

Engagement Report – Parental Childcare Sufficiency Project



Table of contents

1	Executive summary.....	2
2	Introduction.....	2
3	Stakeholders.....	3
4	Methodology.....	3
5	Findings.....	3
6	Conclusions and next steps.....	4
7	Appendices.....	5

1 Executive summary

- This is a statutory, annual survey of current and potential childcare users. This year it was open for four weeks.
- 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 last survey in 2022 received approximately 1,500 responses. This year it has received 1893 responses, almost 26% more.
- There were 1,893 respondents, of which 228 had children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND).
- Most respondents, 68%, 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.
- Over a thousand respondents, 1,380 (78%), did not know about the Family Services Directory as an online source of childcare.
- The majority, 1,680 (96%) were also unaware of the childcare gap form to inform Lincolnshire County Council of gaps in childcare provision.
- The most frequently made comment related to a lack of availability of childcare followed by the cost.

2 Introduction

The local authority has a duty to secure sufficient childcare to meet the demands of parents who work or wish to study or train. (Childcare act 2006).

The Early years and childcare team has undertaken a parental survey as part of the statutory annual Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2023

The parent survey was published on Let's talk Lincolnshire for parents/carers of children under 19 years of age to provide their views and experience of childcare in Lincolnshire.

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.

Additionally, there was an audit survey on SNAP (information gathering survey) to childcare providers to provide information about their services.

The results from both surveys will formulate a report which will be shared with Lincolnshire County Council's Directorate Leadership Team (DLT) in July 2023. Additionally, the results will feed into the Childcare delivery plan 2023-2025, which will be shared with DLT for approval in July.

3 Stakeholders

Public – Anyone who uses or is planning to use childcare services in Lincolnshire.

4 Methodology

A survey was open to the public on the homepage of Let's talk Lincolnshire for four weeks from 24 April to 21 May 2023. 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
- Social media messages were sent out on the following pages: Lincolnshire County Council, Children's Centres, Maternity Hub, 0-18 Children Health
- An article was put in the Town and Parish Council newsletter
- Email newsletters sent to childcare settings, children's clubs, childcare groups, DWP contact, Let's talk Lincolnshire registered participants, Lincolnshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services, Children's Links, the LCC Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education team, YMCA Lincolnshire, LCVS/VCS, Shine network, Lincolnshire Military Veterans and Families Wellbeing Network
- Messages were sent through the internal communications newsletter 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

5 Findings

- The project page had 6,002-page visitors. Of that number, 2,737 people clicked for further information and 1,881 of them completed 1,893 surveys. This is a 31% visitor to respondent conversion rate which is positive. Most respondents used an email link they had received directly (1,462) or came from social media (330). This reflects the way the survey was promoted.
- Of the 1,893 respondents, 1,752 (92.6%) did use childcare services and 141 (7.4%) did not use or intend to use any childcare services in Lincolnshire.
- The highest number of responses (264) came from parents/carers living in South Kesteven. 226 from those in North Kesteven, 204 in West Lindsey, 160 in East Lindsey, 152 responses from South Holland, 151 from the City of Lincoln. The lowest (56) number of responses came from parents/carers in Boston.
- Most of the parents/carers responding (963) had children aged 4-11 primary school age and the parents of children aged 16-18 years old (17) were the least represented
- When asked if their child had special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) - 228 (15%) parents/carers said yes
- Of these 228 parents/carers, 94 felt that the needs of their child/children with additional needs were not fully met and this was a barrier to accessing childcare provision

- In response to the question 'Have you been able to access all the childcare that you need?' 1191 respondents (68%) felt they had didn't need any extra childcare and 561 (32%) wanted extra childcare
- Those 561 respondents were then asked what extra childcare they would like. The highest requests were for afterschool clubs and holiday clubs. With 238 and 235 requests, respectively. Day nursery was next with 155 requests followed by breakfast clubs (151), access to a childminder (134), preschool/playgroup (68), school nursery place (65) and home childcare/nanny (31). (Respondents could tick more than one option)
- When asked about how they find information about childcare in their area, the majority (1,154) said that they use the internet, followed by almost 1,100 use word of mouth. Only 92 responses stated that they use noticeboards.
- Availability was the main barrier highlighted by respondents to accessing the current childcare provision. Followed by cost and lack of wraparound care.
- When analysing SEND comments, almost all (93.8%, 76) provided a negative response, three (3.7%) provided a mixed response and 2 (2.5%) provided a neutral response
- The most frequently made comment related to a lack of any services for children with SEND (55, almost two in three), followed by a lack of funding (17)
- A lack of local or any provision, funding for very minimal hours, 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
- When asked if they were accessing tax-free childcare, 906 said they were. 834 replied that they weren't.
- Of the 834 that replied, 452 (54%) said they were not eligible, 201 (24%) were not aware of the benefits and 181 (22%) had other reasons for not claiming this benefit. Most people not accessing tax free childcare said this was due to claiming Universal Credit.
- Over a thousand respondents, 1,380 (78%), did not know about the Family Services Directory as an online source of childcare.
- The majority, 1,680 (96%) were also unaware of the childcare gap form to inform Lincolnshire County Council of gaps in childcare provision.

6 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 the parent and the provider surveys.
- An internal report will be written and presented to Lincolnshire County Council's Directorate Leadership Team and Councilors, with recommendations. Following approval it will be available [here](#).
- The childcare delivery strategy will be updated. The strategy outlines the next steps that ensure the local authority meets their statutory duties to secure sufficient childcare to meet the demands of parents that work, study or train.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1 Survey

Parental childcare survey 2023

Please only complete this survey if you use, want to use or intend to use childcare.

The findings will be published in autumn 2023 and can be found on

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/early-years-education/support-childcare-providers>.

We only use the information you provide for the purposes of analysing the childcare sufficiency need in Lincolnshire. We will only ask you to provide the minimum amount of information we need in order to do this. Your information is only shared where necessary and where the law allows it.

We will only keep your information for as long as is necessary, and in line with our retention schedules <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/directory-record/65606/community-engagement>.

For further information on how we process your information, see our Privacy Notice on <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/privacy>.

1. Do you currently use, want to use or intend to use childcare in Lincolnshire? Tick only one option. Mandatory question.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No – please skip to end of survey

2. Please provide your full postcode. We need your full postcode so that we can identify the areas that have insufficient childcare. Mandatory question.

3. What age ranges are the children that access, want or need to access childcare? Please tick all that apply. Mandatory question.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Under 2
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	3- 4 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	4-11 years – Primary school age
<input type="checkbox"/>	11-16 years – Secondary school age
<input type="checkbox"/>	16-18 years – Sixth form or college

4. Have you been able to access all the childcare that you need? Tick only one option. Mandatory question.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No – please answer 4.1 and 4.2 below

- 4.1 What childcare do you need that you are unable to access? Please tick all that apply. Mandatory question.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Childminder
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day nursery

	Pre-school/playgroup
	School nursery/preschool
	After school club - Primary or Secondary school aged children
	Breakfast club - Primary or Secondary school aged children
	Holiday club - Primary or Secondary school aged children
	Home child carer/ Nanny
	Other

Other, please specify below.

4.2 Are any of the following preventing you from accessing childcare? Please tick all that apply.
Mandatory question.

	None
	There are no places locally
	I don't have transport
	I cannot afford the cost
	My preferred provider(s) are full
	Places are not available at the times or the days that we need them
	Other

Other, please specify below.

5. Is one or more of your children considered to have a Special Educational Need or Disability? Mandatory question. Tick only one option

	Yes – answer Q5.1
	No

5.1 Do you feel the childcare that your child/ children access meets their SEND needs? Tick only one option

	Yes
	No – answer Q5.1.1

5.1.1 Can you briefly tell us why.

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6. Why do you need to access childcare? Tick all that apply. Mandatory question.

<input type="checkbox"/>	To be able to work
<input type="checkbox"/>	To be able to study
<input type="checkbox"/>	To be able to volunteer
<input type="checkbox"/>	So my child can access their free entitlement
<input type="checkbox"/>	To give me some free time
<input type="checkbox"/>	To give my child opportunities to socialise with peers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

Other, please specify below.

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Tax free childcare can help you with your childcare costs. You can find out what help you are eligible for on the childcare choices website.

7. Are you using tax free childcare? Tick only one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No – answer Q 7.1

8. What is the reason you are not using tax free childcare? Tick only one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Not eligible
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not aware of the benefits
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

Other, please specify below.

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9. How do you find information about childcare in your area? Please tick all that apply

<input type="checkbox"/>	Internet searches
<input type="checkbox"/>	Noticeboards
<input type="checkbox"/>	Word of mouth
<input type="checkbox"/>	Leaflets and advertisements

	Social media
	Other

Other, please specify below.

The Family Services Directory is a website that allows you to find suitable childcare in Lincolnshire.

10. Are you aware of the Family Services Directory? Tick only one option.

	Yes
	No

The Childcare Gap Form informs Lincolnshire County Council of the need for childcare in your area

11. Are you aware of the childcare gap form? Please tick only one option.

	Yes
	No

12. If you would like to make any further comments on childcare in Lincolnshire, please use the box below.

Thank you very much for completing this survey.

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