

Gaps Analysis

As part of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, analysis is undertaken to establish gaps in childcare sufficiency. This is based upon parental, supply and demand data, consultation and all other key information identified by the completion of the full assessment.

As throughout the assessment, the following postcodes have been used throughout the document. The table below details the areas that fall into each post coded area:

CF31	Bridgend Town, Brackla, Coity, Pen-y-Fai
CF32	Cefn Cribwr, Laleston, Ogmere Vale, Tondu, Sarn, Ynysawdre, Pontycymer, Llangeinor, Garw Valley, Blaengarw, Blackmill, Bettws and Aberkenfig.
CF33	Cornelly and Pyle
CF34	Maesteg Town, Llangynwyd, Caerau, Nantyllyllon
CF35	Pencoed, Coychurch
CF36	Porthcawl, Nottage and Newton
CF39	Evanstown and Gilfach Goch

For the purposes of the report CF32 and CF39 information has been reported under CF32 data.

Some areas of Coity, including new development falls into CF35, but for the purposes of this report will be captured in CF31.

192 parents completed the parental survey. Key responses have informed the gaps analysis across a range of factors. These are:

- Affordability
- Welsh-medium provision
- Atypical childcare
- Childcare during school holidays
- Childcare for children with additional needs
- Childminding provision
- After school and holiday provision
- Family Information

Please note that whilst a total of 192 parents responded to the survey, not all 192 responded to each question.

Other actions identified from the assessment are:

- Investigate geographical and type gaps
- Supporting workforce and development

To gain a sense of what may be preventing the use of childcare, respondents were asked why they do not use childcare for their children. 60 respondents gave the following reasons:

Statement	CF31	CF32/39	CF33	CF34	CF35	CF36	Overall
My child is on a waiting list for a provider and we are waiting for a place to become available	2					1	4* <i>one respondent did not provide postcode</i>
I use informal childcare such as a family member or friend					1		1
I choose not to access any childcare					1		1
I am a stay at home parent and have no need for childcare	1				1	2	4
My children are old enough to look after themselves	1						1
There is no childcare with sufficient quality	2	2	1		1	1	7
There is no suitable Welsh Language provision		1				2	3
No suitable provision in our language, which is neither Welsh nor English							0
The childcare available is not flexible enough for my needs	2	2	1	1		3	9
The cost of childcare is too expensive	14	4	2	4	7	5	36
Childcare times are unsuitable	2	2	1		1	3	9
There is no childcare available that is suitable for my child's age	2	3	2				7
There is a problem with transport					1		
There is no childcare where I need it to be	5	5	2		1	1	14

There is no childcare that can cater for my child's specific needs	2						2
I only use childcare on an ad hoc basis and it is impossible to plan	2					1	3
Other	2	1			1	2	6

Of the 'other' statements, the below was provided:

'I use childcare all the time'

'One child goes to childcare. Our son who has additional needs cannot access the right care beyond the BASE unit'

'For children aged 11 plus there is a lack of age appropriate child care which qualifies for UC assistance'

'My baby does not need childcare for a few months yet'

'The main reason is the cost of childcare which is putting me in the position to hand on my notice in work because my wage doesn't cover the childcare required to do my job.'

'I am a childminder and as such do not require childcare for my own children.'

Childcare is deemed as too expensive for over half (60%) of those not using childcare. Of the 36 respondents who stated childcare was too expensive, the following was indicated as the household income and in the following wards:

Average weekly household income	CF31	CF32/39	CF33	CF34	CF35	CF36	Total
Up to £100					1		1
£100 - £149	1						1
£150 - £249	4			1			5
£250 - £349	1			1	1		3
£350 - £499							0
£500 - £580				1			1
£581 - £749	1	2	1				5* 1 postcode not provided
£750 - £999	3	1	1		1	2	8
More than £1000	1				2	1	4
Prefer not to say	1				2	2	5
Blank	2	1					3

88% of parents surveyed indicated that they 'strongly agreed' or 'tended to agree' with the statement that childcare is too expensive.

Conclusion: Affordability is a barrier to childcare. Improve information available to families on potential financial support.

Welsh-medium childcare provision.

When asked if they utilise Welsh-medium childcare, of the 131 who responded 5% answered 'yes' and 91% answered 'no'.

Of the 122 who answered the further question of whether they would like to access Welsh-medium provision the following responses were received (with ward information provided):

Response	CF31	CF32/39	CF33	CF34	CF35	CF36	Total
Yes – 12%	7	2	2		3	1	15
Maybe – 18%	6	5	3		6	2	22

A further 66% answered 'no', with 4% stating 'don't know'.

Breaking this down further, when asked why they didn't use Welsh-medium provision, 31 respondents gave the following reasons:

(Please note that some respondents opted for more than 1 reason)

Distance	CF31	CF32/39	CF33	CF34	CF35	CF36	Total
42%	5	2	2		2	2	13

Availability	CF31	CF32/39	CF33	CF34	CF35	CF36	Total
68%	7	5	2		5	2	21

Quality of care	CF31	CF32/39	CF33	CF34	CF35	CF36	Total
0%							

Staff language capacity	CF31	CF32/39	CF33	CF34	CF35	CF36	Total
16%	1		1		3		5

Cost	CF31	CF32/39	CF33	CF34	CF35	CF36	Total
16%	1		1		3		5

Additional comments were provided:

'There is no Welsh childcare close to where I live. The Welsh school is fairly close but the cylch meithrin is much further. There are no Welsh day nurseries in Bridgend county - only cylchs which do not suit parents who work as they don't provide full day care.' CF32 resident

'There are no private Welsh day nurseries in Bridgend. I know there are plans to build new settings by 2023 but none available now for my son. Cylch meithrin only have part time and I cannot get my child from one place to the other due to working full time' CF33 resident.

'Nothing around the area where I work so drop offs and picks up would be hard. However the child minder I use does use a little Welsh' CF32 resident

'There is no childcare facility for children under 2 at present through the medium of welsh which is extremely disappointing. I would like to send my child to a full time childcare facility who deliver everything through the medium of welsh' CF31 resident

'Many childcare settings do not cater for shift workers only the standard mon- friday worker' CF35 resident

'I had no idea where or what Welsh childcare was available since my child attended childcare at the age of 1. I did not know where to find this information' CF31 resident

'There is no cylch meithrin for miles and there are no Welsh speaking day nurseries in bridgend county - cylch meithrins don't offer long enough child care hours for working parents' CF32 resident

'Sessions are too short and not flexible' CF33 resident

Based on 66% of respondents indicating that they do not want to access Welsh-medium childcare there does not appear to be significant demand, or gaps.

However, 30% did indicate 'yes' or 'maybe' with lack of availability, distance and insufficient hours being the primary barriers.

Based on additional comments received from the parents/carer it appears that there is also a 'type' gap for full daycare in the county borough. This is indicated by the comments around the length of time existing provisions are currently open.

Conclusion: Welsh-medium provision should be increased, specifically full daycare. Further to parent/carer responses, the following geographical gaps have also been identified within the supply data: CF31, CF36 and CF39

Atypical childcare

Two respondents stated that early mornings would be useful due to shift work.

No overnight or weekend childcare is currently provided. None of the respondents indicated requiring this service in the future. This must be identified as a 'TYPE' gap across Bridgend.

Conclusion: Investigate further the demand for atypical childcare across the county borough

Childcare during school holidays

Overall, the majority of respondents (64%) were satisfied with the quality of childcare during the school holiday period, with 19% disagreeing. A significant number of respondents (20) were dissatisfied with childcare in CF31 during the school holidays, with a further seven in CF35.

Holiday childcare is well located across the county borough but is offered across a range of different 'types' of provision, including day nurseries, childminders and 'standalone' holiday out of school clubs. There are some geographical gaps, based across the Garw and Ogmore valleys (CF32 and CF39). However, the parent/carer survey indicated dissatisfaction within CF31 and CF35, of which there is more provision.

Conclusion: Explore the demand for holiday provision, identifying whether the gap is type and/or geographical.

Childcare for children with additional needs

Three respondents indicated that they struggled to access childcare due to their child's additional needs. Of the three, one had defined their child as autistic and lived in CF36. The remaining two were unspecific other than stating their child had additional needs. One lived in CF31 and the other CF35.

There has been a significant increase in children requiring additional support in their childcare provision. Support for the childcare sector in meeting the needs of children with ALN must continue and increase, where necessary. The partnership working across the Inclusion Service and the Early Years and Childcare Team is a strength upon which the additional support must build upon.

The Welsh Government should continue to work in partnership with Bridgend County Borough Council and review the Additional Support Grant for Bridgend to ensure that all eligible children continue to be supported by the Childcare Offer.

Conclusion: To ensure the needs of children with additional learning needs (ALN) can be met in childcare settings.

Childminding provision

The lack of childminders was specifically noted by eight respondents in the following areas: CF31, CF32 and CF35.

Geographical gaps have been identified in CF32/39, CF34, and CF36.

As noted throughout the CSA childminding numbers has declined over the last 5 years, and particularly throughout the pandemic.

Conclusion: Increase the number of childminders across the county borough, focusing on particular areas of need.
Investigate further the reasons for the decline and promote the career benefits of childcare, and in particular, childminding.

Availability of after school and holiday provision.

The lack of after school and holiday provision was specifically noted by 11 respondents in the following areas: CF31 (8 respondents), and one respondent from CF32, CF33 and CF36.

Conclusion: Explore the potential development of out of school childcare on school sites.

Family Information

Throughout the parent/carer survey, and other consultations, there are indications that some respondents were not fully aware of information around childcare. This has been highlighted as a priority of Bridgend County Borough Council's Childcare Team and significant improvements have been made to the corporate Family Information Service. This will be an on-going priority as detailed in the Action Plan.

Conclusion: To improve the access to and quality of information available to families

Other notable considerations from parent/carers.

80% of 189 respondents indicated that they are satisfied with their childcare in term-time.

83% of 188 respondents agreed that their childcare is of high quality.

50% of 190 respondents agree that there is a good choice of childcare in their area, with 43% disagreeing.

69% of 189 respondents agree that childcare is well located, with 24% disagreeing,

78% of 188 respondents agree that their childcare caters for their children's needs.

38% of 189 respondents agree that childcare is a barrier to employment/training, with 34% disagreeing.

28% of 189 respondents agree that they know where to find out information on financial assistance for childcare, with 60% disagreeing.

130 respondents answered the question asking if childcare had caused any issues in the following:

Caused problems at work: 76%

Prevented continued employment: 27%

Stopped working: 25%

Stopped training: 21%

Conclusion: The majority of parents are satisfied with their childcare. The level of childcare across the county borough is generally sufficient to meet the needs of those families who are in employment or training with the intention to return to work. However, there are specific geographic and type gaps identified that require further investigation and development.

Workforce and Development

The childcare sector has had a tumultuous two years as a result of the pandemic. The workforce has, at times, become disenfranchised and felt undervalued. As a result of this, the retention and recruitment of childcare practitioners has become a national issue.

Childcare settings across Bridgend have indicated their concerns around on-going sustainability and staffing issues, along side the changes that COVID-19 has had on parental demand.

Conclusion: In order to sustain existing childcare provision, as well as developing new, support for the sector and workforce must continue and become more targeted. The sector must be equipped to meet the increased demand of the funded 2-year-old childcare.

