

## 5. Priority and Excluded Groups

### 5.1 Parents who have disabled children.

We sent questionnaires to parents about their unmet childcare and early education needs via pre schools, nurseries and childminders. We sent 4100 questionnaires and received 844 responses, thirty seven of which indicated they were a parent with a disabled child. We also received an additional eighteen responses through targeted outreach work which are included in the analysis below.

This analysis is separate to that of parents who do not have a disabled child in order to identify where there are differences in access to early education and childcare services. However, this needs to be treated with caution as the number of responses is very low.

#### 5.1.1 Quantitative Analysis

##### 5.1.1.1 Childcare

We asked how many children are in the family.

Number of children	Number of responses	Percentage response
1	6	11%
2	20	37%
3	16	29%
4	9	16%
5	3	5%
6	---	---
7	1	2%

We asked whether parents had any problems with childcare which enables them to access work or training.

Yes	33%
No	42%
No response	25%

A greater number of parents who are already accessing some level of childcare or early education are experiencing problems with their childcare than other parents. 33% of parents with disabled children expressed that they have problems with early education or childcare enabling them to access work or training whereas only 11% of other parents did.

We asked what type of childcare parents prefer.

	Preferences expressed by parents using group childcare
Childminder	6
Group	20

Combination of both	11
No preference	18
Total responses	55

The Opportunity Network is a register of childminders who have specific training and experience in working with disabled children. There are currently 28 childminders on the opportunity network benefiting in the region of 18 children. In the majority of cases children with disabilities can be accommodated within the network although there are some complications around care for school aged children with the provision of transport. In occasional exceptional cases a referral would be made to a different agency or group.

### 5.1.1.2 Early Education

Eighteen parents responded that they benefit from early education funding. Parents are at the time of writing entitled to five 2.5 hour early education sessions a week over 38 weeks of the year for qualifying three and four year olds. Parents of three and four year olds with disabilities are able to attend any registered provision.

There is a dedicated opportunity group, Koalas, located at Saltway Children's Centre offering twelve early education places over four sessions a week. Parents are currently offered a maximum of two sessions a week due to high demand but most parents are able to access the balance of their entitlement at other settings. This could be in a combination of ways including at pre school, Special Tots or through Portage. For these children, access to early education services is more highly fragmented than for other children, sometimes due to parental choice and sometimes due to place availability.

We asked parents whether they are able to access their full entitlement of early education sessions. We asked how many sessions parents currently use and how many additional sessions they would use if they were available.

Number of sessions per week	Parents accessing that number of sessions per week
1	2
2	2
3	2
4	8
5	4

  

Number additional of sessions wanted per week	Number of parents wanting these additional sessions
1	2
2	
3	2
4	7

As very low numbers of parents report they want access to additional sessions to make up their entitlement further research and analysis would be needed to determine whether parents of disabled children are less likely to be able to access their full early education entitlement than others.

We asked parents whether they would like to use their entitlement over fewer days in the week eg by using five sessions over two and a half days. 50% of parents using early education would like to be able to do this. This compares with 38% of parents who do not have a disabled child. This correlates with the higher percentage of part time workers amongst parents who have a disabled child for whom this arrangement would be advantageous.

Yes	9	50%
No	5	28%
No response	4	22%

We asked parents whether they would like to be able to use their entitlement over a longer period than 38 weeks. 45% of parents using early education would like to be able to do this. There is no correlation with a working pattern in this case but may be an indication that parents use early education as an opportunity for respite or for their children to socialise.

Yes	8	45%
No	4	22%
No response	6	33%

### 5.1.1.3 Employment

We asked parents about their work.

	Responses	Responses as a percentage
Full time employed	3	6%
Part time employed	23	43%
Self employed	2	3%
In education	1	2%
Unemployed	3	6%
Looking after the home	21	40%

- 6% of parents who have a disabled child are in full time employment as compared to 21% of other parents.
- 43% of parents who have a disabled child are in part time employment as compared to 46% of other parents.
- 40% of parents who have a disabled child are looking after the home as compared to 23% of other parents.

### 5.1.1.4 Information

We asked parents whether they know about the Children’s Information Service

	Responses	Responses as a percentage
Yes	45	82%
No	7	13%
No response	3	5%

- 82% of parents who have a disabled child are aware of the Children’s Information Service as compared to 78% of other parents. Although there is a higher awareness it must be factored in that 18 of the 55 responses came through outreach work conducted by the Children’s Information Service. Without the responses received through outreach the percentage is 78%.

We asked parents whether they are aware of how the Childcare Element of the Working Tax Credit can support them with their childcare costs.

	Responses	Responses as a percentage
Yes	33	60%
No	17	31%
No response	5	9%

- 60% of parents who have a disabled child are aware of how the Childcare Element of the Working Tax Credit can support them with their childcare costs as compared to 75% of other parents. Without the responses received through outreach the percentage is 62%.

### 5.1.2 Qualitative Analysis

We asked parents if they have any other comments to make about childcare and early education in Swindon. Typical comments from parents who have disabled children include:

- Can't afford childcare for 4 children.
- All is well. My child is very well looked after and my children enjoy attending the nursery. We are happy too. The staff are good, with always a positive and truthful comments.
- I have opted to stay at home until my son goes to full time education
- Disabled child who needs a lot of care.

### 5.1.3 The Special Schools Cluster

Schools in the Special Schools cluster are Brimble Hill, The Chalet School, Nyland, Crowdys Hill, St Luke’s, Uplands and the Pupil Referral Unit at Stratton. Consultation with parents was carried out by the Extended Services Co ordinator by means of a questionnaire. Seventy seven parents took part in the consultation.

15% of parents said they need breakfast provision  
36% of parents said they need after school provision for 5 – 11 year olds  
38% of parents said they need after school provision for 11 – 16 year olds  
92% of parents said they need holiday care (see 4.6)

55% of parents said childcare would enable them to work  
25% of parents said childcare would enable them to attend training  
19% of parents said childcare would enable them to volunteer

#### **5.1.4 Training and Experience of Childcare Staff**

All Ofsted registered childcare settings are required to operate an equal opportunities policy, including not discriminating against disabled children. An additional audit of training and experience of the childcare workforce in working with disabled children was carried out. This showed a broad geographic spread of trained and experienced staff in all Children’s Centre areas.

#### **5.1.5 Outreach Work**

An outreach worker is employed by the Children’s Information Service under a service level agreement with Swindon Sure Start Partnership. Additional consultation was carried out through outreach using existing relationships with support groups for parents with disabilities. 18 parents contributed feedback.

Using childcare	2
Using early education	2
Using childcare and early education	
Using neither childcare nor early education	12
Unspecified	2

Parents were asked to give additional feedback to the question, ‘what is it about the fact that your child has a disability that makes it difficult for you to access childcare or early education’.

Responses fell into a number of categories expressing concerns about:

- the lack of experience of the carer
- the lack of specialist care
- providers’ ability or willingness to cope
- the need for a period of familiarisation with a provider
- suitable holiday care
- the impact on the child of leaving the parent
- any potential loss of benefits linked to income from work
- isolation of both parent and child without the option to access care
- accessing provision to support the disabled child and their siblings
- parental awareness of the childcare system and how to engage with available services

- cost including having to pay more for a more highly qualified or experienced carer
- co-ordination of school and childcare where Local Authority transport is used

### **5.1.6 Recommendations**

Feedback from this consultation has highlighted some of the complexities faced by parents of disabled children when considering work and childcare options. In line with the information about the scope of this assessment (section 1.2) recommendations have been made are within the remit of Swindon Sure Start Partnership's work.

- Increase the capacity of the Childminder Opportunity Network to increase childcare options for parents who have children with disabilities.
- Work with the school transport service to consider ways that disabled children can travel to childcare settings in the vicinity of their own home.
- Continue to build capacity within childcare services staff to meet the needs of children with disabilities by delivering a programme of targeted training to the childcare workforce
- Continue to deliver outreach services to parents of disabled children to ensure that parents are well informed of childcare services and support available.
- Introduce attendance at childcare training to support children with disabilities as a condition of any new grant awarded.
- Provision of holiday care for disabled children will be considered within the review of out of school holiday care for all children.

## **5.2 Parents who are not white British**

We sent questionnaires to parents about their unmet childcare and early education needs via pre schools, nurseries and childminders. We received 73 responses from parents who indicated they are not white British. This was 9% of the 844 responses.

This analysis is separate to that of the white British community in order to identify where there are differences in access to early education and childcare services. However, this needs to be treated with caution as the number of responses is very low.

### **5.2.1 Quantitative Analysis**

### 5.2.1.1 Childcare

We asked how many children are in the family.

Number of children	Number of responses	Percentage response
1	28	39%
2	33	45%
3	11	15%
4	1	1%
5	0	0%

There is no difference in the outcome between this and the main sample.

We asked whether parents had any problems with childcare which enables them to access work or training.

Yes	14%
No	55%
No response	31%

- 14% of parents from this sample have problems with childcare which enables them to access work or training as compared to 11% of white British parents.

We asked what type of childcare parents prefer.

	Preferences expressed by parents using group childcare
Childminder	4
Group	22
Combination of both	16
No preference	31
Total Responses	73

### 5.2.1.2 Early Education

Fifty two parents responded that they benefit from early education funding. Parents are at the time of writing entitled to five 2.5 hour early education sessions a week over 38 weeks of the year for qualifying three and four year olds.

We asked parents whether they are able to access their full entitlement of early education sessions. We asked how many sessions parents currently use and how many additional sessions they would use if they were available.

Number of sessions per week	Parents accessing that number of sessions per week
1	1
2	3

	3	10
	4	9
	5	29
Number additional of sessions wanted per week		Number of parents wanting these additional sessions
1		
2		2
3		6
4		5

56% of parents from this sample accessing early education receive their full five day entitlement which equals the outcome from the main sample.

We asked parents whether they would like to use their entitlement over fewer days in the week eg by using five sessions over two and a half days. 41% of parents from this sample using early education would like to be able to do this. This compares with 38% of white British parents.

Yes	30	41%
No	12	17%
No response	31	42%

We asked parents whether they would like to be able to use their entitlement over a longer period than 38 weeks. 23% of parents from this sample using early education would like to be able to do this. This compares with 54% of white British parents.

Yes	17	23%
No	23	32%
No response	33	45%

### 5.2.1.3 Employment

We asked parents about their work.

	Responses	Responses as a percentage
Full time employed	20	30%
Part time employed	18	27%
Self employed	6	9%
In education	1	1%
Unemployed	4	6%
Looking after the home	18	27%

- 30% of parents from this sample are in full time employment as compared to 21% of white British parents.
- 27% of parents from this sample are in part time employment as compared to 46% of white British parents.

- 27% of parents from this sample are looking after the home as compared to 23% of white British parents.

#### 5.2.1.4 Information

We asked parents whether they know about the Children’s Information Service

	Responses	Responses as a percentage
Yes	49	67%
No	22	30%
No response	2	3%

- 67% of parents from this sample are aware of the Children’s Information Service as compared to 78% of white British parents.

We asked parents whether they are aware of how the Childcare Element of the Working Tax Credit can support them with their childcare costs.

	Responses	Responses as a percentage
Yes	40	55%
No	31	42%
No response	2	3%

- 55% of parents from this sample are aware of how the Childcare Element of the Working Tax Credit can support them with their childcare costs as compared to 75% of white British parents.

#### 5.2.2 Qualitative Analysis

We asked parents if they have any other comments to make about childcare and early education in Swindon. Typical comments from parents from this sample include:

- Very happy with staff and quality of service at this nursery.
- I'm happy, because my son now learned to play with children, and he is learned to speak English and this is much important to me.
- Childcare for more than one child can be very costly and may be a big factor in people not returning to work - especially care over school holiday periods.
- When should a child join a group and for how long? When should they start school?

#### 5.2.3 Recommendations

- Focus outreach work on the take up of tax credits by working parents who are not white British.

- Improve channels of communication with minority ethnic groups including asylum seekers to ensure parents are aware of entitlements including early education funding.

### 5.3 Outreach in Parent Groups

Thirty two parents were invited through outreach work to complete the same consultation questionnaire as parents received from nurseries, pre schools and childminders. This took place in Children’s Centres and other established groups, located in Swindon’s Neighbourhood Renewal areas, where parents meet. The parents were encouraged to give additional comments about specific barriers to childcare leading to employment or training.

This analysis is separate to that of the community as a whole in order to identify where there are differences in access to early education and childcare services. However, this needs to be treated with caution as the number of responses is very low.

#### 5.3.1 Quantitative Analysis

##### 5.3.1.1 Childcare

We asked how many children are in the family.

Number of children	Number of responses	Percentage response
1	6	19%
2	13	41%
3	9	28%
4	3	9%
5	1	3%

We asked whether parents had any problems with childcare which enables them to access work or training.

Yes	28%
No	56%
No response	16%

- 28% of parents from this sample have problems with childcare which enables them to access work or training as compared to 11% of parents from the main sample.

We asked what type of childcare parents prefer.

	Preference
Childminder	2
Group	9
Combination of both	9
Family	3

No preference	9
Total Responses	32

### 5.3.1.2 Early Education

Eight parents responded that they benefit from early education funding. Parents are at the time of writing entitled to five 2.5 hour early education sessions a week over 38 weeks of the year for qualifying three and four year olds.

We asked parents whether they are able to access their full entitlement of early education sessions. We asked how many sessions parents currently use and how many additional sessions they would use if they were available.

Number of sessions per week	Parents accessing that number of sessions per week
1	1
2	
3	
4	
5	7

  

Number additional of sessions wanted per week	Number of parents wanting these additional sessions
1	1
2	
3	
4	

We asked parents whether they would like to use their entitlement over fewer days in the week eg by using five sessions over two and a half days.

Yes	2
No	4
No response	2

We asked parents whether they would like to be able to use their entitlement over a longer period than 38 weeks.

Yes	4
No	3
No response	1

### 5.3.1.3 Employment

We asked parents about their work.

	Responses
Full time employed	2
Part time employed	7

Self employed	0
On a government scheme	1
In education	1
Unemployed	3
Long term sick or disabled	2
Looking after the home	13

#### 5.3.1.4 Information

We asked parents if they know about the Children’s Information Service.

	Responses	Responses as a percentage
Yes	29	91%
No	3	9%
No response	0	0%

- 91% of parents from this sample are aware of the Children’s Information Service as compared to 78% of the main sample.

We asked parents whether they are aware of how the Childcare Element of the Working Tax Credit can support them with their childcare costs.

	Responses	Responses as a percentage
Yes	24	75%
No	7	22%
No response	1	3%

- 75% of parents from this sample are aware of how the Childcare Element of the Working Tax Credit can support them with their childcare costs which equals the response from the main sample of parents.

#### 5.3.2 Qualitative Analysis

We asked parents if they have any other comments to make about childcare and early education in Swindon. Typical comments from parents from this sample include:

- Three children under five - high cost even with WFTC. Prefer nursery to childminder but can't then work / train as still need to do school runs especially as one child is full time and one is only attending mornings.
- I'm a disabled carer for my disabled daughter which would make it difficult for me to return to work or college.
- Grandparents look after her due to cost of childcare.
- I don't use childcare but there are a lot of good facilities in this area.
- Cost especially through the holidays when funded by the college as nursery fees are not paid during these times. Children have to stay in fear of losing their place.

### **5.3.3 Recommendations**

- Continue to deliver outreach services in children's centres and other parent groups in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas to ensure that parents are well informed of childcare services and support available.