

# The Vale of Glamorgan Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2013-2014 Summary Report



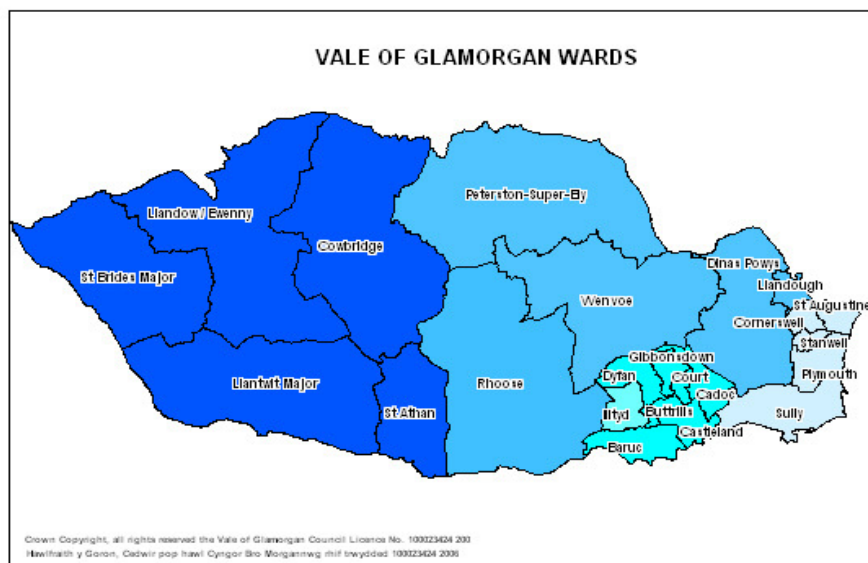
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# 1 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) Executive Summary

## Introduction - The Vale of Glamorgan

The Vale of Glamorgan is Wales' most southern Unitary Authority. It lies immediately west of Cardiff between the M4 and the Severn Estuary. It covers 33097 hectares (331 square miles) with 53 kilometres of coastline, of which 19 kilometres is Heritage Coast.<sup>1</sup>

There are 23 electoral wards in the Vale of Glamorgan but of these the eight considered to be rural cover approximately 80% of the area. Mid-year estimates for 2012, that the population of the Vale **122,018** with Barry being the largest town with a population of approximately **51,500**. It is the Vale's administrative centre, a seaside resort and port. Four miles to the west of the town centre, at Rhoose is Cardiff International Airport.



<sup>1</sup> Facts and figures booklet published by the Vale of Glamorgan Council

## **1.1 What is a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment?**

The Childcare Act 2006 requires all Local Authorities in Wales to carry out a childcare sufficiency assessment. The intention of this report is to provide an assessment of the current levels of childcare within the Vale and the gaps identified via consultation. This will inform an action plan to secure sufficient childcare.

A Childcare Sufficiency Assessment looks at the current supply of childcare in the Vale of Glamorgan (including type, quantity of provisions, location, costs, places available, choice) and the gaps in childcare (including location, choice, barriers to take up provision, places unavailable).

In order to carry out this assessment and gather the information required to achieve and deliver a successful Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan, it has been crucial to look at many different areas including:

- Consultation with parents/carers
- Consultation with employers
- Consultation with Providers
- Consultation with Children & Young People
- Consultation with wider stakeholders (e.g. Local Safeguarding Children's Board, Child Health and Disabilities team, Cyfle Cyntaf/First Opportunities, Mudiad Meithrin, Wales Pre-School Providers Association, Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs, etc).

## **1.2 Links to the Vale of Glamorgan Community Strategy**

The Community Strategy considers how the Vale will look in the future and how that vision of the Vale can be achieved. It seeks to ensure that organisations active in the Vale are focused on providing quality services to residents, visitors and businesses. The Community Strategy represents a coordinated approach to improving the quality of life in the Vale. This Community Strategy covers the period 2011 – 21 and builds on the previous Strategy whilst incorporating a number of key partnership plans and strategies. As a result of this integration it is more comprehensive and more detailed than previous strategies.

The Vale of Glamorgan Local Service Board (LSB) acts as the overarching strategic partnership responsible for community planning and is supported by five strategic partnerships;

- Children and Young People's Partnership
- Learning and Skills Partnership
- Regeneration Partnership
- Safer Vale Partnership
- Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Partnership

Priority Outcome 5: Children and Young People in the Vale are well informed and supported to access a broad range of quality services that enable them to take full advantage of the life opportunities available in their local communities and beyond.

**Lead Partnership: Children and Young People's Partnership**

The Vale of Glamorgan wants to ensure that the interests of children and young people are reflected in the services they provide.

They want children and young people to be respected and valued and for organisations to effectively engage with them and deliver services which will improve their quality of life.

They will work together to ensure every child has;

- A flying start in life with better access to information, family support and services including childcare.
- Access to a wide range of education and learning opportunities and is able to achieve their potential.
- A life, free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation and has the best possible physical, emotional and mental health.
- Access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities.
- Respect, and has their race and cultural identity recognised and is listened to.
- A safe home and a community that supports their physical and emotional wellbeing.
- A life not disadvantaged by poverty as services are more coordinated and families and carers including young carers are supported.

### **1.3 Summary of key findings**

#### *Numbers of disabled children*

It is predicted that 2,038 children and young people in the Vale of Glamorgan (aged 0 – 17yrs) have a disability and it is predicted that this will rise to 2,115 by 2020 and 2,206 by 2025

#### *Early Years & Childcare support for children with disabilities/additional needs*

There are a number of projects that support children with a disability/additional need or a child in need – a few examples are listed below. For a full description, please refer to the main Childcare Sufficiency Assessment report.

- Cyfle Cyntaf/First Opportunities
- Rainbows group
- Sense of Play Project
- Assisted Places Scheme
- Inclusive Play

#### *Multiple deprivation*

As reported in the 2008 WIMD, Gibbonsdown 2 still remains the most deprived LSOA in the Vale in 2011, whereas Court 3 now appears as the third most deprived area as opposed to 2<sup>nd</sup> in 2008.

However, it is important to remember that there are pockets of deprivation throughout the Vale of Glamorgan and particularly Barry.

#### *Income deprivation affecting children index*

The rate of children in the Vale of Glamorgan who live in workless households has been consistently below the Welsh average and has decreased over the last three years for which data is available (up to 2011).

#### *Percentage of household which are economically active*

The 2011 Children and Young People Well-being Monitor reported that although being in employment reduces the risk of living in poverty, recent estimates suggest that more than

half of all children living in poverty are now in households where at least one person is working. Although most of these are either self-employed or working part-time.

One of the key findings in the 2011 Children and Young People Well-being Monitor states that nearly one in three (32%) of children in Wales - around 200,000 – now live in poverty, according to a relative income measure.

### *Childcare places*

There are **4,242** registered childcare places in the Vale of Glamorgan, of which the largest proportion is with childminders (**26%**). This means that 4,242 places are available for parents to be able to claim help with childcare costs through the childcare element of working tax credit and childcare vouchers. There has been an increase of **36** registered places since March 2013. This is due to an increase of places in day nurseries (**44**), playgroups (**77**) and crèches (**5**). All other settings have seen a decrease in places (out of school clubs **9**, childminders **47**, Cylchoedd Meithrin **34**).

There is a reduction in childcare places during the school holidays of **35%**.

### *Welsh medium childcare*

The number of registered places where Welsh is used a significant amount has increased by **214** childcare places over the past **3** years which brings the total number of registered places where a significant amount of Welsh is used to **378**. It now accounts for **10%** of all childcare places. This is also reflected in the number of places in English medium settings, which has decreased by **24%** from **1760** to **1343** places

### *Childcare fees*

The average hourly rate for all types of childcare in the Vale is above the national average. The greatest difference is with childminders where the average hourly rate in the Vale is **£4.38** compared to **£3.93** in Wales. This is the most expensive form of childcare on average per hour. Day nurseries in the Vale charge **£4.08** per hour, compared with **£3.70** in Wales. Out of school care doesn't vary greatly from the national average and this is the cheapest form of childcare in the Vale. The national average for sessional care is unknown.

When comparing fees with data over the past 3 years, there has been an increase in cost per hour for all childcare providers, the most significant being in sessional care.



### *Profile of Flying Start children taking up a place*

From January 2013 – December 2013

- **290** children accessed a childcare place (**86%** take up)
- **29** BME children accessed childcare
- **137** children accessed childcare at any one time (the date assessed for this was 18<sup>th</sup> November 2013)

## **1.4 Consultation with key stakeholders**

### *Parents/Carers*

*Reason for using childcare* - The most popular reason for using childcare was because parents and carers worked. The majority of parents and carers who said that they did not use childcare simply did not need to – they, their partner, their family or friends looked after their children. Cost is still a barrier to both users and non-users of childcare, but the extent of this problem has decreased since 2011

A small minority of respondents said that they used Welsh medium or bilingual provision. In addition there was limited desire for an increase in the number of Welsh medium places available.

Use of childcare was lowest in Barry, with 48% of respondents saying that they used childcare for some or all of their children. 59% of respondents from Central and Western Vale used childcare and 58% from the Eastern Vale used childcare.

*Reasons for not using childcare* - 38% of respondents said that they did not use childcare for any of their children. Respondents were asked why this was the case.

35% of respondents who did not use childcare for any children said that they or their partner were stay at home parents. 30% of respondents said that their friends or family looked after their children. These were the most popular reasons

*Free breakfast club initiative* - The free breakfast clubs were most popular among respondents in Barry, particularly when including those who used Welsh medium and bilingual clubs.



*School holiday childcare* - During school holidays, the number of respondents who used childcare decreased, but the average amount of hours used per respondent increased. There was a strong desire for expansion of school holiday provision, better aligning it with working hours.

The most popular form of school holiday childcare provision was English medium day nursery. 23% (59) of respondents who said that they used childcare used these during school holidays. English medium childminders were also popular, with 22% (58) of respondents saying that they used them.

Welsh medium and bilingual provision were significantly lower. 22 respondents said that they used Welsh medium or bilingual provision during the school holidays. This equates to less than 1% of respondents who said that they used childcare. The Local Authority is aware of the lack of Welsh Medium childcare during the school holidays and will continue to work with partners to increase provision.

*Future use of childcare* - 10% of respondents said that they did not currently use childcare, but that they intended to in the future. This 10% does not include those respondents who were expecting a child, adopting their first child and on maternity, paternity or adoption leave with their first child. When asked why they did not currently use childcare, 33% of these respondents said that they or their partner was a stay at home carer, 28% said that childcare was too expensive and 12% said that their family or friends looked after their children.

*Family Information Service (FIS)* - Over the past year FIS has received a total of **4,206** enquiries made up of both direct and on-line enquiries, which is an average of **177** enquiries per month. This is an increase of **22%** over the past three years.

The number of requests for childcare information has decreased over the last three years by 26% and the number of vacancies has increased by 18%. There has only been a net gain of 126 childcare places since 2011 but the number of places in some wards has fluctuated greatly.

**120** enquiries were received where the child has a specific requirement. This has increased by **30%** since last year, where **84** enquiries were received. The most common requirement

relates to 'Autistic Spectrum Disorder' (47 enquiries), followed by 'Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties' (30 enquiries).

Only 7 enquiries for Welsh medium information were received, which is the same as the previous year. When including requests for Cylchoedd Meithrin, the number increases to 53.

### *Consulting with Childcare providers*

There is a clear perception among childminders that the level of demand for their service is decreasing.

Opinion among childminders is divided about their prospects for the future. Some childminders have very real concerns about the viability of their business and so are considering leaving the profession.

Conversely the majority of other childcare providers feel that the demand for their services has either grown or stayed the same in recent years

An increase in fees from all forms of childcare providers is likely in the near future. A number of providers are also planning on beginning to offer Welsh medium care provision.

The support received by all forms of childcare providers in the Vale is generally valued. There is considerable demand for increased forms of training and support from the Vale of Glamorgan Council in the future.

### *Consultation with employers*

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is the largest employer with approximately 6,500 full-time, part-time and casual employees (as at December 2013) which is an increase of 622 staff since 2011. 77% of the workforce is female. The Council works in partnership with many different agencies in the public, voluntary and business sectors to deliver a wide range of services.

Due to the poor response of replies reported for the 2011 CSA, discussions took place as to how this could be improved upon. As a result of these discussions, the Vale's Family

Information Service office spent some time with the Vale's business and employment officer to look at ways of distributing the prepared questionnaire. Therefore, 75 questionnaires were sent out via the Business Wales forum, 9 questionnaires were distributed at the local business breakfast form and 11 partner organisations linked to the Local Service Board.

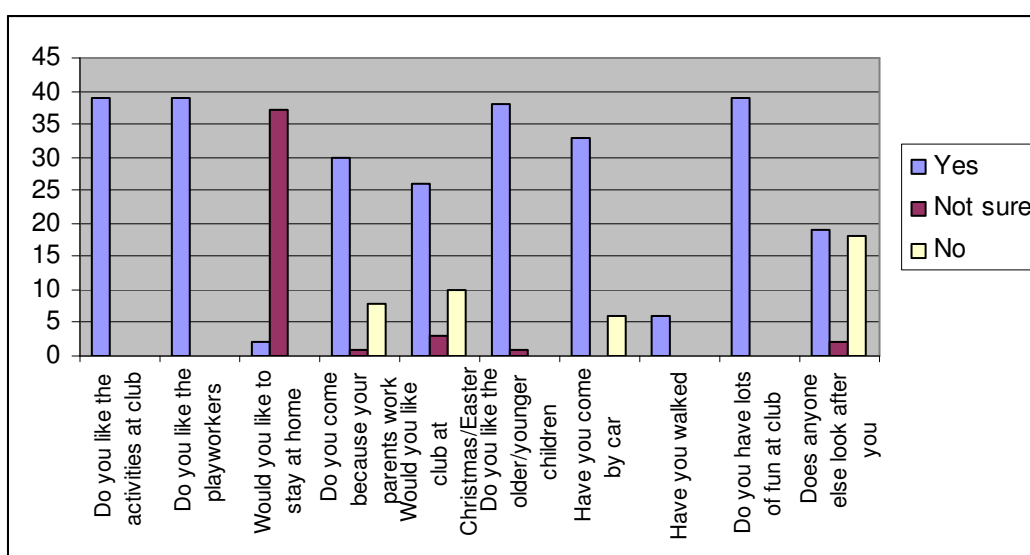
After some considerable time a very disappointing 6 completed questionnaires had been returned. As reported in 2011, due to the low amount of returns and not all sections being completed, there will be very little evidence to give any constructive feedback on this section.

### Consultation with Children and Young People

A number of methods were used in order to consult with children universally, by this we mean a wide cohort of children and young people aged 5+, including face-to-face, self-completion surveys and group sessions.

*Out of School Provision children aged 5 – 11yrs* - 39 children and young people attending 7 different out of school provisions were consulted on a number of questions.

Table 1 below shows the results.



### Holiday provision for children aged 10 – 14yrs

A gap identified in childcare provision for 10 – 14yr olds resulted in a pilot project being introduced in Llantwit Major and Barry. The provision was run for 4 weeks in each location during the summer holidays.

The young people who attended the scheme had the opportunity to take part and complete a Bronze Youth Inspire Award that is a locally recognised award that highlights the achievements of young people through their active participation in activities. From the 105 individual young people who attended the schemes 54 young people completed this award.

A total of 105 questionnaires were given out to the attendees with 19 responses being returned – feedback included:

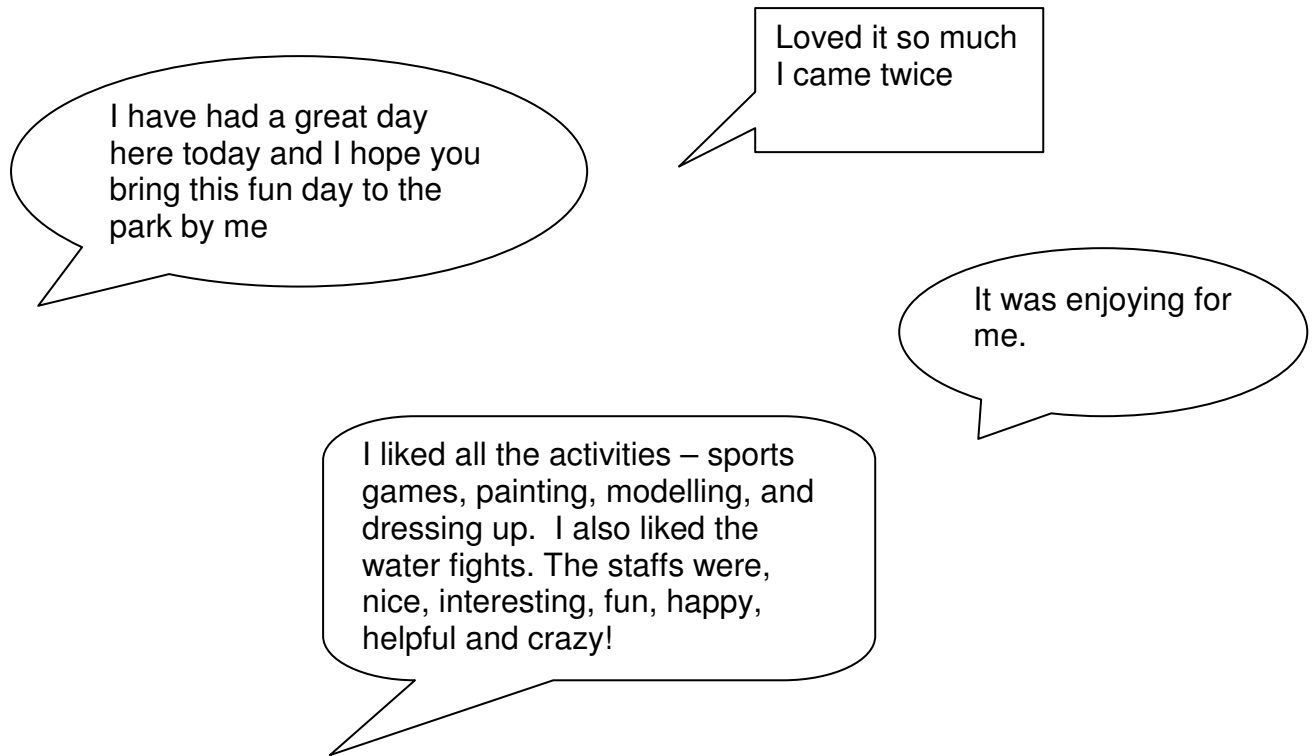
- I felt very comfortable with staff.
- They were fun.
- They made me feel happy and helped me get to know others better.
- They were all lovely.
- Nice and friendly
- Every-one took time to make us feel welcome; we were asked what we wanted to do and weren't made to do any thing we didn't want to.
- Caring and nice
- Staff were very friendly, we could ask them any thing
- They got involved with what we were doing
- If there was a problem they were there to help
- They made me laugh
- I liked them all

### **Playscheme staff's consultation with children aged 4 – 14yr olds**

12 days of playscheme were held during the summer, 6 days over two weeks in Murch Community Centre (Dinas Powys) and 6 days over two weeks in Palmerston Community Learning Centre (Barry). Attendance figures for the playschemes were very positive and whilst these are not offered as 'childcare' the children attending benefitted greatly.

A total of 127 children attended the Murchfield playscheme over 2 weeks during the summer holidays – 38 of which had a disability and a total of 184 children attended the Palmerston playscheme – 44 of which had a disability.

### ***Some comments received by the children***



As reported in 2011, there is a broad mix of holiday care provision in the Vale of Glamorgan. The Out of Schools Grant over the past 3 years has supported some new settings including:

- pilot project for 10 – 14yr olds in Llantwit and Barry,
- a club for over 8's was supported in Cowbridge,
- club attached to a school in Barry

The Out of Schools Childcare Grant has also supported some existing settings with sustainability including:

- Ashgrove club for children on the autistic spectrum

Extension of places and age range for a holiday provision in the Western Vale

### **Consultation with other organisations**

There are some similar views from our partners reported in 2013 that were also reported in the 2011 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment in that there is a diverse range of childcare

options for parents in work, training or education and that childcare settings remain steady.

Having said this affordability still remains problematic for a number of parents. According to the Daycare Trust's 'Childcare Costs Survey in 2013, real earnings have fallen to a 2003 equivalent resulting in a **77%** increase in childcare costs.

Whilst the introduction of Flying Start in 2008 has supported a high number of parents to access free part-time childcare, there are a number of families who struggle financial but do not reside in the Flying Start area and are therefore unable to access the free childcare.

In the present climate, it is not only parents who are feeling the squeeze financially as sustainability issues for childcare settings continues to be an ongoing problem which not only affects the running of the setting but staff morale too. A continuation of the Welsh Government free breakfast club is a must if we are to support parents and children.

Sessional care - Unfortunately in a lot of cases, sustainability still continues to be an ongoing problem which affects staff morale.

*Some of the suggestions that third sector organisations have made as to the improvements necessary* - Increase the number of Welsh speaking qualified staff possibly more work to be done to ensure that secondary school leavers are given inspiring information and advice regarding childcare as a career choice.

Family Information Service to continue to promote their services to the general public in order for them to be aware of what the service provides.

Flexible models of childcare need to be developed/highlighted to reflect the range of childcare needed within the family. For example: families with mixed ages and or additional needs, shift workers, shift-parenting & single parent families. Possibly a need for weekend/bank holiday workers.

There is a need to maximise the use of current childcare settings as opposed to creating new ones if possible.

More affordable childcare needed

Increase the number of out of school childcare places for children aged 4 – 14yrs, both afterschool and during the school holidays, through the medium of Welsh

### **1.5 Conclusions/ Next Steps – from the gaps analysis**

The number of requests for childcare information has decreased over the last three years by 26% and the number of vacancies has increased by 18%. There has only been a net gain of 126 childcare places since 2011 but the number of places in some wards has fluctuated greatly.

In order to respond to the gaps highlighted within this assessment, an action plan for 2014-2017 will be developed.