

Engagement report

Parental childcare sufficiency survey



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Executive summary

- This is a short statutory, annual two-week survey of current and potential childcare users
- It was very widely promoted to news outlets and partners, social media, staff, the public and councillors (who were also invited to share the information locally)
- The survey was previously on SNAP in 2017 and received approximately 1,000 responses. This year it was hosted on Let's talk Lincolnshire and received almost 50% more responses
- There were 1,496 responses, of which 139 had children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)
- Most respondents, 61%, felt they had sufficient childcare to meet their current needs
- The vast majority of those who felt they needed more childcare required afterschool club places or holiday clubs
- The cost of childcare was the most prohibitive factor
- 1,200 respondents, 88%, were unaware they could inform Lincolnshire County Council via the Family Information Service if they did not find the childcare they needed
- Over 1,000 respondents were unaware that Family Information Service had a directory for childcare in Lincolnshire
- The most frequently made comment related to a lack of any provision for children with SEND

1 Introduction

The Lincolnshire County Council Early Years and Childcare Support team undertook an annual parental childcare sufficiency survey as part of our statutory duty under the Childcare Act 2006 and Early Years and Childcare statutory guidance. The information from this survey will be included in the annual Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022.

The aim was to find out if the needs for childcare are being met across Lincolnshire. The service wanted to know if parents can access the childcare provision they need and when and where they need it. The information will help the team to plan new services that will benefit parents and children.

The page included useful links for help with:

- Childcare costs
- Information on Lincolnshire's local offer for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families.

2 Stakeholders

Public – Anyone who uses or is planning to use childcare services in Lincolnshire. The last survey in 2017 was hosted on SNAP survey software and received approximately 1,000 responses. This year it was hosted on Let's talk Lincolnshire and received almost 50% more responses.

3 Methodology

A survey was open to the public on the homepage of Let's talk Lincolnshire for two weeks from 25 April to 6 May 2022. The dates of this survey ran parallel to an audit that was being completed by childcare service providers.

Promotion was carried out via various methods:

- News releases were sent out to local media outlets
- News article on the county council website front page
- News item on ITV Calendar 6pm bulletin
- Social media messages were sent out on the following pages: Lincolnshire County Council, Children's Centres, and NHS
- Email newsletters sent to childcare settings, children's clubs, polish childcare groups, Let's talk Lincolnshire registered participants, Lincolnshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services, Children's Links
- Messages were sent through the internal communications newsletters to all staff
- Email message to all councillors, asking them to help raise awareness of the survey and circulate the page link to their networks

4 Findings

- The project page on Let's talk Lincolnshire was visited by 3,500 people. The majority, 2,991 (80%), of the visitors accessed the project by a direct link such as an email link.
- Only 1,855 (53%) of those people visited the survey page.
- There were 1,496 responses to the survey and 1,481 of those respondents completed the survey and 15 stopped after the first question
- Of the 1,481 respondents, 1,342 (90.6%) did use childcare services and 139 (9.4%) did not use or intend to use any childcare services in Lincolnshire
- Most of the parents/carers responding (1,031) had children aged 5-10 years old and the parents of children aged 15-18 years old (515) were the least represented
- When asked if their child had special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) - 139 (9.4%) parents/carers said yes
- Of these 139 parents/carers, 28 felt that the needs of their child/children with additional needs cannot be fully met and this was a barrier to accessing childcare provision

- In response to the question ‘What childcare do you need that you are not already using?’ 831 respondents (61%) felt they didn’t need any extra childcare and 527 (39%) wanted extra childcare
- Those 527 respondents were then asked what extra childcare they would like and 515 replied. The highest requests were for afterschool clubs and holiday clubs. With 238 and 235 requests, respectively. Breakfast clubs were next with 150 requests followed by day nursery (128) and family member (114), access to a childminder (111), preschool/playgroup (28), school nursery place (25) and home childcare/nanny (23) (respondents could tick more than one option)
- When parents/carers were asked if they felt it was easy to get the type of childcare they wanted in their local area, 712 (52%) respondents either agreed or strongly agreed, it was easy, but 458 (33%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- A similar proportion of respondents, 34%, felt they could access childcare at the times/on the days they needed it. However, 21% felt they couldn’t
- Cost was the main barrier highlighted by respondents to accessing the current childcare provision. Followed by the times and days it was available
- When analysing SEND comments, almost one third (65%, 11) provided a negative response, the rest provided mixed responses
- The most frequently made comment related to a lack of any services for children with SEND (10, almost one in three)
- A lack of local or any provision, funding for very minimal hours, difficulties accessing an Education, Health and Care Plan, mental health services or buildings and services that are equipped to accept children with specific needs were all highlighted. Alongside more training for staff, prohibitive costs, and the impact on parental and children’s wellbeing
- Over a thousand respondents, 1,200 (88%), did not know they could inform Lincolnshire County Council via the Family Information Service if they did not receive the childcare or find the childcare they needed
- The majority, 1,001 (78%) were also unaware that Family Information Services had a directory to access information about childcare in Lincolnshire

5 Conclusions and next steps

- This survey was published at the same time as a childcare sufficiency survey, gathering data from all current childcare providers in Lincolnshire
- Analysis is now underway to interpret all feedback received from both surveys
- An internal report will be written and presented to Lincolnshire County Council’s Directorate Leadership Team and Councillors, with recommendations
- A comprehensive strategy will be developed to plan the next steps