

# **Bradford Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2011-14**

## **Executive Summary**

### **1. Background**

Good quality childcare can significantly improve the life chances of children by providing:

- Free early education for eligible two, three and four year olds
- Paid-for care for parents who need childcare to enable them to go to work or training

The free entitlement to early education is funded by the Local Authority. Parents pay for most other childcare. Financial support is available to parents through the Childcare Element of Working Tax Credit and childcare vouchers. Working parents with pre-school age children often use a combination of their child's free early education entitlement and paid-for care to meet their childcare needs. Informal childcare provided by family and friends is also widely used. Childcare settings are expected to operate as self-sustaining businesses. They need to generate sufficient income through a combination of fee income and early education funding to cover overheads.

The Childcare Act places a duty on local authorities to ensure there is sufficient childcare to help parents of children up to the age of 14 (17 with additional needs). This report reviews factors affecting the supply and demand for childcare in the Bradford district and makes recommendations for development priorities in 2011-14.

### **2. Demand for Childcare**

Bradford's strong birth rate points towards a significant increase in demand for free early education places. This is unlikely to be matched by a similar increase in demand for paid-for childcare in the current economic climate.

Cost remains the main barrier to greater use of paid-for childcare by working parents. Cost pressures on the family budget meant that 39% of the Bradford workforce who were surveyed opted for informal or no childcare compared to 32% in 2007. Neither employers nor working parents highlighted lack of childcare in general as being a problem. However some parents expressed concern about the wide range of ages being catered for in some Holiday Clubs.

Childcare costs have risen by around 4% over the last two years, slightly below the rate of inflation as competition in the market has intensified. Take up of the Childcare Element of Working Tax Credit has increased in all areas, but most notably in the more affluent communities. Use of childcare vouchers has fallen.

For children and young people absorbing and exciting outdoor play is vital. Successful management of risk is the hallmark of quality provision from a child's perspective. For older children this is more likely to be found outside a traditional childcare setting.

### **3. Supply of Childcare**

Five daycare providers closed in 2010, while one new nursery opened, bringing the District's provision of daycare down to 105 nurseries providing 4864 childcare places. Provision is concentrated within the affluent commuter communities and along travel routes.

The number of childminders increased slightly to 553, providing 1453 places in 2010. There is a natural rate of turnover of childminders joining and leaving the profession of around one fifth each year. Childminders account for around 20% of the District's 0-4 provision, allowing for the fact that at any one time approximately 10% of childminders are not actively minding. There is wide variation in childminding provision across the District; Shipley, Keighley and South Bradford have significantly higher numbers of childminders than Bradford East or West.

Combining the figures for daycare and childminders, indicates there are an average of 15.4 childcare places per 100 children aged 0-4. This average conceals a wide variation in provision by Area. Shipley has 26.2 childcare places per 100 children compared to 11.1 places in Bradford East.

There are vacant places in all areas. Overall occupancy of daycare is 68%, compared to 73% in 2007/8. In January 2011, occupancy rates for daycare were running at 65% for the under twos and 69% for over twos. Childminder occupancy rates for the under fives were 60% in January 2011. This low occupancy rate for childminders may partly reflect the fact that many childminders chose to run below their registered capacity. Nonetheless the data suggest there is no shortage of 0-4 provision in daycare or childminding.

95% of the District's primary schools are serviced by formal out-of-school childcare. There are 172 group-based out-of-school clubs operating in term-time. The vast majority of childminders also provide out-of school childcare; many of them provide holiday care as well as term-time care. Occupancy rates for group-based out-of-school provision were 81% in January 2011.

Each Parliamentary constituency area has between 30-40 out-of-school clubs, however Shipley and Keighley tend to have larger more sustainable settings. When you factor in differences in child population sizes, there are marked differences in the availability of group-based provision per 100 primary school aged children. Availability ranges from 2 places per 100 children in East and West to 11 places in Shipley.

### **4. Use of Childcare**

Approximately 16,000 children were attending some form of private, voluntary or independent sector (PVI) childcare in June 2010. Almost three quarters of children attending childcare were under the age of five, whereas less than one per cent was aged 12+.

There have been several attempts to establish age appropriate childcare for children in secondary schools as parents of children in school years 6 and 7 have requested this service. In practice there has not been sufficient demand

to create viable childcare businesses for this age group. The emphasis for childcare for the over 11's is therefore on after-school and holiday activities.

Children from families living in better-off areas are significantly more likely to use paid-for childcare. Children with a White British heritage account for three quarters of children using childcare. The under-representation of children with BME heritage is most marked in the out-of-school and childminding sectors where White British children account for 86% and 90% of users. Having said this, a level of diversity is apparent insofar as 45 different languages are spoken by children attending childcare settings in the District.

Children attend childcare for an average 17.5 hours a week. Children from more affluent backgrounds tend to travel further to attend childcare but 55% of children travel less than 1km to their childcare.

## **5. Demand for Early Education Places**

Parental awareness and use of free early education remains higher in more affluent communities. Parents, whose children access early education, see numerous benefits: building confidence, speech and language development, socialising with other children, learning how to behave and share with others. Unfortunately a significant number of vulnerable families do not perceive the benefits of early education.

The Department for Education plans to trial new approaches and begin to rollout extension of free early education for disadvantaged two year olds between April 2011 and September 2012. Funding proposals signal a six-fold increase in provision up to 2014. Over 2,000 places will be required to meet the needs of the District's 25% most disadvantaged children. This will require development of significant new capacity.

## **6. Supply of Early Education Places**

There is a current maximum capacity of 12,496 early education places available for three and four year olds. School-based provision accounts for the majority of places in disadvantaged parts of Bradford East, West and South. Private and voluntary provision accounts for the majority of places in Shipley and some parts of Keighley where pre-school playgroups have historically dominated village provision and use of daycare is higher.

The number of children eligible for nursery education changes according to the school term. Across the District there are a maximum of 149 places for every 100 children during the autumn term. However, this figure falls to 90 places per 100 children in the summer. The areas of greatest shortage tend to be the areas of greatest disadvantage. Bradford East has a maximum of 76 places per 100 eligible children in the summer term, whereas Shipley has 123 places per 100 children.

## **7. Use of Early Education Places**

Only 78% of children were taking up their entitlement to free early education in the District in spring 2011. Although some children will be accessing their early education in neighbouring local authorities, take up in disadvantaged areas remains worryingly low. Take up rates in the spring term varied from 74% in Bradford West to 86% in Shipley. The situation is compounded by a lack of capacity in some areas, most especially in the summer term.

## **8. The Needs of Disabled Children**

Accessing childcare becomes increasingly difficult as children get older. In particular, parents identify a lack of accessible childcare during school holidays. Feasibility work was carried out at the newly re-organised special schools in 2010. This work found there was insufficient demand to develop new on-site childcare. The focus of work continues to be development of inclusive practise.

Early education and childcare for pre-fives is provided through a combination of specialist provision in children's centres and resourced provision elsewhere. Demand for places continues to rise and more work needs to be carried out to ensure there is sufficient provision.

## **9. The Needs of Looked-after Children**

Take up of early education by Looked-after children is reported to be good. It is vital to ensure Social Workers and Foster Parents are aware of the free entitlement and new developments around two year old places.

## **10. Priority Developments for 2011-14**

Bradford's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment highlights the need to address the following priorities in 2011-14:

- Increase uptake of free early education entitlement in low uptake areas and among vulnerable groups
- Ensure sufficiency of early education capacity in areas of shortage
- Expand free two year old provision in line with emerging guidelines
- Recruit and develop childminders in line with natural turnover
- Ensure sufficiency of age-appropriate out-of-school childcare. Explore partnership approaches to provision of care for older children
- Ensure appropriateness of holiday care and play opportunities by age
- Ensure the needs of disabled children are met through inclusive childcare and sufficiency of resourced provision
- Improve affordability of childcare for parents through promotion of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit and childcare vouchers. Promote good business practise among childcare providers.

## **2. Purpose of this Report**

Local authorities have to ensure there are sufficient childcare places for the families who live in their district. This report considers factors affecting the supply and demand for childcare and makes recommendations for development work in 2011-14.

### **2.1 The Role of Childcare**

Good quality childcare can significantly improve the life chances of children by providing:

- (i) Free early education for eligible two, three and four year olds
- (ii) Paid-for care for parents who need childcare to enable them to go to work or training

The free entitlement to early education is funded by the Local Authority. Childcare fees which parents pay directly to their childcare provider are determined by individual childcare settings. Financial support is available to help parents with the costs of childcare through the Childcare Element of Working Tax Credit and childcare vouchers.

Working parents with pre-school age children often use a combination of their child's free early education entitlement and paid-for care to meet their childcare needs. Informal childcare provided by family and friends is also widely used, particularly by parents of older children. Childcare settings are expected to operate as self-sustaining businesses. They need to generate sufficient income through a combination of fee income and local authority funding to cover overheads.

### **2.2 Types of Childcare**

The types of formal childcare considered in this report are Ofsted-registered and exempt:

- Day nurseries
- Childminders and home-based childcarers
- Pre-school playgroups
- School nurseries
- Out-of-school childcare

Formal childcare is generally paid-for either through the fees paid by parents or by the Local Authority's funding of early education places. Many families also use informal childcare provided by family and friends to meet some or all of their childcare needs.

## 2.3 Basis of Analysis

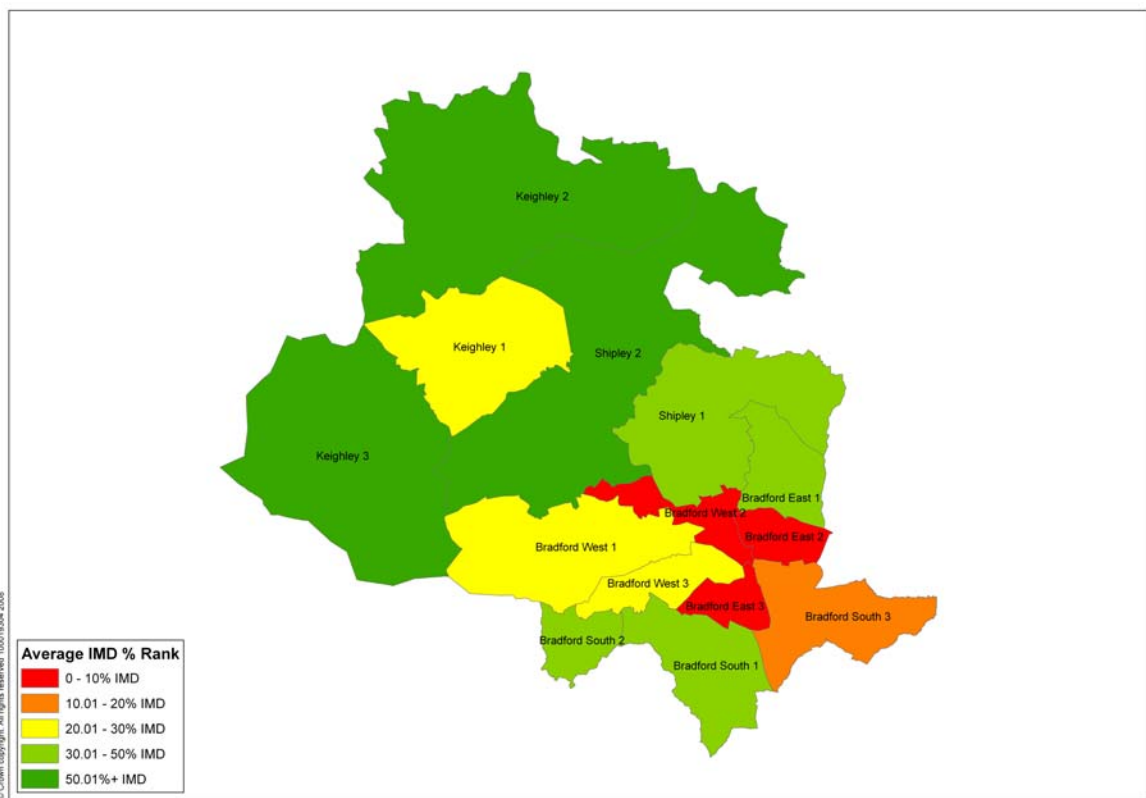
This report considers the sufficiency of childcare and early education places in relation to the five constituency areas of Bradford East, Bradford West, Bradford South, Keighley and Shipley.

## 3. Demand for Childcare in Bradford

### 3.1 Bradford Context

The Bradford district is a diverse district with a mix of environments ranging from inner-city areas, towns and villages, and high Pennine moorland. A quarter of the district's citizens are from Black and Minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds.

Bradford is one of the 10% most deprived local authorities in England, however there is considerable variation in wealth across the district. The map below illustrates a pattern of inner-city and housing estate deprivation flanked by areas of relative affluence.

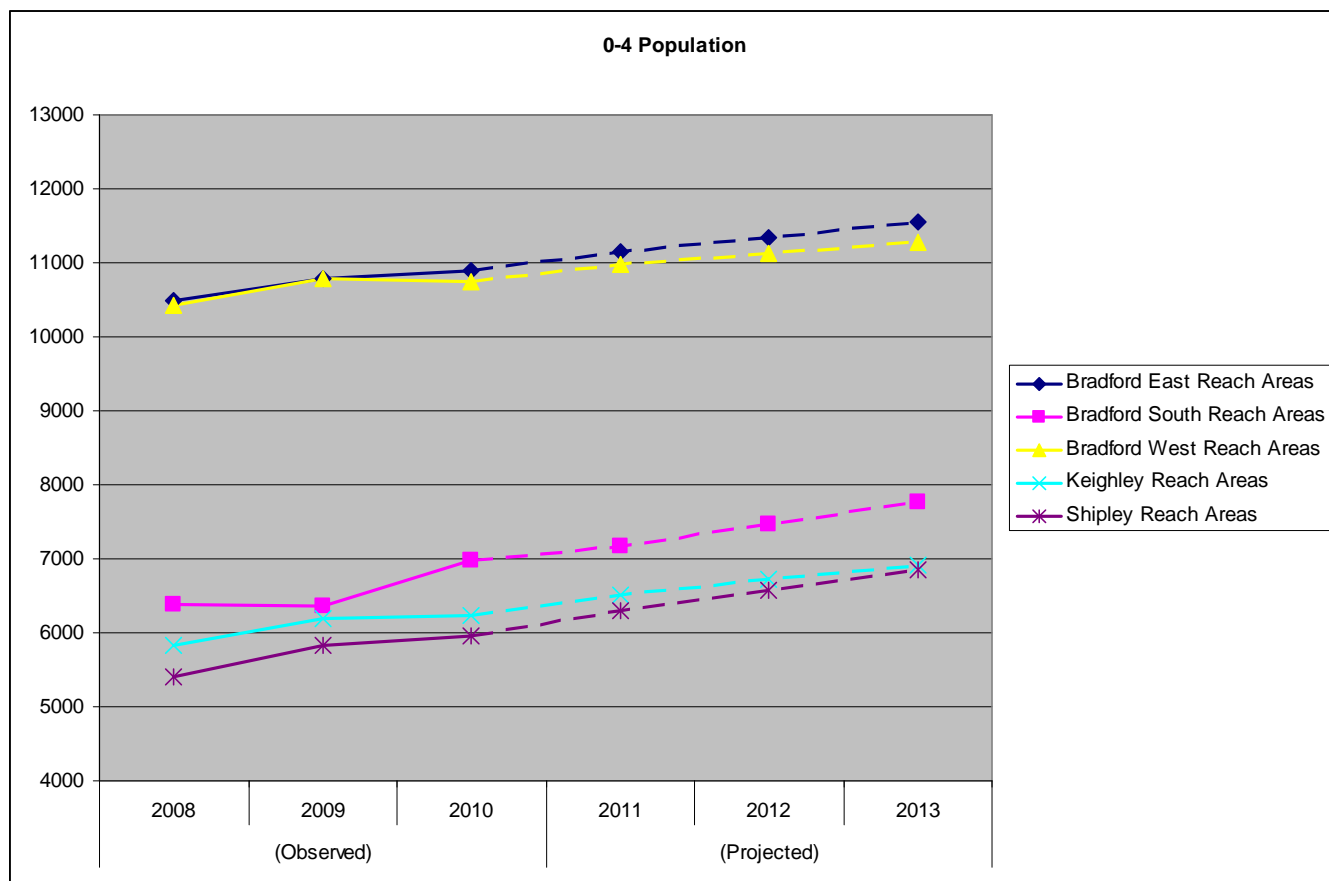


### 3.2 Population Trends

The population of Bradford district is set to rise by one third over the next 20 years. Bradford has one of the youngest populations in the UK, fuelled by a consistently high birth rate. Population growth is likely to be highest in the most disadvantaged areas.

The number of births in Bradford is growing at around 2% per year. The total number of children aged under five grew from 38,530 in 2008 to 40,835 in 2010. This was not only the result of the birth rate but also family migration into the district, notably from East European communities.

Strong child population growth is expected in all areas over the next three years. In absolute terms the 0-4 child populations of Bradford East and West will remain 65% higher than Keighley and Shipley.



### 3.3 Economic Outlook

While Bradford's strong birth rate points towards a significant increase in demand for free early education places, the current economic outlook suggests this may not be matched by a similar increase in demand for paid-for childcare.

Almost 20% of the District's working age population were claiming out of work benefits in 2010, primarily Employment and Support Allowance and Incapacity Benefit. This is higher than both the regional and national averages. In May 2010 over 15,000 (4.9%) of the District's working age population were claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) in comparison to 3.9% nationally and 4.6% regionally.

Bradford has historically had a relatively low proportion of JSA claims of 12 months or more duration, but since 2008 the proportion claiming for 12 months+ has increased. This suggests that growing numbers of people are moving into long-term unemployment.

Approximately one in four children in the district live in workless families, which is a higher proportion than seen regionally or nationally. The highest proportions of children in out of work families are to be found in Bradford East and Bradford West.

Area	Out of work	
	Families	Children in families
Bradford East	28.7%	31.1%
Bradford South	24.2%	27.7%
Bradford West	28.1%	29.4%
Keighley	16.2%	17.5%
Shipley	12.7%	13.2%
<b>Bradford District</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Yorkshire &amp; Humberside</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>21%</b>

Source: HMRC

52,000 adults across the District have no qualifications. This equates to around 18% of the working-age population and is the highest of all local authority districts in the Leeds City Region. Growth forecasts for the Bradford District (2009-2019) suggest that the strongest growth is likely to be seen in parts of the service sector which typically employ highly-skilled staff.

At £410, average weekly earnings for full-time workers are 10% lower than the regional average and 20% lower than the national average.

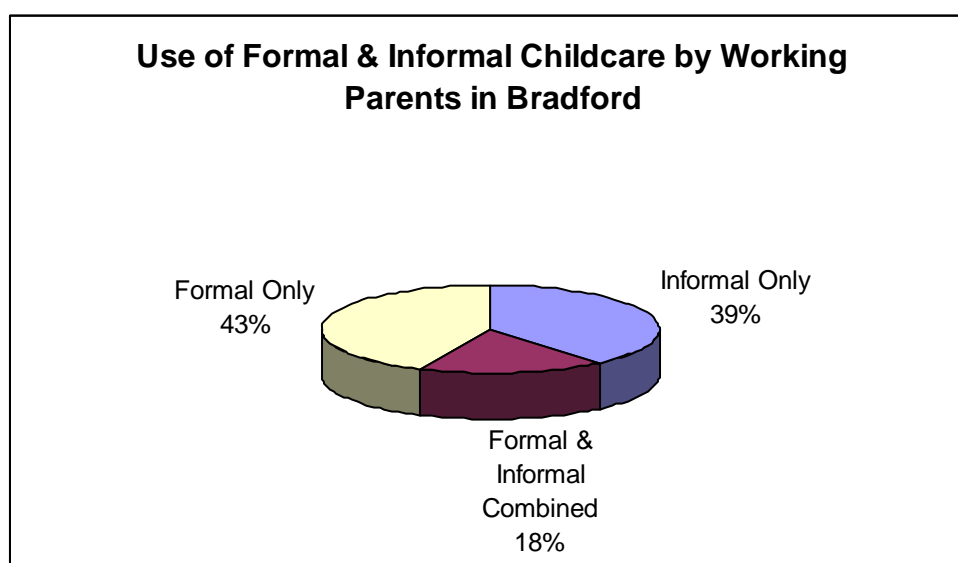
### 3.4 Housing Trends

In October 2010 the total number of occupied dwellings stood at just under 200,000. This represents growth of 2.3% since April 2008. Bradford West and Shipley wards have seen the greatest increases in occupied dwellings (3.8% and 2.9% respectively), whereas Bradford South and Keighley wards have seen the lowest increases (1.5%). Bradford East housing stock grew broadly in-line with the district (2.1%).

### 3.5 Use of Childcare by Working Parents

The Childcare Act places a duty on local authorities to ensure there is sufficient childcare to help parents of children up to the age of 14 (17 with additional needs) to access work and training.

A survey of 430 parents working in the Bradford District highlighted that cost remains the main barrier to greater use of formal childcare. Lack of childcare provision did not emerge as a problem for working parents, but cost pressures on the family budget meant that 39% of the Bradford workforce who took part in the survey opted for informal/no childcare compared to 32% in 2007.



Although 61% of working parents surveyed were using some formal childcare, the proportion of parents using a mix of formal and informal care rose from 13% to 18% between 2007 and 2010. This may in part be due to the Recession as well as the increase in after school activities provided through Extended Services and the increased flexibility of early education funding.

A survey of Bradford businesses also lent weight to the impression that the availability of childcare (both formal and informal) generally meets most families' needs. Employers reported an average 13% staff turnover in 2010 (14% in 2007). 16 out of the 17 employers surveyed conducted formal exit interviews for leavers. Only six members of staff cited childcare as a reason for leaving their job, which is less than 1% of leavers.

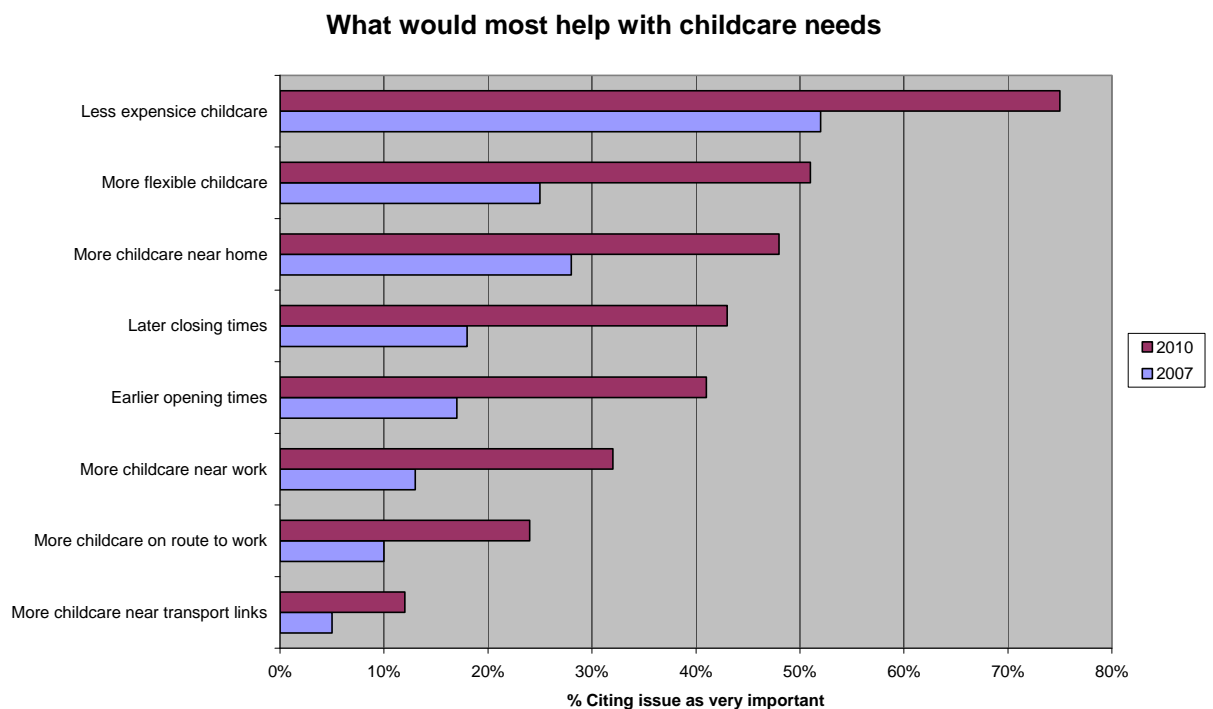
Bradford employers were generally slightly less concerned about the impact of childcare arrangements on time-keeping than they had been in 2007. On the other hand concerns about absence due to child illness and breakdown of childcare arrangements have increased. Informal childcare arrangements are more prone to breakdown than formal arrangements, so this concern is consistent with increased reliance on informal childcare.

Job Centre Plus Advisers highlighted issues of trust and affordability as being the main barriers to use of formal childcare by parents on low incomes. Opening hours can also cause problems for parents who have to use public transport to travel between work and their childcare provider. Advisers said that formal childcare can be problematic for the retail sector where evening and weekend work is required. Some shift working patterns where the shifts vary and hours can be fluid also cause problems.

### 3.6 Attitudes of Working Parents to Childcare

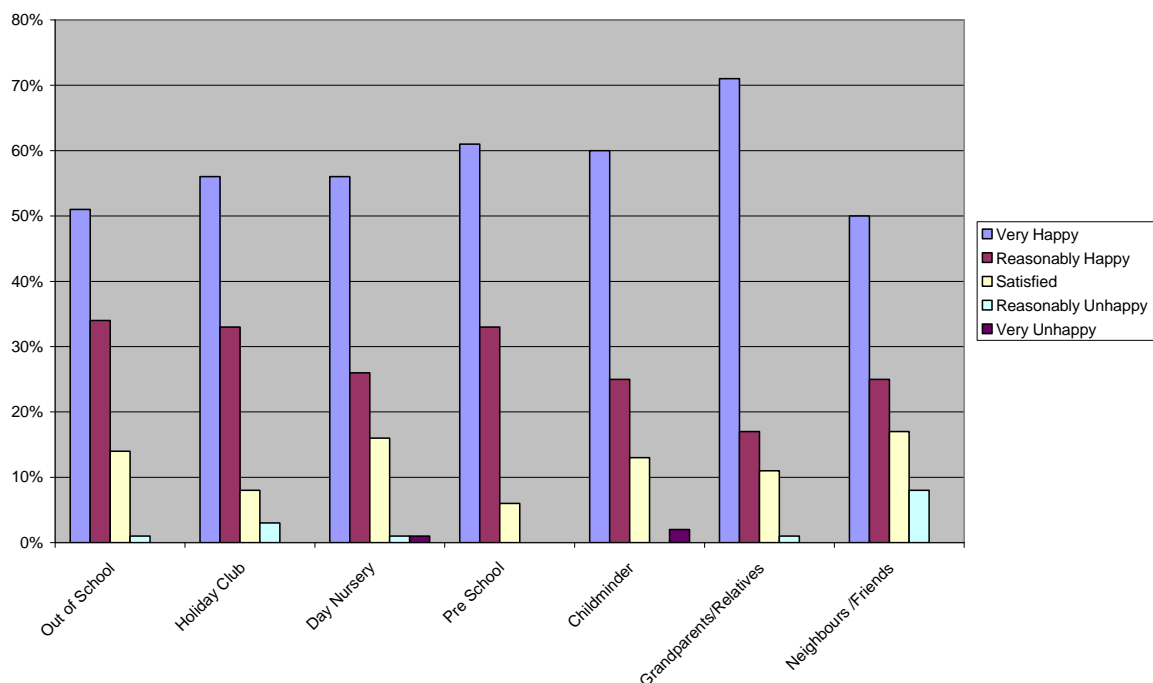
Working parents have become more cost conscious in the current economic climate. Although word-of-mouth recommendation remains overwhelmingly the most important reason for choice of childcare provider (cited by 57% of parents), followed by convenience for work or school, 15% of parents said they had chosen their provider because it was the cheapest. This compares to 10% on 2007.

Working parents appear to have become more demanding customers across the board, desiring far more flexibility as well as lower costs. The proportion of parents who said more flexible childcare was important/very important has doubled, while the proportion of parents citing earlier/later opening times as helpful has also more than doubled since 2007.



Despite rising expectations, users of formal childcare are reasonably happy with their childcare choices. However, parents who have the option of using grandparents or relatives remain happiest with their arrangements.

### Satisfaction by Type of Childcare Used



Most working parents would appreciate greater flexibility in their childcare arrangements. More than 40% of daycare and OOSC users would like earlier opening times and later closing times respectively. There was no significant difference noted in the needs of parents working full-time vs part-time.

One criticism of some holiday care was passed on by Job Centre Plus Advisers. They reported that some parents had concerns about the wide range of ages being catered for in some Holiday Clubs which could be intimidating for younger children and off-putting for older ones. This was also echoed by responses from several of the working parents surveyed.

### 3.7 Cost of Childcare

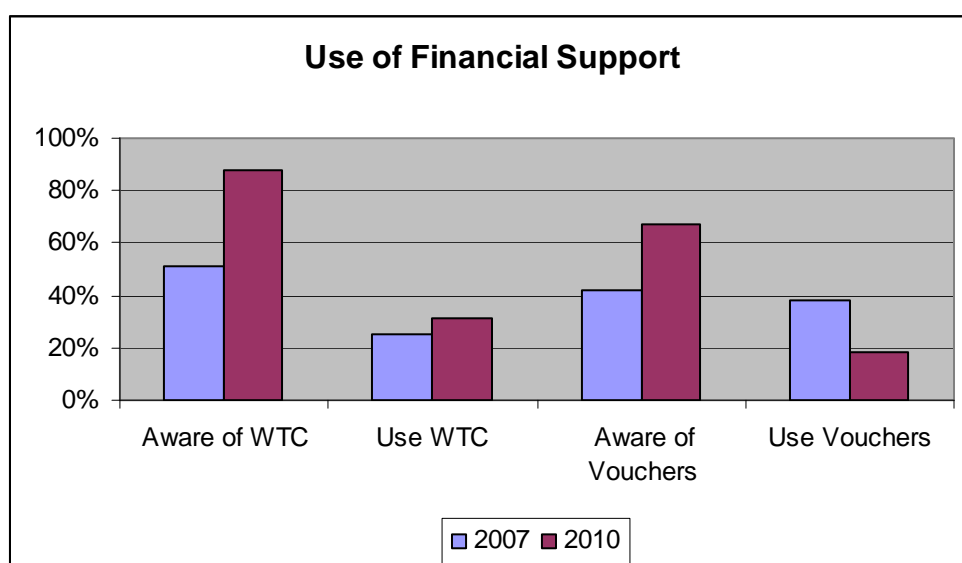
Costs of childcare have risen by around 4% over the last two years, slightly below the rate of inflation as competition in the market has intensified.

	Average cost per hour	Average cost per day	Average cost per session	Average cost per week
<b>Childminders</b>	£3.41	£29.44	n/a	£141.40
<b>Full Day Care</b>	n/a	£31.51	n/a	£153.30
<b>Out of School Care</b>	n/a	£19.84 (holiday care)	£3.71 (before school) £7.43 (after school)	n/a
<b>Pre-school Playgroup</b>	n/a	n/a	£7.75	n/a

Financial support is available to help parents pay for childcare. Parents on low incomes may be able to access the Childcare Element of Working Tax Credit (WTC) which pays for up to 70% of childcare fees (effective from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2011). Employers can also help their staff through the provision of childcare vouchers, which are generally taken as a tax and National Insurance free part of salary.

Bradford Council has promoted information about financial support for childcare costs to local employers. This appears to have had some success as 75% of companies surveyed said they provide staff with information about the Childcare Element of Working Tax Credit in 2010. 69% of businesses now offer childcare vouchers.

The employee survey showed significant improvements in working parents' awareness of financial help, with almost 90% awareness of the Childcare Element of Working Tax Credit and over two-thirds' awareness of vouchers.



Greater awareness of WTC has translated into increased uptake of the benefit. Some of this may be at the expense of the use of childcare vouchers as WTC financial support is generally more generous than the tax relief benefit of childcare vouchers. However it is worrying to see just how much local use of childcare vouchers seems to have fallen since 2007. Increased

use of informal childcare and uncertainty/confusion over the use of vouchers appears to lie behind this trend.

Take up of the Childcare element of WTC has increased in all areas, but most notably in the more affluent communities. Take up in Shipley is three times the rate of Bradford West.

<b>Take up of Working Tax Credits Childcare Element by Eligible Parents</b>		
	<b>2006/7</b>	<b>2008/9</b>
<b><i>District Average</i></b>	<b>9.5%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>
<b><i>West</i></b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>7.6%</b>
<b><i>South</i></b>	<b>11.9%</b>	<b>22.7%</b>
<b><i>East</i></b>	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>10.0%</b>
<b><i>Shipley</i></b>	<b>11.8%</b>	<b>22.7%</b>
<b><i>Keighley</i></b>	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>17.7%</b>

The Childcare Element of WTC has been promoted evenly across all Areas using: posters and leaflets in childcare settings, doctors' surgeries, children's centres, information accompanying Council Tax bills and personal contact through Job Centre Plus, Citizen's Advice Bureaux, parental involvement workers in schools and the Families Information Service. The differences in rates of take up therefore are likely to reflect differences in the availability of informal childcare through extended families. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some parents remain distrustful of the WTC.

### **3.8 The Views of Children and Young People**

Extensive consultation was carried out in each of the five areas to identify the opinions of children and young people around what play and leisure opportunities would make up a quality childcare setting. Various pictorial representations were used to help children and young people to identify what activities they would most like to see in a childcare setting. These were split into three age groups, 0 -4 years, 5 -11 years and 11 years and above.

Views of children attending major events were also captured as well as those in childcare settings. Consultation occurred at events such as Parent Participation Framework launches, children's centre events and community Good Neighbour Days, at out of school settings, nurseries, and youth settings as well as targeted consultation with looked after children and on a Traveller site. Altogether, 221 children and young people were consulted.

The clear favourite activities chosen by the under-fives were: painting, singing, reading and outdoor play activities. Five to eleven year olds' clear favourite activity was a water slide. The other top choices all identified outdoor and adventurous play - skate boarding, wall climbing, den building. Some of these activities might already be found within childcare settings but reflect the need to support childcare settings to manage risk in play opportunities.

For children aged 11+, the top choices were ice skating, horse riding, climbing and free running. These choices reflect a demand among this age group for activity based provision that is not traditionally seen as childcare.

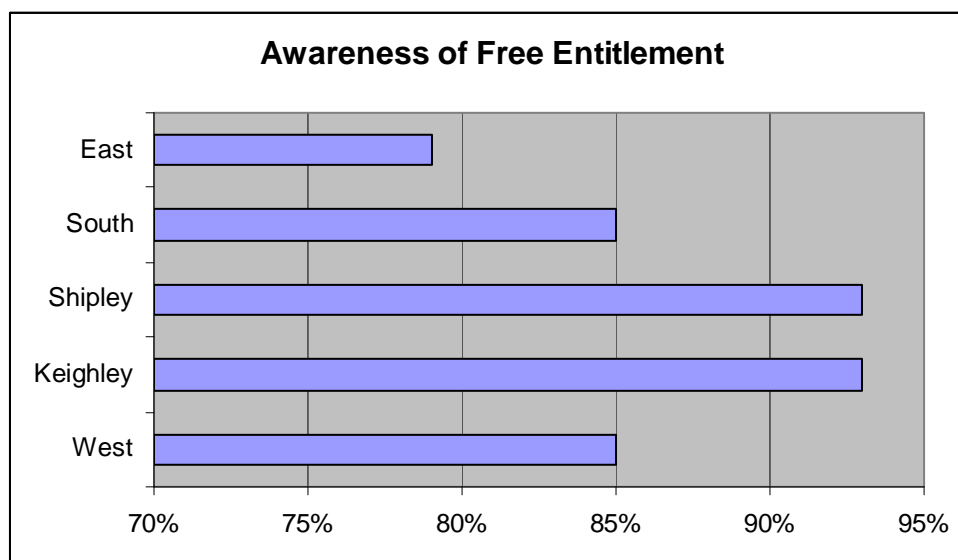
The activities identified reflect adventurous, outdoor play choices and all had an element of risk and challenge to them. The consultation did not identify if the choices made reflected play and leisure opportunities that young people had already engaged in or if they were aspirational choices.

Quality childcare from a child's perspective is one that effectively manages risky play and enables children to concentrate wholeheartedly on their play. For older children this is more likely to be found outside a traditional childcare setting. Within childcare settings, the focus there also needs to be on ensuring that children have access to exciting outdoor play opportunities.

### 3.9 Parents' Use of and Attitudes towards Early Education Places

There are significant differences in parents' attitudes towards the free entitlement across the district. These have a significant bearing on uptake.

87% of Bradford parents of three and four year olds surveyed last autumn were aware of the free entitlement to early education. However awareness was significantly lower in the less affluent areas. Only 79% of parents in Bradford East were aware compared to 93% in Keighley and Shipley. Awareness was lower among BME families and non-working parents.



78% of eligible children whose parents were aware of the entitlement were accessing their free early education. 80% of eligible White British children were accessing the entitlement compared to 70% of BME children. The main reason for not wanting to access the entitlement was that family care was already in place, followed closely by distrust of anyone outside the family looking after young children.

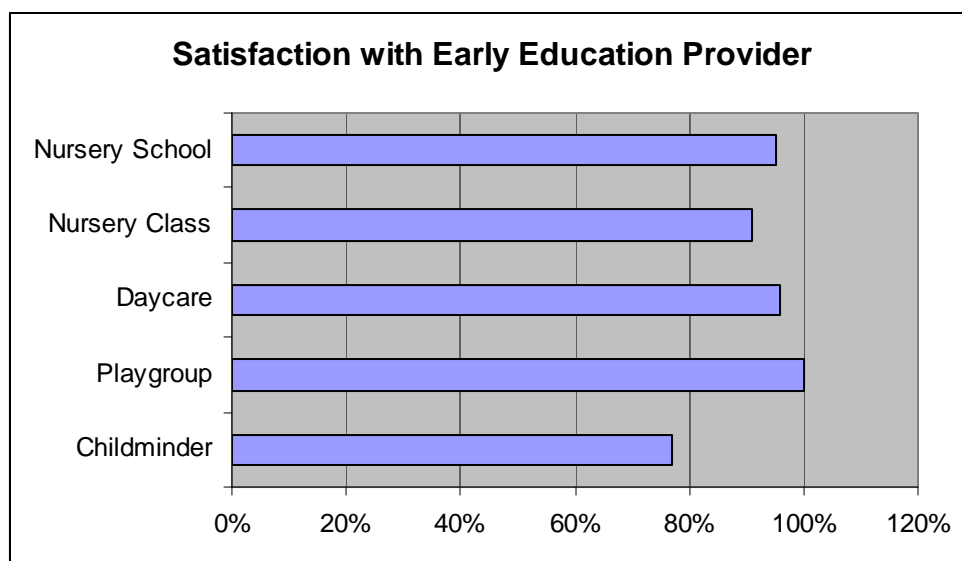
The free entitlement to early education has recently been extended to 15 hours per week, with providers encouraged to offer the entitlement more flexibly. The primary objective for this change was to increase uptake of the entitlement among low access groups. An important secondary objective was to improve the affordability of childcare and work-life balance for working parents. There is evidence that greater flexibility in delivery would encourage more families to take up the entitlement in Bradford. 38% of parents whose children were not accessing early education say greater flexibility would encourage them to take up the entitlement.

Word-of-mouth from family and friends remains the most used and trusted source of information about early education, cited by over half of parents of young children. Parents felt official information about the entitlement from Bradford Council did not always get through to them; they suggested that Health Visitors could pass on information at the Two Year Health Check.

A 2009-10 project aimed at increasing uptake of early education among the BME community in Barkerend highlighted the fact that there remain significant barriers for some parents who are aware of the entitlement; notably a lack of confidence to approach the local provider (30%) and confusion about waiting lists or difficulty in getting/understanding information about application processes (20%).

Working parents are markedly more pro-active in seeking information about childcare than non-working parents. They are the most likely to use the internet (21%) and Bradford Council sources such as the Family Information Service (FIS -10%). There were 2842 telephone enquiries regarding childcare and early education to Bradford's Family Information Service in the year to September 2010.

Most parents are satisfied or very satisfied with the early education provided. Playgroups scored 100% satisfaction among parents. This may be due to the close community links many playgroups have with their parents.



Parents, whose children access early education, see numerous benefits: building confidence, speech and language development, socialising with other children, learning how to behave and share with others. Unfortunately a significant number of vulnerable families do not perceive the benefits of the free entitlement.

### **3.10 Government Policy on Two Year Old Places**

The Department for Education (DfE) places considerable emphasis on the provision of free early education places for disadvantaged two year olds in order to improve education and life chances. Bradford was one of the pilot authorities for two year old provision and has one of the largest programmes nationally, with 362 centrally funded two year old places available through children's centres in 2010-11. A further 188 places were also locally commissioned in voluntary pre-school playgroups.

The DfE plans to trial new approaches and begin to rollout extension of free early education for two year olds between April 2011 and September 2012. Funding proposals signal a six-fold increase in provision up to 2013. Assuming Bradford children benefit in line with the national projections, there will be a significant increase in demand for two year old places. Over 2,000 places will be required to meet the need of the District's 25% most disadvantaged children. This will require development of significant new capacity.

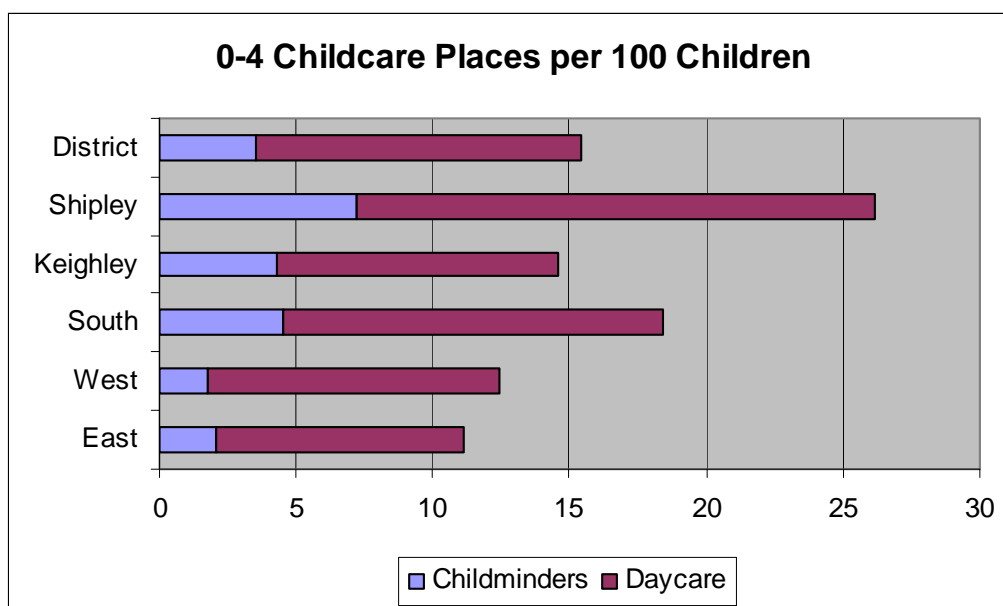
## **4. Supply of Childcare**

### **4.1 0-4 Daycare and Childminders**

Five daycare providers closed in 2010, while one new nursery opened, bringing the District's provision of daycare down to 105 nurseries providing 4864 childcare places. Provision is concentrated within the affluent commuter communities and along travel routes. Within many of the more disadvantaged communities, children's centre childcare forms a significant part of local provision. This childcare was developed in response to social need rather than local demand and some of the provision has struggled to break even financially. The Government has now withdrawn the requirement for children's centres to offer on-site childcare. It is anticipated that three out of the 27 day nurseries sited in children's centres will close in 2011.

The number of childminders increased slightly to 553, providing 1453 places in 2010. Childminders account for around 20% of the District's 0-4 provision, allowing for the fact that at any one time approximately 10% of childminders are not actively minding. There is significant variation in childminding provision across the District; Shipley, Keighley and South Bradford have significantly higher numbers of childminders than Bradford East or West.

Combining the figures for daycare and childminders, indicates there are an average of 15.4 childcare places per 100 children aged 0-4. This average conceals a wide variation in provision by Area. Shipley has 26.2 childcare places per 100 children compared to 11.1 places in Bradford East.



Although there is a wide variation in the numbers of childcare places per 100 children across the district, there are vacant places in all areas. This suggests there is no shortage of 0-4 provision in daycare. In January 2011, occupancy rates for daycare were running at 65% for the under twos and 69% for over twos.

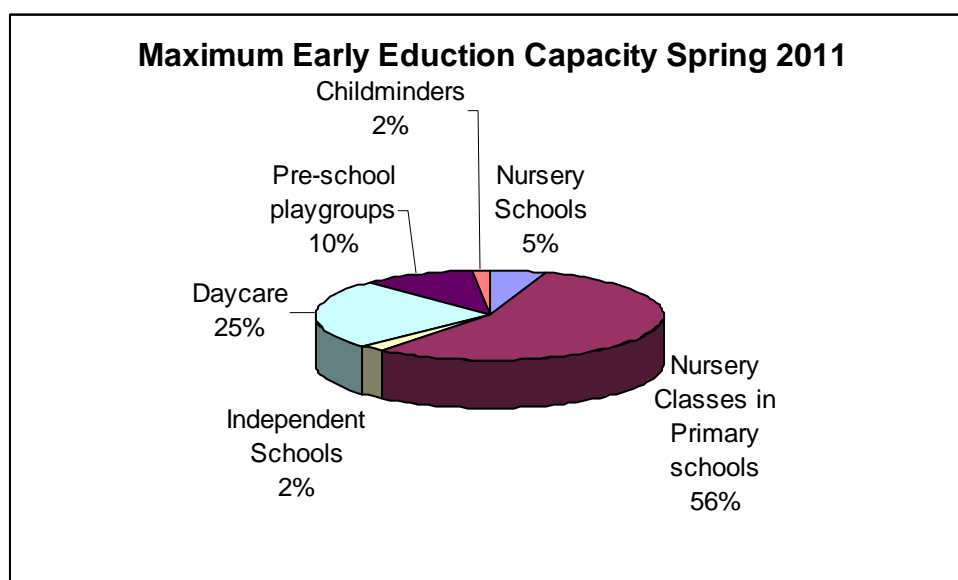
Occupancy rates in Daycare Settings Jan 2011		
	Under Two's	Over Two's
East	69%	77%
West	62%	71%
South	69%	60%
Keighley	65%	74%
Shipley	61%	66%
District	65%	69%

Occupancy rates for childminders are rather harder to gauge. In theory only 60% of childminder places for the under fives were filled in January 2011, however there are likely to be considerably fewer unfilled places than this figure might suggest. Childminding is a lifestyle occupation and many childminders would not wish to care for the maximum number of children they are registered to care for.

## 4.2 Early Education Places

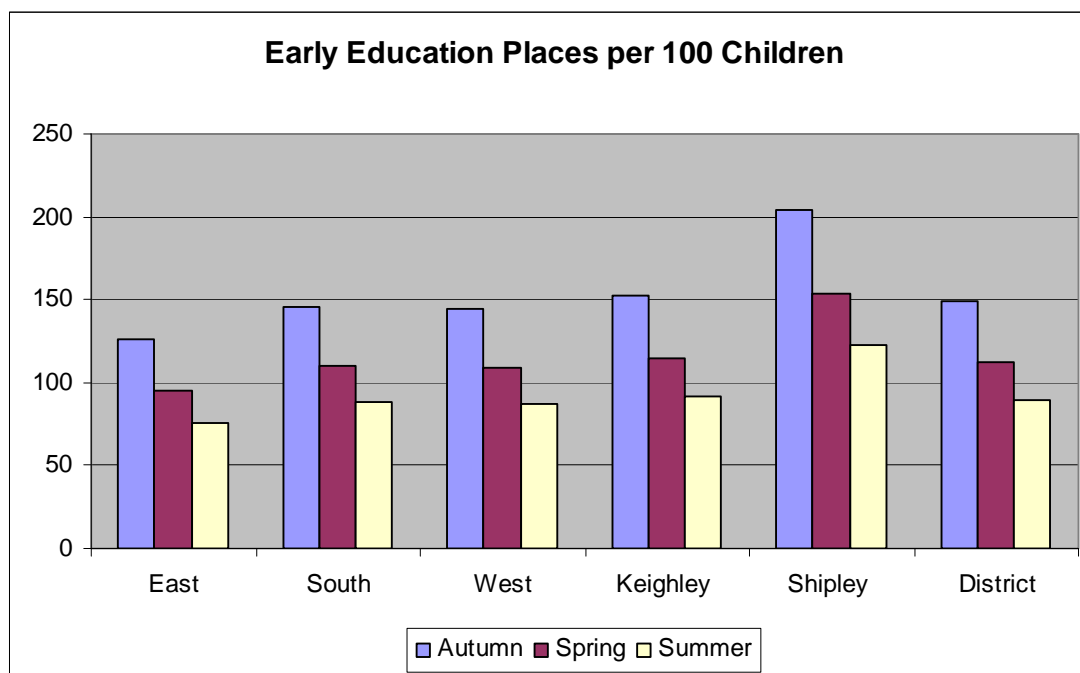
There is a current maximum capacity of 12,496 early education places available for three and four year olds. The realistic available capacity is somewhat lower than this, however, as at any one time some of the available capacity in the private and voluntary sector will be taken by younger and fee-paying children.

School-based provision accounts for the majority of places in disadvantaged parts of Bradford East, West and South. Private and voluntary provision accounts for the majority of places in Shipley and some parts of Keighley where pre-school playgroups have historically dominated village provision and use of daycare is higher.



The number of children eligible for nursery education changes according to the school term. At the start of the autumn term all 4 year olds will be eligible for a reception class place and only 3 year olds will be eligible for a nursery class (8,375 children). In the spring term all 3 year olds and around 1/3 of 4 year olds will be eligible (11,140 children). In the summer term this increases again, to all 3 year olds and around 2/3 of 4 year olds (13,904 children).

Across the District there are a maximum 149 places for every 100 children during the autumn term. However, this figure falls to 89 places per 100 children in the summer. The areas of greatest shortage tend to be the areas of greatest disadvantage. Bradford East has just 76 places per 100 eligible children in the summer term, whereas Shipley has 126 places per 100 children.



### 4.3 Out-of-School Childcare

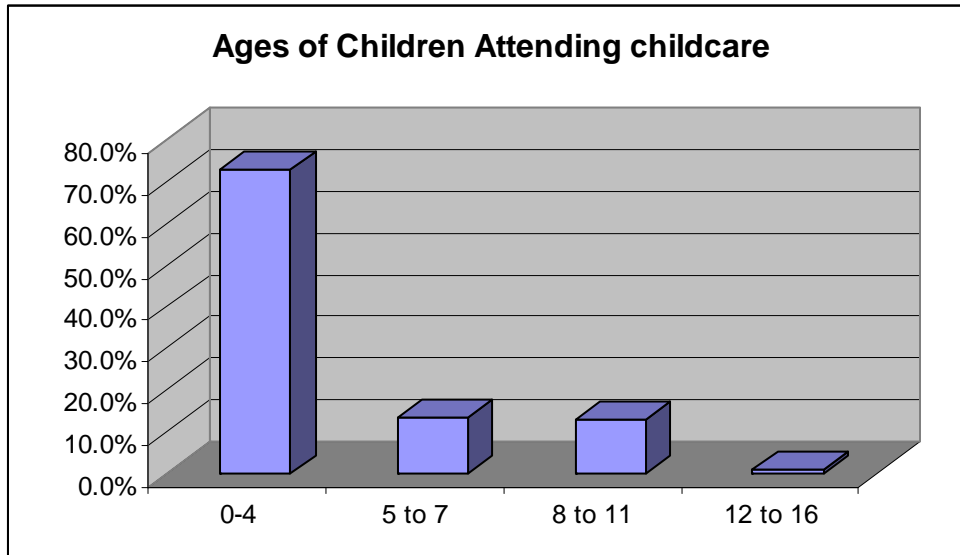
95% of the District's primary schools are serviced by formal out-of-school childcare. There are 172 group-based out-of-school clubs operating in term-time. The vast majority of childminders also provide out-of school childcare; many of them provide holiday care in addition to term-time care. Occupancy rates for group-based provision are currently running at 81%.

Each area is home to between 30-40 group-based schemes, however Shipley and Keighley tend to have more sustainable larger out-of-school clubs (OOSCs). When you factor in differences in child population sizes, there are marked differences in the availability of group-based provision per 100 children.

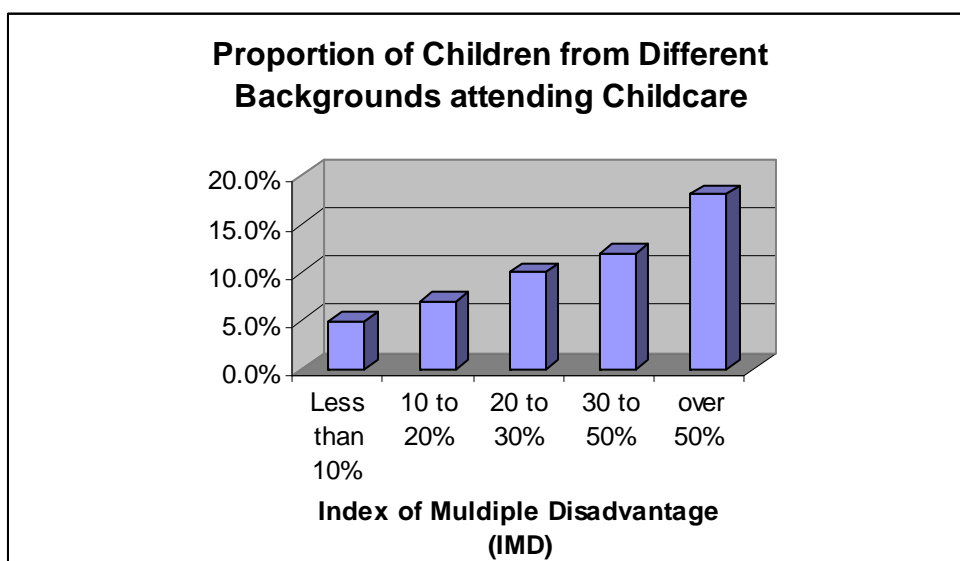
Availability and Occupancy of Group-based OOSC Jan 2011		
	Places per 100 Primary School Children	Occupancy
East	2	79%
West	2	56%
South	3	88%
Keighley	8	78%
Shipley	11	86%
District	4	81%

## 5. The Use of Childcare

Approximately 16,000 children were attending some form of PVI childcare in June 2010 (including out of school childcare and pre-school playgroups). Almost three quarters of children attending childcare were under the age of five, whereas less than one per cent were aged 12+.



There have been several attempts to establish age appropriate childcare for children in secondary schools as parents of children in school years 6 and 7 have requested this service. In practice there has not been sufficient demand to create viable childcare businesses for this age group. The emphasis for childcare for the over 11's is therefore on after-school and holiday activities and the creation of "Safe Places to be" in line with the Extended Schools agenda..

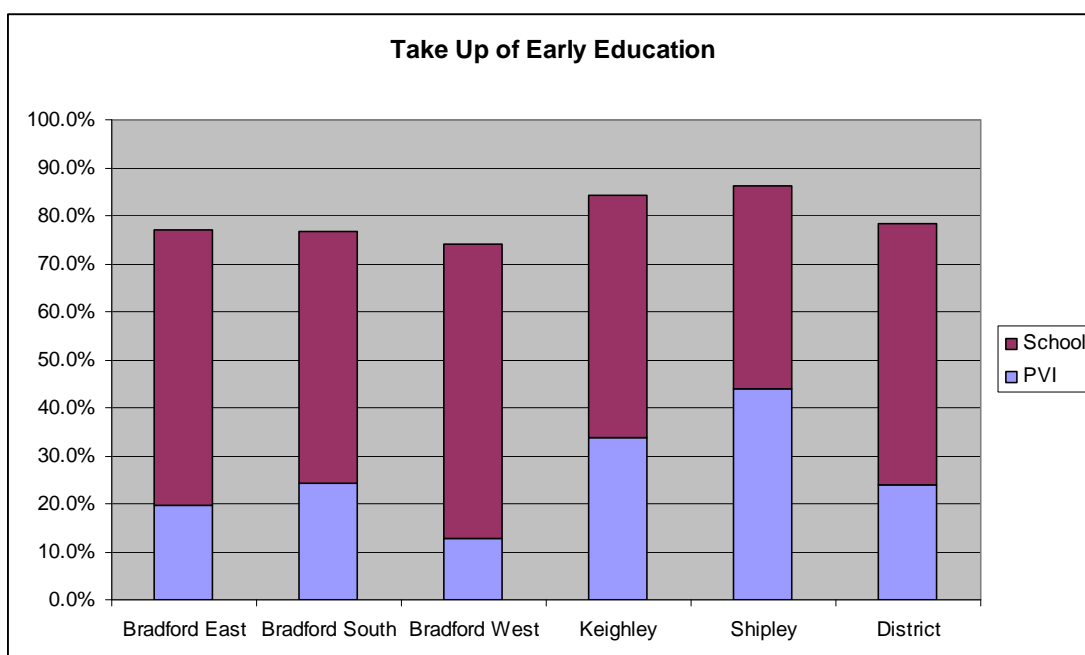


Children from families living in better-off areas are significantly more likely to use childcare. Children with a White British heritage account for three quarters of children using childcare. The under-representation of children with BME heritage is most marked in the out-of-school and childminding sectors where White British children account for 86% and 90% of users. Having said this, a level of diversity is apparent insofar as 45 different languages re spoken by children attending childcare settings in the District

Children attend childcare for an average 17.5 hours a week. Children from more affluent backgrounds travel further to attend childcare but 55% children travel less than 1km to their childcare.

## 6. Take Up Of Early Education

In spring 2011 approximately 78% of children were taking up their entitlement to free early education in the District. Although some children will be accessing their early education in neighbouring local authorities, take up in disadvantaged areas remains worryingly low. Take up rates in the spring term varied from 74% in Bradford West to 86% in Shipley. The situation is compounded by a lack of capacity in some areas, most especially in the summer term.



## **7. The Needs of Vulnerable Children**

### **7.1 The Needs of Families with Disabled Children.**

In July 2010 there were 9017 known disabled children in the district, which represents 6.9% of the total child population. 4.0% of the total child population have an identified learning disability, 2.9% are on the autistic spectrum or have challenging behaviour, and 1.4% have a communication disability (note that many disabled children are categorised as having more than one disability).

Disabled children are proportionally under represented in the take up of childcare. 2.7% of children accessing childcare are categorised as disabled. This rises to 4.0% of school age children accessing childcare. Disabled children from a BME background are further under-represented in their access to childcare. On average, disabled children are likely to access childcare for fewer hours per week and travel further from home to access provision.

However, the number and proportion of disabled children accessing childcare has increased by 55% from January 2009 to July 2010 and significantly more childcare settings are now included disabled children. Bradford has been one of ten Local Authorities piloting the governments Disabled Children's Access to Childcare (DCATCH) project which has successfully increased the capacity and quality of childcare settings to include disabled children.

Families who fall into one or more of the following categories are those who are likely to encounter major barriers to access childcare:

- Families with school age disabled children requiring access to childcare during the school holidays; in particular those with children aged 11 and over.
- Families whose children receive home to school transport as part of their statement of special educational needs and require childcare after-school, either home or group based.
- Families whose children have complex medical needs, and are not on the caseload of the community nursing team, and require childcare settings to administer medical procedures; e.g. gastronomy feeds.

Families who fall into one or more of the following categories are likely to be able to access childcare but may experience delays in accessing provision and / or their children will not be able to fully participate in the provision:

- Families whose children have limited or no verbal communication.
- Families with children with the most complex needs which necessitate additional staffing in the childcare setting.

An in-depth analysis of the childcare needs of families with disabled children has been undertaken. Qualitative consultation was conducted with 112 parents of disabled children around their childcare needs in 2009. This research was revisited in November 2010 through a focus group of parents and feedback gathered from parents involved with the DCATCH project. A second research project gathered in-depth actionable information about the experiences of childcare of 10 children with complex needs. Using a memory journal the research captured the experiences of 10 children aged between 4 and 11, many of whom had little or no verbal communication. Both research reports indicate that the majority of families with disabled children can access childcare; however, work remains to ensure all children can fully participate within the setting.

These research reports recommend that effective inclusion and participation of all disabled children in childcare settings requires:

- Childcare settings to have access to specialist support and training around the inclusion of disabled children.
- A basic level of understanding of disability and disability equality amongst all staff working in childcare settings in the district.
- An effective care plan or transition plan to be in place to ensure all aspects of the child's needs are met and there is a consistent approach across all provision a child accesses.
- Effective mechanisms to be in place to ensure information from home and school about individual children is gathered and routinely shared with the childcare setting.
- Information about individual children to be routinely shared with all staff at the childcare setting.
- Childcare settings to make an assessment of the skills and resources required to care for a child and be able to willing and able to access specialist support where necessary; including bespoke training.
- Childcare settings to regularly review the experiences of children in their setting, with particular regard for children with no or limited verbal communication.

National and local research has shown that, compared to other parents, parents of disabled children are likely to have less confidence in accessing childcare. This could be caused by; low confidence in universal provision meeting their child's needs; bad previous experiences of using childcare; or a substantial period of time out of work due to being a full-time carer. Through DCATCH, a flexible model of brokerage through Families Information Service was piloted with parents of disabled children. Good quality brokerage was shown to be effective in increasing parents' confidence and facilitating access to childcare. Providing opportunities for parents of disabled children to meet with their peers has also been shown to be successful in raising parents' confidence in accessing childcare.

## **7.2 The Needs of Looked-after Children**

Take up of early education by Looked-after children is reported to be good. It is vital to ensure Social Workers and Foster Parents are aware of the free entitlement and new developments around two year old places.

## **8. Conclusion and Recommendations**

Bradford's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment highlights the need to address the following priorities in 2011-14:

- Increase uptake of free early education entitlement in low uptake areas and among vulnerable groups
- Ensure sufficiency of early education capacity in areas of shortage
- Expand free two year old provision in line with emerging guidelines
- Recruit and develop childminders in line with natural turnover
- Ensure sufficiency of age-appropriate out-of-school childcare. Explore partnership approaches to provision of care for older children
- Ensure appropriateness of holiday care and play opportunities by age
- Ensure the needs of disabled children are met through inclusive childcare and sufficiency of resourced provision
- Improve affordability of childcare for parents through promotion of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit and childcare vouchers. Promote good business practise among childcare providers.