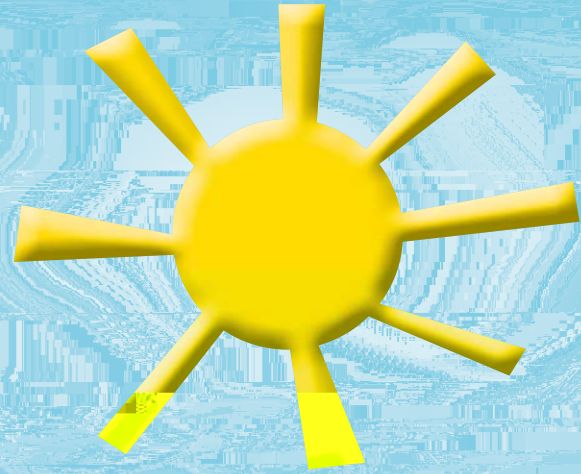


Blaenau Gwent Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Annual Refresh 2013



Executive Summary

Under the Childcare Act 2006, Local Authorities have a statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare for the needs of working parents/carers in their area for children up to 14 years of age or 18 in the case of children with disabilities.

A core element of this duty is to complete a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment every three years, with an Annual Update, which assesses the supply of, and demand for, childcare in the local authority and identifies any gaps in provision. The statutory guidance on undertaking a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment also recommends that an action plan is also developed to help address the identified sufficiency gaps.

This report is the Annual Update 2013 of the Sufficiency Assessment.

The childcare market in Blaenau Gwent is still relatively new. Until 10 years ago there were only 114 childcare places within the Authority and no quality assurance procedures, workforce development and other schemes relating to the childcare non-maintained early years sector. The Authority now has 1344 registered childcare places and a record 78 childcare providers.

October to December 2012 have not yet been released, but will form the basis

Acknowledgements

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council would like to thank colleagues in partner organisations and agencies for their contributions to the Annual Update 2012/13.

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1.0 Introduction

The Childcare Act 2006 requires every Local Authority in Wales to conduct a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA). The aim of this assessment is to provide Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council with the information it needs to identify gaps in the childcare market and plan the steps to secure sufficient childcare places. In this context, 'sufficient' means having the right type and the right volume of childcare places to meet the needs of all parents/carers in the local community, but with a particular focus on meeting the needs of families with disabled children, Welsh speaking households and those who are in work or who are seeking work.

The Welsh Government requires each Local Authority to provide a full Childcare Sufficiency Assessment every 3 years with a "Refresh" of the data published on an annual basis.

In April 2011, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council published its last Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2011-2014 with its 3 year strategic plan. This set out the findings regarding registered childcare for children up to the age of 14 or up to 18 with disabilities within the Authority.

This document is the Annual Refresh of the CSA for 2013.

A summary of the full Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2011, Action Plan and Summary Refreshes are all available on www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

2.0 Review of the Local Childcare Market

2.1 Background

The CSA 2011 identified that registered, childcare places in Blaenau Gwent had increased from 114 places in 2002, to 1,362. There had been a further 129 places created in 2011/12 increasing the total to 1,491 registered childcare places. This demonstrates the use of childcare by the community of Blaenau Gwent is now more common. However 2012/13 has seen the effects of the recession hit childcare in Blaenau Gwent, which has seen a net loss of 147 childcare places since the refresh in 2012, even though new childcare has been developed.

We must not be complacent about the economy and the setting's business infrastructure must be supported throughout these difficult times so growth continues in our sector. If the sector is not supported through this difficult time we could be facing a situation where we lose more settings and undo all the hard work we have invested into this sector over the past ten years.

As an Authority we need to build childcare places inline with demand. It is a very fine balancing act as surplus places cost money so we need to build places inline with demand. For this reason there is a need for development work to sustain existing childcare levels and build in areas where there are gaps.

3.0 Demographic Data

3.1 Birth Data

The following figure shows the difference between live birth in 2010 and 2011 and the variance.

Figure 1

Ward	Live Birth 2010	Live Birth 2011	Variance	Live Birth up to Sept 2012
Abertillery	49	42	-7	31
Badminton	25	20	-5	12
Beaufort	52	58	6	28
Blaina	52	50	-2	31
Brynmawr	58	55	-3	49
Cwm	61	40	-21	28
Cwmtillery	66	55	-11	34
Ebbw Vale North	59	64	5	30
Ebbw Vale South	46	51	5	35
Georgetown	39	41	2	22
Llanhilleth	39	58	19	25
Nantyglo	61	58	-3	31
Rassau	32	30	-2	17
Sirhowy	62	56	-6	29
Sixbells	34	26	-8	14
Tredegar Central and West	66	63	-3	45

Figure 2

Figure 3



development there is also a new integrated children's centre which opened in November 2012.

The new services at Ebbwfawr ICC will include the establishment of a 46 place Day Nursery for children aged 0-4, which will also offer wrap around services to the school with before, after school and holiday childcare.

The hospital – Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan opened in December 2010, and has created over 2000 full-time and part-time jobs. With the development of the Day Nursery it is proposed to carry out a childcare feasibility study alongside a Family Information Service outreach session, at the hospital to raise awareness with employees of local childcare options.

The leisure, sports, theatre and secondary education phase is still being developed.

Land has also been identified by the council to develop up to 720 new houses. At this time no interest from contractors has been put forward. It is anticipated that the residential area will include a range of types and style of housing, with a mix of ownership options including open market, intermediate low cost and other affordable housing.

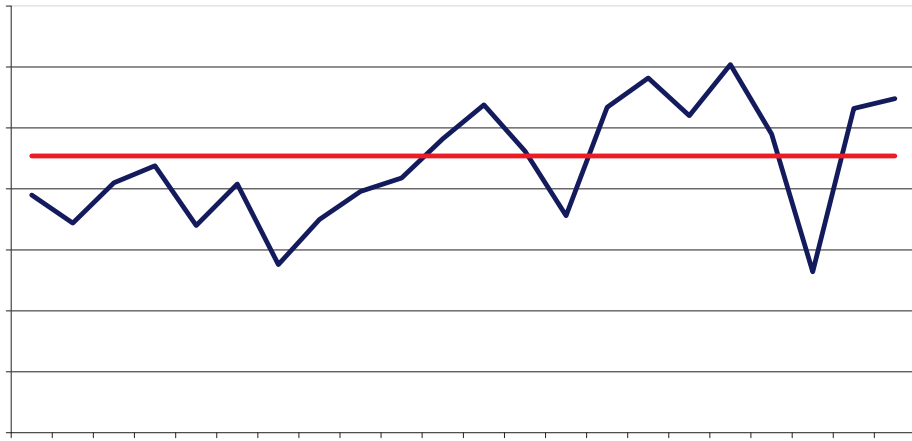
3.3.1 Other Areas That May Impact on Demand For Childcare

There are no army/forces in Blaenau Gwent, the nearest is in Brecon over 12 miles away. Our FIS survey to childcare providers tells us that they have stated that this base has no impact on childcare in Blaenau Gwent.

There are also no HM Prisons within Blaenau Gwent.

3.4 Child Poverty Initiatives

A high proportion of working age adults claim some kind of benefits higher than the Wales average, which in turn has a big impact on poverty and deprivation levels within the Borough, presenting a number of challenges for Blaenau Gwent. According to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, 43% of lower super output areas in Blaenau Gwent are in the most deprived fifth of Wales. As a result there is a comparably low level of annual household income (£25,800 compared to £30,600 for Wales). A recent Estyn inspection



'We (The Assembly Government) know that there are some significant challenges if we are going to provide the right type of childcare, in the right place, and of a quality that will support the development of children in the early years. A priority for this Child Poverty Strategy and Delivery Plan must be to promote accessible, affordable and high quality childcare – which offers a dual benefit for employment and early years development.

The Child Poverty Strategy highlights the commitment too;-

- Develop a strategic and coherent approach to childcare policy in Wales to provide integrated solutions to improve the supply and diversity of childcare provision. This will include developing the childcare infrastructure by increasing and improving the range of provision.
- Close the gap between demand and supply for childcare in Wales.
- Work with Local Authorities and the Sector Skills Council to develop and enhance the childcare workforce in Wales.
- Continue to promote the availability of the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit and where possible, to extend the reach of the scheme to parents with older children.
- Help schools to build on existing provision and consider what additional services or activities that they and their partners might develop, particularly in the field of childcare.
- Continue to support the development of out of schools care in Community Focused Schools and the development of activities for children and young people as part of that childcare package. Community Focused Schools can provide important wraparound childcare.

The key Child poverty initiatives are;-

Flying Start

Flying Start is targeted at 0-3 year olds in the most disadvantaged communities in Wales. It aims to create positive outcomes in the medium and long term. It is a prescriptive programme, based on international evidence of what works.

What it means in practice

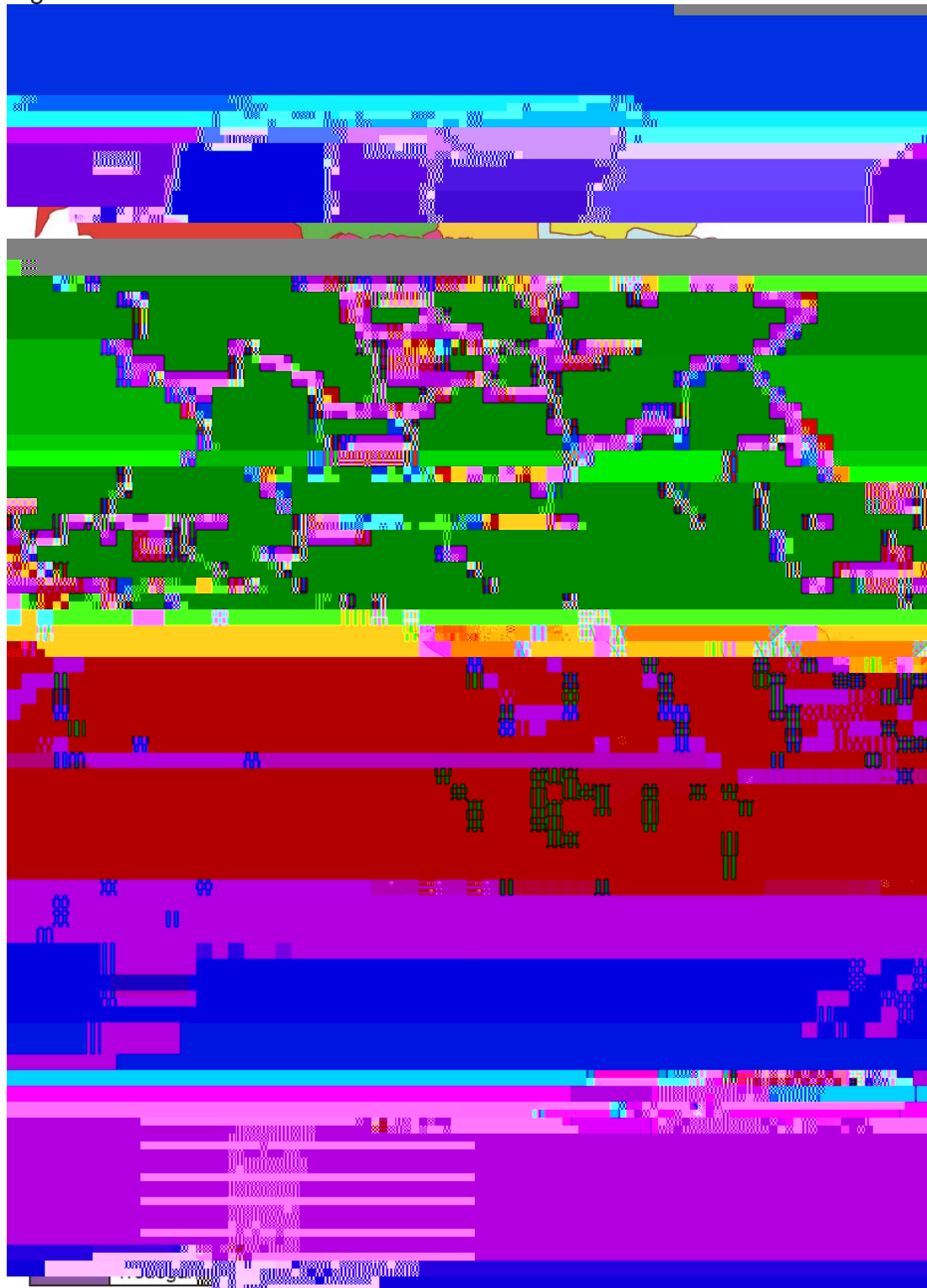
- free quality part-time childcare for 2-3 year olds
- an enhanced Health Visiting service (where the Health Visitor caseload is capped at 110 children)
- access to Parenting Programmes
- access to Language and Play sessions.

* Please see Flying Start plan in the appendix 1

Families First

4.1 Wards within Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council – Map of Wards

Figure 5



4.2 Analysis of Supply

4.2.1 Summary of Supply

There is a total of 78 registered providers located across Blaenau Gwent County Borough. All settings are registered with CSSIW (Care and Social Services Inspectorate), a fee is payable and therefore all parents accessing these provisions are eligible to claim the Childcare element of the Tax Credit.

We have seen an overall decrease of 147 registered places (5%) and a decrease of 11 vacancies throughout the Authority (1.2%).

This comprises of the registration of:

- 2 Pre-school Playgroups/Meithrin (Beaufort and Rassau)
- 6 Registered Childminders (Brynmawr, Llanhilleth, Abertillery and Blaina)
- 1 Out of School Club (Abertillery)

and the de-registration of:

- 3 pre-school Playgroups (Beaufort, Cwm, Tredegar Central and West)
- 3 registered Childminders (Abertillery, Badminton and Brynmawr)
- 1 Day Nursery (Blaina)
- 6 Out of School Clubs (Abertillery, Cwmtillery, Blaina, and Tredegar Central and West)

In conclusion to the factors identified in the data from demand, supply and other emerging data sections there are no new gaps or gaps that have not been planned for.

The key issues identified are still affordability, flexibility, location and affordable, accessible childcare for children with additional needs to meet the needs of both the parents and children. This is mentioned in a number of contexts. It is important for Blaenau Gwent EYDCP to continue to develop an understanding of current supply through ongoing locality needs assessment in the areas of affordability, flexibility and location.

4.3 Total number of Registered Providers

Figure 6 indicates that there were 78 CSSIW registered providers in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council as of the 31st December 2012 and overall decrease of 6 settings since 31st December 2011.

Of these:

- 44 (56%) are childminder settings an overall increase of 4 settings;
- 5 (6%) are private day nurseries an overall decrease of 1 setting;
- 13 (17%) are pre-school playgroups an overall decrease of 3 settings;
- 7 (9%) are holiday clubs and overall decrease of 2 setting settings;
- 9 (12%) are out of school clubs, of these 8 provide after school care, with an overall increase of 2 and 1 providing breakfast club provision, with no overall increase;
- 5 of the above provisions provide wrap-a-round care with an overall increase of 1 setting.

Figure 6

4.4 Free Provision

In addition there are:

- 25 Free Breakfast Clubs
- 29 Early Years education providers, of these 3 settings are in the non-maintained sector and 26 are located in schools
- 5 registered Flying Start Settings

5.0 Number of Places

5.1 Total number of Registered Places by setting type within the Borough

Figure 7

Provider Type	Registered Places 2011	Registered Places 2012	Net Difference
After School Club	261	245	-16
Breakfast Club	45	29	-16

Figure 9

Figure 9 Indicates the total number of CSSIW registered places by setting type. There are a total number of 1344 places compared to 1491 in 2011, a net decrease of 147 (5%).

5.2 Total Number of Childcare Providers offering a School Pick up and Drop Off Facility

Figure 10

Ward	Childminder	Day Nursery	OOSC	Playgroup/Meithrin
Abertillery	4			
Badminton	2			
Beaufort	2			
Blaina	1		1	1
Brynmawr	6			
Cwm	1			
Cwmtillery	4			
Ebbw Vale North	1			1
Ebbw Vale South	2	1		
Georgetown	2			
Llanhilleth	3			
Nantyglo	1			
Rassau	1	2	2	
Sirhowy	4	1		
Six Bells				
Tredegar Central & West				

6.3 Number of Vacancies for Children aged 8-17years

Figure 13

Political Ward Description	Over 8yrs - Under 17 Years	Total
Abertillery	7	7
on	1	1
Beaufort	3	3
Blaina	8	8
Brynmawr	43	43
	4	4
		1

6.4 Breakdown of ward vacancy places by Age Category and Languages Spoken

The below figure indicates that there is currently only 1 vacancy available in those settings that are of a dedicated Welsh Setting only and 477 vacancies are available in an English/Welsh setting and 130 vacancies available in an English only setting.

Figure 14 Number of vacancies for children aged 0-17 broken down by age category and spoken language for that setting



6.5 Number of Full Time Vacancies in Registered Settings for Children aged 0-17 Years

Figure 15

Provider Type	No Vacancies 2011	No Vacancies 2012
After School Club	97	63
Breakfast Club	26	10
Childminder	62	105
Day Nursery	65	72
Holiday Club	98	96
Playgroup/ Meithrin	100	91
Total	448	437

Figure 16

Figure 17

Figure 17 above indicates that there were 448 overall vacancies in 2011 and 437 overall vacancies in 2012 an overall decrease of 11 (1.2%) places.

7.0 Childcare Demand Update

7.1 Data Used

For the purpose of the annual update, demand data consists of that which is available without us carrying out the consultation process that will be repeated for the full assessment. The review uses quantitative data on

7.2 Childcare Demand by Childcare Type

Figure 18 shows the number of childcare enquiries made to the FIS office (via telephone, drop in, email and outreach) compares between the period April to April 2011 and the same period during 2010.

It shows that the biggest increases in demand for information on childcare (via FIS office) were for the childcare types of:

- Out of School Clubs which include; Breakfast, After School and Holiday Provision
- Pre School Playgroups
- Meithrins

Figure 18

7.3 Childcare Demand by Locality

Data regarding the ward locality of enquiries to the FIS is recorded when

7.4 Demand for Welsh and Bilingual Childcare

The Blaenau Gwent Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2011 Gap Analysis Report states that “based on the survey, there may be 9 (0.1%) of all families across Blaenau Gwent that are experiencing a barrier to accessing childcare because of the lack of Welsh language provision”

Among those not using childcare, Welsh Language provision was one of the least important reasons parents gave for not accessing childcare and may only affect 0.1% of families in Blaenau Gwent.

However the report on this consultation with parents and carers highlighted that 23% of parents from Brynmawr and Cwm strongly agree that there is enough Welsh Language Childcare, with 3 % (1) parent from Llanhilleth stated there was no suitable Welsh Language Childcare provision available.

There was no data collected to evidence parents wanting improvements in Welsh Medium Childcare.

In order to find out more about the Welsh Language childcare needs of parents and carers in Blaenau Gwent, it was decided through The Childcare Action Plan 2011-2014 to carry out a further survey of parents and carers in Blaenau Gwent. Findings of report to be included within full audit.

Blaenau Gwent is one of the authorities in Wales that has the lowest numbers of native welsh speakers and welsh learners in the whole of Wales. The response to the recent ESTYN inspection and the Welsh Education Strategic Plan is “how are we, as an authority going to stimulate demand for Welsh medium education”.

One of the biggest barriers with developing welsh language provision in Blaenau Gwent is not having welsh speaking qualified staff. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2011 identified that 74.2% of childcare providers needed help with using Welsh language in their settings. Childcare providers already have the opportunity to learn Welsh through the EYDCP training programme, and other training providers, however, childcare staff anecdotally report, that they don't have confidence to use what they have learnt in their settings.

To increase the demand for Welsh medium and bilingual childcare it is necessary to stimulate this area of childcare.

7.5 Demand for Childcare for Children with Disabilities or Additional Needs

The main evidence for issues in the childcare market experienced by this group came from consultation with parents/carers in focus groups.

Four parents (0.8%) said they wanted childcare that is better at meeting their child's disability. Parents and carers of disabled children cited lack of information as the main reason for not using childcare, followed by issues around trust and quality.

As part of the Blaenau Gwent Childcare Action Plan Blaenau Gwent FIS now must ensure that an information article is placed in the Children with Disabilities Newsletter, ensure the database hold sufficient information for parents regarding providers expertise to care for children with disabilities or additional needs (see section of Special Educational Needs) and also through e-mail distribution to settings update them regularly about both local and national support agencies for disabled children and children with additional needs.

7.6 Demand for childcare – other specific groups

There is little evidence that suggests families from BME groups experience different gaps in the childcare market in comparison to parents/carers generally.

There was a low response rate from BME groups to the questionnaire survey (just over 3% which may reflect the low BME population in Blaenau Gwent).

8.0 Funded Places

8.1 Nursery Places for 3 and 4 Year Provision

Information provided by the LA in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council indicates that there are 1,069 nursery places available for 3 and 4 year olds. This is broken down into 1024 places at schools (including community schools, church schools and Welsh schools) and 45 places available to registered non-maintained settings. For the academic year 2011/2012, in total 772 places were offered to eligible children 3 and 4 year olds whose parents required a nursery place. This is a take up of 76% of all children eligible for a place. The table on the following page indicates the individual breakdown and take up of places at schools and funded playgroups for the academic year 2012. The highest take up of school places was in the Abertillery area (79%) and the lowest take up was in Brynmawr/Nantyglo area (72%). 8.8% of places available were taken up in the playgroups.

Please note data is unavailable as to the profile of children taking up a place, the ward where the children live and whether they take up a place in the ward where they live.

Figure 20 Indicates nursery places available and allocated to children in the maintained and non-maintained sector for both schools and 3 Year old Education Providers within the Borough as at January 2013.

Figure 20

<u>SCHOOLS</u>	<u>PLACES AVAILABLE</u>	<u>PLACES ALLOCATED</u>
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Settings that are non-maintained education providers are also inspected by Estyn. Estyn reports for the non-maintained sector can be found on www.estyn.gov.uk

Acorns Nursery

Last inspected May 2012.

<http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/provider/6779101/>

Brynmawr Pre School

ESTYN inspection is due Summer Term 2014.

Last report from Summer 2008

<http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/provider/6779102/>

Mrs Tiggywinkles Day Nursery

ESTYN inspection is due Spring Term 2017

Last report from Spring Term 2011

<http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/provider/6779104/>

9.0 Quality

9.1 Quality Assurance

High quality childcare improves the life chances of all children – especially disadvantaged children and children from poorer homes with fewer life opportunities. High quality childcare gives children a great start in life, both educationally and socially. Research shows good preschool education between the ages of 2-5 years helps children achieve more in school, at primary level and even beyond. Findings published by the Institute of Education (2008) show those children's achievements in language, reading and numeracy increased in proportion to the number of months they spent in preschool.

Research also shows that for some children, long hours spent in poor quality childcare may not be beneficial. For this reason Blaenau Gwent EYDCP feel childcare is intrinsically linked to quality and one should not be without the other. It is felt that childcare and quality should be developed alongside each other and not separately.

Blaenau Gwent was one of the first EYDCP's in Wales to implement its own scheme and have shared good practice across other Authorities. The

development of high quality early years and childcare services is one of the key aims of Blaenau Gwent EYDCP, which underpins its commitment to quality with its own quality assurance schemes (2 schemes – one for each area of Childcare Early Years and Out of School Childcare) that were developed in 2003, and revised in 2011.

Childcare providers who complete a quality assurance scheme are demonstrating their commitment to quality.

In 2011, need was also identified to appoint a Quality Improvement Officer into the Blaenau Gwent Childcare Strategy Team to raise standards and provide quality improvement advice in the non-maintained early years/childcare sector, as this according to inspections and feedback seemed to be missing from the umbrella organisations support to settings. The Quality Improvement Officer is also responsible for data collection and monitoring of progress made of children attending preschool childcare settings.

Blaenau Gwent EYDCP tie in many incentives to promote quality and encourage settings to achieve quality assurance e.g. we market, promote and fund quality childcare. Settings can only access marketing support, Assisted Places, Additional Needs funding, Sustainability Grants and Expansion Grants wessss8d setS (nsion Grant.
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9.2 Pre-School Playgroup and Day Nursery Quality Assurance

Figure 21 indicates that all 5 day nurseries achieved the Blaenau Gwent Quality Assurance Award and 12 out of 15 preschool playgroups have also achieved the award, 2 of these groups are Cylchoed Meithrin delivering childcare in a medium of Welsh, and 4 of the playgroups are Flying Start childcare providers managed by the Local Authority.

Figure 21 also indicates that 2 of the 5 day nurseries and 3 playgroups have a current nationally recognised quality award.

10.0 Workforce Development

There is a rolling programme within the EYDCP for workforce development and we are constantly underpinning the movement in, out and upwards within the sector with new students and planning for increased supply and demand.

We have invested substantially in our Early Years and Childcare workforce over the past 9 years and also funded continuous professional development for our entire workforce.

Blaenau Gwent EYDCP has a continuous programme of workforce promotion, as we know this is a sector in Blaenau Gwent, which is constantly growing and can provide employment to the Local Community. The EYDCP works closely in partnership with the Genesis Wales Project to attract new students into the workforce with additional support from this project.

As well as providing information and support to those wishing to acquire National Qualifications in childcare, we provide fully funded training courses for childcare workers in Blaenau Gwent covering CSSIW regulations and supporting Continuous Professional Development.

The Annual Training Needs Analysis (TNA) carried out at the beginning of each academic year – September, helps us to better understand the need of all childcare providers and forms the basis of deciding what training courses there is need for in the forthcoming year.

Figure 23 Qualified Staff within Childcare Settings

Qualification	2011/2012	2012/2013
CCLD Level 2	53	55
CCLD Level 3	72	109
CCLD Level 4	24	21
CCLD Level 5	0	19
Above Level 5	0	8

Figure 23 shows that there has been a 1.8% increase in qualified staff holding a Level 2 qualification, a 20% increase holding a Level 3, a 12.5% decrease in Level 4, and 19 workers holding a Level 5.

Figure 24 Participants Working Towards Qualification

Qualification	Ebbw Vale Learning Zone 2011/2012	Ebbw Vale Learning Zone 2012/2013	Aspiration Training 2011/2012	Aspiration Training 2012/2013
CCLD Level 2	80	44	0	0
CCLD Level 3	72	115	0	0
CCLD Level 4	0	0	0	0
CCLD Level 5	0	0	15	21
Above Level 5	0	0	0	0

11.0 Childcare from Out of School Childcare Grant

The Out of School Childcare Grant in 2012-2013, has made a significant difference to the availability of out of school provision and other childcare in Blaenau Gwent.

Blaenau Gwent CBC alongside CPCKC have developed a further 4 out of school clubs, in areas identified by the CSA 2011 and according to demand identified by feasibility studies with parents.

Other factors affecting demand and ability to pay were taken into consideration when planning for clubs i.e. unemployment rates of school catchment areas, free school meals and the amount of working and training parents in each locality.

The childcare funding has enabled childcare provision to be more accessible to children and families. Strong links have been forged with schools when developing new provision. Where it has not been possible to develop a service within school premises, the school has been fully supportive of the alternative venue and assisted with marketing and promotion of the service. It is important that all out of school childcare provision becomes an integral part of the school ensuring involvement in school events, newsletters and websites. Sustainability of after school and holiday clubs is a big issue across Wales and came out as one of the highest areas for development in most Authorities CSA.

Sustainability grants are also made available through the Out of School childcare grant to ensure clubs open and remain open. The Out Of School childcare grant sustainability element has certainly helped Blaenau Gwent keep vulnerable settings open, but due to uncertainty about future funding levels to support the clubs we aim to use alternative means to support childcare business to be sustainable.

In addition to funding additional childcare places and funding sustainability grants, the Out of School childcare grant also supported;

- Inclusion Support Package
- Training and Workforce Development
- Quality Assurance Scheme for OOSC's

12.0 Welsh Medium/Bilingual Childcare Provision

Health) suggests that there could be more Welsh language/bilingual provision, and if there is a growing supply the market may respond automatically.

The CSA 2011 also said :-

14% of employers, strongly agreed that there should be more Welsh language/ bilingual provision.

50% of providers consulted felt that bilingual/Welsh language provision was good / excellent

37% stated they had plans in place or are interested in expanding Welsh/ bilingual provision which suggests that if there is a growing supply the market may respond automatically.

In the improvements section there was no data collected to evidence parents wanted more improvements in Welsh Medium Childcare

Blaenau Gwent Childcare Strategy Unit has commissioned Mudiad Meithrin to carry out a pilot project to provide intense welsh language support in 3 English medium providers to increase the confidence in staff to use welsh in their settings every day. As part of this pilot the parents of children attending the setting will be surveyed to identify whether they have seen an increase in the amount of welsh spoken by their children over the 10 weeks, followed by a parent focus group to further encourage and inform the development of welsh medium childcare and early years education.

In December 2012 a joint survey was carried out with Newport County Borough Council to identify demand for Welsh medium education and childcare. The findings of this survey are being analysed and will be used to inform the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment in 2014.

13.0 BME/Ethnic Minority Groups

In the CSA 2011, the factors affecting demand and ability to pay report show that non-white minority ethnic groups make up less than 1% of the population of Blaenau Gwent equating to just under 600 people, according to the 2001 census.

More recent population estimates (2009) show that the percentage of people from ethnic minority groups has increased from 2.1% in 2002 to 4.1% in 2009. The estimates also suggest that, in 2009, the percentage of people in Blaenau Gwent from minority ethnic groups was 2.0%, which would equate to approximately 1,400 people – a notable increase. Even so, Blaenau Gwent still has one of the lowest levels of people from minority ethnic groups in Wales.

The expansion of the European Union in May 2004 extended freedom of movement to 10 new member countries. Currently, there is no single data source that provides comprehensive information on migration at a local level. However, it is known that Blaenau Gwent has a number of people from the Accession (A8) Countries amongst others, living in the authority (information collected regarding school aged children). As of 2012, Blaenau Gwent has 226 children from Black and Ethnic Minority families, with the majority being Polish (58) and Indian (43).

There is one Gypsy Traveller site in Blaenau Gwent, Cwmcraehen, Nantyglo, which accommodates 33 families. Blaenau Gwent also has a small number of Gypsy Traveller families living in social landlord accommodation.

Due in part to Blaenau Gwent geographical location, it witnesses very few transient travelers settling in illegal encampments, however, the area does have a small number of Gypsy Traveller families that temporarily remain in the region looking for short term work or for family reasons.

There was also little evidence in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2011 that suggests families from BME groups experience different gaps in the childcare market in Blaenau Gwent in comparison to parents/carers generally. The findings were as followed:

- There was a low response rate from BME groups to the questionnaire survey 2010/11 (just over 3%) which may reflect the low BME population in Blaenau Gwent generally.
- Those parents/carers from BME groups who responded to the parent/carer survey were more likely to state that childcare was too expensive compared to other parents/carers. However, this is based on a small sample and caution should be applied in interpreting this finding.
- Focus groups with parents/carers at an ESOL class, showed that some parents /carers felt that more and better quality information is needed on what childcare is available and what funding and support there is for parents/carers.

Further consultation will take place with BME groups during 2013/14 to inform the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2014

14.0 Vulnerable Children

14.1 Looked after Children (LAC)

Children become looked after when their birth parents are unable to provide on-going care in either a temporary or permanent capacity. Children can either be looked after as a result of voluntary agreement by their parents or as the result of a care order. Children may be placed with kinship carers (family), network carers (extended family / friends) or foster carers depending on individual circumstances.

Figure 25 shows the updated number of Looked After Children living in Blaenau Gwent who have either been placed by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council or by another local Authority. It shows a total of 134 Looked After Children in Blaenau Gwent, which is a decrease of 3 children (1%) since the last annual update in 2012.

Figure 25

Ward	Total Looked After Children	Of which are disabled
Abertillery	1	-
Badminton	7	-
Beaufort	4	-
Blaina	5	-
Brynmawr	4	-
Cwm	6	-
Cwmtillery	3	-
Ebbw Vale North	12	1
Ebbw Vale South	5	-
Georgetown	8	-
Llanhilleth	7	-
Nantyglo	9	1
Rassau	6	1
Sirhowy	6	-
Sixbells	3	-
Tredegar Central & West	1	-
Out of County	47	2
Total	134	5

14.2 Child Protection Register

Child Protection is used to describe a set of usually government-run services

Figure 26 shows that there are 59 children on the Child Protection Register in Blaenau Gwent, which shows a slight decrease of 4 children (6%) since the last annual update in 2012. There are no disabled children on the Child Protection Register.

Figure 26

Ward	Total Children on Child Protection Register	Of which are disabled
Abertillery	-	
Badminton	1	
Beaufort	2	
Blaina	5	
Brynmawr	-	
Cwm	-	
Cwmtillery	4	

Figure 27 shows that there are a total of 839 known children in need in Blaenau Gwent, which is an increase of 211 children (34%) since the last annual update in 2012.

Figure 27

Ward	Total Children in Need	Of which are disabled	Of which are 18+
Abertillery	43	5	2
Badminton	14	2	-
Beaufort	66	8	2
Blaina	44	8	2
Brynmawr	56	4	3
Cwm	35	7	2
Cwmtillery	64	14	-
Ebbw Vale North	51	3	3
Ebbw Vale South	45	3	2
Georgetown	24	2	-
Llanhilleth	67	6	2
Nantyglo	71	12	6
Rassau	37	4	-
Sirhowy	56	11	1
Sixbells	26	1	-
Tredegar Central & West	98	16	4
Out of County	42	-	16
Total	839	106	

15.0 Provision for Children with Disabilities and Additional Needs

The Additional Needs subgroup of the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership provides information advice and guidance, to early years childcare providers regarding early identification and monitoring of pre-school children who present with additional needs.

The Education Psychology Service advisor works together with families, children and early years settings to promote positive progress in childcare settings for pre-school children and their families.

Blaenau Gwent EYDCP has a robust training programme in place, which takes into account all providers need to have informative training around disabilities and special needs. In addition if a setting has specific need around training this will be arranged individually for them to ensure a child is placed at their setting.

Blaenau Gwent EYDCP Additional Needs (AN) subgroup remit is:-

- To support inclusion for pre-school children with a disability or AN within local early years settings. This will enhance the learning environment and the social development of all pre-school children and thus help to promote the inclusive society that we are all striving towards.
- To promote positive opportunities for development and learning for pre-school children who present with AN in Blaenau Gwent.
- To develop guidelines to promote positive and informed transition between early years settings.
- To provide training and advice for staff in early years settings.
- To support local developments and interventions for meeting the needs of children in pre-school settings.
- To work collaboratively with the multi-disciplinary members of the EYDCP in order that pre-school children can benefit from quality experiences that meet their individual needs.

The CSA 2011 detailed that some parents were already aware and using the Blaenau Gwent EYDCP Schemes for disabled children and children with AN and they were extremely grateful for the individual advice and guidance given by the professionals and the funding for one to one support given to their child.

Parents also commented that the EYDCP AN scheme with one to one support for their child was invaluable.

47% of childcare providers consulted felt that provision for children with a disability or additional needs was good or excellent.

In 2012/2013 EYDCP funded 33 children with Additional Learning Needs to attend a registered childcare setting, providing between 2 and 4 sessions a

week. Of these 33 children, 31 (94%) children attended either a Pre-school Playgroup or Cylchoedd Meithrin, and two children out of 33 (6%) attended a Day Nursery.

Referrals for 1-1 support for children attending registered settings, are dealt with on a monthly basis by the AN sub group. Support is offered depending on the child's needs and the availability of funding for the extra member of staff that maybe required. All registered settings are inclusive of children regardless of their disability

15.1 Special Needs – Areas of Experience

Figure 28

Type of Provider	Qualified	Experienced	Basic Skill Level
Day Nursery	1	1	3
Playgroup/Meithrin	0	1	12
After School Club	0	1	7
Breakfast Club	0	0	1
Childminder	0	3	41
Holiday Club	0	0	7
Total	1	6	71

Qualified – Staff Qualified in a specific Special Needs Qualification

Experienced – Staff has a wealth of experience in Special Needs

Basic Skill – Staff has basic knowledge of Special Needs.

Figure 28 above indicates the type of registered provider and their area of experience in relation to working with children with special needs. It shows that only 1 registered provider identifies themselves as being fully qualified (1.2%), 6 registered providers deem themselves as experienced (7.6%) and 71 (91%) registered providers deem themselves at a basic skill knowledge level.

Figure 29

Please note this information is provided by the setting themselves.
showing Areas of Experience by Registered Provider Type 2012

16.0 Flying Start

The Welsh Government is committed to doubling the number of children who benefit from Flying Start from 18,000 to 36,000 by the end of the Assembly term, and has made available an additional £55 million over the next three years to support this expansion. This is a significant uplift in the funding available for this programme, particularly in the current economic climate, and marks the Welsh Government's absolute commitment to the Flying Start Programme which provides preventative services in the early years.

Flying Start brings together education, childcare, health and social services and combines the voluntary, private and statutory sectors to offer preventative interventions that influence child outcomes.

Phase 1 Flying Start - the original school catchment areas;

Sirhowy, Tredegar
Deighton, Tredegar
Garnlydan, Ebbw Vale
St Illtyd's, Llanhilleth
Swffryd, Llanhilleth

The Flying Start Programme in Blaenau Gwent has also benefitted from Welsh Government Capital investment to provide fit for purpose facilities.

Using the data provided by the Welsh Government, and local data and knowledge, the areas in Blaenau Gwent with the highest percentage of 0-3's living in income benefit households have been selected for the expansion. It is proposed that the following areas will then receive FS services between 13/15, based upon the data from the WG, BGCBC data and Aneurin Bevan Health Board data, ensuring that the expansion does not exceed the capped figure of 966

Welsh Government has confirmed the capped number for Blaenau Gwent for the expansion period as follows:-

639

2012/13

17.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Revised Childcare Action Plan 2011- 2014

If you would like more information about this refresh in Welsh, large print, Braille or audiotape, or for additional copies of this report, please contact the Blaenau Gwent Childcare Strategy Team – details below.

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Published March 2013

Appendix 1

Introduction

Under the Childcare Act 2006 local authorities have a statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare to address the needs of working parents / carers in their area for children up to the 1st September after they turn 14 years, or until they reach the age of 18 years in the case of children with a disability. A core element of this duty is to complete a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment every three years, which assesses the supply of, and demand for, childcare in the local authority and identifies any gaps in provision. The statutory guidance on undertaking a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment recommends that an action plan is also developed to help address the identified sufficiency gaps.

This document is the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council childcare sufficiency action plan. It identifies new or different actions that the local authority and its partners will undertake to address the gaps in childcare. Where appropriate, it also signposts to existing initiatives or actions that are already in place within the local authority. The action plan will also focus on the three key areas outlined by the Welsh Assembly Government, Affordability, Accessibility and Quality.

The action plan should be read alongside the following documents, which are published separately:

- 1) [Analysis of the Supply of Childcare In Blaenau Gwent](#)

Information held by Blaenau Gwent CBC was used to profile the childcare available in the borough. The analysis looked at number of places, number of children per place, opening times, vacancies, fees and quality. It looked at differences in the childcare market by type of provider, locality, age of child and time of year. The analysis of supply also included results from a questionnaire sent to all childcare providers asking about their views on the childcare market.

2) Analysis of the relevant factors affecting demand for childcare in Blaenau Gwent and the ability to pay.

This report brings together a whole range of economic information and data sets and presents a range of demographic and social - economic indicators that may affect either the demand for childcare or the ability to pay for it. Ward information such as the number of children living there, how many people are working and the deprivation factors of each ward are analysed in this section.

3) Consultation with parents and carers

This report evidences the views of nearly 1000 parents and carers living and working within Blaenau Gwent and the improvements they feel should be made within the childcare sector in Blaenau Gwent. The analysis includes the results of questionnaires distributed to 887 parents / carers in the Summer 2010 and presents an analysis of focus groups held with over 40 parents and carers from all different communities and backgrounds within Blaenau Gwent.

4) Consultation with children

A range of childcare settings across Blaenau Gwent were visited in Autumn 2010 to seek the views of children and young people accessing childcare. This report summarises the views of 36 children and young people living in Blaenau Gwent on childcare and how it could be improved to better suit their needs.

5) Consultation with Childcare Providers

This report summarises the views of childcare providers currently managing settings within Blaenau Gwent. It analyses their views on the local childcare market and how they suggest we can improve provision in the area for specific groups. They also detail their own plans for improvement and / or expansion within their own business.

6) Consultation with other key professionals

This report summarises the consultation with other key professionals in Blaenau Gwent such as Health, Education, Social Services, Early Years and Childcare and other preventative services. These professionals have an interest in childcare, and use childcare for their services or work with individuals, who need to use childcare.

7) Consultation with employers

This report summarises what various employers in Blaenau Gwent have told us about their views on the childcare market in Blaenau Gwent and their employee's needs around childcare.

8) Gap and Analysis and Summary

This report seeks to quantify the scale and extent of gaps within the childcare market. It examines income gaps, time gaps, age gaps, type gaps, specific need gaps and geographical gaps. The final report pulls together the key findings from all the other above reports to identify gaps in provision and offer recommendations for the future direction of the childcare sector in Blaenau Gwent. The summary is the document that will be circulated more widely for parent / carer use and general public awareness raising.

All the above reports can be accessed in full format by visiting <http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/education/19682.asp>

2) Flexibility/opening times - No childcare available at the right times 1.3% (Flexibility / wraparound / shift working etc) School Holiday Care

Improve both flexibility and sufficiency of provision of childcare linked to parent / carer work patterns.
Why parents/carers highlight flexibility as an area for improvement

3) No suitable childcare for the age of my children 0.8% - Lack of age appropriate care for under 5's and over 8's
Further develop childcare provision across the age ranges with particular focus on specific age groups, most notably 0-2 years and over 8's.

4) Location of childcare – not in right location 1.4%
Improving the geographical spread of childcare to better meet parental demand and to address the identified gaps in different types of childcare

5) No childcare that caters for my child's disability / additional needs 0.7%
To ensure chi

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Timescales: when the action will be completed by.

AS AT 5th MARCH 2012

Priority 1 – Affordability / Awareness - Ensure childcare is inclusive and affordable for all

	Key Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer and partners	Timescale	Measure of Success	Progress
1	The CSA identified that affording childcare was a barrier.	Ensure childcare is inclusive and affordable for low-income families	HB			
2		Roll out the Assisted Childcare Places Scheme Encourage awareness and uptake of Assisted Places in vulnerable areas through Families First.	All EYDCP Um Orgs to promote	Annually	Supported 111 Children in 2010/2011 Supported 131 children in 2011/2012 Supported 85 children in 2012/2013	March 2013 Assisted Places Scheme revised and childcare providers and external agencies trained to implement changes. Sessions increased from 2-4 per week to improve outcomes and benefits for the child. 4c8.ib117.943.398.473

	Key Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer and partners	Timescale	Measure of Success	Progress
		First and Childcare Providers.		thereafter.	hubs/Flying Start/Communities First and Childcare Providers staff trained as FIS champions.	
6		Raise the profile of the FIS through various media channels such as local free advertising, social media and website.	RB	Monthly	By March 2014 reduce by 20% (to 26%) the number of parents who did not know about FIS.	
7		Work with employers to encourage them to offer childcare vouchers. Increase awareness of employers to the benefits of childcare for their workforce in particular promoting WTC and Childcare Vouchers.	RB	By June 2013	List developed of childcare friendly employers with Blaenau Gwent.	
8	The CSA identified that 1.3% of parents felt that childcare wasn't available at the right times to meet their needs.	Identify why flexibility is an issue for parents accessing childcare and monitor through the FIS enquiry data.	RB	By March 2014	Reduce 1.3% of parents saying childcare is not available.	

9

To work with childcare providers to ensure they provide flexible childcare to meet the needs of parents.

	Key Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer and partners	Timescale	Measure of Success	Progress

	Key Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer and partners	Timescale	Measure of Success	Progress
17		<p>childminders, launch a recruitment campaign</p> <p>Research the demand for Day Nurseries: Tredegar Abertillery EbbwFawr ICC</p>	CB/EYDCP/HB	<p>Tredegar – December 2011</p> <p>Abertillery 2013</p> <p>Ebbw Fawr ICC September 2012</p>	<p>of childminders in all areas.</p> <p>Base CSA 2011</p>	<p>New day nursery opened in January 2012. Provider Identified for Ebbw Fawr ICC – anticipated opening September 2013</p>
18		<p>Research the demand for Preschool:</p>				

	Key Issue
22	
23	
24	
25	

Process	Progress
and ss s needs ed by an and e. children	Completed
children	Reviewed March 2012
children	Training on SEN Code of Practice and ASD provided by Psychology Service Provided each quarter
children	Increase in numbers evidenced by ALN subgroup minutes and invoices. Baseline monitoring is in progress.

26

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Key Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer and partners	Timescale	Measure of Success	Progress
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newsletters and internal and external communications.

available to them

Increase Social Media by

Key Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer and partners	Timescale	Measure of Success	Progress
				Scheme	1 - Level 3 Clubs working towards: 3 – Level 1 4 – Level 2 1 – Level 3
35	Implement QA schemes for childminders. Establish a focus group to identify suitable quality standards for childminders.	HB/KS	By March 2014	New quality process identified and rolled out to childminders	Initial and follow up meeting taken place to explore options in March 2012 Childminder network evening in January 2013 to inform providers of the new Quality Improvement Tool using the environmental rating scales.
36	Roll out of QA in Parent and Toddlers/Ti a Fi's	KS	By March 2014	75% of Parent and Toddler groups achieve the BG QA award.	As at Feb 2012 17 P & T/Ti a Fi's have Bronze award 9 have Silver award 6 Gold award
37	To ensure Welsh childcare options in Blaenau Gwent. To ensure the Welsh language is promoted throughout settings in Blaenau Gwent, in line with WG's Welsh Language Strategy "A living language for living"			CSA demand for Welsh Medium was extremely low. 0.01% Increase demand for Welsh medium childcare.	Agreement with LEA for development of unit as start of new Welsh medium primary in Tredegar. This setting has successfully moved into the premises, the Meithrin is now up and

Key Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer and partners	Timescale	Measure of Success	Progress
38	Establish a welsh medium holiday and after school club at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg.	CB/LF	July 2011	Parental choice	Sbri de Ri opened October 2011 and closed in October 2012 without registering with CSSIW
39	Welsh language officer to support settings	HB	April 2013	Increase the confidence of childcare providers to use welsh everyday within their setting	Welsh language pilot scheme tender awarded.
40	To develop a long-term action plan with MM to promote Welsh medium childcare.	CB/MM	Starting September 2011	3 meithrins in Blaenau Gwent March 2011	We would like to develop this further
41	Establish new Meithrins Marketing plan	MM	Starting September 2012	3 meithrins in Blaenau Gwent March 2011	This has been discussed and marketing strategies are being piloted for Abertillery.
42	Carry out an audit of Welsh language ability in all settings and develop a				

