Childcare Sufficiency in Merton
Annual Report 2018

www.merton.gov.uk
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Introduction

London Borough of Merton has a statutory duty under section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006 to work in partnership with childcare providers to influence childcare provision, as far as is practicable, to ensure that there is sufficient childcare for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 to 14 years or up to 18 for disabled children.

An annual assessment and subsequent report are produced and published to fulfil this statutory requirement.

Sufficient, high quality childcare is not only a vital component of the local economy and can support regeneration, but ensures that families can access the right type of childcare to meet their needs that enables them to seek work or maintain their employment. In addition, a market that can offer high quality, accessible and affordable childcare has the potential to contribute to the reduction of child poverty.

Evidence shows that high-quality early years provision has a positive and lasting effect on children’s outcomes, future learning and life chances - regardless of the economic circumstances of their parents. Speech and language gaps appear by the age of two and early difficulties with language can affect pupils’ performance throughout primary school (EPPSE Project). Therefore, high quality childcare supports the Local Authority in its role to improve the wellbeing of young children and reduce inequalities between them.

In this report we share this year’s assessment of the sufficiency of Merton’s childcare market place and the actions lay out our intention for managing any shortfall in a specific type or need in the borough.

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This Childcare Sufficiency Report is subject to review and endorsement by the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Signed</th>
<th>Date of Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, London Borough of Merton</td>
<td>[Signature]</td>
<td>20 Nov 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of key findings

Key findings are based on data covering 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2018 unless otherwise indicated. Data sources are indexed by numbers and details can be found at the end of this report.

Overall Merton has good levels of childcare across the market place that broadly meet demand. Generally, this is helped by stable sustainable local businesses that have offered childcare in Merton for many years and have a good understanding of local families childcare needs. Whilst the estimated population of very young children across Merton is decreasing, there are 3 wards – Lavender Fields, Figge’s Marsh and Wimbledon Park – that have the highest numbers of children under the age of five and also have planned or potential local development housing schemes of over 100 units of more. This may impact on demand for additional childcare provision in these local communities in the future.

Merton has a level of flexibility in the childcare market, which enables most parents to find a provider locally that meets their childcare requirements. This is supported by the fact that Merton’s Family Information Service receives a very low number of enquiries from parents who have not be able to find childcare to meet their needs.

For school-aged children there is a good level of provision for Merton families who need childcare either side of the school day (breakfast and afterschool clubs) and holiday childcare. This is provided on-site by schools themselves or private / voluntary settings or at settings near a school. Childminders also provide childcare before and after school and in the holidays for school-aged children.

Take-up of early education for eligible two-year-olds has remained steady over the last few terms, supported by the Local Authority’s Childcare Engagement Team delivering outreach to eligible families. The number of families with eligible 2-year-olds in Merton is decreasing, so whilst the numbers taking up a free place is stable there is an overall small percentage increase. There are a few wards, Wimbledon Park and St Helier in particular, where available places do not meet demand. The supply in these wards has been impacted by two local providers closing their businesses in this year. Merton Park has a good level of places, but a low number of families living in that ward appear to be taking up their entitlement.

Overall the percentage of three and four year old take-up for the universal entitlement has reduced, but remains in line with Outer London (Source: 13). Data published by the Department for Education (DfE) highlights that the population figures used to inform the percentage take-up has been revised, so some caution may be required, hence it is a useful benchmark to review Merton’s take-up compared with the other Outer London boroughs.

The market place has responded very well to the introduction of the new funded extended entitlement (30 hours) which is available for eligible families with three and
four-year-old children. Since it started, 156 providers have joined the scheme to offer the extended entitlement. Local data shows that overall that there are sufficient places in the wards that have the higher percentages of economically active families.

Source: 8

To date, there is insufficiently robust data/information to determine whether there is sufficient childcare to meet the childcare needs of families with children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Further consultation with parents of children and young people with SEND and young people themselves is required to enable us to measure whether what is being offered is meeting their needs.

Information about the range of childcare services and the Local Offer for SEND is available via Merton’s Local Directories website, and this aids families in finding suitable childcare and provision that may meet their needs. In June 2018, representatives from the Local Authority attended a workshop on improving information on childcare for children with SEND run by The Family and Childcare Trust (now Coram Family and Childcare). Parents of children with SEND and other LA representatives were present. During the session, a range of Local Authority Local Offer websites for families with children with SEND were evaluated. Feedback at the session was that Merton’s Local Offer information about childcare is very good and the website easy to use.

Overall the quality of Ofsted registered childcare remains consistent, however there has been a minimal percentage reduction in the quality of full day providers achieving Good and Outstanding grades and a minimal increase across sessional care and childminders.

Actions and priorities

Demand

- Continue to work with the childcare sector to make sure that in wards where there are new housing developments planned, information is shared in good time so providers can consider this in their delivery models in order to meet potential new demand.

Supply

- Continue to work with the planning team to ensure that in wards where there are new housing developments planned that potential childcare needs has been considered

- Promote the newly developed business tool “Cost Calculator” developed through funding from the DfE and in partnership with the Professional
Association for Childcare and Early Years and Wandsworth and Sutton Councils that supports childcare providers to review the sustainability of their business.

Childcare costs

- Continue to promote the 30 hour offer and Tax Free Childcare to families across a wide range of media, including social media.
- Continue to promote the benefits of voluntary registration with Ofsted by out-of-school childcare providers so families can benefit from Tax Free Childcare and voucher schemes.
- Engage with Job Centre Plus to make sure that families are made aware of the childcare offers and funding entitlements.

Take-up of funded education

- Engage with childcare providers and maintained schools in Wimbledon Park and St Helier wards to investigate the potential for them to offer funded places for two-year-olds.
- Investigate the possibility of supporting the development of new childcare provision in St Helier ward to deliver provision which includes places for funded two-year-olds.
- Continue to monitor the take-up of the 30 hours programme and its impact on the childcare sector in terms of provider type and patterns of take-up of early education and childcare.
- Continue to work with Merton schools with vacant universal places for 3 and 4-year-olds and investigate alternative take-up of these places by funded 2-year-olds or 30 hours provision.
- To pilot the “Golden Ticket” scheme to identified families who are eligible for funded early education at age two in the autumn term to ascertain if this approach increases the number of families taking up their entitlement.
- Investigate the reasons for low take-up by families in Merton Park who are eligible for funded places for two-year-olds.
- Bid to the GLA London Early Years Campaign – small grants to pilot a project to increase take up of 2 year funded places

SEND

- Assess and monitor the childcare needs of parents of children with SEND by consulting with families, aligning with the Wandle Early Years Hub evaluation.
for families with children aged 0 to 5. (For more information about the Hub, please see page 27)

- Increase the number of childcare providers who publish additional information on the Local Offer about their service for families with children with SEND.
- Create a promotional video of a parent whose child with Special Educational Needs has taken up 30 hours funded education and a promotional video of an early years practitioner who has completed the new accredited training programme for “Working with children with SEND”

Quality

- Carry out further work to better understand why Merton has a lower percentage of settings that are graded Good and above delivering funded early education places than Outer London as a whole

Support for childcare providers

- Increase membership of the new Greater London Assembly funded Wandle Early Years Hub (see page 27 for more information about the Hub)
- Maximise the opportunities created by the Wandle Early Years Hub which includes external evaluation surveys to providers and access to accredited and non-accredited training
- Continue to promote the Continuous Improvement Framework and training programme to support sector improvement

Demand for childcare

Estimated 2018 child population [Source: 1]

- Age 0-1: 6,400
- Age 2: 3,100
- Age 3 to 4: 6,000
- Age 5 to 11: 20,000
- Age 12 to 18: 14,800
By 2023, the population of children aged under 5 in Merton is estimated to fall very slightly, by approximately 100, compared with 2018. The number of primary school aged children is expected to fall more - by about 500 in the next five years. However, it is estimated that there will be 2,600 more 12 to 18 year olds in Merton in 2023. A new secondary school opened in Merton in September 2018.

Demand for childcare is greatest for children aged under the age of 5, although all families are entitled to statutory maternity pay for the first year of a child’s life reducing the need for childcare in that first year. There are estimated to be 15,500 children under the age of five in Merton.

Of the estimated 20,000 children aged 5 to 11, some need childcare before and after school and during the school holidays. Whilst London Borough of Merton does not hold data on the demand for this type of childcare, we do not receive enquiries from parents who are not able to find the childcare they need from what is already available. For children over 12, the childcare need becomes less but they may still require a safe place to be sometimes after school. Many Merton Secondary schools offer clubs and activities after school which provide this service to some children.

Table 1: 2018 estimated numbers of children by age and number of economically active adults by ward

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>0-1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3-4</th>
<th>5-11</th>
<th>12-18</th>
<th>Percentage of economically active adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbey</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>80.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannon Hill</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>73.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colliers Wood</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>78.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cricket Green</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>1,330</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundonald</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>82.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figge's Marsh</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>1,420</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>70.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graveney</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillside</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lavender Fields</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>1,110</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>75.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longthornton</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>1,090</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>72.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Morden</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>76.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Estimated population figures indicate the possible total demand for places, however, they do not take account of the number of families who require childcare, which is usually driven by employment patterns, and numbers of children living in working households. Hence population profiles are just one measure of planning for potential demand.

In addition, population data does not take into account movement of children not only across ward boundaries, but also across borough boundaries. For example, families may choose childcare in a neighbouring borough as this is closer to their place of work or their child’s school.

The labour market

Another key data source that helps us measure demand is the labour market. Working families are more likely to need access to a range of good quality, flexible and affordable childcare to enable them to take up their employment opportunities.

To help assess demand for funded early education for 2-year-olds, the Department of Workforce and Pensions shares information on the number of potentially eligible families with two-year-olds living in the borough. Within the economic criteria, there are three groups of eligible families: those in receipt of Universal Credit, those receiving non-working legacy benefits and those in low income jobs.
This provides a good starting point for assessing potential future demand within an area based on population as well as the anticipated number of families who are in low income working families, and so are more likely to require childcare.

Low income families with two-year-old children  

![Graph showing the proportion of non-working and working households from 2016 to 2018.]

In low income families claiming benefits and with 2-year-old children, the proportion that are working households is some 16% less than the proportion that are non-working households. This gap has grown slightly over the past three years. As working families are more likely to need childcare for their two-year-olds, this shows that the likely demand for follow-on funded places is not increasing.

Children living in households where out-of-work benefits are claimed  

![Graph showing the number of children in households where out-of-work benefits are claimed from 2010 to 2016.]

Source: 18

Source: 6
The number of families with children across the whole age range (0-18) and claiming out-of-work benefits fell year-on-year; by a total of 35% over the seven years to 2016. In spite of this decrease, there does not appear to have been a sufficiency issue in terms of a potential increase in the demand for childcare places across the borough.

There have been changes to welfare over the past few years meaning that some families with older children are no longer able to claim certain out-of-work benefits. This considerable fall in claimant families with children tends to imply that it was caused by families with older children moving into work. As older children with working parents may still need childcare when not at school, the demand for breakfast, afterschool and holiday childcare could increase if this trend continues.

### Deprivation

In terms of deprivation, Merton ranks 118 out of 152 upper tier Local Authorities in England with rank 1 being the most deprived. Merton is the 6th least deprived borough in London. Source: 8

The map overleaf shows the borough and the location of the most deprived areas as measured by the Indices of Deprivation Affecting Children, and is a guide to the demand for childcare as well as the ability of parents to pay for it and the importance of a good supply of registered childcare so Tax Free Childcare and voucher schemes can be utilised.
Local Development Scheme

Every local planning authority is required to publish an Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) each year containing information on the implementation of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and the extent to which the planning targets set out in the Local Plan documents are being achieved, including the five year supply of housing developments.

For the 15 year period 2011 to 2026, Merton’s minimum new housing target is 5,801. The projected total number of net units 2018 to 2023 is 3,207. Table 2 below lists the sites that have already sought planning permission and those identified in Merton’s housing pipeline with 100 units or more that may be developed over the next 15 years. Should these sites be presented for formal development proposals the volume of units may impact on demand for childcare in that local community and annual reviews are undertaken between the council’s Children, Schools and Families and Environment and Regeneration Departments.
Table 2: Sites with 100 or more housing units from 2018 to 2033 Source: 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Postcode</th>
<th>No. of Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raynes Park*</td>
<td>SW20 0JY</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Helier</td>
<td>Chaucer Centre</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wimbledon Park</td>
<td>Haslemere Industrial Park</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lavender Fields</td>
<td>Former Mitcham Gasworks</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wimbledon Park*</td>
<td>Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium</td>
<td>602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figge’s Marsh</td>
<td>Estate Plan Eastfield Estate</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbey</td>
<td>Estate Plan High Path Estate</td>
<td>992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravensbury</td>
<td>Estate Plan Ravensbury Estate</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicates planning permission

Supply of childcare

Early education and childcare providers and places (under 5’s)

Table 3 Sources: 9, 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of provision</th>
<th>Providers</th>
<th>Places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childminders</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>1,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school nursery classes and one special school</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private and voluntary nurseries and preschools</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>3,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>382</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,910</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The total number of registered places has been provided in Table 3 for childminders, although some of these places will be offered to children aged over 5).

For private and voluntary nurseries / preschools and childminders, the number of places represents the maximum number of places they are registered to provide. However, in practice many providers may provide fewer than the registered maximum number of places, due to staff capacity, for example.)
This number represents full time places, and many providers offer one full time place to more than one child. For example, a provider is open for 10 hours a day, one child attends in the morning and another child attends in the afternoon.

For primary school nursery classes and the special school, the number of places given is the maximum for the universal entitlement (15 hours a week to which all 3 and 4-year-olds are entitled).

**Early education and childcare hours (under 5’s)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of provision</th>
<th>Number providers</th>
<th>Sessional Mon to Fri</th>
<th>Full day care Mon to Fri</th>
<th>Available weekends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private and voluntary preschools and nurseries</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery classes in schools and special schools</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childminders</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Childcare is mostly commonly delivered by private and voluntary nurseries and preschools as either sessional care (3 hour sessions only) or as full day care (typically up to 9 hours from 9am to 6pm). Most full day care providers also offer shorter sessions.

Most childminders offer flexibility to meet parental demand across the day, with some being able to provide care from 7.30am to 6.30pm.

Providers are given the opportunity to promote their current vacancies via London Borough of Merton’s Family Services Directory and Information for Families Facebook page. In practice, turnover of place availability is high and not enough providers update this information regularly enough for it to be reported on.
Childcare providers and places (over 5’s)

Table 5  Source: 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of provision</th>
<th>Providers</th>
<th>Places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast club - primary school age</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1,110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After-school club - primary school age</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday club - primary school age</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1,350</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tracking supply of childcare for school age children is not as easy compared with supply across the Early Years sector. This is because registration with Ofsted is only mandatory when caring for children aged 0 to 7 and is on a voluntary basis for providers open for fewer than 2 hours a day (such as breakfast clubs). Therefore, it is possible that there are more breakfast and after-school clubs and holiday clubs in Merton than are counted here. Parents may also use provision which is not considered ‘childcare’, for example sports or arts clubs after school or in the holidays.

Many childminders also offer care for children aged over 5. All but a handful of childminders in Merton are registered to deliver care for children from 0 to 7 and some choose to care for over 8’s. These childminders may choose to care for under 5’s only, or spread their places across the whole age range and include out-of-school care in their service, depending on demand. Therefore, a count of the number of places for before or after school or into the holidays is not possible for childminders.

However, to give an idea of the out-of-school services offered by childminders in Merton, 185 offer drop off and / or pick up from schools. These services extend to 53 schools, including some in neighbouring boroughs  Source: 12

Childcare places gained and lost

Table 6:  Source: 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>August 2017 to July 2018</th>
<th>Providers opened</th>
<th>Places gained</th>
<th>Providers closed</th>
<th>Places lost</th>
<th>Net places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childminder</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>+ 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sessional / full day care</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>- 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-school</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>+ 61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The closure of a chain of three nurseries impacted on place numbers, though no parents with places at these settings contacted the Local Authority to say they were unable to find alternative childcare elsewhere.

### Average hourly childcare costs

**Sources:** 14, 15

- **Holiday club**: £4.54
- **Breakfast / Afterschool club**: £2.94
- **Childminder**: £4.42
- **Day Nursery / Preschool**: £6.18

Childcare in Merton is more expensive than the Outer London Average, most significantly in holiday clubs. In Merton, there are four very large holiday clubs / schemes that operate out of premises in Wimbledon and offer wide-ranging activities for up several hundred children at a time. These clubs can command a premium rate, which pushes up the average price. The most cost-effective holiday clubs are those run by schools, of which there are 3 in Merton.

### Take-up of funded early education

Data provided by the DWP over the period August 2017 to July 2018 list around 700 families with 2-years-olds who are eligible for funded early education each term. This equates to 23% of the estimated 2-year-old population in Merton.

Most 3 and 4-year-olds take up their Universal Entitlement in primary school nursery classes. The Extended Entitlement became available to eligible families In September 2017. 24 nursery classes are offering extended entitlement (30 hours) places as of September 2018, significantly increasing the availability of childcare hours from around 9am to around 3pm at school for many eligible children.
## Overall take-up of funded early education

**Table 7:** Source: 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding age and type</th>
<th>% of eligible children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 2</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 3 and 4 (universal entitlement)</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Funded early education for 2-year-olds

**Table 8:** Sources: 2, 3, 10, 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Eligible families living in ward</th>
<th>Funded 2-year-olds living in ward</th>
<th>Eligible families taking-up places</th>
<th>Places with providers in ward</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbey</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>67.7%</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannon Hill</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colliers Wood</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cricket Green</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>63.5%</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundonald</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figge's Marsh</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graveney</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>51.2%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillside</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lavender Fields</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longthornton</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Morden</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merton Park</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollards Hill</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravensbury</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raynes Park</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Helier</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>Eligible families living in ward</td>
<td>Funded 2-year-olds living in ward</td>
<td>Eligible families taking-up places</td>
<td>Places with providers in ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinity</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Barnes</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wimbledon Park</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of Borough</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals (in borough families only)</strong></td>
<td><strong>695</strong></td>
<td><strong>384</strong></td>
<td><strong>55.2%</strong></td>
<td><strong>888</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Note: families do not have to take up places in the ward in which they live
- Dundonald, Hillside and Village wards have fewer than 10 eligible families so figures are too small to provide meaningful results

The lowest take-up of places is by families in Wimbledon Park, St Helier and Merton Park. In the case of the first two, the number of available places is less than the number of eligible children, meaning that it could be that families have not been able to find a local provider. However, in Merton Park, there are more than enough places to meet demand, and yet take-up is the lowest in the borough.

In this case, it is worth considering that the Merton Park area is not in an area of deprivation. Perhaps eligible families (who are low income) are in accommodation isolated from peers who could provide feedback about the free childcare programme and/or are difficult to reach by Local Authority Childcare Engagement staff who support families into free places for 2-year-olds.

In St Helier, the number of eligible children is reasonably high and is a deprived area, so low take-up is a priority area of focus. Though Merton lacks providers in this ward, it shares its boundary with Sutton, so it is possible that Sutton settings are providing funded places for these families instead.

The highest numbers of eligible families are found in Cricket Green, Figge’s Marsh and Lavender Fields. Of the three, take-up of free childcare for 2-year-olds is lowest in Lavender Fields; some 20% down on take-up by families living in Figge’s Marsh. However, there are sufficient available and vacant places in Lavender Fields ward for eligible families.
Funded early education for 3 and 4-year-olds

Take-up of universal free early education for 3 and 4-year-olds is a published by the DFE and shows take up at 84% \(^\text{Source: 13}\). This compares with Outer London at 87%, Merton and Outer London as a whole have had a slight year on year decline in take-up.

The Extended Entitlement (30 hours) for 3 and 4-year-olds was launched in September 2017. The Extended Entitlement provides up to 15 extra free hours of early education a week for many families where both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in sole parent families). Take-up in Merton is steady and there are sufficient places across the sector to meet demand as the table below shows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Extended entitlement for 3 and 4-year-olds by ward</th>
<th>% of population economically active</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Places at providers in ward</td>
<td>children living in ward taking-up places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbey</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannon Hill</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colliers Wood</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cricket Green</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundonald</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figge's Marsh</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graveney</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillside</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lavender Fields</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longthornton</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Morden</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merton Park</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollards Hill</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravensbury</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raynes Park</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Helier</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>Places at providers in ward</td>
<td>Children living in ward taking-up places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinity</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Barnes</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wimbledon Park</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-borough</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,363</strong></td>
<td><strong>779</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Number and types of providers of funded early education**

Source: 10

- Childminder, 74
- Full day care, 55
- Sessional day care, 21
- Primary school / academy, 43
- Independent school, 6
- Special school, 1
Children with SEN and disabilities

The Local Authority has a duty to secure sufficient childcare for children with disabilities up to the age of 18.

All childcare providers should be inclusive for all children, including children with individual needs. Some providers have extensive experience of caring for children with particular needs and information about this can be found on Merton’s Local Offer and Family Services Directory websites. This information can assist families and professionals in finding the most appropriate care for a child.

- **1439** Merton resident children had an Education, Health and Care Plan as of January 2018 [source: 3]
- **700** children are on the voluntary Merton Disability Database for children and young people [source: 5]
- **320** children with SEN and disabilities have a valid ‘M-Card’ providing concessions when accessing certain services [source: 5]

The needs of children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) are identified at different ages depending on a range of factors. This can mean needs are identified whilst the child is very young often by a health practitioner, or may be identified as they are older once they are at school for example.

**Table 10:** number of children in Merton with a statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan [Source: 3]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of children with Statement or EHCP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5 years</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 5 to 10</td>
<td>531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 11 to 15</td>
<td>502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 16 to 19</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SEND early education and childcare

Some children receiving funded early education and childcare in Merton who are identified at SEN support level are funded via the Local Authority through the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Inclusion Fund (SENDIF).

As of January 2018, 31 funded 2-year-olds were identified by their setting as “SEN Support” and 11 settings received SENDIF administered by the Local Authority.

290 funded 3 and 4-year-olds were identified by their setting as SEN Support and 48 settings received SENDIF sources: 3, 13 and local records.

The council has approved proposals for a nursery at Cricket Green School that will provide new places for children with additional needs. This is part of the general expansion development at Cricket Green School and is expected to open in September 2020.

Disability Access Fund (DAF)

DAF is additional annual funding available to early years providers delivering funded hours to eligible three and four-year-old children. The following children are eligible:

- child is accessing three and four-year-old entitlement, and;
- child is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance

32 children benefited from DAF funding from April 2017 through to March 2018.

Funding has been set at a national rate of £615 per financial year, and this is paid as a lump sum payment to one early year’s provider nominated by the parent. The purpose of the fund is to support Early Years providers to make initial reasonable adjustments and build the capacity of their setting to support disabled children.

The Portage Service provides a structured, home-based teaching service for preschool children with disabilities, following a model of support that provides guidance and information for parents and carers of the children and supports them to taking-up their free entitlement(s). At any one time, approximately 20 two-year-olds are eligible for a funded place because they receive Disability Living Allowance.

The Local Authority also provides an Inclusion Advisory Service and in the spring term of 2018, 69 settings, childminders and schools received advice for children in their care across the whole of the Early Years Foundation Stage age range.
Childcare for school-age children with SEND

Some children with SEND will access childcare locally, particularly if it located on a school site. For children who have additional and complex SEND needs, provision can be via specialist services or for children with disabilities and in accordance with eligibility criteria via the Short Breaks Service.

The Merton Short Breaks Service for children was accessed by 445 families of children with disabilities in 2017 - 2018. Families are assessed and the outcome of the assessment could offer a direct payment to the parent to organise their own Short Breaks and leisure opportunities for their child, or access to activity clubs provided by a range of providers that are commissioned through the Short Breaks Service. Merton also has a specialist out-of-school service for children with more complex needs which is open every day after school and all day at the weekends and holidays.

In addition to the Short Breaks Service there are a range of leisure activities available to Merton children with SEND which have no eligibility criteria; details of these can also be found on the Local Offer website which also describes the range of services and support for children and young people, aged 0 to 25 with (SEND).

Further work with families to better understand barriers to childcare will be carried out to inform service planning. This is in the context of a significant increase in children with EHCPs and more children with SEND requiring appropriate provision.

Quality of early education and childcare

Childcare providers register with and are inspected by Ofsted, who give them an overall grade for the quality of their provision. Childminders and private and voluntary providers are on the Early Years Register, schools are on the Schools register. The grades for both registers are comparable. Schools with nursery classes have an overall inspection grade for the whole school and also have a separate Early Years grade. Providers register with Ofsted and it can be up to two years before they are inspected.

Both schools and Early Years providers have four possible Ofsted grades: ‘Outstanding’, ‘Good’, ‘Requires Improvement’, and ‘Inadequate’. Some providers are still awaiting their first full inspection and this is indicated. Schools data does not include special schools or those independent schools which are inspected by Ofsted.
Sessional day care Source: 9 (Ofsted Early Years Register)

- Outstanding: 4
- Good: 14
- Requires Improvement: 1
- No Inspection: 1

Full day care Source: 9 (Ofsted Early Years Register)

- Outstanding: 11
- Good: 36
- Requires Improvement: 3
- No Inspection: 7
- Inadequate: 1

Maintained and academy primary schools Source: 16

- Outstanding: 10
- Good: 27
- Requires Improvement: 3
- No Inspection: 4

Maintained and academy secondary schools Source: 16

- Outstanding: 4
- Good: 4
- Requires Improvement: 3
- Inadequate: 1
- No Inspection: 7

Childminders Source: 9 (Ofsted Early Years Register)

- Outstanding: 31
- Good: 134
- Requires Improvement: 2
- Inadequate: 2
- No Full Inspection: 54
Data published by Ofsted shows how Merton compares with Outer London and statistical neighbours for take up of funded early education places across the whole sector and Ofsted grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funded places taken up by children who are:</th>
<th>Merton</th>
<th>Outer London</th>
<th>Statistical Neighbour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 years old</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 and 4-years-old (universal)</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 and 4-years-old (extended)</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further work to analyse the data is required as Merton is showing below the average for both Outer London and statistical neighbours for the take up of places for 3 and 4-year-olds in Good or Outstanding provision.

For funding for 2-year-olds, Merton has a policy of withdrawing funding from providers if they do not achieve Good or above at inspection. For providers with funded places for 3 and 4-year-olds, funding will be withdrawn if they receive an Inadequate grade at inspection, unless there are specific sufficiency/mitigating factors. Removing funding can take up to two full funding periods and the date can reflect this time lag.
Variation in Ofsted grades  
Sources: 9, 17

The change in proportion of Good or Outstanding Ofsted grades of day nurseries, preschools and childminders on the Early Years Register since the last Childcare Sufficiency report published in 2016 shows a marked improvement in the quality of childminders in the borough.

Support for childcare providers

London Borough of Merton offers an Early Years Continuous Improvement Framework (CIF). The CIF provides an opportunity for providers to access a range of support, advice, training and meetings, including free services, through membership and on a pay-as-you-go basis. The aim of the support programme is to improve the quality of provision, disseminate information and provide an advisory service.

Charges apply for attending termly managers / network and inclusion (SENCo) meetings, training and direct quality improvement work in settings. Our free services include regular communications across the sector and sector updates.

New childcare providers to the market in Merton can also access the support services and can seek advice at any stage in the process of starting up their business. There is an annual programme of training for childminders, including briefings and Introduction to Childminding Practice.
115 providers on the Ofsted Early Years Register have purchased 2018-19 Quality Improvement Membership of the Merton Early Years Continuous Improvement Framework (CIF) Source: 5

Providers receiving Early Education Funding also receive annual safeguarding and SEND inclusion visits, and follow-up support to improve is provided where needed. In the year 2017 / 18 over 90% of settings met expected standards in both visits.

Methodology

All figures in this report are calculated using available data, unless otherwise stated, and at times are estimates based on the interpretation of the data.

Childcare places are calculated as full-time places unless otherwise stated (e.g. free early education places which are for 570 hours a year over a minimum of 38 weeks). Full-time places are all day for 5 days a week. Some of these full-time places could be shared by more than one child on a part-time basis if the provider offers sessions in the morning and afternoons or if two or more children can share a place by attending on different days.

Spend is rounded to the nearest 1,000.

Overall population estimate figures are rounded up or down to the nearest 100. Ward based population projections are rounded up or down to the nearest 10 (figures ending in 5 have been rounded up).

The Wandle Early Years Hub is steered by a range of partners in Merton and Wandsworth, Including the London Borough of Merton. The Hub works with Early Years providers and local families to improve the take up of free quality childcare and early education provision for eligible 2-year-olds. It aims to improve Early Years provision for the most disadvantaged children, promote early years as a career and improve early intervention for children with special educational needs and disabilities. One of the hub’s priorities is to offer access to accredited training to staff working in childcare settings which will give them the skills, knowledge and confidence to provide an increased number of places for eligible children who have special educational needs and disabilities.
Sources

1. GLA 2016-based Demographic Projections London Borough population projections Housing-led Model
   https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/projections

2. GLA 2016-based Demographic Projections London Ward population projections Housing-led Model
   https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/projections

3. London Borough of Merton Early Years and Schools Census’ and Headcount Spring 2018 and 2018 SEN2 return

4. London Borough of Merton Short Breaks Service

5. Merton Early Years, Childcare and Children’s Centres Service


7. HM Revenue and Customs Personal tax credits: finalised award statistics - small area data (LSOA and Data Zone) 2015 to 2016.
   https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/personal-tax-credits-statistics


9. Merton Enhanced Childcare Database including daily data feed from Ofsted (as at end July 2018)

10. Merton Directory of Providers of funded early education places 2017 (as at end July 2018)

11. Ofsted and Merton School Admissions data (as of end of academic year 2017-18)


13. DfE Education Provision: Children Under 5 Years of Age, January 2018

14. Family and Childcare Trust 2018 Childcare Costs and Holiday Childcare Costs Surveys
    https://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/our-research
15. Merton Early Years surveys of childcare providers (2017/18)

   https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted


18. Department for Education – DWP data release to the Local Authority of families with eligible 2-year-olds 2016-2018

19. Merton Data website
   https://data.merton.gov.uk/

20. Merton Local Plan
    https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning/local-plan

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