

Local Authority: Merton

http://www.merton.gov.uk/community-living/children-young-people-families/childcare/early_years_performance_plans_and_procedures/childcare_sufficiency_report_2013.pdf

Background to Childcare Sufficiency Assessments:

The Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on the Local Authority to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the supply of and demand for childcare in the local area, known as a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. This comprehensive assessment includes consultation with a range of key groups including parents, employers, and professionals. By analyzing the supply of childcare available, and comparing it with information about demand from parents, potential gaps in childcare provision can be identified. This is the first step towards developing a strategy for securing sufficient childcare places through working with local providers and tailoring services to the particular needs of children and families.

Situation in the borough:

- 51% of Merton's population is from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups. In Mitcham this is 67%
- 121 languages are spoken in Merton's 43 primary schools, eight secondary schools (including three academies), three special schools, one Pupil Referral Unit and 11 children's centres
- In Merton, 20% of all households with dependent children are lone parent households. Of lone parents who live in their own household, 60-62% are in full or part-time employment
- The relative affluence of Wimbledon is marked, with only 10% of children considered to be living in an area of deprivation
- 79% of childcare provision in Merton is good or outstanding.
- Childcare costs vary across the borough and by type of provision, but are higher in Wimbledon.
- In 2012-13, there was a net gain of 58 childcare places in Merton from opening and closure of providers. In addition, a number of settings were expanded to accommodate 2-year-old children and an additional 112 free places for eligible 2-year-olds were created over the course of the year.
- In 2012-13, significantly more childminders resigned from Ofsted than registered with Ofsted, resulting in a net loss of places.
- Local Authority figures indicate that total take-up of free places for 3- and 4-year-olds is about 89%.
- In Merton, the vast majority of children aged 3 and 4 (88.6%) take up their free early education place in a maintained school. This is far greater than the national average of just over 61%
- When compared to the average cost of a day nursery/preschool place in London of £5.16 an hour, nurseries in Mitcham are 13% cheaper, those in Morden are very marginally more expensive and Wimbledon nurseries are nearly 35% more expensive. Overall, Merton nursery place prices are higher than the London average.
- Preschool prices are lower than the London average in both Mitcham and Morden. Wimbledon preschools charge nearly a third more.
- Childminders caring for under 5's in London charge an average of £5.19. In Morden and Mitcham, childminders are cheaper. Again, in Wimbledon, the cost of a childminder is much higher, being 20% more expensive than the London average.

Presenting this information:

Merton's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment uses a broad range of graphics and charts to visually represent this information in the best possible manner. The graphs and charts act to clarify the data and make it more accessible. Also, tables of data are accompanied by a clearly summary explanation, which is again useful to draw out the point of the chart. For example the table below(1) is accompanied by the sentence: "From the information in Table 3, it can broadly be concluded that there is sufficient childcare in Merton for children aged 0-1." This demonstrates the style and approach of Merton's Assessment in the way it looks to fuse clear language with more detailed information, to ensure clarity and understanding.

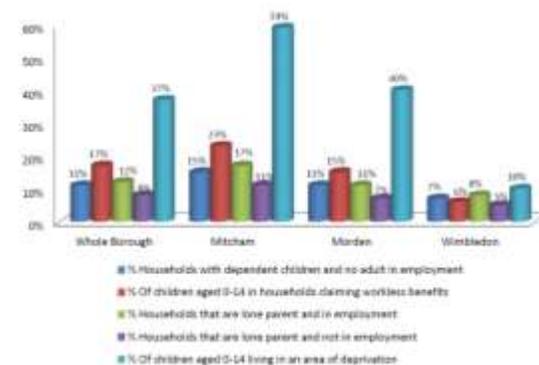
The range of graphs include bar charts to show deprivation (2), pie charts for understanding the make up of childcare (3) and maps demonstrating the distribution of childminders (4).

Childcare for Children Aged Under 2

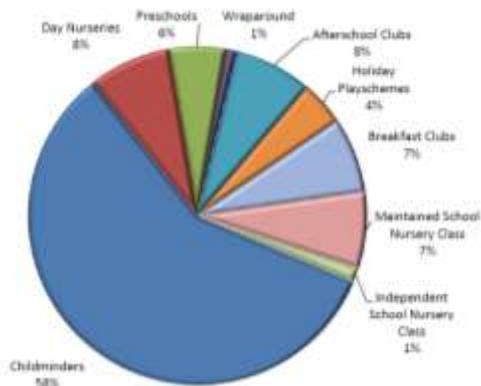
Table 3: Childcare availability for children aged 0-1 in Merton (from 6, 12, 13, 14)

Mitcham				
Type of Provision	Number of Providers	Number of places	Number of 0-1 year olds	% who could access a place *
Childminder	119	163	2,420	6.3%
Day Nursery	18	303	2,420	12.5%
Total	127	466	2,420	18.8%
Morden				
Type of Provision	Number of Providers	Number of places	Number of 0-1 year olds	% who could access a place *
Childminder	121	161	1,375	11.7%
Day Nursery	6	88	1,375	6.4%
Total	127	249	1,375	18.1%

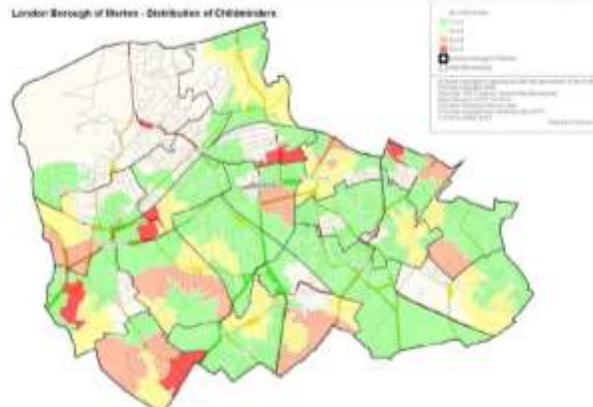
1)



2)



3)



4)

Strengths/Weaknesses of the Assessment:

- Demonstrates a good appreciation of the clear differences between the three main areas of the borough and relevant comparisons with national and outer London figures.
- Excellent presentation and clear graphics.
- Strong and consistent focus on provision of the early education entitlement for 3 and 4-year olds and the expansion to include disadvantaged two-year-olds.
- Appreciation of future government policy direction through investigating availability of out of school care to support blended offer of education and childcare to children from 8am to 6pm as highlighted in the Government report "More Affordable Childcare".
- Strong statement of 'actions' to complete moving forward, including focusing on more deprived Mitcham to promote benefits of free places and encouraging/supporting childminders.