

## London childcare providers network

sharing experiences, influencing policy

Briefing sheet 01 | July 2010

# Out-of-school provision for 5-14 year olds in London

### Local authorities' Childcare Sufficiency

**Assessments frequently report a lack of out-of-school provision. At the same time, changes to the benefits system mean that more lone parents now have to look for work. Despite this, both the previous and current governments have failed to address the issues and service gaps for older children.**

**Based on general research and information from Daycare Trust's *London childcare providers network* project, this briefing sheet addresses the policy and practical issues for providers and parents around out-of-school activities for 5-14 year olds.**

### Terminology

#### Childcare

Under the Childcare Act 2006 all types of care for children, 0-16 years, are called 'childcare'. This term can sometimes seem inappropriate and confusing for this age group, and many older children themselves do not want to think of themselves as a 'child that needs to be cared for'.

#### Out-of-school provision/activities

We refer to 'out-of-school provision/activities' though recognising that particularly for younger children and those with special needs, these are in fact also providing 'care'.

#### Safe place to be

As part of the extended schools core offer, schools must now ensure that pupils have a 'safe place to be' between 8am and 6pm, and that if an activity does not run, that there is somewhere safe for them to go.

#### Formal childcare

This refers to Ofsted registered provision, and can include childminders, as well as out-of-school clubs, etc.

### Who provides out-of-school services?

The main providers of formal out-of-school care and activities for 5 to 14 year olds are the extended services, before/after school clubs, 'safe places to be' and holiday play schemes.

Schools offering extended services do not have to provide the activity or childcare themselves but can work in partnership with the local authority, other schools and the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sectors.

### Policy context

The previous government's 'Ten Year Strategy for Childcare: Choice for Parents, the Best Start for Children' of (2004) made the following commitments:

*For 5-14 year olds, childcare will be available based in schools. By 2010 all parents with children aged 5-11 will be offered affordable school-based childcare on weekdays between the hours of 8am to 6pm, all year round; and all secondary schools will open on weekdays between the hours of 8am to 6pm, all year round, offering a range of activities such as music and sport.*

'Next Steps for Early Learning and Childcare: Building on the 10-Year Strategy' (2009) included an expectation for "Local Authorities to put particular focus on 5-14" and a move to encourage "more providers of care and activities for school aged children to be registered with Ofsted so that parents are entitled to use tax credit support to access them"

At the time of writing (July 2010), the new government's Department for Education has not announced any new or amended policies.

# London childcare providers network

sharing experiences, influencing policy

## Briefing sheet 01 | July 2010

### Out-of-school provision in London

In 2009, the Training and Development Agency ([www.tda.gov.uk](http://www.tda.gov.uk)) reported that in London:

- 94% of schools were offering activities and/or childcare, and 88% of parents were aware that their child's school offered these.
- 2,294 schools out of 2,477 (92.5%) in London were offering the extended services full core offer of childcare, a varied menu of activities, parenting support, swift and easy access and community use.
- 1,925 schools (77.5%) were offering childcare and activities for 0 to 14yrs.
- However, 41% of 5-14 year olds did not receive any non-parental care, and
- many parents report that their schools do not offer comprehensive 8am – 6pm services.

### Benefits of out-of-school activities

**Parents** are better able to balance the demands of their work with looking after their children, and like to use activities linked to their child's school.

**Pupils'** levels of motivation, aspiration and achievement are often raised.

*"[Children] get to learn more... If [children] don't know the people in the class, they can have new friends and learn stuff. ... people can show them how to make things."* 7 year old girl, Bideford holiday and after school club

Listening to children about childcare, Daycare Trust, 2008

*"In 2008, the school achieved its best GCSE results to date, with 68% of students achieving five A\*-C grades"* Deptford Green School following the introduction of out-of-school provision.

Transforming Lives in London, TDA, 2009

### Issues for providers

#### Communication and inclusion

Results from the London Childcare Providers Survey 2010 show that most out-of-school providers find borough provider network meetings to be a good way to connect with other providers, Where this is not possible, providers also value electronic meeting forums and resources.

Childcare and activities run through schools are linked through the 'schools cluster'; a group of local schools working together to deliver extended services. These should include PVI sector providers, the police, and faith and uniformed groups (scouts, guides etc). Providers have highlighted the need for these groups to be involved in their local authority's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

Providers report that publicity of their services is also an issue – see issues for parents below – but it should be noted that many Family Information Services (FIS) also report that they struggle to get details of services from providers.

#### Sustainability of provision

Feedback to the London Childcare Providers Survey 2010 highlights the need for better funding for settings offering out-of-school activities.

Sustainability of an activity is also linked to the quality. If something is good, interesting and exciting, families will continue to use it. Quality services:

- Consult with children/young people and parents
- Have a quality and monitoring strategy
- Have service level agreements
- Have a workforce with qualifications appropriate to the age of the user and activity

# London childcare providers network

sharing experiences, influencing policy

## Briefing sheet 01 | July 2010

### Issues for families

#### Affordability of out-of-school provision

Parents may be able to get financial help with the costs of out-of-school activities through Working Tax Credit or childcare vouchers, but there are two potential barriers to accessing this support:

- Services must be registered with Ofsted to be eligible for financial support. Those run by a school on its premises fall within the school's Ofsted registration. For many PVI providers, registration with Ofsted is not compulsory, but they can choose to join the Voluntary part of the Ofsted Childcare Register.
- There is a lack of awareness amongst parents that they can claim help with childcare costs for older children.

#### Information for families including FIS

Local authorities are required to ensure that all parents can access the information they need for their children through to their 20th birthday, but the 'Families Information Service, Evaluation of Services Provided' report (2009) found that:

- information held by FIS on leisure activities, activities and childcare for older children at extended schools, and activities at youth and community centers varies considerably from one area to another, and
- the local FIS was familiar to around a third (32%) of parents, but only half of these (15% of all families) said they had ever used it.

Schools should also be a source of information for parents and pupils informing them of local activities and signposting to financial help.

However, as well as the official sources above, we also know that many parents rely on information from people/organisations they regularly encounter in daily life including word-of-mouth from friends/relatives.

#### Availability of out-of-school provision

The first Childcare Sufficiency Assessments in 2008 highlighted gaps in provision for 5-14 year olds, especially during school holidays.

Daycare Trust's Childcare Costs Surveys have found that:

- only 45% of FIS reported sufficient childcare for 5-11 year olds (2010), and
- only 20% of FIS reported sufficient holiday childcare for older children (Holiday Childcare Costs Survey 2009).

The Childcare and Early Years Survey 2008, asked parents about the quality, flexibility and affordability of childcare during school holidays;

- 58% of parents were happy with the quality of childcare available.
- 22% of parents reported having problems finding holiday care that was flexible enough to meet their needs.
- 31% had difficulties finding childcare that they could afford during the school holidays.

These gaps in provision could be exacerbated if/when an increase in demand for out-of-school activities arises as a result of changes brought in by the Welfare Reform Act. Currently, lone parents with a youngest child of 10 or over are no longer entitled to Income Support on the grounds of being a lone parent; from 25 October 2010 this will apply to lone parents with a youngest child aged seven or over. Instead, in many cases lone parents will be moved to Jobseeker's Allowance which requires them to actively seek employment.

The second full Childcare Sufficiency Assessment should be completed by April 2011 and will provide an opportunity for local authorities to assess their progress in this area.

# London childcare providers network

sharing experiences, influencing policy

## Briefing sheet 01 | July 2010

### Recommendations

#### Informing local policy

- The schools extended services cluster group should invite representatives of a wide range of out-of-school services to their meetings. This would include youth services, PVI providers, childminders, play rangers, Police.
- Childcare Sufficiency Assessments should include consultation with extended services, PVI providers, youth services, childminders, play rangers etc. who offer out-of-school activities and parents – both to contribute to planning processes and to ensure that the extended services/PVI sector are understood.

#### Affordability

- Affordability of services is a major factor in parents' use and choice of out-of-school activities. Training should be offered to childcare providers/parent support workers to improve their understanding of tax credits and enable them to support more parents to claim financial help including the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit and childcare vouchers from their employer.
- More encouragement must be given to PVI providers who offer services for 8-15 year olds to join Ofsted's Voluntary Childcare Register as this will enable more parents to claim financial help. Policies which discourage registration should be addressed, for instance providers having to pay multiple fees if they run activities in different venues.

#### Availability

- Gaps in the provision of whole day/wrap-around childcare and activities for older children should be addressed in local authorities' Childcare Sufficiency Action Plans.
- Parents should be consulted on what they need.

#### Information

- Up-to-date information is vital to help parents/young people make the right choices. FIS should establish service level agreements with out-of-school activity providers to ensure that there is a good flow of information between themselves, providers and parents.
- Information on what is available through the extended services and schools should be given a prominent position on schools' websites.
- Local authorities should consider the development of tried and tested models of parent outreach including Daycare Trust's Parent Champion scheme to target families of older children.

#### Relevant links

DaycareTrust [www.daycaretrust.org.uk](http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk)

4Children [www.4children.org.uk](http://www.4children.org.uk)

Department for Education [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

Ofsted [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

#### Daycare Trust

2nd Floor, Novas Contemporary Urban Centre

73-81 Southwark Bridge Road

London SE1 0NQ

Tel: 020 7940 7510

Fax: 020 7940 7515

Email: [info@daycaretrust.org.uk](mailto:info@daycaretrust.org.uk)

Website: [www.daycaretrust.org.uk/london](http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/london)

Information line on 0845 872 6251

or email [info@daycaretrust.org.uk](mailto:info@daycaretrust.org.uk).

Daycare Trust is a registered charity: 327279 and a company limited by guarantee: 02063604, registered in England and Wales. VAT registered: 830 9847 06

This briefing sheet forms part of the London Councils-funded *London childcare providers network*