

## Sedbergh Childcare Report

A comprehensive survey of parents and caregivers in Sedbergh with current or future needs for childcare.

### Extent of survey

- 52 families surveyed, a total of 100 children
- 86 children requiring child care of upwards of 1 hour per day
- 65 children needing childcare of upwards of 4 hours per day

### Days per week

- 72 children requiring childcare one or more days per week
- 50 children requiring childcare for three or more days per week

### Reasons

- 92% of those surveyed need childcare to work

### Costs and current satisfaction

- All families surveyed said that they were happy with the current costs of childcare, or would consider paying more.

## The need for childcare provision in Sedbergh

### Economic

Overwhelmingly the need for childcare is driven by care-givers' need to work. Without adequate local childcare, particularly wrap-around childcare, care-givers need to travel or work- reduced hours. Anecdotally we know there are parents in Sedbergh who want or need to work longer hours and are unable to because of Sedbergh's child care situation.

On a national level, research from the Centre for Progressive Policy (CPP) discovered 1.6m women with children want to work more hours but a lack of childcare is holding them back. Research revealed employment rates are 11 percentage points higher among women in areas with more locally available childcare opportunities. CPP estimates 1.7m women were prevented from working more hours, 1.3m were unable to taking a job, 1.1m had to reduce their hours

For Sedbergh this means families with less money in their pocket and less money to spend with local businesses. A lack of adequate, comprehensive wrap-around childcare may also dissuade those with young families or who are planning families, from moving to the area.

The Economic Appraisal of Sedbergh published September 2020 identified '*several key areas which need urgent attention if the town is to prosper including a fundamental shift in housing policy to support an increase in both affordable and open market housing. The risk is that without intervention such as house building, future employment growth will stagnate,*

*local state school pupil numbers will decrease, and the town will enter a period of managed decline.'*

Alongside housing policy is the need to make Sedbergh a desirable destination for those families whose children will enter the local state school. Early years and wrap-around childcare plays an important role in both attracting families and allowing those families to work. Arguably childcare is as important in the prosperity of Sedbergh as new family housing.

### Social

Social interaction is well-understood to be essential to child development. In a small community such as Sedbergh early years childcare provides the basis for the social relationships that will stay with a child (and their parents) as the child progresses into formal schooling and beyond. By dispersing the community to childcare facilities outside of Sedbergh this opportunity for relationship building is lost.

A further consequence of this is that if a child becomes comfortable in an early years setting parents may consider continuing their education there, which will have an impact on the numbers in Sedbergh's local schools.

### Environmental

Over a quarter of children are currently leaving Sedbergh for all or part of their care. Sedbergh is not well served by public transport so there is an increase in private car use in making these journeys, plus additional pressure on caregivers time, both of which could be reduced by more comprehensive local childcare provision.

### Benefits to a potential childcare provider

Our report has identified a clear need for comprehensive childcare provision in Sedbergh. And the need for childcare provision will increase with the proposed development of 50 new homes on Station Road.

Whilst childcare benefits the whole community there is the opportunity for a new provider to create a successful business. Of the parents surveyed the vast majority are happy with what they currently pay or would be willing to pay more.

### Concluding statement

Now is the moment of opportunity as the closure of key childcare facilities has left caregivers frustrated, at this point a new facility would almost guarantee their support. As the situation becomes more established and families find solutions outside of the area it will be harder to draw them back to Sedbergh.

A comprehensive wraparound childcare facility is essential for the economic development of Sedbergh as a town, for the social development and relationships of the next generation

and to minimise environmental impact by reducing unnecessary car journeys. It also offers an opportunity to a business with a clear and demonstrable need for its services.