



Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Progress Report April 2026

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GENERAL UPDATE

Monmouthshire has a higher percentage of working parents than the Welsh average, hence there has always been a high demand for childcare and previous Childcare Sufficiency Assessments haven't identified significant gaps in provision, particularly for children under 5 years of age. Nevertheless, the introduction of the Childcare Offer resulted in an increase in demand for places and over the last 12 months demand has further increased with the roll out of Flying Start childcare. In the summer term 2025, around a third of all settings reported they were full and were operating with a waiting list for full time places. Hence, we offered support and financial incentives to new or existing providers to encourage them to open new settings or expand their existing provision. As a result, we have seen developments in childcare provision since April 2025 and there has been an increase in the number of childcare places offered.

We have a preference for a mixed economy approach when it comes to meeting our statutory duties around Flying Start childcare and early education, so we offer both maintained and non-maintained provision and allow parents to choose the setting that best meets their needs. We are also committed to equity for providers, so any settings that meet the required standards and quality of provision are eligible to offer early education and Flying Start childcare places. We carried out a tender process in summer term 2025 and, as a result, we now have 30 non-maintained approved early education providers and 39 non-maintained Flying Start childcare providers, including 6 childminders. We also have 13 LA maintained nurseries providing early education and 4 LA maintained Flying Start childcare settings. 94% of our sessional or day care providers (45 settings) offer either early education or Flying Start childcare places, there are only two settings that aren't offering funded places and they are both outdoor settings, so their staffing ratios are higher, hence their fees need to be above the rate currently funded by the Welsh Government.

Take up of places is monitored on a termly basis to ensure there are sufficient places available and to identify any trends in demand. Over the last few years, we have observed more families are opting for non-maintained early education provision that is more flexible and is able to offer wrap around childcare, in preference to LA maintained school nurseries. In response, we are currently going through the statutory process to close one of our school nurseries and replace it with a non-maintained setting on site.

The quality of provision in Monmouthshire remains at a high level. During this financial year, four non-maintained early education providers were jointly inspected by Estyn and CIW and three of them were rated excellent for Wellbeing and Care & Development and good for all other areas. The fourth setting was issued with a Priority Action Notice for an area of non-compliance, but they have permanently closed since their inspection.

The workforce has previously been identified as a barrier to developing childcare provision, as there is a shortage of suitably qualified staff. This has been one of our priorities for the last two years, so we have increased the number of engagement events we have attended and invested in promotional resources and leaflets. We have also developed positive relationships with the job centres, providing them with relevant information for parents and attending their Childcare Parents Forum. One of our four secondary schools is offering the Level 2 Childcare, Play, Learning & Development (CCPLD) course as part of their post 16 curriculum for the first time and we currently have a cohort of five students. We have run sessions in each of our secondary schools that have been positively received, and we are hoping to have one cohort in the north of the county and one in the south for the next academic year.

During this financial year, we have delivered or facilitated 64 training opportunities for childcare practitioners across 24 different courses. These range from statutory courses such as Paediatric First Aid, Safeguarding and Manual Handling to best practice courses including ALN Modules, Our Sensory World, Making Sense of Autism, Early Communication Strategies, Trauma Informed Practice, Non-Racist to Anti-Racist Practice, Positive Approaches to Behaviour, Teacher Talk, Safer Recruitment, Froebel and Curriculum for Wales. Take up of training is generally good and there is only one setting that hasn't accessed training with the Local Authority during the financial year 2025-26. Childminders can book on all our training courses and we try to offer some courses in the evenings or at weekends to enable them to attend; we are also developing webinars to share key messages from training.

Funding rates and the current financial climate has caused issues for some of our childcare providers and we have seen two long-standing settings close this year. Thankfully, one of these has been taken over by an existing setting from a neighbouring local authority and one of our settings has taken over the lease of the other setting and is hoping to open their second setting in the summer term 2026. We have also issued sustainability grants to two day care settings that were struggling due to the rise in utility bills.

Small capital grants totalling £388,470 were awarded to 50 childcare providers in 2025-26 to enable them to maintain their premises and make improvements to their learning environment. We developed a full Business Justification Case for a purpose-built childcare setting on the grounds of a primary school that is situated in a village that currently has no childcare provision. This has been submitted to Welsh Government to apply for capital funding from the CC&EY Capital Scheme.

PROGRESS MADE AGAINST TARGETS

The table below details the progress that has been made in 2025-26 against the CSA Action Plan that was revised in April 2025.

Target	Why is it Required?	How will it be Achieved?	How will it be Monitored?	Progress 2025-26	Timescale
<p>Develop 3 full day care or sessional care settings or extend existing provision to offer more places for children under five years of age.</p>	<p>Places for children under five years of age are tight in some areas of Monmouthshire and, although there are vacant sessions, it is not always possible to offer a full time place.</p> <p>The rollout of free childcare for all two year olds is likely to exacerbate this situation.</p>	<p>Monitor take up of places in full day care and sessional care through take up of Flying Start, Early Education and Childcare Offer, as well as regular communication with providers.</p> <p>Offer advice and support along with financial incentives to develop new provision or increase places.</p>	<p>Number of settings will be monitored through CIW monthly reports and take up of places will be monitored termly.</p> <p>Development grants will be monitored through CSG quarterly reports.</p>	<p>During the financial year 2025-26, there have been significant developments that have resulted in an increase in the number of childcare places available for children under five years of age:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monmouth Day Nursery at HABS opened in September 2025 offering full day care. • Little Gems also opened in September 2025 providing early education and wrap around care at Durand Primary School in Caldicot. • Celyn Childcare changed their registration from after school provision to full day care to include early education and wrap around care at Overmonnow Primary School in Monmouth. 	<p>March 2027</p>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little Oaks, the LA Flying Start setting in Abergavenny, relocated to the new school in September 2025 and expanded their provision to include wrap around care for children in King Henry VIII 3-19 School. <p>Unfortunately, one of our long-standing day nurseries in Abergavenny was forced to close for personal reasons; however, another provider has taken over the lease and is going through the registration process with CIW.</p> <p>We now have 30 non-maintained settings approved as Early Education providers and 43 approved Flying Start childcare providers, including 4 LA maintained settings.</p>	
Develop an after school club in the Caldicot and Abergavenny areas or increase the number of after school places offered at existing settings.	Feedback received from parents is that there is a shortage of after school places in some parts of Caldicot and Abergavenny, particularly those that operate until at least 5.30pm to meet the	Childcare Development Officer will work closely with Clybiau Plant Cymru to develop additional after school provision. Development grants will be offered as an incentive.	Number of settings will be monitored through CIW monthly reports and take up of places will be monitored termly. Development grants will be monitored	In September 2025, an after-school club registered on the site of Castle Park Primary School in Caldicot. Three quarters of all schools in the Caldicot cluster now have access to after school provision.	September 2026

	needs of working parents.		through CSG quarterly reports.	There hasn't been an increase in after school places offered in the Abergavenny area; however, most schools in this cluster already have after school provision on site. In addition, Lil Rascals registered a 90-place holiday club in Magor & Shirenewton Playgroup expanded their provision to include care during school holidays.	
Encourage and support existing out of school clubs and any new childcare settings that are developed to register with CIW.	Parents and carers are unable to access funding to support with the cost of childcare if settings are not registered with CIW. In unregistered settings, it is difficult to ensure childcare is of a sufficient standard.	Childcare Development Officer to support existing clubs and new settings to take them through the CIW registration process. Training to be funded if this is the barrier preventing settings from registering.	Number of registered settings to be monitored through CIW monthly reports. Take up of training to be monitored through CSG quarterly progress reports. Staff qualifications to be monitored annually.	All new settings established this year have registered with CIW before opening, including the out of school clubs. There has been no progress in encouraging existing unregistered providers to register with CIW, as they are happy with their existing arrangements.	March 2027
Register 10 new childminders across Monmouthshire and support existing providers to at least maintain the current level of provision.	There is always a high turnover of childminders due to the transient nature of the job, but this was even more of an issue during the pandemic and the total number of childminders has	Work in partnership with PACEY Cymru to provide childminder briefing sessions and ongoing support through the registration process and on a campaign to recruit more childminders.	Number of newly registered childminders and de-registered childminders will be monitored through CIW monthly reports. Monitor take up of pre-registration training	There was one childminder registered with CIW during the autumn term 2025. Unfortunately, one childminder that had previously suspended their registration decided to permanently cancel their registration and a further	March 2027

	<p>reduced significantly in the last five years.</p> <p>Childminders are best placed to provide childcare during atypical hours.</p>	<p>Continue to offer financial support for pre-registration training and start-up grants.</p>	<p>through monthly PACEY support logs and record number of childminder start-up grants awarded on a termly basis.</p>	<p>childminder has suspended their registration with CIW. As a result, the total number of registered childminders in Monmouthshire has remained constant at 28.</p> <p>Encouragingly, several prospective childminders have recently completed the childcare briefing with Coram Pacey, so we hope to see numbers begin to rise soon.</p>	
<p>Establish a cylch meithrin in Monmouth and Chepstow so that there is Welsh medium childcare provision in each of the four clusters.</p>	<p>There is currently no Welsh medium pre-school provision in the Monmouth or Chepstow clusters.</p> <p>Lack of Welsh medium provision and distance from existing provision has been raised by parents as a reason for not accessing Welsh medium childcare.</p>	<p>Monmouthshire Early Years will work closely with Mudiad Meithrin to develop additional Welsh medium pre-school provision.</p> <p>Offer financial incentives such as development and sustainability grants to cover start-up costs and a proportion of running costs.</p>	<p>The number of Welsh medium childcare places is included in the Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and this is reviewed termly.</p>	<p>There has been no progress on this action. It hasn't been possible to establish Cylch Meithrin Trefynwy due to a lack of space on the existing site and uncertainty as to the permanent home for the Welsh school in Monmouth. We are awaiting costings for establishing a modular build on the site that would be used exclusively for childcare.</p> <p>More work needs to be done to establish demand in the Chepstow area. We have been to view a possible premises in this area but there is a lot of work needed to make it suitable for delivering childcare and we aren't</p>	<p>September 2026</p>

				convinced it is in the most appropriate location.	
Extend the number of places, opening hours or services offered by our existing Welsh medium childcare settings.	There is not sufficient Welsh medium childcare provision, in particular full day care and childcare during school holidays, to meet the needs of working parents.	Monmouthshire Early Years will work closely with Mudiad Meithrin and the existing providers to extend Welsh medium childcare provision. Development grants will be offered as an incentive to support settings to extend their provision.	The number of Welsh medium childcare places is included in the Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP), this is reviewed termly.	The two existing cylch meithrin settings have been approved to offer Flying Start childcare places and take up of places has increased at both settings. Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni are due to move to a new site with the Welsh school in the autumn term 2026. They are then hoping to extend their age range to include under twos.	March 2027
Attend at least 6 events to promote childcare training opportunities and careers in childcare.	There is a lack of qualified childcare practitioners and this limits the development of additional childcare places, as well as threatening the viability of existing childcare provision. We need to do what we can to encourage more people to take up training in order to increase the childcare workforce.	Produce and publicise a Careers in Childcare Booklet and share this widely through the website, social media and face-to-face meetings. Attend Careers Fairs and similar events to promote careers in childcare. Work with the four secondary schools to establish the Level 2 Childcare qualification as part of their post 16 curriculum.	Number of events attended, social media posts and any other forms of promotion will be recorded. Enquiries regarding childcare training or childcare job opportunities will be logged. Number of students enrolling on the Level 2 Childcare course will be recorded.	During the 2025-26 financial year, we attended 14 outreach events including careers fairs, sixth form open evenings and community events. We have also produced a Careers in Childcare Booklet and a promotional video that can be shared online and at future events. The Level 2 CCPLD course commenced at King Henry VIII School in Abergavenny in September 2025 and we currently have five students. We are hoping to have cohorts	Ongoing

				in the north and the south of the county next year.	
Continue to promote the Family Information Service and advertise the availability of financial support to assist with the cost of childcare (including Flying Start, Childcare Offer, Early Education & Tax-Free Childcare).	<p>According to the parental survey and consultation with stakeholders, affordability is the main barrier to accessing childcare in Monmouthshire.</p> <p>There are many schemes available to support with the cost of childcare.</p>	<p>The Family Information Service will continue to promote new and existing childcare and the availability of financial support for childcare through our section of the MCC website and across our social media channels.</p> <p>Childcare Financial Support Booklet will be shared widely.</p>	<p>The Family Information Officer produces monthly reports including details of promotional activities. Users of the FIS website complete evaluation forms.</p> <p>Take up of Flying Start, Early Education and Childcare Offer are monitored termly.</p>	<p>During this period the FIS has used email and social media to advertise the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare Offer • Financial support for families • Careers in childcare & job vacancies • New childcare settings • Childcare places available and open days • Childcare survey for settings & parents • School admission dates • Active Play sessions and school holiday activities • Welsh language groups and events • Parent & toddler / Ti a Fi groups • Baby groups & activities including rhyme times • Getting Ready for School parenting workshops • Schools Essentials Grant • ABUHB antenatal courses & breastfeeding support • Vaccinations and clinics 	Ongoing

				<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Durand Nursery consultation• Dadfest Cymru• EY Food Survey• Community events <p>We have also purchased a pull-up banner, leaflets and promotional resources that can be taken to outreach events to promote our FIS.</p>	
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CHILDCARE SUPPLY

The table below shows the supply of childcare provision in Monmouthshire at the end of March 2026 compared with the previous year. This includes both registered and unregistered provision, as some out of school clubs run for under two hours and are not registered with CIW.

Type of Childcare	Child-minders	Full Day Care	Sessional Care	Out of School Care	Open Access Play	Crèches	Nannies	Total
March 2026	28	41	6	22	0	0	3	100
March 2025	28	37	7	22	0	0	6	100
Difference	0	+4	-1	0	0	0	-3	0

The total number of childcare providers (excluding nannies) has increased from 94 to 97 during the financial year 2025-26. The increase has been in full day care, so there are now more places available for children aged 0-5 years than there were previously and the majority of childcare providers offer provision from 9am to 3pm, as a minimum. Around half of these settings also provide childcare during school holidays.

We have seen very little change with childminders during this financial year. We have only seen one childminder cancel their registration and one suspend their registration with CIW, which is a significant improvement from the previous financial year. Unfortunately, we are struggling to recruit new childminders, and we have only had one new childminder registered in Monmouthshire during this period. We are continuing to work with Coram Pacey to provide advice and support to individuals who are considering a career in childminding and those going through the registration process, and we are hopeful we will be able to increase the number of registered childminders in the next financial year.

We have seen the development of a new after school club and a new holiday club since April 2025, but we have also seen one provision close and one change their registration to full day care, so the total number of out of school clubs also remains unchanged. This figure does include unregistered provision that provides a service for families, although more than two thirds of out of school clubs are now registered with CIW. In addition, all our primary schools now have free breakfast clubs and before school care on site.

Supply of Welsh medium childcare provision is low as we only have two cylch meithrin settings, one after school club and one childminder who offer Welsh language childcare provision; there are also three LA maintained Meithrin in Welsh medium schools offering Early Education.

In December 2025, we conducted a consultation exercise with childcare providers across Monmouthshire and we had responses from a total of 43 providers spread throughout Monmouthshire. This represents less than half of all providers, so the numbers themselves aren't particularly relevant; nevertheless, it covers a good cross-section of the childcare market in Monmouthshire, so the data is useful for identifying trends.

Across the 43 settings, there were 1,825 children on roll, with distribution reflecting population density and concentration of childcare facilities:

- Caldicot reported the highest number on roll (555), closely followed by Abergavenny (487).
- Chepstow and Monmouth reported 398 and 235 children respectively, with 150 children on roll across Raglan & Usk.

In total, providers reported 173 full time spaces currently available for children under 5. Availability varied by area:

- Caldicot (48) and Abergavenny (47) had the greatest number of spaces.
- Raglan & Usk (36) and Chepstow (23) followed.
- Monmouth had the fewest available spaces (19).

This distribution suggests that while some areas have capacity to accommodate additional children, others—particularly Monmouth and Chepstow—are operating with tighter margins. Of the 43 providers, 20 reported having a waiting list.

Across the county, 18 providers (42% of respondents) felt there is a need for additional childcare places; this sentiment varied widely by area:

- Caldicot providers expressed the strongest views, with 10 settings identifying a need for more places.
- Chepstow also showed notable demand (5 settings).
- In Abergavenny, only 2 providers felt more places were needed.
- Monmouth had just one provider expressing this view.
- No providers in Raglan & Usk felt additional places were needed.

These differences suggest varied local pressures—Caldicot and Chepstow appear to have the clearest unmet demand, while other areas consider current provision largely sufficient.

A relatively small proportion of settings (7 out of 43) expressed intentions to expand or increase their provision:

- Most interest came from Abergavenny (4 providers).
- Caldicot, Monmouth, and Raglan & Usk each had one provider planning expansion.
- No providers in Chepstow reported any expansion intentions at this time.

In contrast, a larger number of settings—14 in total—reported that they would consider opening another setting if an appropriate opportunity arose. This was particularly notable in Abergavenny and Caldicot, each with 5 settings expressing interest.

CHILDCARE DEMAND

Demand for childcare and early education places remains high in Monmouthshire, with approximately 96% of eligible children accessing early education in the autumn term 2025 and spring term 2026. The trend towards parents opting for non-maintained settings rather than LA maintained school nurseries has continued, with around 60% of children accessing their early education with a non-maintained provider in 2025-26. In response to this demand, we are in the process of closing one of our LA maintained school nurseries and replacing it with a non-maintained setting on the school site that will offer early education places and wrap around childcare. Take up of Childcare Offer places is also high in Monmouthshire and the latest statistics received from Welsh Government suggests that 100% of eligible families in Monmouthshire are accessing the Childcare Offer. Despite this high take up of places, we are largely able to meet this demand, and we aren't aware of any families that would like to take up their entitlement to early education or childcare funded through the Childcare Offer but are unable to do so. There were, however, some that weren't able to take up their full entitlement during the summer term, when demand for places is at its highest.

The expansion of Flying Start childcare has continued during 2025-26, although this rollout has been slower than anticipated due to funding restrictions. The majority of full day care and sessional care providers are approved to offer Flying Start childcare places, along with some childminders, so families are able to choose the provision that best meets their needs. It also means there are less transitions needed for young children, as they can often stay with the same provider for Flying Start childcare, early education and wrap around childcare funded through the Childcare Offer.

There has been a further increase in demand for Welsh medium early education this year; in the summer term 2025 there were 97 children accessing Welsh medium early education in LA school nurseries, which accounts for almost 10% of the total cohort. There has been no change in take up of Welsh medium Flying Start childcare places, however this is only currently available in two areas of Monmouthshire. There have been expressions of interest for Welsh medium childcare in the Monmouth area, but we don't have provision to meet this demand and are struggling to develop this provision due to a lack of space in a suitable location and building restrictions in the area due to flooding issues. We aren't aware of any demand for childcare places in any languages other than English or Welsh.

We don't have specialist provision in Monmouthshire for early years children, instead there is an expectation that all providers will accommodate children identified with additional learning needs (ALN) or emerging needs. In order to equip settings to meet the needs of these children, we have an extensive ALN training package and a team of three ALN Advisors that facilitate person centred meetings for individual children and support providers to implement appropriate interventions. There is also a small pot of funding that is allocated to settings to provide additional support where there is evidenced need.

We conducted a childcare survey for parents and carers in December 2025 and we had a total of 129 responses spread across Monmouthshire:

- The highest concentration of responses was in Monmouth (45), followed by Abergavenny (32).
- The other responses were spread between Caldicot (23), Chepstow (16) and Raglan & Usk (13).

The majority of respondents (56.6%, 73 of 129) reported having at least one child of school age.

Current use reported by childcare type was as follows:

- Full day care - 46.5% (60)
- Before school club - 24.8% (32)
- After school club - 17.8% (23)
- Holiday club - 16.3% (21)
- Sessional care/playgroup/Cylch - 15.5% (20)
- Childminder - 14.7% (19)

Future intentions for use of childcare indicate growing pressure for out of school care, whilst use of full day care remains high:

- After school club: 51.2% (66)
- Full day care: 48.8% (63)
- Before school club: 47.3% (61)
- Holiday club: 43.4% (56)
- Sessional care: 22.5% (29)
- Childminder: 16.3% (21)

The implication is that anticipated demand is highest for the forms of care that most directly enable full working days and continuity across term time and holiday periods – i.e. full day care, after school clubs, before school care and holiday provision.

When asked if they had experienced any difficulties accessing suitable childcare, 77.5% (100 of 129) stated they had experienced at least one difficulty and 22.5% (29 of 129) reported no difficulty. The reported barriers were:

- Cost too expensive - 45.0% (58)
- No spaces available - 30.2% (39)
- Opening hours not suitable - 26.4% (34)
- School doesn't have out of school care - 9.3% (12)
- Poor quality - 5.4% (7)

- Facilities not suitable for ALN - 4.7% (6)
- No provision in walking distance - 2.3% (3)

Provision gaps highlighted by families were:

- Affordability & equity of funded entitlements - Parents frequently referenced the Flying Start eligibility “postcode lottery” and differences with England’s funding for under 3s.
- Wrap around and holiday childcare - Several parents noted limited or non-existent wrap around linked to specific schools, and breakfast clubs starting too late for typical working hours.
- Welsh medium places - Families flagged a lack of Welsh medium childcare
- ALN suitability - Parents of children with Additional Learning Needs described limited suitable places, concerns about 1:1 availability, and exclusion from holiday clubs where continence care is needed
- Childminders - A number of families emphasised the value of childminders (16 mentions) and asked that funding mechanisms remain accessible/sustainable for them, particularly where childminders better meet children’s needs (including ALN) or where nurseries are full.
- Quality and environment - Whilst only 7 parents/carers (5.4%) selected “poor quality” as a barrier overall, comments included concerns about limited outdoor space, staff turnover, and passive activities (e.g., TV) in some afterschool settings; families asked for structured activities (reading, homework, skills) to relieve pressure at home.

Suggestions from parents on what would help mainly focused on a few themes:

- Broaden funded support for under 3s and delink Flying Start from postcode to better match need.
- Expand wraparound (before/after school) and holiday club capacity, with earlier breakfast club starts and full day holiday hours (8am–6pm where possible).
- Strengthen Welsh medium pathways to ensure continuity for families choosing Welsh-medium education.
- Increase ALN appropriate places, including holiday/short-break options with 1:1 support and continence care.
- Sustain and integrate childminders within funded schemes (where viable) to increase flexibility and choice.
- Encourage quality improvements in some after school clubs (more structured, developmental activities; consistent staffing; access to outdoor space).

SUMMARY

We have made good progress this year in relation to developing and expanding childcare provision in Monmouthshire and there is a good spread of childcare provision across the county. As Monmouthshire is predominantly a rural area, monitoring childcare provision by ward or LSOA isn't particularly helpful, instead we look at it in five clusters around the four main towns (Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth) and the central area of Usk and Raglan. Each of these areas has a mix of childcare provision including full day care, sessional care, childminders and out of school care. We have also attempted to develop early years provision in the surrounding villages, particularly those that are large enough to have their own primary school. There are only two of these villages (Portskewett and Cross Ash) that don't currently have any early years provision and we have submitted a Business Justification Case to Welsh Government for capital funding to build a childcare setting on the site of ARW Primary School in Portskewett, near Caldicot.

Take up of all types of early years and childcare provision remains high in Monmouthshire. There are no obvious gaps in provision; however, our monitoring of places, along with feedback from parents, suggests there are areas where margins are tighter, particularly in parts of Chepstow and Caldicot. Our recent consultation with childcare providers suggested that there are existing providers that would consider opening another setting if an appropriate opportunity arose, hence we will work closely with these providers moving forward to increase and expand our childcare provision to ensure we are able to meet the growing demand for places.

There have also been developments in our out of school provision during the 2025-26 financial year. Every primary school in Monmouthshire apart from one runs a free breakfast club and 29 out of 30 of these also offer before school care on site at a nominal cost of £2 a day. This provision is run by school staff prior to the commencement of the free breakfast club, usually from around 8am, but it isn't registered with CIW as it runs for under two hours a day. Nevertheless, it meets the needs of most working parents and schools have been able to accept most childcare vouchers as payment for this provision. Around two thirds of all primary schools also have an after school club on site or arrangements with a local provider in the area to collect from their school. There are still four after school clubs that are not registered with CIW and can only run for under two hours a day. This is an issue for some working families, as this isn't always long enough and parents are unable to use childcare vouchers or tax-free childcare at unregistered provision; this issue was raised in our recent consultation with parents so will be an area of focus in the next financial year.

Demand for registered childcare during school holidays tends to be low, as families opt for the MonGames or SHEP and open access play provision, as this is much cheaper or even free of charge. Nevertheless, there are some families that would prefer to use registered childcare and we have seen a slight increase in holiday childcare provision this year and are looking to extend this into other areas of Monmouthshire next year.

Lack of childminders continues to be a concern for us in Monmouthshire, but we have seen the market stabilise more this year, with very few existing childminders suspending or cancelling their registration. Our main issue is that, despite working closely with Coram Pacey and offering financial support for childminder pre-registration training and start up grants, we are struggling to recruit new childminders.

We have been unable to meet the target in our Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) to develop cylch meithrin settings in each of the four towns of Monmouthshire and the lack of Welsh medium childcare provision was raised by parents in our recent parent consultation, along with the need to strengthen pathways to ensure continuity of provision for those families opting for Welsh medium education. We will continue to work closely with the Welsh Education Forum and the Welsh Promotion Subgroup to identify a way forward.

The childcare workforce is a concern nationally and a lack of qualified staff can be a barrier when settings are looking to expand their provision. We have worked closely with our four secondary schools to raise the profile of careers in childcare, and we are now offering the Level 2 Childcare Play Learning & Development (CCPLD) qualification as part of our post-16 curriculum. Our next step is to go into schools to speak to students that are studying the new Health, Social Care and Childcare GCSE. We have also developed closer links with job centres and we are looking to build on this and attend as many careers fairs and outreach events as capacity allows to promote careers in childcare and play.

The other barrier or gap in provision that has been raised by parents and carers is the lack of early years Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision. We don't currently have any specialist provision for pre-school aged children in Monmouthshire and this is an area that is being explored; nevertheless, our early years and childcare providers are equipped to meet the needs of ALN children and no child is turned away due to their needs. We will continue to provide a high level of support and training to childcare providers to enable them to meet the increasing level of need that we are seeing in our settings and to maintain the high quality of care and education.

Despite making progress against many of the targets set last year, priorities for the upcoming year are similar to the last few years and can be summarised as follows:

- *Increase the number of childcare places available for children under five years of age;*
- *Develop after school provision for all primary schools and ensure operating hours are sufficient to meet the needs of working parents;*
- *Increase provision of childcare for school aged children during school holidays;*
- *Continue to recruit and retain childminders;*
- *Develop Welsh medium childcare provision in Monmouth and Chepstow;*
- *Continue to promote the benefits of bilingualism and support Welsh medium childcare providers to expand their provision;*
- *Promote careers in childcare and playwork to increase the childcare and play workforce;*
- *Continue to promote the Family Information Service and government funded schemes that support with the cost of childcare.*

REVISED ACTION PLAN

Target	Why is it Required?	How will it be Achieved?	How will it be Monitored?	Timescale
Develop a further 2 full day care or sessional care settings or extend existing provision to offer more places for children under five years of age.	Places for children under five years of age are tight in some areas of Monmouthshire and, although there are vacant sessions, it is not always possible to offer a full-time place. The rollout of free childcare for all two-year-olds is likely to exacerbate this situation.	Monitor take up of places in full day care and sessional care through take up of Flying Start, Early Education and Childcare Offer, as well as regular communication with providers. Offer advice and support along with financial incentives to develop new provision or increase places.	Number of settings will be monitored through CIW monthly reports and take up of places will be monitored termly. Development grants will be monitored through CSG quarterly reports.	March 2027
Expand after school provision so all schools have an after school club on site or within walking distance.	Feedback received from parents is that there is a shortage of after school places in some parts of Monmouthshire, or that operating hours don't always meet the needs of working parents.	Childcare Development Officer will work closely with Clybiau Plant Cymru to develop additional after school provision and encourage existing providers to extend their operating hours. Development grants will be offered as an incentive.	Number of settings will be monitored through CIW monthly reports. Development grants will be monitored through CSG quarterly reports.	March 2027
Develop 2 holiday clubs in different areas of Monmouthshire.	Feedback received from parents is that there is a shortage of childcare during school holidays for school aged children.	Childcare Development Officer to work with existing clubs and new providers to develop holiday provision. Development grants will be offered as an incentive.	Number of registered settings to be monitored through CIW monthly reports. Development grants will be monitored through CSG quarterly reports.	July 2027

<p>Register 5 new childminders across Monmouthshire and support existing providers to at least maintain the current level of provision.</p>	<p>There is always a high turnover of childminders due to the transient nature of the job, but this was even more of an issue during the pandemic and the total number of childminders has reduced significantly in the last five years.</p> <p>Childminders are best placed to provide childcare during atypical hours.</p>	<p>Work in partnership with Coram PACEY to provide childminder briefing sessions and ongoing support through the registration process and on a campaign to recruit more childminders.</p> <p>Continue to offer financial support for pre-registration training and start-up grants.</p>	<p>Number of newly registered childminders and de-registered childminders will be monitored through CIW monthly reports.</p> <p>Monitor take up of pre-registration training through Coram PACEY support logs and record number of childminder start-up grants awarded on a termly basis.</p>	<p>March 2027</p>
<p>Establish a cylch meithrin in Monmouth and Chepstow so that there is Welsh medium childcare provision in each of the four clusters.</p>	<p>There is currently no Welsh medium pre-school provision in the Monmouth or Chepstow clusters.</p> <p>Lack of Welsh medium provision and distance from existing provision has been raised by parents as a reason for not accessing Welsh medium childcare.</p>	<p>Monmouthshire Early Years will work closely with Mudiad Meithrin to develop additional Welsh medium pre-school provision.</p> <p>Offer financial incentives such as development and sustainability grants to cover start-up costs and a proportion of running costs.</p>	<p>The number of Welsh medium childcare places is included in the Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP), and this is reviewed termly.</p>	<p>September 2027</p>
<p>Extend the number of places, opening hours or services offered by our existing Welsh medium childcare settings.</p>	<p>There is not sufficient Welsh medium childcare provision, in particular full day care and childcare during school holidays, to meet the needs of working parents.</p>	<p>Monmouthshire Early Years will work closely with Mudiad Meithrin and the existing providers to extend Welsh medium childcare provision.</p> <p>Development grants will be offered as an incentive to support settings to extend their provision.</p>	<p>The number of Welsh medium childcare places is included in the Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP), this is reviewed termly.</p>	<p>March 2027</p>

<p>Attend at least 12 events to promote childcare training opportunities and careers in childcare.</p>	<p>There is a lack of qualified childcare practitioners and this limits the development of additional childcare places, as well as threatening the viability of existing childcare provision.</p> <p>We need to do what we can to encourage more people to take up training in order to increase the childcare workforce.</p>	<p>Publicise the Careers in Childcare Booklet and share this widely through the website, social media and face-to-face meetings.</p> <p>Attend Careers Fairs and similar events to promote careers in childcare.</p> <p>Work with the four secondary schools to establish the Level 2 Childcare qualification as part of their post 16 curriculum.</p>	<p>Number of events attended, social media posts and any other forms of promotion are recorded.</p> <p>Enquiries regarding childcare training or childcare job opportunities will be logged.</p> <p>Number of students enrolling on the Level 2 Childcare course and completing the course will be recorded.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Continue to promote the Family Information Service and advertise the availability of financial support to assist with the cost of childcare (including Flying Start, Childcare Offer, Early Education & Tax-Free Childcare).</p>	<p>According to the parental survey and consultation with stakeholders, affordability is the main barrier to accessing childcare in Monmouthshire.</p> <p>There are many schemes available to support with the cost of childcare.</p>	<p>The Family Information Service will continue to promote new and existing childcare and the availability of financial support for childcare through our section of the MCC website and across our social media channels.</p> <p>Childcare Financial Support Booklet will be shared widely.</p>	<p>The Family Information Officer produces monthly reports including details of promotional activities. Users of the FIS website complete evaluation forms.</p> <p>Take up of Flying Start, Early Education and Childcare Offer are monitored termly.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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