

CHAPTER SEVEN

HOW SUFFICIENT IS CHILDCARE IN ISLINGTON?

7.1. Approach

In order to reach conclusions about the extent to which there was sufficient childcare to enable parents to work or study, 'as far as is reasonably practicable', we refer in this report to benchmarks in the guidance (2.15), namely:

- sufficient places overall in each sub-local authority area
- flexibility of availability
- accessible in terms of distance
- quality
- range, between sessional and full daycare
- sufficient knowledge and information about supply
- affordable
- inclusive and meeting particular needs
- sustainable
- sufficient knowledge and information about supply of places

7.2. Sufficient places in each sub-local authority areas

Chapter Four showed that there was a good range of childcare provided through the voluntary, private and maintained sectors across the borough, but some unevenness of supply by type of childcare and area. Chapters Five and Six on Demand indicated an apparent need for certain types of childcare, some of which existed, indicating a possible mismatch of supply and demand, some of which did not. This section explores this further.

As set out in Chapter Five above, on the basis of the household survey in summer 2007, about 2,220 formal childcare places were needed to help parents work or study, before taking into account affordability issues and availability of vacancies.

Table 7.1. Summary of places needed (household survey) to work or study

| Age Group | Revised full day care figure | Sessional Care | Childminder | After School Club | Breakfast Club | Holiday Play Scheme | Total |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Under 2 | 472 | 130 | 235 | | | | 837 |
| 2 only | 138 | 63 | 56 | | | | 246 |
| 3 to 4 | 174 | | 87 | 140 | 25 | 4 | 431 |
| 5 to 7 | | | 45 | 178 | 13 | 7 | 242 |
| 8 to 14 | | | 28 | 174 | 25 | | 227 |
| Other age group /unknown | | 64 | | 160 | 11 | | 235 |
| Total | 785 | 245 | 451 | 651 | 75 | 11 | 2218 |
| | | | | | | 2218 | |

The household survey then estimated where places were needed by type and ward, and broadly by income band of household (across four income bands). It went on to estimate how many places would be needed assuming the parents/carers were able to use the vacancies - so mapping supply to demand. There was also the broad assumption that parents wanting under fives sessional care would be able to share the unfilled full daycare places. Highlights of the findings of that analysis are referred to below. Details are in the main household survey report.

In assessing sufficiency as a basis for planning provision for the future the authority will need to be mindful of the gap (on account of affordability issues) between numbers of parents who would like formal childcare but are unlikely to be able to afford it, at least while their children are under five.

7.2.1. Childminding places needed according to household survey:

Approximate gross places needed overall: 377 for under fives, 73 for over fives.

It was not possible to divide the childminding places needed by age of child in terms of under two year olds, two year olds and three and four year olds. **Table 7.2.** below shows the approximate places needed by Area Children's Network and ward for under and over fives.

Table 7.2. Childminding places needed by area according to household survey

| | Approx Childminding places needed by | | Ward | Approx CM places needed by ward | |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|---|---------------------------------|--------------|
| | U 5s | 5-14s | | U 5s | 5-14s |
| Barnsbury | 41 | 11 | Barnsbury Caledonian | 35 6 | 6 5 |
| Canonbury | 44 | 11 | Canonbury St Mary's St Peter's | 34 10 0 | 3 0 8 |
| Finsbury | 5 | 3 | Bunhill Clerkenwell | 0 5 | 3 0 |
| Highbury | 147 | 27 | Highbury West Highbury East Mildmay | 82 43 22 | 5 19 3 |
| Holloway | 70 | 13 | Junction St George's Holloway | 28 34 8 | 10 3 0 |
| Hornsey | 70 | 8 | Hillrise Tollington Finsbury Park | 25 14 31 | 0 3 5 |
| Totals | 377 | 73 | | 377 | 73 |

Note: minor differences are due to rounding up sessional places.

Highlights of places needed by ward:

- highest in Highbury East, Highbury West, Barnsbury and Junction
- lowest in Holloway, Bunhill and Clerkenwell.

Table 7.3. Childminding places needed by ward in context of supply and vacancies

| | Childminding Places | | Places needed (household survey) | | Approximate Vacancies | |
|---------------|---------------------|------------|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|
| | U 5s | 5-7s | U5s | 5-14s | U5s | 5-7s |
| Barnsbury | 25 | 14 | 35 | 6 | 8 | 3 |
| Bunhill | 42 | 23 | 0 | 3 | 26 | 9 |
| Caledonian | 41 | 22 | 6 | 5 | 18 | 6 |
| Canonbury | 29 | 16 | 34 | 3 | 14 | 5 |
| Clerkenwell | 18 | 10 | 5 | 0 | 10 | 4 |
| Finsbury Park | 54 | 30 | 31 | 5 | 24 | 9 |
| Highbury East | 14 | 7 | 43 | 19 | 8 | 3 |
| Highbury West | 34 | 18 | 82 | 5 | 13 | 4 |
| Hillrise | 35 | 19 | 25 | 0 | 19 | 6 |
| Holloway | 30 | 17 | 8 | 0 | 26 | 9 |
| Junction | 35 | 19 | 28 | 10 | 17 | 6 |
| Mildmay | 56 | 30 | 22 | 3 | 34 | 12 |
| St. George's | 20 | 11 | 34 | 3 | 11 | 4 |
| St. Mary's | 29 | 16 | 10 | 0 | 14 | 5 |
| St. Peter's | 15 | 8 | 0 | 8 | 9 | 3 |
| Tollington | 57 | 32 | 14 | 3 | 28 | 10 |
| Totals | 533 | 293 | 377 | 73 | 279 | 97 |

Note: minor differences are due to rounding up sessional places.

Note, the vacancy figures above and below are very approximate and do not take into account that childminders indicated they did not want to fill about 13% to 20% of their places.

Table 7.4. Childminding places needed by ACN in context of supply and vacancies

| | Childminding Places | | Places needed (household survey) | | Approximate vacancies | |
|------------------|---------------------|------------|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|
| | U5s | 5-7s | U5s | 5-14s | U5s | 5-7s |
| Barnsbury | 66 | 36 | 41 | 11 | 26 | 9 |
| Canonbury | 73 | 40 | 44 | 11 | 37 | 13 |
| Finsbury | 60 | 33 | 5 | 3 | 36 | 13 |
| Highbury | 103 | 56 | 147 | 27 | 55 | 19 |
| Holloway | 85 | 47 | 70 | 13 | 54 | 19 |
| Hornsey | 147 | 80 | 71 | 8 | 71 | 25 |
| Totals | 533 | 293 | 378 | 73 | 280 | 97 |

Note: minor differences are due to rounding up sessional places.

- Theoretically, many of the places needed for under fives and more than all the places needed for over fives could be covered by the vacancies.
- As explained in Chapter Four on Supply, the divisions between under and over fives places should be regarded with caution, and between 13% and 20% of the supply was not being offered, particularly for the over fives.
- So if vacancies could be matched to need, and taking into account the 13% to 20% actual supply, it appears there would be minimal or no need for over fives places but some unmet need for the under fives - about 135 to 150 places (supply: 426 to 464 places, vacancies: 224 to 244 places; places needed: 378 - gap of between about 134 to 154 places).
- For some families the matching of need to vacancies is a big 'if' - either because they have a preference for a group setting or because the cost of childminders can be high compared to nurseries (especially once a child is over two) - the high number of places for under fives needed along with high number of vacancies indicate a possible mismatch of supply. The issue of trust was raised in focus groups, particularly by younger mothers.
- So the actual need for places is likely to be higher for both under and over fives than the 'net' figures above.
- In addition, the levels of supply and need varied greatly across the borough.
 - The five wards of the borough where there was the highest likely unmet need for under fives places were:
 - Highbury East
 - Highbury West
 - Barnsbury
 - St George's
 - Canonbury
 - It is worth noting that supply of under threes nursery places was also relatively low in the east (Highbury) and Barnsbury, and that across the border from Highbury in Hackney the supply of under fives childcare was also low and demand was projected to increase with a large housing development (Woodberry Down).
 - In six wards the number of vacancies significantly exceeded the places needed, indicating a possible mismatch of supply:
 - Bunhill
 - Caledonian
 - Clerkenwell
 - Holloway
 - Mildmay
 - Tollington
- It is likely there is unmet need particularly in Highbury area children's network for all ages, and possibly for under threes particularly in all other ACNs (see wards above) except Finsbury.
- It is likely there is unmet need for childminders for five to seven year olds in about half the wards
- It is likely there is sufficiency of supply or oversupply in Finsbury ACN and the wards listed above. Finsbury had the highest number of places by population for childminding places and nursery places for under fives. It had relatively high vacancies for its childminding places (under five) and low vacancy rates in its

nurseries. For over fives, it had the second highest number of places by population, and it had few vacancies.

- Given English speakers were over-represented in the household survey (74% while 57% of children speak English as first language), and their use of childminders was even more over-represented (87%), the actual unmet need for childminding places may not be as suggested from the household survey - also it appears that BME groups generally did not use formal childcare for children under five, so the need may be a bit lower than indicated here.
- Given the high turnover of childminders, there is always the need to support new registrations but efforts should initially be targeted at Highbury and for those who will care for under threes and over fives.
- It is not yet clear what potential there is for childminders to offer services for children with special educational needs (SEN) children, at atypical hours (both gaps in Islington) and as part of the package of services to families at children's centres and extended schools, but this is to be explored in 2008 - and then further targeting of support can take place
- Given population projects (and the housing development in Hackney next door), it is likely that the need in Highbury is even greater than indicated here, as population is due to grow particularly in the east and west of the borough, and overall by about 5% by 2010, and 13% by 2016.
- However, given the BME child population is growing faster than the white British population, and given BME families seem to take up childminding places less, this may reduce unmet demand.
- With safety as parents' number one concern (from household survey and focus groups), the excellent work begun in the children's centres to bring parents into contact with childminders, should continue, to develop trust.

Summary of sufficiency of childminding supply

- There was apparent high need for places for the under and over fives in the household survey.
- However, there were also high vacancies (although reduced by possibly 13% to 20% - places childminders did not want to fill).
- This indicated a mismatch of supply, except in Finsbury area children's network, which seemed to have a sufficiency or an over-supply, and in some wards in the north in particular.
- There was a likely undersupply in Highbury area children's network, likely to increase further with projected population growth.
- Even if the vacancies could offset the demand, there was still an apparent net need for about 135 to 150 places for the under fives.
- Given the overall lack of places for children aged 6 months to 2 years, childminders could be key to helping to reduce that gap. But further work will be needed to address the concerns of parents on the trust issue.
- There is the possibility that childminders could also help fill gaps for out of school care for 5-7s (and wrap-around for three and four year olds). However, providing a service for such limited hours (in the term time at least) may not be viable without extra support or combining with providing full-time services or other work.
- The potential for childminders to provide services for children with special educational needs and at atypical hours needs further investigation.

7.2.2. Nursery places needed according to household survey:

As Chapter Four on Supply showed, Islington had a relatively good supply of registered childcare for the under fives by population compared to London and neighbouring boroughs (except the City of London). There was particularly the case for three and four year olds, with an apparent over-provision of free early years education places.

Nevertheless, from the household survey, there appeared to be considerable need for full-day care places, and for under two year olds in particular. Note: the household survey did not cover reception class provision. The table below shows the sessional (part-time) and full-time needed, across the whole borough.

Table 7.5. Full-time and part-time places needed in nurseries in Islington

| | | | |
|---|------------|------------------|-----|
| Approximate places needed overall: | 966 | FTE (875) | |
| • under 2s (sessional) | 130 | Total U2s (FTE): | 537 |
| • under 2s (full-time) | 472 | | |
| • 2 year olds (sessional) | 52 | Total 2s (FTE): | 164 |
| • 2 year olds (full-time) | 138 | | |
| • 3 & 4 year olds (sessional) | 0 | Total 3&4s: | 174 |
| • 3 & 4 year olds (full-time) | 174 | | |

Chapter Four showed that there were low vacancies in nurseries for under twos (27 or 4.2%) and for two year olds (75 or 7%), and that these were predominantly in community and private nurseries.

For three and four year olds, there were 177 vacancies or 6%, and then with the reception class places included, there was estimated to be a surplus of places for the free early years education entitlement. There was no demand for sessional care for three and four year olds in the survey, although from focus groups, and other consultation with stakeholders, there was some demand for care wrapped-around the free EYE session and during the holidays. It is possible that when parents said in the survey they wanted full daycare for their three and four year olds, some meant either they wanted holiday care or care wrapped around the free EYE entitlement.

If it were possible to match the places needed with the few vacancies there were, the balance would be (not including reception classes):

Table 7.6. Net places needed in nurseries in Islington

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Approximate net places needed overall: | 505 (FTE) |
| • under 2s: | 445 |
| • 2 year olds: | 63 |
| • 3-4s: | -3 |

This shows a clear need above all for places for under two year olds (about a third needed were sessional). For two year olds the need for places could possibly be met by some of the vacancies, but there may be a mismatch of supply. A similar level of need for places for three and four year olds would, however, be more than met by the vacancies - suggesting a mismatch of supply (and this is without taking into account provision of reception class places for four year olds).

In addition to the full-time and sessional places, the household survey indicated there was also need for 'holiday', 'breakfast club' and 'after school club' places for three and four year olds - the latter two would be care wrapped around the free early years education sessions.

Table 7.7. Other places needed for three and four year olds in Islington

| | |
|--|------------|
| Approximate gross places needed: | 169 |
| • 3 & 4 year olds ('breakfast') | 25 |
| • 3 & 4 year olds ('after school club') | 140 |
| • 3 & 4 year olds (holiday) | 4 |

The breakfast club places and holiday places were so low they are not analysed further than **Table 7.7.** above (except to say the breakfast club places were needed in Junction [17] and St Peter's [8] wards).

The gross places for after school club are analysed in terms of ward and ACN in **Table 7.8.** below. With regard to unmet (net) demand, it has not been possible to analyse them to the same degree as the part-time and full-time nursery places.

Table 7.8. below shows the approximate gross sessional, after school and full-time nursery places needed by ward and area children's network (ACN) areas by age, before vacancies were deducted. Minor differences in totals are due to rounding up/down sessional places.

The headlines from this table:

- Highbury ACN showed a high level of need for under fives places, full-time and sessional, (except for three and four year olds), particularly for under twos and in Highbury West ward in the west of the area. It also had the highest level of need for after school.
- Canonbury ACN showed a high level of need for under twos, particularly in St Mary's ward (southern central Islington), and relatively high for after school.
- Hornsey ACN showed the third highest level of need for under twos, but full-time only.
- Finsbury ACN showed the lowest need for places except for sessional places for under twos.
- Barnsbury and Holloway showed average to low needs - most needs for full-time places for under twos.

Table 7.8. Approximate under fives places needed to work or study

| Ward / ACN | Sessional places | After school places | | Approx full-time nursery places | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|---------------------|------------|---------------------------------|------------|------------|
| | U 2s | 2s | 3&4s | U 2s | 2s | 3&4s |
| Barnsbury | 24 | 6 | 8 | 17 | 4 | 6 |
| Caledonian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 8 | 17 |
| Barnsbury | 24 | 6 | 8 | 28 | 12 | 23 |
| Canonbury | 8 | 6 | 16 | 11 | 4 | 11 |
| St Mary's | 8 | 0 | 0 | 56 | 8 | 6 |
| St Peter's | 8 | 0 | 16 | 39 | 8 | 6 |
| Canonbury | 24 | 6 | 32 | 106 | 20 | 23 |
| Bunhill | 8 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| Clerkenwell | 16 | 0 | 8 | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| Finsbury | 24 | 0 | 8 | 12 | 0 | 12 |
| Highbury West | 8 | 6 | 25 | 94 | 32 | 34 |
| Highbury East | 16 | 13 | 16 | 78 | 32 | 28 |
| Mildmay | 16 | 6 | 0 | 17 | 16 | 11 |
| Highbury | 40 | 25 | 41 | 189 | 80 | 73 |
| Junction | 8 | 6 | 25 | 44 | 4 | 11 |
| St George's | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 4 | 17 |
| Holloway | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Holloway | 16 | 6 | 25 | 55 | 8 | 28 |
| Hillrise | 0 | 0 | 8 | 22 | 12 | 0 |
| Tollington | 0 | 6 | 16 | 39 | 4 | 11 |
| Finsbury Park | 0 | 0 | 0 | 22 | 4 | 6 |
| Hornsey | 0 | 6 | 24 | 83 | 20 | 17 |
| Approximate Totals | 130 | 49 | 138 | 473 | 140 | 176 |

Note: minor differences are due to rounding up sessional places.

If the vacancies could offset the places needed the outcome would be as set out in Table 7.9. below. Note it was not possible to calculate the net figure for the 'out of school' places needed.

Table 7.9. Net places needed after vacancies deducted

| Ward /ACN | Approx sessional nursery places needed by ward/ | | | Approx full-time/FTE nursery places needed by ward / | | |
|------------------|---|-----------|----------|--|------------|------------|
| | U 2s | 2s | 3&4s | U 2s | 2s | 3&4s |
| Barnsbury | 12 | 3 | 0 | 17 | 2 | 4 |
| Caledonian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | -2 | -6 |
| Barnsbury | 12 | 3 | 0 | 28 | 0 | -2 |
| Canonbury | 4 | 3 | 0 | 11 | 4 | 0 |
| St Mary's | 4 | 0 | 0 | 56 | 8 | 1 |
| St Peter's | 4 | 0 | 0 | 33 | 3 | -4 |
| Canonbury | 12 | 3 | 0 | 100 | 15 | -3 |
| Bunhill | 4 | 0 | 0 | 6 | -5 | -11 |
| Clerkenwell | 8 | 0 | 0 | 4 | -8 | -4 |
| Finsbury | 12 | 0 | 0 | 10 | -13 | -15 |
| Highbury West | 4 | 3 | 0 | 94 | 31 | 31 |
| Highbury East | 8 | 6 | 0 | 76 | 28 | 24 |
| Mildmay | 8 | 3 | 0 | 15 | 11 | 5 |
| Highbury | 20 | 12 | 0 | 185 | 70 | 61 |
| Junction | 4 | 3 | 0 | 43 | 0 | 5 |
| St George's | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | -1 | 12 |
| Holloway | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -4 | -21 |
| Holloway | 8 | 3 | 0 | 52 | -5 | -4 |
| Hillrise | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | -5 | -43 |
| Tollington | 0 | 3 | 0 | 39 | 4 | 7 |
| Finsbury Park | 0 | 0 | 0 | 18 | -1 | -2 |
| Hornsey | 0 | 3 | 0 | 71 | -2 | -38 |
| Approx Totals | 65 | 26 | 0 | 445 | 63 | -3 |

Note, some of the net gaps will be for part-time places, in addition to the 26 identified above (for two year olds). So some of the apparent surplus full-time places may be surplus part-time places. As there was no demand for part-time places for three and four year olds, vacancies have been deducted from the demand for full-time places.

The headlines from the table above, in terms of full-time equivalent places, are:

- A high number of places were needed for under twos, but there appeared to be surpluses/mismatches of supply for places for two year olds and in particular three and four year olds in much of the borough (except Highbury ACN).
- **Highbury ACN** showed the highest level of 'unmet' need for under fives places, full-time and sessional, (except for three and four year olds), particularly for under twos and in Highbury West ward in the west of the area. Unlike any other ACN, there did not appear to be any surplus supply.
 - *Places by population: under two year olds average to low - only 11 per 100 children in west (where unmet need greatest); two year olds - average; three and four year olds low.*
 - *Vacancy rates: average (14% overall for under fives, **note** vacancy rates in this section include childminders - see [Table 4.16](#), Chapter Four)).*
- **Canonbury ACN** showed a high level of 'unmet' need for under twos, particularly in St Mary's ward (southern central Islington). The supply for two-year olds appeared to be nearly sufficient. It appeared to have a minor oversupply or mismatch for three and four year olds.
 - *Places by population: under twos average to low in north (including St Mary's ward where unmet need greatest), high in St Peter's; two year*

olds similar; three and four year olds - high supply, particularly in Canonbury ward.

- *Vacancy rates: average (13% overall for under fives).*
- **Hornsey ACN** showed the third highest level of 'unmet' need for under twos, but full-time only. It showed the highest oversupply or mismatch for three and four year olds.
 - *Places by population: under two year olds relatively high in middle, elsewhere low (10 places by 100 children overall); two year olds second lowest; three and four year olds - average*
 - *Vacancy rates: highest (27% overall for under fives).*
- **Finsbury ACN** showed the lowest need for 'unmet' places overall, including the lowest level of need for under twos, although provision for that age group was still low. There was likely over-supply of places for threes and fours.
 - *Places by population: under two year olds highest but only 24 places per 100 children (NB Clerkenwell in west - 36 places per 100 children), two year olds highest (53 places per 100 children); three and four year olds highest (94 places per 100 children)*
 - *Vacancy rate: average (15% overall for under fives).*
- **Barnsbury ACN** showed average to low 'unmet' need, but for under threes it had the lowest number of places by population - likely unmet needs for full-time places for under twos in the centre.
 - *Places by population: under two year olds lowest (seven places per 100 children) with Barnsbury ward with only one place per 100 children. Two year olds lowest (34 places per 100 children) with Barnsbury ward low again; three and four year olds average - very high in west, very low in east.*
 - *Vacancy rate: lowest (11% overall for under fives).*
- **Holloway ACN** showed average to low 'unmet' need - most needs for full-time places for under twos. It had quite high places by population overall and average vacancies, which could in theory offset needs for places for two to four year olds.
 - *Places by population: under two year olds average (18 places per 100 children), two year olds second highest (52 places); three and four year olds third highest (70 places)*
 - *Vacancy rate: average (17% overall for under fives).*
- given English speakers were over-represented in household survey (74% while 57% of children speak English as first language), and their use of nursery places was even more over-represented (83%), the actual unmet need for nursery places across the borough may be slightly lower
- given population projects, it is likely that the need in Highbury may be greater than indicated here, as population is due to grow particularly in the east of the borough, and overall by about 5% by 2010, and 13% by 2016. Also population is likely to grow more in the west of the borough, which could impact on Barnsbury and Holloway ACNs.

Summary of sufficiency of nursery places

- Islington was relatively well-served for nursery provision, particularly for three and four year olds, and in the south of the borough (Finsbury ACN).
- However, the household survey indicated that, before taking into account vacancies, there was a high level of need for full daycare for the under threes, and particularly the under twos, and there was likely to be some need for provision 'wrapped around' the free early years education place or during the holidays.
- For the under two year olds, there appeared to be demand for about 472 full-time and 130 sessional places, if they could be provided affordably. The gap appeared to be greatest in the Highbury Area Children's Network. There were few vacancies to meet this demand.
- For the two year olds, there appeared to be demand for about a further 138 full-time and 63 sessional places, if they could be provided affordably. While nearly half these places could possibly be met by some of the vacancies, it is likely there were some gaps (particularly in the Highbury ACN) and some mismatch of supply and demand (particularly in the south).
- For the three and four year olds, it appeared there was over-supply of the free early years education entitlement part of provision. From the household survey there appeared to be demand for about a further 174 full-time places. In theory this could be more than met by the vacancies – suggesting a geographical mismatch of supply and demand. From discussions with parents, however, there did appear to be some need for wrap-around and holiday care attached to the free early years education offer as well.

7.2.3. Over fives places needed according to household survey:

The table below shows the overall places needed (gross) in Islington according to the household survey, for five to seven year olds and eight to 14 year olds for after school club, breakfast club and holiday playscheme. Please note, these are approximate - the figures for breakfast club and holiday scheme are particularly low from which to make conclusions.

NB according to the household survey, there were a further 64 sessional, 11 breakfast club and 168 after school places needed but the age of the child was not known. The number of breakfast club places needed is low, so is not being analysed further than **Table 7.10.** below. But analysis of the age-unknown after school club places needed is included in **Table 7.10.** below.

Table 7.10. Over fives places needed in Islington before occupancy taken into account

| | | |
|---|------------|-------------------------|
| Approximate gross places needed overall: | 568 | |
| • 5-7s after school club | 178 | Total 5-7s: 194 |
| • 5-7s breakfast club | 13 | |
| • 5-7s holiday playscheme | 7 | |
| • 8-14s after school club | 174 | Total 8-14s: 199 |
| • 8-14s breakfast club | 25 | |
| • 8-14s holiday playscheme | 0 | |
| • 'age unknown' after school club | 160 | Total age?: 171 |
| • 'age unknown' breakfast club | 11 | |
| • Total after school club places | 512 | |
| • Total breakfast club places | 49 | |
| • Total holiday playscheme places | 7 | |

In addition, as set out above, 73 childminding places for over fives were needed. The total over fives places needed were **about 641 places**.

Overall places by population in Islington:

- Holiday: about 14 places per 100 children aged 5-7s and nine places per 100 young people aged 8-14s
- Breakfast clubs: about six places per 100 children all ages.
- After school clubs: about 10 places per 100 children all ages.

The table below breaks down the gross over fives places need by area (not including the childminding and extra breakfast and sessional places referred to above).

Table 7.11 Approximate over fives places needed to work or study

| Ward / ACN | After school | | | Breakfast club | | Holiday playschemes | |
|----------------------|--------------|------------|------------|----------------|-----------|---------------------|----------|
| | 5-7s | 8-14s | Age? | 5-7s | 8-14s | 5-7s | 8-14s |
| Barnsbury | 24 | 17 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Caledonian | 12 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Barnsbury ACN | 36 | 29 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Canonbury | 41 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| St Mary's | 0 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| St Peter's | 0 | 23 | 23 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Canonbury ACN | 41 | 35 | 23 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bunhill | 0 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Clerkenwell | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Finsbury ACN | 12 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Highbury West | 24 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Highbury East | 24 | 12 | 46 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Mildmay | 0 | 17 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Highbury ACN | 48 | 52 | 69 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Junction | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| St George's | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 |
| Holloway | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Holloway ACN | 24 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 |
| Hillrise | 0 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Tollington | 12 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Finsbury Park | 6 | 12 | 46 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Hornsey ACN | 18 | 41 | 46 | 7 | 15 | 7 | 0 |
| Approx Totals | 178 | 175 | 161 | 13 | 25 | 7 | 0 |

The headlines from this table:

- It appeared there was little need for holiday places for five to seven year olds and none for eight to 14 year olds - note there was unmet need for some holiday care for children with special educational needs/disabilities.
- **Highbury ACN** showed a high level of need for over fives places, particularly for after school clubs - it likely there is unmet need here.
 - *Places per population: holiday - average for 5-7s, low for 8-14s; average for breakfast and after school*
- **Finsbury ACN** showed the lowest level of need, but with some after school places needed - given the quite high number of places per population, this may point to a mismatch of supply
 - *Places per population: holiday - average for all ages; low for breakfast and high for after school*
- **Barnsbury ACN** showed relatively high levels of need for after school places, particularly for 5-7s, but also quite high places per population, so possibly some mismatch of supply
 - *Places per population: holiday - relatively high for all ages; highest for breakfast and after school*

- **Canonbury ACN** showed relatively high levels of need for after school places, particularly for five to seven years old (and age unknown).
 - *Places per population: holiday - average for all ages; low for breakfast and average for after school*
- **Hornsey ACN** showed relatively high levels of need for after school places, particularly for age unknown - possibly mismatch of supply.
 - *Places per population: holiday - average for all ages; average for breakfast and high for after school*
- **Holloway ACN** showed relatively medium to low levels of need, except for after school places for five to seven years old.
 - *Places per population: holiday - average for 5-7s but lowest for 8-14s; average for breakfast and after school*

It was not possible to break down the net places by area due to the lack of accurate information on vacancies available.

Given English speakers were over-represented in the household survey (74% while 57% of children speak English as first language), and their use of after school club places was even more over-represented, the demand for after school places across the borough may be skewed (possibly over-stated).

Summary of sufficiency of over fives places

- there was an apparent sufficiency of supply of holiday places, with low demand in the household survey, and generally high occupancy rates. So the level of supply for about 14% for the five to seven year olds and 9% of the 8-14s population seems to be about right and should be maintained.
- for after school and breakfast places, there were spare places in many settings so there was the potential for all families' needs to be met without creating new places. However, it appears there was some mismatch between supply in terms of the type of provision available and parents' preferences, particularly for after school places.
 - Mismatch of supply and demand was most likely in Finsbury, Barnsbury and Hornsey Area Children's Networks.
 - It appears there may have been too few places in Highbury and Canonbury ACNs.

There is scope to explore this further, including improving the information on supply and demand, but also why families do not take up the places that are available.

- we should prepare for an increase in demand in line with population increases and resulting from changes in welfare benefits for lone parents - from October 2008 when lone parents with the youngest child aged 12 will be required to seek work, and thereafter in October 2009 (youngest child aged 10) and in October 2010 (youngest child aged seven).
- there is scope to increase capacity in much over fives provision by recruiting additional staff, rather than creating new provisions.

7.3. Flexibility of availability and balance between sessional and full daycare

Under two year olds and two year-olds: there appears to be limited flexibility in nurseries, but not that much demand for it, from the household survey (though it was over-represented by English speakers). Most places are 10 hours plus and all-year round (particularly for under twos). The costs are high and generally better-off families are accessing the places. More work needs to be done to explore how many places are shared, local demand for more flexibility and the potential for developing more flexibility. Also more work needs to be done to explore the potential for provision for atypical hours, although demand for it did not seem to be particularly high from the household survey. Childminders may also be able to offer more flexibility - again more work is to be done on this area of research.

Three and four year olds: there is more much flexibility here. There may be some unmet need for wrap-around (extended day) in the east of the borough and particularly holiday care for three and four year olds.

Childcare Affordability programme - as of December 2007, 39 flexible places were on offer to lower-income families, of which 28 were being used (72% take up). Given the relatively high take-up, the CAP scheme may be a good model on which to develop similar projects after December 2008 when the scheme ends.

Childminders - most places appeared to be for 8 hours or over. While it may be desirable for more childminders to offer more flexibility, particularly for threes and over, it may be difficult for them to offer it and run a viable business.

Breakfast and after school clubs: tend to be the same hours each day. More work needs to be done to explore the need for more flexibility at the end of the after school provision (to help working parents have time to pick up) and the potential for providing that flexibility.

Holiday schemes: this needs looking into more, but from local knowledge, there are a variety of hours open. There also appears to be little unmet need, except for provision for children with SEN/disabilities. Flexibility can be enhanced by the mix of open-access provision and supervised care within one setting (particularly adventure playgrounds).

7.4. Accessible in terms of distance

Islington is a small borough with good transport links. From the household survey and focus groups, parents/carers were prepared to travel 20 to 30 minutes to reach childcare. Therefore, even if the ACN in which they live is relatively poorly served, they should be able, in theory, to reach childcare. However, from consultation exercises with young people, it appears that issues of territorialism may need to be taken into account - for example some children and young people being reluctant to access provision outside their housing estate or its immediate area.

7.5. Quality and Sustainability

7.5.1. Quality

Overall, the quality of provision is good or satisfactory, in line with national Ofsted report results or, in some cases, outstanding. In the early years all settings meet the Ofsted standards for qualified staff and in many cases exceed it. However, about six settings across the whole age range have failed their Ofsted inspections in the past year.

In addition, for all types of provider, including schools, there is a strong network of training and support to help providers meet qualifications standards, but also improve their practice, self-evaluate and develop themselves as businesses.

Partnership working with the voluntary sector (ICCT) is supporting under fives voluntary providers with potential or actual difficulties, both in terms of quality and sustainability.

7.5.2. Sustainability

Nevertheless, certain issues threaten the sustainability of some providers, such as:

- High staffing and running costs - the need for high occupancy which can be difficult for nurseries and other providers given deprivation of borough
- Lack of leases for voluntary sector - undermining ability to fundraise
- Pressures on voluntary management committees - high turnover - and on the managers.

The costs of providing childcare are high in London and in a deprived borough such as Islington, it is not possible for many providers to rely exclusively on income from fees to be sustainable.

7.5.2.a. Council subsidies

In recognition of this difficulty and to support parents to access training and employment, the council provides significant subsidies for childcare in both council and voluntary-sector provision.

Under fives – average weekly charges subsidised by the council in maintained provision and voluntary/community provision funded by the council, compared to the unsubsidised (marketed) rate, were (March 2008):

| Age bands | Community charge | Marketed rate |
|-----------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Under three year olds | £183.33 | £242 |
| Three year olds* | £143.33 | £205 |
| Four year olds | £115.00 | £205 |

* this is the charge once a three year old is eligible for free early years education

Over fives – the council provides subsidies to schools and other providers of after school and holiday provision to enable them to keep charges at a level that parents can pay.

7.5.2.b. Other subsidies

The Government provides support to parents through mechanisms such as tax credits, the 'Care to Learn' scheme and the employer childcare voucher scheme. Also it has supported the pilot Childcare Affordability Programme (CAP) being led by the London Development Agency. This pilot has provided subsidies to 12 Islington nurseries¹ to allow them to offer 'affordable' and flexible childcare to lower income families.

In order to continue to secure sufficient holiday care and the generous supply for three and four year olds, and to secure sufficient care of all other types, funding and support will be continue to be needed to sustain the providers.

7.6 Sufficient knowledge and information about supply

Households still rely overall on family and friends for information about childcare. However, from the household survey and focus groups, while there was about 50% awareness of the Children's Information Service (CIS) and feedback about it was generally good, there was clearly scope for increased awareness and 50% wanted more information from the CIS. This should include written materials, some translated, for newly arrived BME families. However, the demand for active help with looking for childcare (brokerage) was much lower at 13%. The view was expressed that some information on services for children with SEN was not kept up-to-date.

Given the apparent mismatches in supply, particularly for threes and fours, for childminding places and for out of school and breakfast places, it appears that more information on these in particular, and more ways of disseminating it, needs to be developed.

7.7 Affordable

Affordability is clearly a huge issue for Islington families and a big challenge for development of childcare.

From the household survey the breakdown of salary ranges wanting places was as follows:

- Lower income families (earning under £25K) accounted for 43% of respondents
- Middle income families (£25K to £60K) accounted for 52% of respondents
- The highest income families (over £60K) accounted for 5% of respondents

So there was relatively high demand from middle income families, some of whom may have difficulty accessing tax credits - see Chapter Five.

7.7.1. Under three year olds

There were a significant number of 'affordable' places for this age group in maintained and voluntary provision, such as children's centres, operating the council charging

¹ As of March 2008, 11 nurseries.

policy (as of October 2007 with six income bands), given that about 51% of parents were paying the lowest charging band for under fives places as a whole, well below what the government considers as 'affordable' (£175 or less a week).

In addition, it appeared that there were no vacancies for this age range in the maintained sector, and only 42 vacancies in the voluntary sector (likely to be 'affordable').

Further research is needed to clarify the proportion of 'affordable' places. However, it is likely that fewer places in the private sector than the maintained and voluntary sectors were 'affordable' for the under threes. It appeared there were about 60 vacancies in the private sector for this age group.

Given the high demand for more 'affordable' places for the under threes as set out above, in the best case scenario, there would have been about 100 places to match the high demand for places for this age group, but possibly less than half of these would have been 'affordable'.

Given how high the charges to parents and costs to providers of places for the under threes can be, and the high levels of deprivation in Islington, it is unlikely many more families could afford to pay for them. Therefore any commissioning of such places would have to be done carefully, alongside market research and predictions of access to tax credits or vouchers and/or subsidies needed in particularly deprived areas.

7.7.2. Three and four year olds

Affordability was much less an issue in that the free early years education (EYE) sessions are widely available (although part-time). There can still be an issue for families wanting to access wrap-around and/or holiday care. And we will need to reassess the situation in the light of the review of how providers are funded for EYE and with the impact of the extension of EYE provision in 2010 to 15 hours per week.

Childcare Affordability Programme (CAP) - as of December 2007:

- 12 providers were offering 32 affordable full-day places (costing no more than £175pw) and 39 flexible places.
- 23 affordable places and 28 flexible places were being used by lower-income families (72% take-up rate).

Given the relatively high take-up, the CAP scheme may be a good model on which to develop similar projects after December 2008 when the scheme ends.

7.7.3. Over fives

While the charges are 'affordable' by themselves, other factors come into play, such as the likelihood of younger siblings also needing childcare (which is more costly generally). Also, as young people reach secondary age, what parents are willing to pay for and what young people are interested in attending can change (and there can be differences within families on this). It does seem to be difficult for schools to recoup the true costs of breakfast clubs in particular.

So while further work with JobCentre Plus and the CIS will aim to encourage and to support families in accessing tax credits, the reality is that ongoing support will be needed to ensure sufficiency of supply for the over fives and possibly the under fives.

7.8. Inclusive and meeting particular needs

Islington values the diversity of its residents, and there is good practice within settings to cater for the additional needs that such diversity may bring.

Ethnicity and language

However, it appears from the household survey that in terms of take-up of **under fives childcare**, white British children and those with English as their first language were over-represented in taking up all types of provision, except for nursery classes in primary schools. This is likely to be largely to do with cost and high poverty among BME families and those of children with SEN, though some cultural issues about care outside the family may also contribute, as well as lack of access to information.

It also appears from the household survey that in terms of take-up of childcare and positive activities for **over fives**, white British children and those with English as their first language were again over-represented in provision, although less than for under fives. (Note it was not possible to analyse the take-up of breakfast clubs and holiday schemes in the household survey as the numbers were too low.) From local information, take-up of places in adventure playgrounds was much more balanced and broadly in line with the borough make-up - but then many of these places were open-access and so free.

Note - while English speakers were over-represented in the household survey, it is worth mentioning that many children and their parents with English as an Additional Language may speak English fluently, so language may not be a barrier.

Having said that, from the focus groups, the lower take-up was also to do with information on services available - potential for higher awareness and use of CIS, language barriers, information going out of date - though awareness of and feedback about the CIS were generally good.

Gender - boys in the household survey were accessing less childminders, full daycare and sessional care than girls (and more nannies), while boys were accessing more after school, breakfast and holiday provision than girls. This may point to the need to review what activities are on offer at settings.

Special Educational Needs/Disability

From the three SEN focus groups and discussions at the SEN/Inclusion subgroup of the Childcare Strategy Subgroup, it was agreed that the following gaps existed:

- extended day and some holiday care for the under fives (extend some of the 36 assessment places in the 10 maintained settings)
- specialist holiday care for over fives and beyond 13 years old, including provision for at least four weeks in summer holidays
- specialist after school care
- support within the mainstream for both holiday and after school care, which would include (further) training for staff in schools and other out of school care providers.

While realistically some of this may be for respite purposes, the aim of the group was to move towards charging families for services according to their income, and so, wherever possible, to use funds from Aiming High for Disability (short breaks) funding

for respite care to subsidise non-working families. Some of this respite care may be at the beginning of the very long road towards study or work, some may not. Childcare grant or commissioning would be for the provision for working parents.