

**Review of the London Development Agency's
childcare programme**

**London Assembly
Economic development, Culture, Sport and Tourism
Committee**

Review of the London Development Agency's childcare programme

Chair's introduction



Why does childcare matter? The basic answer can be found in the first paragraph of this report:

"The way a society looks after its youngest members is part of what defines it: so childcare concerns all of us, whether we have children or not."

Childcare matters because we value our families and our society. But it also matters because it is a vital ingredient in a successful economy. Childcare enables parents to work – indeed, it helps lift many parents out of poverty.

London has the highest rate of child poverty in Great Britain, and better childcare is one of the ways we can break the poverty cycle. But London also has worse childcare than in many parts of the country, because it's more expensive and harder to find staff. The problems are particularly acute for disabled children and some ethnic minorities.

This is why the improvement of childcare is a priority issue for the LDA. It's fundamental to tackling unemployment, poverty and inequality.

The Mayor's London Childcare Strategy recognises that London does not just need more childcare but that amenities should be more suitable, accessible and affordable for parents. Since implementation began in 2003, there have been some achievements, but there is a lot more work that needs to be done.

This report examines progress so far and identifies the shortcomings. It makes a series of recommendations about where action should now be focused to deliver more improvements.

I firmly believe that, if our recommendations are implemented, it's not just the children and parents who will benefit, but all of London.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Dee Doocey'.

Dee Doocey AM
Chair of the Economic Development, Culture, Sport and Tourism Committee

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Executive summary

In 2003, the Mayor published *The London Childcare Strategy: towards affordable good quality childcare for all*. This report is an examination of the LDA's achievements after two years of implementation.

The problems

Childcare is not just a personal, family or a social issue but is also an economic issue. It enables parents to work and, in some cases, escape poverty. This is particularly important in London, which has the highest rate of child poverty in Great Britain.

Childcare is more expensive in London; average childcare costs are about 25% higher than in the rest of Great Britain, and are higher again in many parts of Inner London. This makes it more difficult for parents to break out of the poverty cycle.

Childcare facilities are harder to sustain in London, partly because costs are higher, and partly because it is more difficult to recruit and retain childcare workers.

Childcare is also an equalities issue; minority ethnic groups have a proportionately greater need for childcare, and there is a lack of affordable childcare suitable for disabled children.

The role of the LDA

The LDA has the responsibility for delivering the Mayor's London Childcare Strategy. Because childcare brings together so many issues relating to employment, poverty and inequality in London, the LDA's corporate plan highlights childcare as a very high priority programme for the agency.

The LDA seeks a strategic role, working with various stakeholders to address childcare issues and improve provision in London.

We examined the LDA's record in successfully implementing the Mayor's strategy, in particular:

- Whether the LDA is increasing the availability of childcare in London; and
- Whether the LDA is contributing to making childcare more affordable for London parents.

Our findings

Given the early stage at which we reviewed the LDA's work on childcare, it is not yet possible to assess its success fully. However, we did find evidence of some strengths and some achievements in the LDA's approach. Nonetheless, as the LDA has acknowledged, there is still much more to be done to make childcare more affordable and more accessible to those Londoners who need it most.

In summary, we found that:

- the LDA has a well developed programme for implementing the Mayor's childcare strategy for childcare across London
- The LDA has established useful partnerships at the national level. But it needs to do more to monitor the involvement of the voluntary sector in childcare at a local borough level.

- The LDA is working with organisations representing private sector providers at the national level but it could do still more to monitor and support boroughs' involvement with private sector providers of childcare.
- there can be no doubt that the LDA and stakeholders are delivering more childcare places through the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative scheme
- in the first phase of its programme, the LDA has not yet done enough to address the specialist childcare needs of disabled children and to support their parents. We will closely monitor the second phase of the programme which will run pilot schemes to support childcare for disabled children and those with special educational needs. We expect the LDA to produce a timescale, sooner rather than later, for implementing the good practice that is identified through the pilot schemes .
- the LDA on balance is putting too much emphasis on centre-based care rather than flexible and home-based care.
- there are problems with insufficient training provision for childcare workers. We believe the LDA could build on its relationship with children's workforce training providers to promote additional specialist training and business skills which would increase sustainability. It could also use its role as the lead Regional Development Agency for childcare to ensure that this type of training is prioritised in government allocation of the national Transformation Fund for training.

The Conservative Group members on the Committee do not agree with the findings above and have produced a minority report which is attached to this report at Annex 1.

Our recommendations

1. In order to increase the provision of affordable childcare for disabled children and those with special health and behavioural needs, that the LDA, as a priority and matter of urgency:

- (i) take the lead in researching how data could be collected on demand and provision of childcare across London for children with disabilities and special health and behavioural needs; and work with the national strategic and voluntary sector organisations with expertise on the needs of disabled children and children with special educational needs; and with the London boroughs and other Regional Development Agencies to develop a methodology for collecting this data;
- (ii) include in the Childcare Affordability Programme further specific provision to fund and support childcare places for disabled children and those with special health and behavioural needs, based on the principle that appropriate and good quality childcare should cost no more to the family of a disabled child or child with special needs than it does to the family of a non-disabled child; and should campaign for the allocation of government funding based on this principle;
- (iii) in its role as lead regional development agency on childcare, promote among health and social care partners an earlier and much more rapid system of assessment of the childcare needs of disabled children and children with special needs, so that they do not have to wait for long

- periods for a nursery place with appropriate support while this assessment is carried out;
- (iv) include in its business and skills programme specific initiatives designed to increase the availability of skilled childcare workers in London, including those qualified to work with disabled children and children with special health or behavioural needs; and initiatives designed to improve business skills among childcare workers, to promote sustainability; and should promote this approach to the Children's Workforce Development Council and to the Government in allocating the Transformation Fund for the training of childcare workers.
2. In order to ensure that the remaining childcare places under the Childcare Affordability Programme are directed to where they are needed most:
 - (i) that the LDA conduct a strategic mapping exercise to show existing childcare provision and need across London and
 - (ii) that LDA continue to target funding to parents who cannot afford childcare, but that it also target funding under the Childcare Affordability Programme to areas where there are particularly low numbers of childcare places per 1,000 children, high demand for places, and economic deprivation
 3. That the LDA provide funding and support for training of childcare workers in business planning and administration skills.
 4. That the Mayor continue to work with the London Boroughs to promote increased take-up of Childcare Tax Credit in London.
 5. That the LDA develop a strong strategy to disseminate the information on its pan-London childcare website to parents without internet access.
 6. That the LDA continue to consult widely with private sector and voluntary sector childcare organisations at a strategic and national level; and and that it monitor and support boroughs' involvement with private and voluntary sector providers of childcare at the local level.
 7. That the LDA continue to develop its specific plans to support home-based and flexible childcare places and to include childminders among the groups that it supports; and that it promote, in partnership with the National Childminding Association, the Childcare Affordability Programme among registered childminders, particularly among those looking after disabled children and those with special needs.
 8. That the LDA work with the London boroughs to identify the pattern of childcare across London that would best address the needs of local communities; and initiate a registration campaign among informal childminders and community groups, to increase the number of registered childminders eligible for assistance from the Childcare Affordability Programme.

We feel that it would be useful for the Committee to revisit this issue within the next 1-2 years so that the LDA's performance could be judged more fairly over a longer timeframe.

The One London Group also feels that a further review should consider whether the LDA is the optimum mechanism to deliver the mayor's childcare strategy.

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this review

1.1.1 The London Development Agency (LDA) spends more than £300 million a year to deliver the Mayor of London's strategies to support the growth of new and existing businesses, the creation of new jobs, and the development of new communities. In 2003, the Mayor had published *The London Childcare Strategy: towards affordable good quality childcare for all*. The way a society looks after its youngest members is part of what defines it: so childcare concerns all of us, whether we have children or not. We decided that, two years into the implementation of this enormously important strategy, an examination of the LDA's achievements would be appropriate and timely. Our terms of reference were:

- to evaluate the effectiveness of the LDA in working with other stakeholders to increase the availability, accessibility, affordability and quality of childcare across London, as proposed in the Mayor's childcare strategy to date;
- to assess the LDA's performance in meeting its targets on childcare and how this is monitored and evaluated.

1.2 How we carried out our investigation

1.2.1 We issued a public invitation for organisations and individuals with an interest in the LDA's work on childcare to write to us with their views. We received responses from 19 organisations (these are listed in Annex 3 at the end of this report). We also held a public meeting of the committee on 12 July 2005 to which we invited representatives of the following organisations:

- the London Development Agency (LDA)¹
- the Association of London Government²
- Contact a Family³
- the Pre-school Learning Alliance⁴
- the Richmond Playgroup Network⁵

¹ As the lead Regional Development Agency on Childcare, the LDA is working with local authorities and other partner organisations to create more affordable childcare places across the Capital and to close the childcare gap.

² The Association of London Government is working closely with the LDA and other partners to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of childcare to meet local needs and that childcare services are joined up.

³ Contact a Family provides support, advice and information to families with disabled children across the UK through its freephone helpline and information services.

⁴ The Pre-school Learning Alliance is a charity that has a network of over 15,000 community based early years settings that provide funded nursery education and childcare for half a million children.

⁵ Richmond Playgroup Network is a charity and a local voluntary organisation providing courses and training for childcare workers, parents and carers.

1.2.2 Members of the Committee visited Mudchute Farm Nursery in Tower Hamlets and Wetherells Nursery in Hackney – local childcare providers who have also benefited from support and funding from the LDA – where we met staff delivering childcare, as well as parents and children.

1.2.3 We would like to thank staff of the LDA for providing us with a considerable amount of information to explain how they are implementing the Mayor's childcare strategy; all those who took the time to write to us; and those who attended meetings with us.

2. Our findings

2.1 We looked at the LDA's work at a very early stage in its development when many of its plans had yet to be implemented. We felt it was important to establish a benchmark against which progress towards implementation could be measured in future. The Committee intends to review progress throughout the course of the programmes. Given the early stage at which we reviewed the LDA's work, it is not yet possible to assess its success fully. However, we did find evidence of some strengths and some achievements in the LDA's approach. Nonetheless, as the LDA has acknowledged, there is still much more to be done to make childcare more affordable and more accessible to those Londoners who need it most.

2.2 We found that:

- the LDA has a well developed programme for implementing the Mayor's childcare strategy for childcare across London that should add value by: providing a regional perspective; analysing the barriers to good childcare provision, especially those that are particular to London; identifying gaps in provision and need across the capital; and using funding to address strategic need
- the LDA has established useful partnerships with statutory sector organisations and with some of the larger voluntary organisations at the national level. But it needs to do more to monitor the involvement of the voluntary sector in childcare at a local borough level
- the LDA is working with organisations representing private sector providers at the national level. We understand that two thirds of the childcare places funded by the LDA's Childcare Affordability Programme are with private sector providers. However, we believe the LDA could do more to monitor and support boroughs' involvement with private sector providers of childcare for whose very small businesses sustainability is a serious problem.
- there can be no doubt that the LDA and stakeholders are delivering more childcare places through the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative scheme
- in the first phase of its programme, the LDA has not yet done enough to address the specialist childcare needs of disabled children and to support their parents. We will closely monitor the second phase of the programme which will run pilot schemes to support childcare for disabled children and those with special educational needs. We

expect the LDA to produce a timescale, sooner rather than later, for the good practice that is identified through the pilot schemes .

- the LDA on balance is putting too much emphasis on centre-based care rather than flexible and home-based care. We would like to see further information on the LDA's efforts to promote the Childcare Affordability Programme among registered childminders who have not, so far, participated in the programme.
- there are problems with insufficient training provision for childcare workers, in particular around the provision of good quality care for children with special needs and disabilities. Although the LDA does not provide training directly, we believe it could build on its relationship with children's workforce training providers to promote additional specialist training and also to promote training in business skills which would increase the sustainability of smaller childcare providers. It could also use its role as the lead Regional Development Agency for childcare to ensure that this type of training is prioritized in government allocation of the national Transformation Fund for training.

2.3 The Conservative Group members on the Committee do not agree with the findings above and have produced a minority report which is attached to this report at Annex 1.

3. Why does childcare matter?

3.1 It may seem strange to some people that a committee whose job is to consider economic development issues has decided to examine a childcare strategy. But childcare is not just a personal, family or a social issue: it is an economic issue as well, as the Mayor and the Government have recognised.

3.2 Being able to entrust their children to others during working hours is what enables parents to work. There is a very close relationship between *unemployment* and *poverty*. Children at the greatest risk of poverty live in homes where nobody is in paid employment, and children have the lowest risk of poverty when both parents have paid jobs.⁶ Childcare provision enables parents to escape poverty by getting jobs and training. So ensuring that parents have access to good quality childcare that they can afford is one way of tackling poverty.

3.3 To understand the impact on the UK economy as a whole of providing free childcare, the Daycare Trust commissioned PriceWaterhouseCoopers to undertake research to quantify the potential economic costs and benefits of universal pre-school childcare for the UK over the full working lifetime of both the parents and the children affected by the policy. They published their findings in a policy paper in September 2003.⁷ The paper concludes that moving to universal childcare for all one to four year olds could be beneficial in terms of increasing female employment and earnings, although it would also have significant costs.

3.4 But it is not just parents who benefit economically from childcare provision so that they can go out to work. We were told by the LDA that the childcare sector is vitally important to the UK economy as it *employs* over 200,000 people nationally through day care nurseries alone. Despite the importance of this sector to the economy, closure rates

⁶ Based on Department of Work and Pensions *Households below average income* (2005) table 4.4

⁷ Daycare Trust 'Universal pre-school childcare provision: towards a cost-benefit analysis for the UK' (Facing the Future Policy Paper No.7)

among childcare providers remain high compared to other small businesses. As parents find it difficult to afford childcare, providers of childcare across the UK are struggling to survive, with occupancy rates averaging only 76% and some falling as low as 50%, according to the Daycare Trust.⁸ *Affordability* of childcare is important not only for parents but for the *sustainability* of the organisations that provide it. The links between these factors are even stronger in London, as we discuss in the next section.

4. What is special about London?

4.1 *London has more poverty*

4.1.1 London has the highest rate of child poverty in Great Britain, with 41 per cent of children living in households with incomes below the government's poverty threshold of 60 per cent of median income. In Inner London, this percentage rises to 51 per cent of children. There has been no consistent change in this rate of child poverty in London since 1999/2000.⁹

4.1.2 London has a high rate of child poverty because children in those types of household with higher risks of poverty are over-represented in London. Previous research by the GLA and others has established the links between the employment status of parents and child poverty in London¹⁰. Women with children, both lone parents and those in couples, have lower rates of employment in London than in other parts of the country. Overall, 54% of women with children in London were in employment in 2001/2 compared with 65% in the whole of the UK. This contributes to poverty levels by increasing both the number of workless households and the number of single earner couple households (households with two adults only one of whom is doing paid work). One in five single earner couple households are in poverty. Table 1 shows for Great Britain and London the risk of poverty for children in different types of household, defined in terms of family type and employment status.

⁸ Daycare Trust paper "Childcare for all?" November 2005

⁹ Greater London Authority Data Management and Analysis Group *Income poverty in London 2003/4* (2005)

¹⁰ Mayor of London *London Divided* (2002) chapters 2 and 3

Table 1: Percentage of children in poverty by family type and economic status of household. Three year sample 2001/02-2003/04, households including the self-employed

Family type and economic status	Before housing costs		After housing costs		Percentage point difference	
	London	Great Britain	London	Great Britain	London	Great Britain
Lone parent working	12	15	23	24	12	9
Lone parent – not working	41	48	80	75	39	27
Couple – self employed	19	23	25	27	6	4
Couple – both in full time work	5	2	2	2	-3	1
Couple, one working full time, one part-time or not working	9	9	15	13	6	4
Couple – one or more in part time work only	49	50	67	57	18	7
Couple – neither working	70	67	89	79	18	12
All (2003/04)	27	21	41	28	14	7

Source: Households Below Average Income 2001/02 to 2003/04

4.1.3 To assist in addressing issues of poverty, Government has introduced a number of initiatives in recent years to help support families back into work. The Working Tax Credit, which was introduced in 1999 to increase the incomes of families on low salaries, has had little impact in London¹¹. The low take up of tax credits and the limited effect of this tax credit system on London's expensive childcare places remain key issues.

4.2 Childcare costs more in London

4.2.1 Research has consistently shown that lack of affordable or suitable childcare is one of the main barriers to employment faced by women with children in London (it can also exclude parents, usually mothers, who take the most responsibility for childcare, from voluntary work). Average childcare costs in London are about 25 per cent higher than in the rest of Great Britain, and are higher again in many parts of Inner London.¹² This makes it even more difficult for parents to break out of the poverty cycle. Affordability is an even greater issue for parents of disabled children because the specialist care many of them need is more expensive; and for parents who are themselves disabled, affordability is an issue because they are likely to be on very low incomes.¹³

¹¹ Mayor of London: *The London Childcare Strategy* (2003)

¹² Mayor of London: *The London Childcare Strategy* (2003)

¹³ Mayor of London: *The London Childcare Strategy* (2003)

4.3 *Childcare is less available in London because it is less sustainable*

4.3.1 The organisation, End Child Poverty¹⁴, told us that there is insufficient childcare to meet the need in London and this situation is made worse by high closure rates. We heard that the GLA has estimated that only a third of the childcare provision required by working women is currently available; and that a survey by End Child Poverty showed that one nursery had closed for every four that had opened, one out of school club had closed for every two new clubs and that, for every child-minding business that starts up, another one closes.¹⁵

4.3.2 Lack of access to suitable premises is affecting the availability and sustainability of childcare in London. One reason for the high closure rates of nurseries is that costs here are higher than the rest of the country and land space is at a premium. Greater London Enterprise published a study in 2004 with the Daycare Trust, which looked at sustainability of childcare in London¹⁶. They discovered that shortages of land and availability of premises at affordable rentals are barriers to preventing new providers from setting up. It is not just the cost of land and rental of premises that are a problem: the costs of converting existing premises to meet appropriate health and safety and care standards can also be prohibitive, particularly in London. More imaginative ways of using existing buildings and sites are needed; and we will explore later in this report some ways of increasing availability through flexible childcare such as mobile crèches and by providing more support to home based childcare.

4.3.3 It is not only the cost of land and premises that makes childcare businesses more difficult to sustain. Sustainability is an issue – often in the most deprived areas – because childcare workers often have not had access to the business planning and administration skills necessary for running successful small businesses, which is what many childcare providers are. Childcare workers may not always see their work in this commercial light, but business skills are necessary for sustainability, nonetheless. We believe that the LDA should provide funding and support for training of childcare workers in business planning and administration skills.

We recommend that the LDA provide funding and support for training of childcare workers in business planning and administration skills.

4.4 *There is a greater need for flexible childcare in London*

4.4.1 Many parents, particularly mothers, work part time in order to fit in with their children's needs. In London, there are fewer part-time jobs. Only 24 per cent of women in London with children aged under five work part time, compared with 36 per cent of all women with children in this age group in the UK as a whole¹⁷. In addition, many people who work in London have to commute long distances often because of the cost of housing. This means that parents who do find full-time work need more *flexibility* in the childcare provided for their children: for example, they may need childcare very early in the morning or after school hours. Unfortunately, this kind of flexibility is even more

¹⁴ End Child Poverty is a coalition of organisations and individuals committed to ending child poverty in the UK

¹⁵ End Child Poverty "Capital Losses: London's Child Poverty Problem"

¹⁶ *Making childcare work in London: creating sustainable services for children and families*, Greater London Enterprise, January 2004

¹⁷ Annual Local Labour Force Survey, 2001/02

difficult to provide in London because of the costs and staffing issues discussed above and below.

4.5 *Childcare workers are more difficult to recruit and retain in London*

4.5.1 Childcare employment is characterised by low pay and low status. This makes recruitment and retention of childcare workers more difficult in London because of the high cost of living here. The Mayor's childcare strategy refers to the disillusionment of students on childcare training courses when they see the levels of pay and conditions on offer in the childcare sector. For instance, over 40% of the nursery workforce are young women aged 24 or under and a nursery worker in a private day nursery earns approximately £8,000 a year.¹⁸ Nurseries struggling to stay open find it difficult to find, afford and retain good quality, older staff who can earn more in other jobs.

4.6 *Childcare in London is an equalities issue*

4.6.1 As the Mayor's childcare strategy point out, childcare is a particularly important issue for black and minority ethnic groups, who are more likely to be living in poverty. The Department for Work and Pensions found that 40 per cent of all lone parents in London were from black and ethnic minority groups, compared with less than ten per cent nationally. Research on childcare in Newham found that black parents were particularly likely to want day care before 9.00 am and between 4.00pm and 6.00pm, adding to the need for greater flexibility in childcare referred to above¹⁹.

4.6.2 We were particularly struck by the difficulties for disabled children and their parents in finding appropriate, affordable childcare in London. Like other parents, many parents of disabled children want to go out to work to raise their family income, especially as it can cost three times as much to bring up a disabled child²⁰. Yet in London the scarcity of accessible childcare services means that parents of disabled children are less likely to be able to take up employment, or undertake training or education which could help increase their income. As the Mayor's childcare strategy points out, the additional costs of caring for a disabled child coupled with the high costs of childcare and housing in London means that the income from work needs to be even higher than for other parents.

4.6.3 Despite the obvious need for reliable, London-wide information on numbers of disabled children under 5, and the number of childcare places available for disabled children, we were unable to find such information. We say more about this issue in section 9 below.

4.6.4 Government funding for childcare, for example under the Sure Start programme, was directed initially at the 20 per cent most deprived areas. While this may have been appropriate as a means of getting start-up funding out to communities with considerable disadvantage, it is now recognised that it did not reach deprived parents who live in more affluent areas and that more affluent parents in deprived areas may have benefited disproportionately. More recent government initiatives, such as the network of Children's Centres now being established are, in part, designed to address this issue by making access to provision more universal.

4.6.5 However, universal provision raises issues of its own, in relation to groups of parents or children who have particular needs. The table at Annex 4 shows the number of

¹⁸ Mayor's London Childcare Strategy November 2003

¹⁹ *Childcare research*: research carried out for the London Borough of Newham, Newham LB, May 2000.

²⁰ *Childcare for disabled children and children with special educational needs*, Daycare Trust, Oct 2005.

childcare places per 100 in each of the London boroughs. From this it appears that there are significant inequalities on the supply side across London. However, it is important to be aware that simply increasing the number of places in centre-based care in an area may not necessarily address the need in that area. For example, certain communities may have a strong preference for home and/or extended family based care. For that reason, we believe that the LDA should work with the London boroughs to identify the pattern of childcare across London that would best address the needs of local communities; and that it should promote the childminding register among communities where there is a tradition of informal childcare, to enable these communities to have greater access to the Childcare Affordability Programme.

We recommend that the LDA work with the London boroughs to identify the pattern of childcare across London that would best address the needs of local communities; and initiate a registration campaign among informal childminders and community groups, to increase the number of registered childminders eligible for assistance from the Childcare Affordability Programme.

5. The role of the LDA

5.1 The Mayor launched London's Childcare Strategy 'Towards affordable good quality childcare for all' in November 2003 acknowledging that affordable accessible childcare is important to all parents who work and live in London. The Strategy is intended to create a vision and a framework for developing childcare as part of London's developing economy. Its purpose is to create an opportunity both to focus strategically on childcare resources for London as a region and to respond directly to London's childcare issues.

5.2 The LDA has the responsibility for delivering the Mayor's London Childcare Strategy. There are 17 proposals within the strategy that aim to:

- increase the availability of quality childcare, through LDA funding, using planning powers and taking action on low pay;
- make quality childcare more affordable for parents, through promotion of tax credits and urging their reform to reflect higher costs in London;
- promote family friendly employment practices through engagement with employers and making the case to Government to improve tax incentives for childcare assistance to enable parents to balance work and family life;
- improve information and communication, by mapping the range of childcare provision and its cost, monitoring its availability and suitability for black and ethnic minority families, and providing information in a childcare guide and website for London; and,
- establishing projects that provide skills and employment opportunities supported by childcare to enable parents to access learning and employment.

5.3 Because childcare brings together so many issues relating to employment, poverty and inequality in London, the LDA's corporate plan highlights childcare as a very high priority programme for the agency. It outlines the LDA's role in taking forward the Mayor's childcare strategy and supporting the implementation of national childcare strategies.

5.4 We were interested in finding out whether the LDA is playing a genuinely strategic role across the London region and whether it is adding value to work that is being done by

other agencies, such as the London boroughs. The LDA aims to work with key stakeholders to develop pilot schemes from which lessons can be learned and applied more widely. It also wants to develop specialist childcare programmes and to plug gaps in provision that have regional significance. It is developing programmes that test and challenge existing policies and address issues that hinder parents' access to childcare provision, such as flexibility and affordability.

5.5 We were told that, in supporting the childcare sector, the LDA's aim is to develop and deliver an investment programme that links the related innovation, enterprise, competitiveness and investment agendas.

5.6 The Mayor's economic development strategy commits the LDA to delivering the childcare strategy by supporting:

- London's childcare businesses and workforce;
- London's childcare information and marketing services;
- the growth of London's childcare places; and
- the affordability of London's childcare provision.

5.7 This translates into the four LDA Childcare Programme themes:

- Childcare Affordability Programme 2005-2008;
- Childcare Business and Skills Programme 2006-8;
- Childcare Capital Investment Programme 2006-8; and
- Childcare Marketing and Intelligence Programme.

5.8 The LDA told us that these programmes will not operate exclusively but are being developed to complement each other and support a stronger infrastructure for London's childcare sector. The Childcare Affordability Programme seeks to make affordable childcare provision; the Business and Skills Programme seeks to support the sustainability of childcare businesses and the quality of the workforce of new and existing businesses; the Childcare Capital Investment Programme supports the creation of additional childcare spaces; and the Childcare Marketing and Intelligence Programme seeks to improve information on childcare and to promote all of the LDA childcare themes.

5.9 The Mayor's London Plan includes requirements for local authorities to consider including childcare facilities in new developments. The GLA is taking this proposal forward and work is under way to look at how Olympics developments can include childcare facilities. The LDA was planning to hold a conference for planners and developers in February 2006 to influence the use of new developments to support childcare. We understand that this has not yet happened (at April 2006).

6. The LDA's work with stakeholders

6.1 One of the LDA's objectives is to improve the integration of the Mayor's economic development strategy with the work of the Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs), local authorities, Jobcentre Plus, the Department for Education and Skills and other key stakeholders such as the London boroughs. A measure of the LDA's effectiveness is how well it plays this strategic role of bringing together such stakeholders.

6.2 Partnership with Government

6.2.1 The Department for Education & Skills Sure Start programme initially aimed at the most deprived wards has helped create thousands of childcare places. However, as we note in section 5.6 above on its own it has been unable to address the long-term sustainability issues or to help families outside of the most deprived wards. Building on Sure Start the Government's new Children's Centres programme, which is not tied to particular wards aims to have a centre providing integrated services in every community by 2010. Sure Start Children's Centres - and the extended schools programmes that enable childcare from the age of 6 to take place in schools beyond traditional school hours - are part of the Government's 10 year childcare strategy to enable all families with children to have access to an affordable, flexible, high quality childcare place for their child. Children's Centres are places where children under 5 years old and their families can receive integrated services and information, and where they can access help from multi-disciplinary teams of professionals.

6.2.2 The Children's Workforce Development Council consists of a board of 25 representatives from organisations across the childcare, education, and social care sectors, including the LDA. It aims to improve the lives of children and young people by ensuring that child care workers have the best training, qualifications, support and advice. It works closely with the Department for Education and Skills in determining workforce reforms and identifying skills gaps and shortages. It will receive £15m for 2006/7 and £30m for 2007/8 from Government.²¹ The Learning and Skills Council is also working to raise the quality of childcare provision in London and works in partnership with the LDA and other organisations in the childcare sector. The Learning and Skills Council takes the lead on developing and upskilling the workforce. It is keen to ensure that the LDA's strategic investment to increase the availability and affordability of childcare takes place alongside the development and upskilling of the workforce.²²

6.2.3 Since 2003, Jobcentre Plus has been working alongside childcare partners and employers to meet the childcare needs of unemployed parents. It has recently begun working with the LDA on a Women Returners to Work project instigated by the Treasury to support women into work with flexible care for their children.²³

6.2.4 People 1st is the Sector Skills Council for the Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism sectors. These sectors are characterised by low pay. Many of them present additional barriers to employment to those with childcare responsibilities, such as shift- and unsocial-hours working, which would require considerable flexibility in childcare provision. The Sector Skills Council represents employers within these sectors and has been assisted by the LDA in trying to improve the skills of the workforce and childcare provision in their sectors. The Skills Council is also involved with the Women Returners project.²⁴ Another employer-led organisation is Skills Active, the Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure and Learning. It has been working with the LDA and the other Sector Skills Councils on the Women Returners project to encourage more women to return to employment within their sectors.²⁵

6.2.5 We heard that the LDA is working in partnership with the Sure Start, Extended Schools and Families Group and the Children's Workforce Unit in the Department for Education and Skills on a number of childcare programmes and pilots which are aimed at

²¹ <http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/>

²² Learning and Skills Council written evidence

²³ Jobcentre Plus written evidence

²⁴ People 1st written evidence

²⁵ Skills Active written evidence

improving the availability, accessibility, affordability and quality of childcare across London. These are:

- Childcare Affordability Pilot Programme (CAP);
- London Childcare Capital Investment good practice guide for developers;
- Children’s Workforce Development Strategy; and,
- The Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative (NNI) London Capital Investment Programme.

6.3 *Partnership with Local Authorities*

6.3.1 Local authorities have a vital role to play in the childcare sector, each local authority being responsible for developing childcare in its area. This means increasing access to childcare and developing childcarer skills through training. In delivering on the Government’s 10 year Childcare Strategy, local authorities will have to ensure that provision is inclusive and available to all who want or need it. We heard that local authorities and the Association of London Government have been working closely with the LDA and other key players in the childcare sector to develop childcare further. As we noted above, families with disabled children are more likely to have low incomes, with mothers of disabled children less likely to be in employment: this means that local authorities have a particular responsibility to support this group. However, we found little evidence of positive action to support the parents of disabled children in finding and retaining work or to develop suitable childcare to enable them to do so.

6.3.2 Responsibility for evaluating the quality of childcare rests with the Office for Standards in Education and the local authorities. They work very closely together to seek improvements in the delivery of childcare services at a local level. The LDA told us it would not wish to duplicate this work but would use the information received through the Office for Standards in Education and their inspection process.²⁶

6.3.3 We were impressed by the LDA’s extensive contacts with government departments and agencies and the development of joint projects and partnerships between the LDA and Government both at national and local level. Since much of the funding for childcare development comes from Government, it would, perhaps, be strange if such contacts did not exist. We found a less rosy picture of relationships with other parts of the childcare sector, which we discuss in the next section.

6.4 *Partnership with other organisations in the childcare sector*

6.4.1 Childcare providers in the private and voluntary sectors also have a huge role to play in delivering childcare services at a local level. Many boroughs often carry out their provider role through the voluntary and private sectors, but there are also voluntary and private-sector providers that operate outside of the local authority role. The LDA has been working closely with some of these providers to increase childcare provision. The LDA insists that childcare providers be skilled to the required standards set by Ofsted in order to be eligible to receive funding through the LDA childcare programme.²⁷ (At the moment, the LDA does not support childcarers who are part of the Childcare Approval Scheme and care for children in their own home – these are not inspected by Ofsted.) We received evidence from some of the Ofsted-inspected childcare providers as part of this review.

²⁶ LDA written evidence

²⁷ LDA written evidence

6.4.2 The Pre-school Learning Alliance has a network of over 15,000 community based settings that provide funded nursery education and childcare for over half a million children. It has opened 28 neighbourhood nurseries in the past two years and created over 20,000 new childcare places. It has been working with the LDA but would welcome more consultation between the LDA and the private and voluntary sectors.²⁸

6.4.3 We heard from the Lloyds Park Centre²⁹ in Walthamstow and the National Day Nurseries Association Regional Centre³⁰ in Hounslow which have benefited from LDA funding to provide nursery care. We visited Mudchute Farm Nursery in Tower Hamlets and Wetherells Nursery in Hackney which are good examples of local childcare providers who have also benefited from support and funding from the LDA. There are also some organisations attempting to provide more flexible childcare such as the Islington Mobile Creche Network, which has received £10k capital and £85k revenue funding from the LDA over the previous two years.

6.4.4 A number of organisations provide support and advice in the childcare sector. The Daycare Trust is the national childcare charity, campaigning for quality, affordable and accessible childcare for all and advises parents and carers, providers, employers, trade unions and policy makers on childcare issues. It has been working with key strategic organisations including the LDA to raise childcare issues in the capital.³¹

6.4.5 We also received evidence from Contact a Family, another important charity providing essential support, advice and information to families with disabled children across the UK and through its community projects in London. We noted that it had not yet had any involvement with the LDA when we were carrying out our review, but we were told that Contact a Family would be included in the LDA's Childcare Affordability Programme consultation.³² We will monitor this in our follow-up work.

6.4.6 The National Childminding Association is a national charity and professional association with over 48,000 childminder members and it works with local authorities to support the delivery of quality registered childminding services. The National Childminding Association told us that it would like to work more directly with the LDA to support the 11,000 registered childminders in London who are providing a valuable childcare service and to recruit more to support the delivery of the 10,000 additional childcare places needed in London.³³ The LDA has told us that, although its Childcare Affordability Programme is open to childminders, there has been very little take-up among this group. We believe that although centre-based care is popular among the great majority of parents, there is still a very significant role for registered childminders, particularly in certain communities and in caring for children with special needs.

6.4.7 It is vital that employers and businesses are also committed to developing childcare provision in or near to the workplace so that more parents can be encouraged and helped back into employment. The LDA has funded Childcare4Business to a total of £12k per year between 2002-5 to enable it to advise 91 businesses and distribute information about childcare to over 12,000 businesses located in the Corporation of London, Lambeth, Southwark and Westminster³⁴.

²⁸ Pre-School Learning Alliance written evidence

²⁹ Lloyds Park Centre written evidence

³⁰ National Day Nurseries Association written evidence

³¹ Daycare Trust written evidence

³² Contact a family written evidence

³³ National Child Minding Association written evidence

³⁴ Childcare 4 Business helps companies and their staff find appropriate, quality childcare and investigate funding to help cover costs. The scheme offers a range of information to employers in

6.4.8 We believe that, although the LDA is working with and consulting the voluntary and private sectors at the strategic and national level, it needs to do more to support the boroughs in involving these sectors at the local level, including registered childminders for whose very small businesses sustainability is a serious problem. Inclusion on the LDA's London-wide database is likely to be useful for both parents in seeking childcare (for example, where parents live closer to borough boundaries and are seeking childcare in a neighbouring borough) and for childcare providers in publicising their services.

We recommend that the LDA continue to consult widely with private sector and voluntary sector childcare organisations at a strategic and national level; and that it monitor and support boroughs' involvement with private and voluntary sector providers of childcare at the local level.

7. The LDA's role in funding of childcare

7.1 We thought that it would be helpful to set out the funding for the LDA's four childcare programmes including funding from other sources. The financial investment into childcare is as follows:

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	Total
Childcare Business and Skills Programme	£0.250m	£1.500m	£1.850m	£3.6m
Childcare Marketing and London Intelligence Programme	£0.400m	£0.750m	£0.955m	£2.105m
Childcare Capital Investment Programme	£0.025m	£1.200m	£1.300m	£2.525
Childcare Affordability Programme	£5 m (LDA)	£7m (LDA) £5.5m (SS*)	£10m LDA £5.5m(SS*)	£22m (LDA) £11m (SS*)
Total LDA investment	£5.675m	£10.45m	£14.105m	£30.230m

* Sure Start

8. The LDA's childcare delivery programmes

8.1 The Childcare Affordability Programme

8.1.1 The table above shows that the the Childcare Affordability Programme constitutes the largest part of the LDA's childcare investment budget. The total Childcare

central London, promoting services offered through the project and by other organisations. In addition Childcare 4 Business offers direct assistance to employers, such as on-site surgeries.

Affordability Programme fund of £33 million is a mix of Department for Education and Skills (£11 million) and LDA (£22 million) investment over three years and is administered through the LDA. It provides a mix of supply and demand side funding, including subsidised childcare places and incentives for childcare providers to provide more flexible forms of childcare. This programme aims to support up to 10,000 affordable childcare places across London throughout the next 3 years. In April 2006, the Mayor announced that the Programme had subsidised almost 6500 places a year into its existence. It is not yet clear to what extent the places subsidised fill existing gaps in provision or, therefore, how high the take-up of them is likely to be.

8.2 *The Childcare Business and Skills Programme*

8.2.1 The programme aims to increase the sustainability of existing childcare provision by supporting childcare businesses social enterprises and by supporting improvements in the quality of childcare provision and skills. This is a new programme and 2005-06 has been a development and consultation year with some early projects such as the Treasury's Women Returners to Work pilot schemes.

8.3 *The Childcare Marketing and Intelligence Programme*

8.3.1 This programme was developed throughout 2004-05. It aims to promote tax credits, better practice on childcare and provide information for parents and providers. The largest aspect of this programme is the London Childcare Portal, an internet-based information service about childcare provision.

8.4 *The Childcare Capital Investment Programme*

8.4.1 This programme aims to support local authorities and childcare providers, recognising that capital costs in London are much higher than elsewhere and that land space is at a premium. The programme includes the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative which the LDA has funded with £2.117million between 2003-2005. This supported 28 nurseries and had created 1421 additional childcare places at the time of our investigation. The programme will be developed further with the aim of creating a minimum of 1050 additional childcare spaces across London, during 2005-08.

9. Is the LDA increasing availability of childcare in London?

9.1 *Current Availability*

9.1.1 Statistics on registered day care places in September 2005 showed that there were still a number of boroughs where there are fewer than 10 places per 100 for under-5 childcare. These include Barking & Dagenham at 6.6, Bexley at 7 and Harrow at 9.5. The two tables in Annexes 1 and 2 give the latest available figures.

9.1.2 We have been unable to find comparisons between the numbers of disabled children or children with special educational needs and the numbers of childcare places available for them. However, the Pre-School Learning Alliance carried out a survey of childcare groups and told us that London had the highest percentage of groups (41%) caring for children with an identified special educational need; and that in perceived areas of deprivation had on average three children with an identified special educational need compared with two in other areas.

9.1.3 The Daycare Trust claims that, although most childcare providers say that they can cater for children with special needs at the time of registration with Ofsted, many parents say that the providers cannot offer a place when it is actually needed. This may be because they have long waiting lists or because they cannot provide the necessary staffing levels.

9.1.4 It has been explained to us that unless a child is born with a disability which is picked up by NHS staff at birth, any disability or special educational needs may not receive official recognition until the child is “statemented” (ie receives a statement of special educational need) at school age. This means that there is likely to be a number of disabled children and children with special needs who are receiving or in need of pre-school childcare, but who would not, at the moment, be counted in an audit or in official statistics.

9.1.5 In relation to gathering information about numbers of places available, we understand that most childcare providers would say that they could, in principle, accommodate children with special needs, but that the number of places would depend on the needs of individual children and the level of care and ratio of staff required. This makes it difficult to make an overall assessment of the gap between need and provision.

9.1.6 We conclude with concern that there is insufficient information available on the numbers of disabled and SEN children compared with the numbers and type of childcare places available for such children or the numbers of specialist trained staff. It is clear both from the scanty statistical information available, from the evidence given to us by organisations concerned with care of disabled children and from anecdotal evidence from parents and carers that not nearly enough is being done to address the needs of this group of children. Part of the reason for this is that there has been no systematic London-wide audit of need or of childcare places available for disabled children, either within mainstream childcare provision or within specialist provision. We recognise that, for the reasons described in 10.1.3 – 10.1.6 such an audit would be difficult. However, the Childcare Bill, currently undergoing its passage through Parliament, would place a specific duty on local authorities to ensure that the childcare market meets the needs of working parents with disabled children. Once this Bill is enacted, local authorities will have to find a way to assess both need and provision in their own areas. We believe that the LDA, as the lead Regional Development Agency on childcare, could and should play a valuable role in undertaking research on appropriate ways of collecting and disseminating such information:

- For example, it could explore with the relevant statutory agencies how an assessment of childcare needs might be systematically undertaken as part of postnatal and early years needs assessment.
- It could explore the possibility of “self definition” of children with special needs by their parents, following the social model of self definition of disability.
- It could consult with parents and voluntary organisations about a possible voluntary register of children with special needs under 5 years.
- It could talk to providers and organisations representing them about developing a pan-London database of childcare workers in all sectors with appropriate qualifications in caring for children with special needs.
- It could take the lead with the London boroughs of developing a methodology for mapping need against provision.

- It could also take the lead in providing information about availability and financial assistance to parents and others through an accessible database.

We recommend that the LDA take the lead in researching how data could be collected on demand and provision of childcare across London for children with disabilities and special health and behavioural needs; and work with the national strategic and voluntary sector organisations with expertise on the needs of disabled children and children with special educational needs; and with the London boroughs and other Regional Development Agencies to develop a methodology for collecting this data.

We recommend that the LDA, in its role as lead regional development agency on childcare, promote among health and social care partners an earlier and much more rapid system of assessment of the childcare needs of disabled children and children with special needs, so that they do not have to wait for long periods for a nursery place with appropriate support while this assessment is carried out.

9.2 *Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative*

9.2.1 To tackle the general issue of childcare availability the Government has pledged 3,500 Childcare Centres nationally by 2010 and the LDA, boroughs and other partners are working together to deliver this. Since 2003 the Mayor through the LDA has been providing capital gap funding as part of the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative. This involved identifying where new nurseries were unlikely to be able to meet their capital building costs and where, in some cases, there was even a danger that they might not open. The LDA's funding assists in filling the gap between what the nurseries can afford and their capital costs.

9.2.2 The LDA supported 13 nurseries in 2004/5 with £1.112million. The total spend so far for 2003/4 and 2004/5 is £2.117m. During 2005-6 the LDA will provide limited capital gap funding for children's centre projects that are new build or refurbishments. Through 2006/8 the LDA will provide capital gap funding for the development of school sites. It seems that boroughs will benefit greatly from the additional resources and extra funding.

9.2.3 The Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative was targeted at the 30% most disadvantaged wards in London. The Department for Education and Skills through SureStart³⁵ provided the LDA with a list of proposed nurseries that had identified a short fall in capital funding. Bids were only accepted from those nurseries identified by the Department for Education and Skills. The LDA subsequently commissioned Gardiner and Theobald consultants to assess each of the bids to determine the true shortfall. Of those which submitted applications, one nursery in Kensington and Chelsea and one in Ealing were withdrawn by the Department for Education and Skills and one bid from Islington and one from Brent were turned down by Gardiner and Theobald (the LDA capital shortfall funded was to enable nurseries to meet Ofsted National Day Nurseries inspection standards and both of these nurseries were asking for funding in order to provide facilities over and above the requirements of the standards). Gardiner and Theobald evaluated the

³⁵ Sure Start is a Government programme which aims to: increase the availability of childcare for all children; improve health and emotional development for young children; and, support parents as parents and in their aspirations towards employment.

funding of the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative to determine how successful the scheme had been and published a report which concluded that the work undertaken has increased the number of childcare spaces available in the various London Boroughs through funding approval³⁶. There is also ongoing evaluation of the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative funded by the LDA.

9.2.4 Members attended a site visit to find out more about two nurseries that have received funding through the LDA's Neighbourhood Nursery initiative. Mudchute Farm nursery was granted £50,000 which contributed to a new extension and refurbishment work. This resulted in the creation of an additional 64 nursery spaces. Wetherell Nursery in Hackney opened in April 2005 and was awarded £95,000 which contributed to the refurbishment costs of the nursery building. They have been able to create 70 new childcare places.

9.2.5 There can be no doubt that the LDA and stakeholders are delivering more childcare places through the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative scheme. The target for the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative was to create 1321 childcare places between 2003-5 and the LDA have created 1454 places and spent £2.117m so far.

9.2.6 However, there have been concerns raised about the allocation of funding for neighbourhood nurseries. The Pre-School Learning Alliance³⁷ says that the LDA's gap funding is available only via local authorities even though the Alliance has four neighbourhood nurseries in London. It believes that all organisations working with neighbourhood nurseries in London should benefit from the capital gap funding. The Alliance told us that even though its staff attend local authority committee meetings, they have not always been aware of the funding that is available and the voluntary sector still finds it difficult to access funding.

9.2.7 The LDA has disputed this. LDA staff told us that of the 28 Neighbourhood Nursery projects that the LDA supported, nine were through voluntary sector providers and one was a private sector provider. The local authorities were required, as part of the funding from Government, to be involved in the process. Therefore the LDA has worked with the boroughs in order to distribute that funding. The LDA confirmed that it would like to be able to fund the right provision in the right place, whether that is the voluntary and community sector, private provision or the directly maintained sector. We accept that there is a need for strategic planning of childcare to take place through the statutory sector, but we believe, as the LDA has indicated it intends, funding should take place through whichever providers are available, irrespective of sector. London boroughs and the LDA both need to improve their communications channels with voluntary and private sector providers.

9.2.8 We believe that the LDA funding was vital to ensure that new nurseries opened and existing nurseries were refurbished, which has led to an increase in childcare places.

9.2.9 We conclude that the LDA has been successful in working with other agencies to increase availability of childcare through the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative. The LDA funding was vital to ensure that new nurseries opened and existing nurseries were refurbished, which has led to an increase in childcare places.

9.2.10 However, it is clear that there is a very serious unmet need specifically in relation to childcare for disabled children and children with special needs. When the LDA attended

³⁶ *Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative: Overview Report and Research Project*, LDA May 2005

³⁷ The Pre-school Learning Alliance is a charity that has a network of over 15,000 community based early years settings that provide funded nursery education and childcare for half a million children.

the Committee's hearing, its programme had only been running for six months; and so support for parents of children with special needs was obviously inadequate at that time. We believe that this issue should be seen as an urgent high priority in the next phase of the LDA's work. We understand that the next phase will, indeed, give priority to pilot programmes for this group and we will monitor closely the LDA's progress in this area.

9.2.11 The LDA's Childcare Affordability Programme began in October 2005 and will run for three years until 2008. The programme is attempting to address the issues of affordability and flexibility. It will support 10,000 childcare places with an investment of £33m (£22m LDA and £11m Department for Education and Skills). The LDA will be ranking bids for the Childcare Affordability Programme against the index of deprivation.

9.2.12 The LDA has announced that all 32 London Boroughs and the Corporation of London have expressed an interest in participating in these Childcare Affordability Programme pilots to provide subsidised childcare. It is important to have the boroughs involved in this process. The Association of London Government³⁸ argues that local authorities need to play a key part in the delivery of local services and are better able to plan and respond to that need. The Association of London Government acknowledges that the LDA and boroughs need to work in partnership, as the LDA has been the mechanism for accessing funding and then feeding it in to local authorities so they can respond to local needs.

9.2.13 The LDA is setting up an independent evaluation of CAP. The Department for Education and Skills and Department for Work and Pensions, through their Sure Start Unit, have earmarked about £350,000 to do a full evaluation of that programme to see whether places are going to the parents who most need them and whether it enables parents to stay in work. They will:

- assess the implementation process;
- review progress against objectives of programme;
- obtain views of parents and providers; and,
- assess approaches for wider lessons to be learned.

9.2.14 In its evidence to us, the National Childminding Association (NCA) was critical of the LDA because the NCA claimed the Childcare Affordability Programme funding is not available to all registered childcare providers in London. The National Childminding Association claimed that only centre-based providers will be able to participate in the Childcare Affordability Programme via their local borough. The National Childminding Association believes childminders should have access to the funding. However, the LDA told us that registered childminders do have access to the Childcare Affordability Programme. There is clearly a communications issue to be addressed here, as we have indicated above. The LDA did recognise, in its evidence to us, that the involvement of and awareness among registered childminders was an issue it needed to address.

9.2.15 We were interested to note that neither the Richmond Playgroup Network³⁹ nor Contact a Family⁴⁰ had heard of the LDA and its childcare programme when they gave

³⁸ The Association of London Government represents all 32 London boroughs, the Corporation of London, the Metropolitan Police Authority and the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, which all pay an annual subscription.

³⁹ Richmond Playgroup Network is a charity and a local voluntary organisation providing courses and training for childworkers, parents and carers.

⁴⁰ Contact a Family provides support, advice and information to families with disabled children across the UK through its freephone helpline and information services.

evidence to us in July. Contact a Family claimed that if the funding had been distributed by the boroughs then they would have heard about it because of their close working relationship with them. However, it was pointed out to us that the LDA Childcare Affordability Programme consultation began in October 2005, only after we had held our hearing; and the LDA said that it would be consulting widely with these and other organisations in the childcare sector. We will monitor how successful this has been.

9.2.16 Richmond Playgroup Network complained to us about the difficulties in obtaining funding, delays with receiving funding from local authorities, and too much bureaucracy. The Corporation of London has also criticised too much bureaucracy and red tape for delays.

9.2.17 Contact a Family said that it was crucial to include specialist, home-based provision in funding for CAP pilots so that children with chronic health conditions or special needs were not excluded. It was also pointed out to us that there are some families who, for cultural reasons, prefer home-based care.

9.2.18 The LDA said that there would be a variety of opportunities for providers of services to access funding, some through the pan-London programme and, in subsequent years, through a variety of innovative and pilot projects, where the LDA particularly wanted to identify flexible options like non-standard forms of daycare. The LDA intended to publicise this through its Childcare Affordability Programme consultation which began in October 2005.

9.2.19 The Mayor promised that the LDA would work closely with London Boroughs, Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships and other partners to map the availability of the full range of childcare provision and its affordability in all boroughs and make the information available. Some mapping has already been conducted by the LDA as part of the Childcare Affordability Programme. The Childcare Affordability Programme supported affordable and flexible childcare places will be published and made available to parents through press, jobcentres, local authorities, the LDA website and through local Childcare Information Services. The LDA will monitor its childcare programmes to assess the impact they have on all communities across London to ensure that childcare is meeting the needs of the Capital's diverse population.

9.2.20 Following the launch of Round 1 of Phase 1 of the Childcare Affordability Programme, we note that the LDA has now written to invite the boroughs to submit outline proposals for the Phase 2 pilots. We are pleased to note that these pilots will seek to tackle a wider range of problems associated with childcare affordability and parents' access to employment and training. In particular, we are pleased to note that the LDA has specified among the areas on which proposals for pilotw will be welcomed, "reducing the cost of childcare for children with disabilities and special needs".

9.2.21 Nonetheless, we believe that, for the Childcare Affordability Programme to be a success it is critical that the LDA and stakeholders target those groups of parents most in need, as well as the geographical areas that need childcare the most. The LDA needs to undertake some strategic mapping to target both groups and areas where there is a low number of childcare places available.

9.2.22 It is also vital that the LDA's programmes allow for flexibility in the type of provision that is supported, including allowing for home-based care and care by registered childminders. We recognise that the LDA intends to explore flexible options in further stages of its programme, but we conclude that, because of the lack of flexibility in the

programme so far, the specialist childcare needs of disabled children and support for their parents must be addressed sooner rather than later, and must have overriding priority.

9.3 *Women Returners Treasury Pilot Project*

9.3.1 The LDA has been working with other organisations to develop and establish the Treasury-funded Women Returners pilot project, which was due to commence in January 2006. The aim is to improve the skills of economically inactive women in London and offers childcare support once in employment. The project has a target of creating 120 additional childcare places and supporting 120 women into employment.

9.3.2 Skills Active, the Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure and Learning, said that all bidders for this project were supposed to show clear links with employers in relation to providing work opportunities for women in the leisure and learning sector as well as displaying an understanding of childcare issues. The Skills Council claims that it is not evident from the applications received that such links were always in place. The Skills Council also believes that more could be done to assist in the recruitment and retention of playworkers.

10. Is the LDA contributing to making childcare more affordable for London parents?

10.1 *Tax Credits*

10.1.1 The Mayor's Childcare Strategy, November 2003, concluded that it was not possible for lower income households to access good quality childcare without public funding to subsidise the cost of childcare for parents. Childcare is 25% more expensive in certain areas of London than elsewhere and despite a welcome increase in the Child, Disabled Child and Severely Disabled Child Tax Credits from April 2006 childcare is still inaccessible to many families in London, due to the high cost. The Mayor proposed that the LDA should assist boroughs in seeking ways to increase the quality of childcare at affordable prices, particularly in disadvantaged areas. The LDA has tried to deliver this proposal through the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative, Childcare Affordability Programme and the LDA women returners pilot described in section 10 above.

10.1.2 The Mayor launched London's Childcare Strategy 'Towards affordable good quality childcare for all' in November 2003 acknowledging that affordable accessible childcare is important to all parents who work and live in London. He proposed to make the case to Government for changes to the tax and benefit system to meet the needs of low income families and also to promote the take up of tax credits which is low in London.

10.1.3 Average childcare costs are 25% higher in London than the rest of the UK but this is not reflected in Government assistance through tax credits. Since April 2003 the Working Tax Credit has been available to those with incomes up to £14k per year. Working Tax Credit has a childcare element which is separate from and additional to Child Tax Credit, which benefits families with incomes up to £50k. It is not necessary to be in paid work to receive Child Tax Credit. The childcare element of Working Tax Credit pays up to 70% of eligible childcare costs and the calculation is based on income and the number of dependent children. In July 2003 London had the lowest rate of receipt of Working Tax

Credit of all UK regions. Lone parents who want to work outside the home face the prospect of being worse off in a job than on benefits because of the high childcare costs.

10.1.4 The target group for the Childcare Affordability Programme is lower income parents in receipt of higher rate of Child Tax Credit (parents receiving more than £547.50 in Child Tax Credit). The Mayor's strategy advocates the reform of the Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit system to reflect the higher costs of childcare in London, so more families can have access to affordable childcare. The LDA/Greater London Authority and Association of London Government have had some success in lobbying Government and HM Treasury⁴¹ as the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit increased from £135 to £175 per week for one child from April 2005 and will remain at this level for 2006/7. The disabled child element has increased from £2,285 to £2,350 per year and the severely disabled child element has increased from £920 to £945 per year for 2006/7. Even so, as we heard from Contact a Family, the high costs for parents with disabled children are not met by the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit.

10.1.5 This view has been echoed by research published in the report "Helter Skelter – Families, disabled children and the benefit system" by the Disability Alliance⁴² in February 2005. They interviewed twenty families who had one or more disabled children. They discovered that these families are having problems finding employment and improving their circumstances. The main barriers to employment for these families are inflexible employers, expensive childcare and worries about losing benefit. Apparently they are often advised to give up their jobs by professionals representing their children's needs. Some parents have complained that they receive inadequate support for childcare which would allow them to undertake voluntary work, attend lectures, job interviews, or study at home. We believe that flexible childcare schemes could be a solution for these families and this is the reason for recommending that the LDA evaluate and support these schemes further.

10.1.6 The Disability Alliance also published a report "Hard working families – caring for two or more disabled children" in February 2005, which included recommendations for increasing childcare tax credit and providing further support to families with disabled children. The Alliance has said that families with disabled children and disabled parents face barriers to childcare in excess of those faced by other families. We agree with their view and we believe further information should be compiled on the numbers, geographical locations and needs of families with disabled children so that support for childcare can be provided in a targeted rather than in a general way (see section 9 above).

We recommend that the Mayor continue to work with the London Boroughs to promote increased take-up of Childcare Tax Credit in London.

⁴¹ <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/rates/taxcredits.htm>

⁴² Disability Alliance's principal aim is to improve the living standards of disabled people by breaking the link between poverty and disability.

10.2 *Subsidising childcare places*

10.2.1 London has the highest rate of child poverty in the UK with 51% of children in inner London living in households with incomes below the government's threshold of 60% median income. The Mayor believes that the only way low income households can access affordable good quality childcare is by reducing the cost of childcare to these parents by sustained public funding.

10.2.2 However, in a recent report "Children first: the power of choice in children's services" the Confederation of British Industry argue that the Government's failure to limit heavily subsidised state childcare provision has rendered private and voluntary facilities uneconomic. This, the Confederation of British Industry claims, has resulted in many closures and a reduction in available childcare places.⁴³

10.2.3 Nonetheless, given that affordability is such a serious issue in London, we do not believe that withdrawal of subsidy to state childcare provision is the answer at this time. Supporting the private sector by reducing subsidy to the statutory sector would only work if parents could afford higher fees. It is clear that those most in need of the LDA's support cannot afford higher fees. However, as we have said above, we do believe that the LDA could do more to support the non-statutory sectors, thereby levelling the playing field.

10.2.4 It is clear to us that the disabled child element of Working Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit go nowhere near to meeting the cost of accessing the form of support that parents of many disabled children want for their children. We believe that a fundamental principle should be established that appropriate and good quality childcare should cost no more to the family of a disabled child or child with special needs than it does to the family of a non-disabled child. We therefore believe that the LDA and the Government should adopt forms of subsidy for childcare that would conform to this principle.

In order to ensure that the remaining childcare places under the Childcare Affordability Programme are directed to where they are needed most:

We recommend, in order to ensure that the remaining childcare places under the Childcare Affordability Programme are directed to where they are needed most:

- that the LDA conduct a strategic mapping exercise to show existing childcare provision and need across London and
- that the LDA continue to target funding to parents who cannot afford childcare, but that it also target funding under the Childcare Affordability Programme to areas where there are particularly low numbers of childcare places per 1,000 children, high demand for places, and economic deprivation.

We recommend that the LDA include in the Childcare Affordability Programme further specific provision to fund and support childcare places for disabled children and those with special health and behavioural needs, based on the principle that appropriate and good quality childcare should cost no more to the family of a disabled child or child with special needs than it does to the family of a non-disabled child; and that the LDA campaign for the allocation of government funding based on this principle.

⁴³ CBI report "Children first: the power of choice in children's services."

10.3 *Pan-London Childcare Web-site*

10.3.1 The LDA is developing a Pan London website which will be a portal to enable parents to carry out a single childcare search, covering all boroughs. The London Childcare Portal will be developed to support and promote fiscal initiatives offering childcare subsidies to both parents and employers such as the take-up of the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit and of the Child Tax Credit. The London portal has been identified as a prime channel through which financial entitlements that will help parents keen to enter or return to the workplace, are promoted. The portal will contribute to skills and training initiatives that have strategic significance for London. It aims to promote training programmes, advise, register and provide contacts for people seeking to set up new childcare facilities or become childcare professionals. It will include links to sites such as the Ofsted website where information on childcare inspections and registration are held.

10.3.2 The feasibility work has been completed and an implementation group has been established to take forward the development and implementation of the portal. The first phase was completed by April 2006. A directory and Mayor's guide to childcare in London will be developed in parallel to the portal. A second phase of development of the portal will use 6-10 London boroughs to pilot its information and advice services.

10.3.3 This portal will be extremely useful to parents who have access to the internet. However, the LDA also needs to cater for parents who may be unemployed or have low incomes and therefore might not have easily available and affordable access to the internet. They must provide other means for these parents to access the information provided by the portal on the Pan London childcare web-site. Therefore, we believe the LDA should develop a strong strategy to disseminate the information on its pan-London childcare web-site to parents without internet access.

We recommend that the LDA develop a strong strategy to disseminate the information on its pan-London childcare website to parents without internet access.

10.4 *Consultation*

10.4.1 The LDA confirmed that its Childcare Affordability Programme consultation was going to be widespread when it began in October 2005. It claims to have involved as many people as possible in the process of planning so that different types of organisations could benefit. It also wants to involve people working on the front line of childcare in the design of the programme as it is implemented.

10.4.2 The LDA intends to follow a communications plan targeting lower income parents and encouraging them to sign up to the programme through their local provider. The ultimate goal of the communications strategy is to help raise awareness of the Childcare Affordability Programme. To that end, the LDA will use a variety of media sources to communicate with London organisations, including parents, childcare providers and the boroughs. We will continue to monitor the LDA's Childcare Affordability Programme consultation with interest to ensure that it consults widely and delivers on what it has set out to achieve.

10.4.3 The pre-school Learning Alliance urges that all consultations, guidance and research on childcare undertaken by the LDA and the boroughs should include voluntary

and private sector organisations. These organisations have a wealth of knowledge and experience and are well placed to represent the views of early years workers and parents. It would also ensure that there was no duplication of information.

10.4.4 This view is also supported by the Richmond Playgroup Network. It believes that strategic and local government should make more of an effort to gain a better understanding of the role of voluntary and private sector playgroups. It would like to see more focus on children first and then on parents and carers.

10.4.5 Contact a Family told us that it had only recently been contacted by the LDA as a result of the London Assembly's scrutiny review. It had been unaware of the LDA's central role in implementing the Mayor's childcare strategy. After checking with colleagues in community projects in Lambeth, Southwark and Wandsworth, it found they were also unaware of the LDA, even though the LDA apparently have been developing a childcare programme for the South Central area. We hope that by now Contact a Family as well as other voluntary and charitable organisations in the childcare sector have become regular consultees in relation to the LDA's Childcare Affordability Programme and other initiatives.

10.4.6 It would seem from the written evidence received that the LDA is good at consulting with the major stakeholders such as Government departments, Association of London Government, boroughs and larger childcare organisations. However, we heard evidence which suggested that the private, voluntary and charitable childcare sectors are either not consulted, or their views are not really taken into account. We trust that the situation will be rectified as the LDA's childcare programmes continue to be rolled out.

10.5 *Flexible childcare*

10.5.1 The Mayor's London Childcare Strategy contains other measures, beyond the Treasury pilot, to establish projects that provide skills and employment opportunities supported by childcare to enable parents to access learning and employment.

10.5.2 An example of one of these projects is the Islington mobile crèche which supports parents in returning to work and further education/training by providing flexible childcare provision close to locations where the parents receive this training or work. It will provide about 100 additional childcare places. The Islington Mobile Creche Network is a social enterprise which means that it trades in the market to make a profit but the fees are invested back into the business.

10.5.3 The Islington Mobile Creche Network has been in operation since June 2005 and had delivered 17 creche services at the time of our investigation to the value of £3,395 and had 7 creche workers with plans to recruit additional crèche workers. The crèche has received £10,000 capital and £85,000 revenue from the LDA over two years 2004-2006. The capital funding has enabled the purchase of a 'starter kit' of play and other childcare equipment. The Network was also seeking to purchase an energy-efficient van to transport staff and equipment as this was seen to be value for money.

10.5.4 Mobile crèche services are a relatively new phenomenon within the childcare sector and there are fewer mobile crèche services registered and operating in London compared with some other regions. The London Borough of Islington said that the Islington Mobile Creche Network is testing a unique model for social enterprise development. The model being tested is to develop clusters of crèche workers who will be responsible for developing a client base and delivering services that are tailored to the needs of the locality. The project is subject to an on-going evaluation process. A steering

group has been set up to address the strategic positioning of the Islington Mobile Creche Network and feedback is sought from clients, parents and crèche workers so that improvements can be made to the service.

10.5.5 Islington Mobile Creche Network is one of a number of childcare projects that are part of the LDA area programme (Kings Cross to Finsbury Park). The LDA attends the quarterly Childcare Initiative meetings held by the London Borough of Camden where progress and good practice are shared as well as providing an opportunity to discuss any issues arising during project development.

We recommend that the LDA continue to develop its specific plans to support home-based and flexible childcare places and to include childminders among the groups that it supports; and that it promote, in partnership with the National Childminding Association, the Childcare Affordability Programme among registered childminders, particularly among those looking after disabled children and those with special needs.

10.6 *Home-based childcare*

10.6.1 The National Childminding Association has said that in order for the LDA to meet the Government 10 year strategy of providing 10,000 child places, then it must also include home-based as well as centre-based childcare in its plans. This will ensure that London's families are offered a choice in the type of childcare available for their child. It is concerned that the LDA's strategy places too much emphasis on centre-based care and this has not ensured a level playing field of funding or support for registered childminding. The National Childminding Association believes childminders should have access to the Childcare Affordability Programme funding.

10.6.2 There seems to be an emphasis on centre-based childcare rather than more flexible and home-based childcare. The LDA has confirmed that it has no plans to extend support additional forms of childcare as its childcare capital investment will be linked with extended schools and children's centres. This appears to us to be wrong, because flexible childcare like mobile crèches and home-based care would help to solve the problem of a shortage of good quality and affordable childcare accommodation. In order to address the availability of suitable and affordable premises, more support should be given to flexible childcare such as mobile crèche schemes and also home based childcare schemes.

10.6.3 Therefore, we conclude that the LDA on balance is putting too much emphasis on centre-based care rather than flexible and home-based care and that its remit should be extended to include care that is not centre-based

10.7 *Training for Childcare Workers*

10.7.1 We heard from Contact a Family that some families with disabled children have been told by childcare providers, 'we cannot handle or accommodate your child'. There is a need for better training for childcare providers to be able to meet those needs. The additional costs of childcare for parents with disabled children is so much more proportionally higher and these costs are not met by the tax credits. Contact a Family claims that over half of the families with disabled children that it is involved with live on the edge of poverty. Their representatives said that many of these parents would be willing to return to work if good quality and affordable childcare provision was available. We agree with the Pre-school Learning Alliance and Contact a Family that there needs to

be better training for childcare providers so that they can meet the requirements of parents and disabled children.

10.7.2 We conclude that there is an almost total lack of training for childcare for children with special needs and that, partly as a result of this, good quality care for children with special needs and disabilities is almost non-existent. We recognise that the LDA does not directly provide training, but we believe that it could work with childcare workforce organisations and voluntary sector organisations which understand the needs of families with disabled children and those with special needs in promoting specialist training; and that it could bring pressure to bear on the Government to direct funding for training to this area. These points are reflected in our recommendations.

We recommend that the LDA include in its business and skills programme specific initiatives designed to increase the availability of skilled childcare workers in London, including those qualified to work with disabled children and children with special health or behavioural needs; and initiatives designed to improve business skills among childcare workers, to promote sustainability; and should promote this approach to the Children's Workforce Development Council and to the Government in allocating the Transformation Fund for the training of childcare workers.

11. Recommendations

1. In order to increase the provision of affordable childcare for disabled children and those with special health and behavioural needs, that the LDA, as a priority and matter of urgency:

- (i) take the lead in researching how data could be collected on demand and provision of childcare across London for children with disabilities and special health and behavioural needs; and work with the national strategic and voluntary sector organisations with expertise on the needs of disabled children and children with special educational needs; and with the London boroughs and other Regional Development Agencies to develop a methodology for collecting this data;
- (ii) include in the Childcare Affordability Programme further specific provision to fund and support childcare places for disabled children and those with special health and behavioural needs, based on the principle that appropriate and good quality childcare should cost no more to the family of a disabled child or child with special needs than it does to the family of a non-disabled child; and should campaign for the allocation of government funding based on this principle;
- (iii) in its role as lead regional development agency on childcare, promote among health and social care partners an earlier and much more rapid system of assessment of the childcare needs of disabled children and children with special needs, so that they do not have to wait for long periods for a nursery place with appropriate support while this assessment is carried out;
- (iv) include in its business and skills programme specific initiatives designed to increase the availability of skilled childcare workers in London,

including those qualified to work with disabled children and children with special health or behavioural needs; and initiatives designed to improve business skills among childcare workers, to promote sustainability; and should promote this approach to the Children's Workforce Development Council and to the Government in allocating the Transformation Fund for the training of childcare workers.

2. In order to ensure that the remaining childcare places under the Childcare Affordability Programme are directed to where they are needed most:

- (i) that the LDA conduct a strategic mapping exercise to show existing childcare provision and need across London and
- (ii) that the LDA continue to target funding to parents who cannot afford childcare, but that it also target funding under the Childcare Affordability Programme to areas where there are particularly low numbers of childcare places per 1,000 children, high demand for places, and economic deprivation

3. That the LDA provide funding and support for training of childcare workers in business planning and administration skills.

4. That the Mayor continue to work with the London Boroughs to promote increased take-up of Childcare Tax Credit in London.

5. That the LDA develop a strong strategy to disseminate the information on its pan-London childcare website to parents without internet access.

6. That the LDA continue to consult widely with private sector and voluntary sector childcare organisations at a strategic and national level; and and that it monitor and support boroughs' involvement with private and voluntary sector providers of childcare at the local level.

7. That the LDA continue to develop its specific plans to support home-based and flexible childcare places and to include childminders among the groups that it supports; and that it promote, in partnership with the National Childminding Association, the Childcare Affordability Programme among registered childminders, particularly among those looking after disabled children and those with special needs.

8. That the LDA work with the London boroughs to identify the pattern of childcare across London that would best address the needs of local communities; and initiate a registration campaign among informal childminders and community groups, to increase the number of registered childminders eligible for assistance from the Childcare Affordability Programme.

Annex 1 – Minority Report by Bob Blackman AM, Angie Bray AM and Tony Arbour AM

The Conservative members of the EDCST Committee are unable to endorse the main report as drafted. This is because we believe that the report does not address the Committee's original intention of assessing the LDA as a delivery vehicle for mayoral strategies, of which the childcare strategy is only one example. This would have involved addressing the LDA's decision-making and prioritising processes so as to make a judgement about their effectiveness, which the report does not do. The Conservative members are very sceptical about the LDA's competence to carry out this kind of strategic work and do not believe that the evidence provided for this review indicates that the LDA has such competence. Nor do we believe that the evidence shows that the LDA is providing value for money in its distribution of funding for childcare services. We are concerned that funding is being absorbed by the LDA which might otherwise more effectively go direct to the point of service delivery.

In relation to whether the LDA is addressing the underlying problems relating to childcare, it may be too early to make a definitive assessment, but the monitoring and evaluation systems set up by the LDA have not so far delivered answers to questions such as whether the strategy is achieving its objective of making it easier for more parents, particularly mothers, to return to work and, if so, whether more parents have, in fact, returned to work; or whether the strategy is or is capable of delivering more flexible and extended childcare.

The Conservative members of the Committee believe that the issue should be revisited at a later date in the broader context of the LDA's general competence, effectiveness and ability to deliver value for money and to demonstrate that it is doing so. Until then, we are unable to agree with the findings of the report.

Annex 2 - Economic Development, Culture, Sport and Tourism Committee Members

Dee Doocey, Chair	Liberal Democrat
Bob Blackman, Deputy Chair	Conservative
Tony Arbour	Conservative
Angie Bray	Conservative
Nicky Gavron	Labour
Sally Hamwee	Liberal Democrat
Peter Hulme Cross	One London
Joanne McCartney	Labour

Terms of reference for the LDA childcare programme investigation:

- To evaluate the effectiveness of the LDA in working with other stakeholders to increase the availability, accessibility, affordability and quality of childcare across London, as proposed in the Mayor's Childcare Strategy to date;
- To assess the LDA's performance in meeting its targets on childcare and how this is monitored and evaluated.

Contact:

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ian.williamson@london.gov.uk
Tel: 020 7983 6541

Annex 3 - List of those who provided views and information

The following organisations provided written views and information to the Committee:

Association of London Government	Lloyd Park Nursery
Childcare4Business	London Borough of Islington
Contact a Family	London Development Agency
Corporation of London	Metropolitan Police Service
Daycare Trust	National Child Minding Association
Department for Education & Skills	National Day Nurseries Association
Gardiner Theobald	People 1 st
Greater London Authority	Pre-School Learning Alliance
JobCentre Plus	Skills Active
Learning & Skills Council	

The following people attended a meeting of the Committee on 12 July 2005:

Maxine Jones – Director of Skills & Employment, London Development Agency⁴⁴

Tania Fletcher – Head of Employability and Pathways to Jobs, LDA

Hilary McCollum – Director of Social Policy & Grants, Association of London Government⁴⁵

Pauline Shelley – Policy Officer, ALG

Jo Hardy – London Manager, Contact a Family⁴⁶

Christine Moneypenny – London Regional Executive Officer, Pre-school Learning Alliance⁴⁷

Jenny Burns – Richmond Playgroup Network⁴⁸

The Committee also visited Mudchute Farm Nursery, Tower Hamlets and Wetheralls Nursery, Hackney.

⁴⁴ As the lead London RDA on Childcare, the LDA is working with local authorities and other partner organisations to create more affordable childcare places across the Capital and to close the childcare gap.

⁴⁵ The ALG is working closely with the LDA and other partners to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of childcare to meet local needs and that childcare services are joined up.

⁴⁶ Contact a Family provides support, advice and information to families with disabled children across the UK through its freephone helpline and information services.

⁴⁷ The Pre-school Learning Alliance is a charity that has a network of over 15,000 community based early years settings that provide funded nursery education and childcare for half a million children.

⁴⁸ Richmond Playgroup Network is a charity and a local voluntary organization providing courses and training for childworkers, parents and carers.

Annex 4

Registered day care places in London September 2005

	Full Day Care		Childminders		Out Of School Day Care	
	Places	Places per 100 under 5	Places	Places per 100 under 5	Places	Places per 100 aged 5-14
Camden	2,400	18.8	700	5.5	1,600	7.9
Hackney	2,800	16.3	800	4.7	1,900	7.1
Hammersmith & Fulham	2,300	21.9	600	5.7	900	5.6
Haringey	1,700	10.7	900	5.7	1,600	6.3
Islington	3,000	28.0	900	8.4	1,300	7.1
Kensington & Chelsea	1,900	18.4	300	2.9	1,500	9.4
Lambeth	3,600	19.6	1,200	6.5	1,700	5.9
Lewisham	2,600	15.3	1,800	10.6	2,100	7.0
London, Corporation of	400	144.4	20	7.2	100	20.0
Newham	2,300	11.0	1,300	6.2	1,800	5.0
Southwark	3,200	18.3	1,200	6.9	4,200	14.4
Tower Hamlets	2,000	12.3	400	2.5	1,300	5.0
Wandsworth	4,000	23.1	1,000	5.8	3,700	15.8
Westminster	2,100	18.0	400	3.4	1,100	6.5
Inner London	34,100	17.3	11,500	5.8	24,600	7.8
Barking & Dagenham	800	6.6	1,000	8.3	700	2.9
Barnet	3,200	15.3	1,600	7.7	2,800	7.0
Bexley	900	7.0	2,100	16.2	700	2.4
Brent	3,200	18.4	1,100	6.3	1,300	4.3
Bromley	2,200	12.4	2,400	13.5	2,400	6.4
Croydon	4,300	19.9	2,300	10.7	3,200	7.1
Ealing	3,200	16.5	2,000	10.3	2,200	6.3
Enfield	1,900	10.1	1,600	8.5	1,900	5.3
Greenwich	1,900	12.1	2,000	12.7	2,100	7.6
Harrow	1,200	9.5	1,100	8.8	1,500	5.7
Havering	1,200	10.0	1,400	11.7	900	3.1
Hillingdon	2,300	14.6	2,000	12.7	1,000	3.1
Hounslow	2,000	13.9	900	6.3	1,300	5.1
Kingston upon Thames	1,400	15.7	1,100	12.3	1,400	8.2
Merton	2,100	17.4	1,200	9.9	2,000	9.3
Redbridge	2,900	18.2	1,600	10.1	1,300	3.9
Richmond upon Thames	2,400	20.0	1,200	10.0	2,000	10.0
Sutton	1,700	16.1	1,600	15.1	1,000	4.3
Waltham Forest	2,400	15.1	1,200	7.5	2,100	7.6
Outer London	41,300	14.4	29,400	10.3	31,700	5.7
Greater London	75,400	15.6	40,900	8.5	56,300	6.5
England	542,900	19.0	319,700	11.2	358,100	5.7

Sources: Ofsted Quarterly registered childcare provision at 30 September 2005, Office for National Statistics Mid Year Population Estimates 2004 and GLA calculations

Note: The number of places per 100 children refers to the resident population in the authority in which the provision is based, but it may be used by children from other areas. This is the reason for the exceptionally high rate for the Corporation of London.

Annex 5

Number of free nursery education places taken up by 3 & 4 year olds in London, January 2005

	Places	Places per 100 3 & 4 year olds
Camden	3,900	83.3
Hackney	5,200	90.0
Hammersmith & Fulham	3,400	87.4
Haringey	5,600	105.2
Islington	4,000	102.5
Kensington & Chelsea	2,300	56.4
Lambeth	5,600	90.9
Lewisham	5,400	83.9
London, Corporation of	*	*
Newham	7,800	108.8
Southwark	6,000	101.5
Tower Hamlets	5,600	102.1
Wandsworth	5,800	96.8
Westminster	3,500	82.0
Inner London	64,300	92.9
Barking & Dagenham	4,000	88.4
Barnet	7,000	86.3
Bexley	4,800	91.9
Brent	5,800	97.7
Bromley	6,000	81.9
Croydon	7,500	88.9
Ealing	7,000	99.4
Enfield	6,300	90.3
Greenwich	5,600	95.2
Harrow	4,000	87.3
Havering	4,400	90.8
Hillingdon	6,200	102.1
Hounslow	4,400	87.2
Kingston upon Thames	3,000	85.5
Merton	4,200	89.0
Redbridge	5,800	97.5
Richmond upon Thames	3,900	81.4
Sutton	3,700	82.9
Waltham Forest	5,500	99.2
Outer London	99,000	90.8
Greater London	163,200	91.6
England	1,028,000	91.1

Sources: DfES Provision for Children under Five Years of Age in England: January 2005 (final), published September 2005, Office for National Statistics Mid Year Population Estimates 2004 and GLA calculations

* Figures for Corporation of London not given separately, but included in totals.

Annex 6 – Principles of London Assembly scrutiny

An aim for action

An Assembly scrutiny is not an end in itself. It aims for action to achieve improvement.

Independence

An Assembly scrutiny is conducted with objectivity; nothing should be done that could impair the independence of the process.

Holding the Mayor to account

The Assembly rigorously examines all aspects of the Mayor's strategies.

Inclusiveness

An Assembly scrutiny consults widely, having regard to issues of timeliness and cost.

Constructiveness

The Assembly conducts its scrutinies and investigations in a positive manner, recognising the need to work with stakeholders and the Mayor to achieve improvement.

Value for money

When conducting a scrutiny the Assembly is conscious of the need to spend public money effectively.

Annex 7 – Orders and Translations

How to Order

For further information on this report or to order a copy, please contact Ian Williamson, Scrutiny Manager, on 0207 983 6541 or email ian.williamson@london.gov.uk

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