

DUBLIN DOCKLANDS CHILDCARE FORUM

REPORT ON CHILDCARE

IN THE

**DUBLIN DOCKLANDS DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY AREA**

**AND THE
HINTERLAND**

On behalf of

DUBLIN DOCKLANDS CHILDCARE FORUM

November 2007

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APPENDICES:

Appendix 1	Questionnaire
Appendix 2	Qualifications
Appendix 3	Glossary of Terms

The help and co-operation of all childcare facilities that took part in this project is acknowledged and appreciated:

Afterschools Educational Supports Programme, 25 Spencer Dock, Dublin 1

Community Afterschools Projects, Creche and Training (CASPR) (2),
57 Amiens St, Dublin 1.

Giraffe Childcare and Early Learning Centres (2), Lower Mayor St., IFSC,
Dublin 1.

Kids Inc, Department of Education, Marlborough St., Dublin 1.

Kindercare Playgroup, St Joseph's Co-Ed Primary School, East Wall Road,
Dublin 3.

Larkin Childcare (2), 57/58 North Strand Road, Dublin 1.

Little Bo Peep, ESB Sportsco, South Lotts Road, Dublin 4.

Little Treasures, North Wall Womens Centre, Lr Sherriff Street, Dublin 1.

LYCS, Lr Sean McDermott Street, Dublin 1. (Childcare facility in Rutland St)

Ringsend/Irishtown Community Playgroup and Creche, Thorncastle Street,
Ringsend, Dublin 4.

Saint Andrew's Childcare Centre, 114-116 Pearse St., Dublin 2.

Saint Louises Nursery, North William Street, Dublin 1.

Saint Joseph's Community Pre-school Playgroup, Community Centre, St Mary's
Road, East Wall, Dublin 3.

Saint Mary's Preschool, St Mary's Boys National School, Haddington Road,
Dublin 4.

Smallies, 49 Seville Place, Dublin 1.

Star of the Sea Playgroup, Leahy's Terrace, Sandymount, Dublin 4.

SVP St Mary's, 7/8 City Quay, Dublin 2.

St Mathew's Pre-school and Afterschool, Cranfield Place, Sandymount, Dublin 4.

The Anchorage, 10A York Road, Dublin 4.

Tiny Tots, 49 Seville Place, Dublin 1.

Trinity Day Nursery, House 49/50 Trinity College Dublin, Dublin 2.

1 INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The following report was commissioned by Dublin Docklands Development Authority (DDDA) on behalf of Dublin Docklands Childcare Forum and prepared by Consultant Aileen Sheahan. The Terms of Reference call for a report on the availability and quality of childcare facilities in the Dublin Docklands Development Authority area and the immediate hinterland.

There was no central database available which included details of the facilities offered in the specified geographical area, so it was necessary to compile the information in conjunction with the Health Service Executive (HSE), whose help and cooperation is gratefully acknowledged. A total of 27 facilities were identified as being within the target area of which 24 were interviewed. Of those not interviewed one was a drop in facility for clients of a specific clinic only and another was closing down.

Fieldwork consisted of personal interviews with the Directors/Managers/Project Leaders of 24 facilities operating in the area. Interviews were based on a questionnaire (Appendix 1) designed by the Consultant and agreed with the Client in advance.

Information was gathered under three broad headings:

- 1 The overall structure of the childcare sector in the specified area
- 2 Issues relating to staff – numbers, qualifications, experience etc.
- 3 Child related areas – programmes, waiting lists, facilities and equipment

During an interim meeting on the project, it was agreed that the Consultant would add in sections on conclusions and recommendations. These are included in the report.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Present situation: The twenty-four childcare facilities included in this research provide services for over 1,000 children in the DDDA area and the immediate hinterland. The categories range from babies to afterschool. These centres are staffed by 290 professional, administrative and trainee staff. Of the total 263 are childcare staff.

While some are well funded with excellent facilities, others work on little more than a “wing and a prayer”. They have no security of tenure, have to pack away and store equipment at the end of the sessions and have poorly paid staff. Some depend on volunteers for repair and maintenance work.

Demand: There is a huge demand for affordable childcare places in the DDDA area and hinterland. The population is projected to increase from 17,500 in 1997 to 42,500 by 2012 and this will inevitably lead to a significant increase in the demand for childcare. The large current unfulfilled demand is evidenced by the waiting lists maintained by a number of the facilities. The private (non work based) market, by and large, satisfies demand at commercially viable fee rates.

Capacity: The Managers of many of the existing facilities providing affordable places believe that they would require a doubling or even a tripling of capacity in order to satisfy current demand.

Some private facilities could possibly take additional children – but this would have to be at commercial rates. Where additional capacity exists in the private sector it is very small and not significant in relation to the unsatisfied demand.

Staff: In spite of the constraints identified, the experience, qualifications and numbers in training across the board are impressive. All childcare staff are about to start training, in training or qualified. While Master Degree level has been reached this is exceptional. Training above the basic level is restricted by time and cost constraints.

Programmes: In spite of the fact that there has been no specific overall curriculum for childcare facilities up to the present time (in the way that there is for schools), programmes for children are well planned. The programmes become more structured as children reach the pre-school stage. This positive situation can be attributed to the qualifications, experience and dedication of staff employed and the numbers currently in training.

Benchmarking/standardisation: In other areas covered there is no standardisation – in particular physical facilities, salaries and funding vary significantly

3 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

In this section we examine the structure of the sector, start dates and holidays, availability of places, fees, acceptance criteria, number of staff and how they are funded, training, qualifications and experience of staff, salary scales, programmes for children, waiting lists and facilities and equipment.

3.1.1 Structure of Sector

Of the 24 childcare facilities surveyed, 14 are community businesses, 5 are privately owned and 5 are non profit making but not community businesses. Of the community businesses, 7 belong to larger community centres/charitable organisations and get significant administrative and sometimes financial support. The other 7, while they may belong to a larger group and may, for example, have rent free use of facilities, would not get the same level of administrative and financial support from within the group. In the non profit making/non community sector the facilities are associated with schools, college or trust fund. These receive varying degrees of support. In the private facilities, 3 of the 5 belong to groups with some of the administration undertaken by Head Office.

Summary

Total surveyed	24
Community Businesses	Total 14
	Significant Group Support 7
	Less significant Group Support 7
Privately owned	Total 5
	Stand Alone 2
	Part of group 3
Non profit making/non community	Total 5
	Stand Alone 1
	Some outside support 4

3.1.2 Start Dates and Holidays:

Seven of the facilities were set up pre 1990, eleven in the 1990's and six since 2000. Holiday arrangements vary significantly:

- All close for 1/2 weeks at Christmas
- Five close for school holidays
- Five close for the month of August – one July and August
- Four close for two weeks in August
- Two close for one week in August
- Eight close for Christmas and Bank holidays only

In addition to the above some close for training days during the summer months.

3.1.3 Number of Places and Referrals from third parties

The total number of full time equivalent places in the facilities surveyed is 676 (including 8.30 to 1.30 as part-time and Afterschool as part-time). The total number of children catered for is 1,012. Although the divide between full time and part-time can vary depending on the demand, the split between categories at the time of the research was as follows:

Type of Facility	Full Time	Part Time	Drop In	Afterschool	Total
Community	133	330	12	117	592
Non Profit	53	84	0	12	149
Private	166	105	0	0	271
	352	519	12	129	1,012

The places break down as follows:

Type of Facility	Babies	Wobblers Toddlers Preschool	Afterschool	Drop In	Total
Community	37	436	117	12	602
Non Profit	6	121	12	0	139
Private	59	212	0	0	271
	102	769	129	12	1,012

The Wobblers 1/2 years, Toddlers 3/4 years and Preschool 4/5 years are all included in the one section as many, particularly the part time places, would have all the children from 2yrs 10 months to 5 years in the one room. The age profile varies from year to year. An estimate of the split is Wobblers 13%, Toddlers 35% Preschool 52%.

It was not possible to get an exact breakdown as some of the facilities, in particular the part-time facilities, do not break this down. The full time facilities do have separate rooms for Toddlers and Preschool. However, due to lack of space, some do not have clearly defined Wobbler and Toddler rooms. Not having a Wobbler Room restricts the number of babies that can be taken as they cannot be moved up until they are able to cope with the next room.

The community childcare facilities have varying numbers of referrals from HSE, Public Health Nurses, Family Support Workers, St Vincent de Paul, Social Workers et al. Depending on the qualifications of the staff, special needs may have been covered as part of the overall course. However, only one facility has a person qualified in special needs and one a special needs person in training.

While not all facilities currently have children with special needs, all facilities are open to accepting them. Children are accepted across the full range of facilities with, for

example, Downes syndrome, cystic fibrosis, prosthesis, behavioural issues, language delays etc. Children needing a high level of special needs care would be referred to a relevant qualified person or, in specific cases, a request can be made to the HSE to provide a part-time special needs person. The community facilities in particular would have good contact with the Public Health Nurses and family support workers.

3.1.4 Fees

There is a huge variation in fees charged. The fee ranges given below must be read with the knowledge that:

There is a significant difference in the support received by the individual community facilities and this is reflected in the fees charged. This relates not only to financial support but also to administrative and other back up in the running of the businesses. (See section on funding).

Part time places vary for example, they can be from 8.30 am to 1.30 pm or from 9am to 12 noon. Technically 8.30 am to 1.30 pm is considered a full time place but these places have been included as part-time for the purpose of this report – as a second child can be taken in the afternoon.

Afterschool hours range from two hours to four hours – with or without dinner provided.

Included below is the highest and the lowest for each category. Some facilities would have a range of fees e.g. babies, where they have places, will usually be higher, some have 2 day or 3 day per week rates etc.

The range of fees paid per week is as follows:

Community Childcare Facilities

	Part-time	Full Day	Afterschool
From	€15	€25	€10
To	€65	€110	€60

Where community businesses have a commercial rate it is higher

Private Commercial Businesses and Non Profit Making facilities

	Part-time	Full Day	Afterschool
From	€35	€171	€28
To	€80	€227	€28

Generally there would be discounts of 10% for siblings. Part of the fees may be paid for example by HSE or FAS (see section on funding)

3.1.5 Acceptance Criteria/Profile

Within the community sector different criteria is used and some have stricter acceptance criteria than others. Criteria given included:

- (1) Children at risk or with greatest need are given priority
- (2) Local – may or may not be strict about parish boundaries etc.
- (3) Parents or Guardians attending courses in further education.
- (4) Staff, siblings and parents who work in the area accommodated first.
- (5) Afterschool takes children from designated schools in the area.
- (6) Child who has never been in preschool
- (7) It may be grandparents rather than parents/children who now live in the area
- (8) Children who will attend local schools

In the private sector, there are no strict criteria, but usually parents work or live in the area. The exception is workplace facilities where the criteria relate to your employer. There are no workplace facilities in the community sector. In the not for profit group they are mainly, but not exclusively, associated with schools and colleges. In this group the criteria is defined e.g. students and staff of College, children who will move on to the school associated with the preschool.

It was not within the terms of reference of this research to establish how many of the childcare places are taken up by children living in the area. However, it is likely that a high percentage of the private and workplace facilities relate more to parents working in the area. In the Community and Non Profit facilities the majority of the children are likely to live in the area, however, where children are collected by grandparents, it is possible that the parents now live outside the DDDA area.

3.2.1 Total Number of Staff and how they are funded:

Staff numbers per facility range from 2 to 49 (including full time, part time, volunteers etc). Within the community sector numbers range from 4 to 49. The total number of staff in the facilities included in the research is 290 of which 263 are childcare staff.

The above does not allow for the fact that in the community sector many of the facilities have their administration done by the Community Centre or organisation to which they are associated. Administration is also centralised in the larger private sector facilities and is not carried out in the DDDA area.

The staff (including both childcare and non childcare) are funded as follows:

Type of Facility	Fees	CE	JI	EOCP	Social Economy	Other	Total
Community	30	119	8	34	3	18	212
Non Profit	26	0	0	0	0	0	26
Private	50	2	0	0	0	0	52
TOTAL	106	121	8	34	3	18	290

Other, some of which are contributions to salaries, would come from: HSE (Health Service Executive), DCRAGA (Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs), Vincent de Paul, LDTF (Local Drugs Task Force).

Full time staff and part time staff break down as follows:

Type of Facility	Full Time	Part Time	CE	Total
Community	51	42	119	212
Non Profit	10	16	0	26
Private	47	3	2	52
TOTAL	108	61	121	290

The funding of staff as it relates to training and qualifications is detailed in the following section on Training and Qualifications.

3.2.2 Training and Qualifications

In addition to FETAC Levels 4 and 5 – the staff in the facilities surveyed had a wide range of qualifications ranging from Certificates to Master Degree. A list is included in Appendix 2.

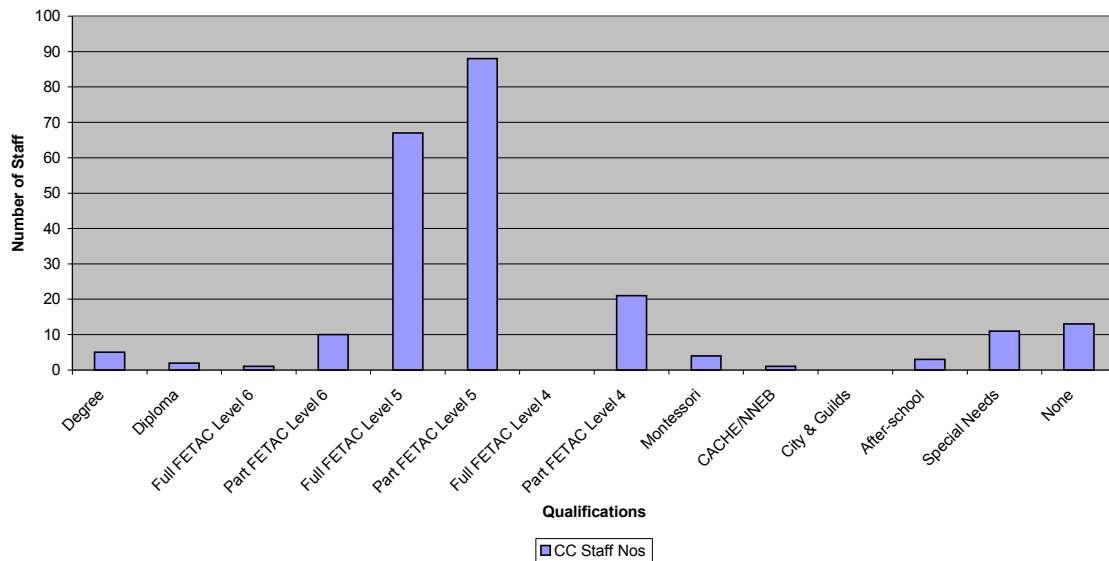
The private sector usually requires that childcare workers have at least a basic qualification prior to offering them employment. Both the community and private sectors employ core qualified staff. Many will continue training while employed. However, in the community sector, very few of the CE participants are qualified in childcare prior to employment. This results in a much smaller group of core qualified staff in the community sector compared with the private sector. Once the CE participants have completed the 2/3 years the funding stops and the childcare facilities can not afford to keep them.

Additional research was undertaken on the area of training following the initial draft of this report. There is some discrepancy with regard to previous staff numbers due mainly to start and finish dates for CE programmes. The difference is not considered significant.

The profiles of the Sectors are as follows:

Community Childcare Sector

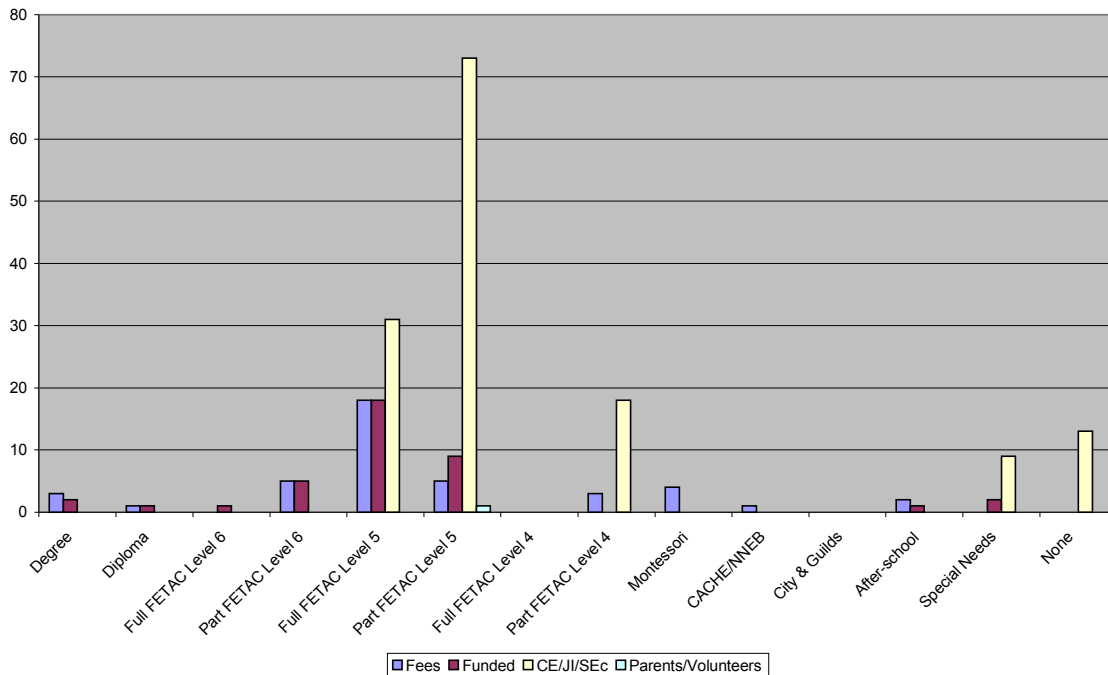
**Childcare Staff Qualifications
Community Childcare Facilities**



The above shows that 39% of the childcare staff is in training for FETAC Level 5, a further 9% in training for FETAC Level 4 and 4% have no childcare training.

The funding of the staff related to the above categories is as follows:

Funding of Community Childcare Staff



The above chart highlights a number of issues:

- 19% of Staff are paid from fees
- 17% are funded
- 64% are on Community Employment, Jobs Initiative or Social Economy Programmes

The Community Childcare Sector is currently responsible for providing childcare to 600 children. It is heavily reliant on Community Employment, Jobs Initiative and Social Economy Programmes (with the majority being on Community Employment Programmes).

At present, participants are on Community Employment (CE) Programmes for three years, in some cases two years. For the majority this is not sufficient time to complete FETAC Level 5 qualification. This is demonstrated by the high number in training for

this level compared with those who have completed this level. Many will have come to the end of their CE Programme participation before completing their Level 5 qualification.

Those with no qualifications largely represent staff starting on a CE Programme. It can take 6 to 12 months before the participant is ready to commence training and a course is available. This means there are only two years (one in some cases) to get the childcare qualification.

The majority of the CE staff is in childcare with the JI and Social Economy staff mainly in support services. All the CE participants working in the childcare area must undertake childcare training. They get as much support as is needed – and this can be very substantial. Many prefer to do their training in community training based projects while others attend Colleges.

Every effort is made to keep CE participants for three years and to support them so that they will be fully trained to FETAC Level 5 within this period of time. Where the CE Programme only lasts two years the participants are supported in reaching the highest FETAC Level that is possible for them within the timescale. As CE staff change every 2 to 3 years (as required by FAS) the community childcare facilities are heavily involved in supporting training on an on-going basis. This is a separate service that they offer to the community. In many cases the trainees require additional support – this is either organised by the Manager, or may be undertaken by the Manager and staff in their own time.

Managers have to schedule the work to fit in with training times. CE staff would be available at different times during the week depending on where they are doing their training and what level they are at. Additional tutor support will usually take place in the evening.

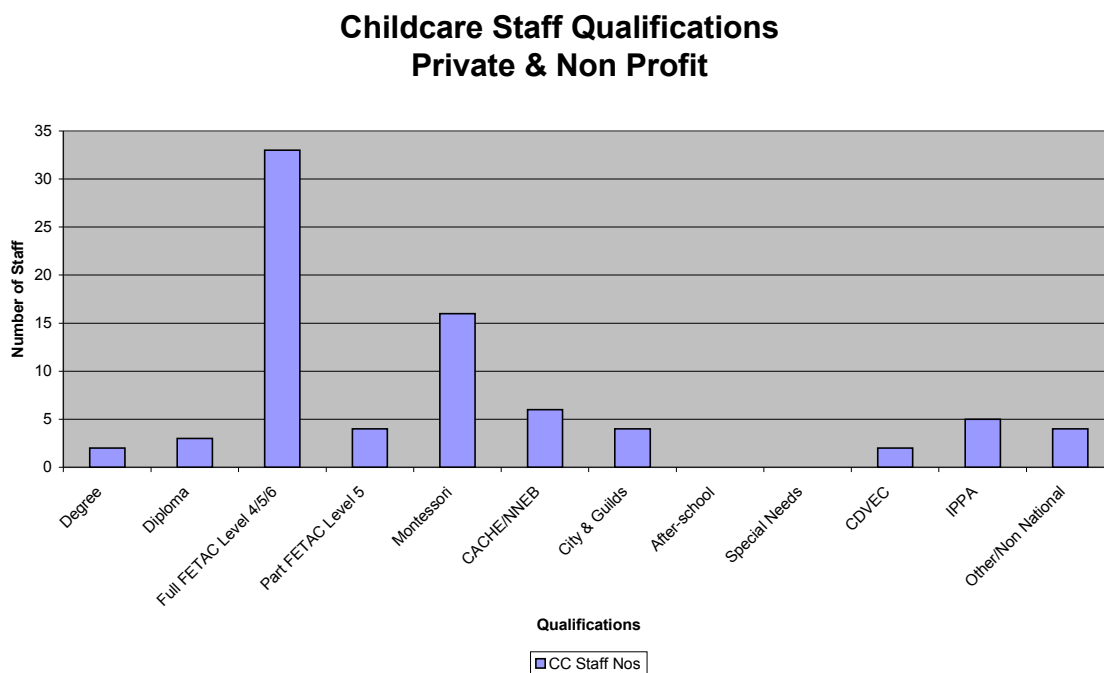
An issue arose regarding CE participants trained in non childcare areas, (in particular a cook who received food and hygiene training and received a HACCP qualification), who are obliged to leave at the end of the CE period as there is no other mechanism for funding their salary.

Non CE staff who wish to train are supported in different ways. Part-time workers can attend the training course on their days off, alternatively, training can be undertaken in the evenings. The community childcare facilities can not afford to replace childcare workers who are training (and must schedule the hours of the CE participants accordingly). Where possible they may make a contribution to the cost of the course. In one of the private sector facilities–staff are paid time and a half to attend training at week-ends – this is additional training for those already qualified. This makes it very expensive.

Private and Non Profit Sectors

While training is ongoing at all levels in all sectors, in the Private and Non Profit Sectors the majority of staff will have a childcare qualification on commencement of employment. Training days are held throughout the year both to keep staff up to date and to add new skills. Study leave and financial support for training are only available where funding, other than fees, can be accessed.

Qualifications are as follows:



All the childcare facilities put a great emphasis on training and a number of in house courses are run annually. These include, for example:

- First Aid
- Food Hygiene
- Health and Safety in the Workplace
- Managing Difficult Behaviour
- Manual Handling
- Childcare Protection
- Bereavement Counselling
- Arts & Crafts
- Anti Bias Training (PAVE Point)

Child Development and Play
Early Education
Woman's Health
Parenting Skills
Yoga for Children
Infant Massage

New courses are developed on an on-going basis and professionals are brought in to deliver the courses.

Training is also required in providing support for parents – the change in demographics is making this a bigger issue. In many cases parents (and children) have not got a good command of the English language. Childcare providers, while having a good understanding of the many and varied cultures now in the Docklands area, could benefit from additional training in diversity and equality and the provision of play resources that reflect the diversity of the culture of the families.

3.2.3 Barriers to Training

During the course of the research barriers to training were identified as follows:

Early School Leavers/ Lack of confidence/Poor literacy skills
Ability – need training suitable to needs
Not understanding the level of support they will get
Difficulty of learning in formal college environment
No suitable place to study – can do assignments during work time if possible – trainer from Centre available

Lack of supports while training (including childcare)
Childcare training at night (need babysitter)
Quality and flexibility of training

Cost of IPPA - the Early Childhood Organisation, and VEC courses
Cost – to pay for special needs training etc.
Lack of funding to replace people who want to train further

Difficult to keep up to date with developments
Time – CE not long enough for some to complete modules
Facilities – try to link in with other projects -Dublin Adult Learning Centre (DALC) etc

In summary, the importance of on-going training was acknowledged across the board. There is a considerable level of support within the community groups for those with personal problems around literacy, confidence etc. but more could be done in terms of flexibility of hours, being able to release people during working hours and grants for

training. Within the non community facilities the barriers were mainly seen as cost of courses to be paid by staff on low childcare worker salaries and time, including the cost of replacing staff attending courses during working hours.

On-going in-house training is also a cost in both time and money.

3.2.4 Salary Scales

There is no standardisation of salaries. Salaries are arrived at as follows:

Salary Scale	No of Facilities
Manager BCCN* – otherwise Directors Decide based on fee income	1
Manager HSE Grade 5 Childcare HSE Grade 4	2
BCCN – All	3
CE Supervisor and Participant Rates and Pobal Rate only	3
Own salary scale based on market/Pobal rates	5
Agreed by committee in consultation with staff – depends on fee income	1
Hourly rates from €6 per hour (under 16yrs) to €13 per hour	1
Balance left from fees after expenses are paid	2
Linked to college secretarial scale	1
Hourly rate €14 – not paid July & August	1
Agreed by committee – reviewed annually	3

*Note: BCCN is Border Counties Childcare Network – published salary scale

3.3.1 Programmes for Children

The high level of training and qualifications leads to comprehensive programmes being developed throughout the sector.

CECDE (Centre for Early Childhood Development & Education) has recently developed a curriculum and this has been welcomed by all early year services. Up to now age appropriate curricula are devised independently by each facility for each age group.

Some include Montessori and Highscope. All include activities such as painting, water play, reading, jigsaws, blocks etc. In most cases it is the qualified person in each room who will plan the activities. This is done in consultation with other staff and with the Manager. The activities will be placed usually on the wall so anyone in the room will know what the activities are for the day. An increasing number now have computers.

Giraffe have developed their own curriculum – The Giraffe Reach Programme. Every staff member is trained in the Programme. Activities for each room are on a board at the entrance to the facility.

Afterschool includes being collected from school, light lunch, some support with homework (not all as onus is on parents). Activities include swimming, Arts & Crafts, football and outings.

3.3.2 Waiting Lists

Waiting lists for the private sector childcare facilities (excluding workplace facilities that have significant waiting lists) refer to bookings for the future and for their youngest age as, in general, they can meet the current demand. The problem of supply occurs where there is an inability on the part of the parent to pay commercial rates – they need rates that are affordable. This is essentially the case for Government intervention.

There is no standardisation of waiting lists so no meaningful summary can be produced. Within the community and not for profit sectors all either have waiting lists or have stopped keeping waiting lists as the facility is always full. For those who do keep waiting lists the numbers on the lists range from 15 to over 150. However, this does not reflect the reality of the situation as waiting lists evolve in a number of different ways.

Examples of how the issue is treated are given below:

- Only include names for the youngest age group as this is the only group that will have places available with the next twelve months. This may be babies or 2/3 or 3/4 year olds depending on the facility.
- Have a specific day during the year when names are taken. The waiting list is then closed until the following year – none of the enquiries made during the year are recorded.
- For those providing one year pre-school – only take bookings for future years. Those left on the list for the current year will be too old by the time places become available.
- Some on the waiting lists for toddler and pre-school groups are not toilet trained – so they cannot be accommodated.

- Some close the waiting list when it reaches a certain number – again there is then no record of further enquiries during that year.

In general, waiting lists operate on a first come basis. However, there are many exceptions depending on the facility. For example the following may get priority:

- Referrals and children at risk.
- Emergencies
- Siblings
- Children who will attend a specific school in the area where schools have taken the initiative (Pre-school)
- Children who will attend (Pre-school) and who are attending (Afterschool) specific schools in the area.
- Children of parents attending courses in community projects and VEC.
- Workplace facilities - have their own criteria within the workplace group

As can be seen from the above, it is not possible to estimate the total number of additional places required. There is likely to be some duplication of names on current waiting lists, however, it is likely that there are many more names not getting onto any waiting list.

3.3.3 Facilities and Equipment

Facilities vary significantly but, overall, there is a wide range of equipment and it is of a high standard. The facilities (i.e. premises) range from very basic with no outside play area and with no security of tenure (could be put out at any time) to high standard purpose built state of the art with good outside play area. An overview is as follows:

Criteria	Number of Private (5)	Number of Non Profit (5)	Number of Community (14)
Existing facilities Adequate for needs	3	1	4
Space too small for current needs – no expansion planned			3
Building Plans in Progress			3
Building work required – not yet being progressed		4	
Short Term Tenure/Sharing Facility	2		5
Indoor Play Area	1		2
Outdoor Play Area	4	5	4
Use local Park			4

Note: Discrepancy in figures relates to more than one location for some facilities. i.e. one location considered adequate but the other not adequate.

Taking the children to a park is not ideal as it requires additional staff, or parent volunteers. Field trips are undertaken by most groups but this is problematic as additional staff, parents and volunteers are required to meet the regulatory requirements regarding ratios.

The community and private facilities pay for repairs and renewals out of their fee income. For the community businesses, once off funding comes from, for example, DDDA, AIB, Bank of Ireland, some materials from CE Scheme, Dept of Education, DCRAGA, Fund Raising, HSE, People in Need, McDonalds, Community Centre to which they are attached, voluntary contributions of time and equipment from parents. While raising these funds is not as big an issue as funding salaries and training, it still takes a considerable amount of time and effort for the managers of the community facilities to make applications for funding and organise fund raising activities.

The HSE carry out inspections of all facilities notified to them. These relate to the compliance with childcare regulations and with HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) regarding the kitchen facilities. While there may a number of infringements, they may be very minor and easily corrected. Some HSE recommendations may be costly and no suggestions are made as to how these can be funded. When recommendations have been implemented, it would be good to have this

acknowledged in a follow up HSE report. With regard to HACCP a certificate could be issued to confirm that everything is up to standard and renewed annually.

3.3.4 Funding

At the time of the research sources of income were as follows:

Source of Income	Number of Facilities
Fees	All (Private only funded by fees)
EOCP*	9
CE	13
Social Economy	2
Jobs Initiative	4
HSE Salary	2
HSE Fees	5
FAS fees	1
VEC Fees	1
Vincent de Paul	1
Other	16+

*EOCP (Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme)

‘Other’ is not exhaustive. It includes DDDA (Capital and Projects), Department of Education and Science, DCRAGA, Department of Health and Children, Dublin City Corporation (Projects), Vincent de Paul (Projects), Banks, Kathryn Howard Foundation, Dormant Accounts, CIE Fund (excess fares), Dept of Social and Family Affairs (Food Grant), DCC (Toll Bridge), Trust Funds, Daughters of Charity, Community/Resource Centres, Schools, College, FAS materials grant and various fundraising activities by the groups.

A major challenge, particularly for those in receipt of Government funding, is to keep the fees low as costs increase. This is essential because of the low income target groups and is currently achieved by high dependency on CE Programmes.

Where grants are involved handling the administration and the cash flow can be an issue. In many cases grants are paid after the work has been undertaken and both time and knowledge are required to draw down the grant.

4 CONCLUSIONS

For ease of reference the conclusions are grouped under the headings of Demand, Supply, Staffing, Administration and Funding, Targeting and Focussing.

4.1.1 Demand

Findings based on interviews held indicated that:

- There is a demand for available affordable childcare places in the area. This is confirmed by the waiting lists that exist and also from the fact that waiting lists are not kept by all facilities as places will not become available. Demographic movements suggest that demand will continue to increase over the coming years.
- There is a demand to fill the gap between Pre-school and Afterschool – Pre-school stops at 4½ years and, while some Afterschools commence at primary school others start at 7 years of age. Working parents with children in the 4½ to 7 age group, including those working in childcare, frequently have to negotiate flexible working hours in order to accommodate the current lack of facilities for these children.
- The issue of affordable Afterschool needs to be addressed.

4.1.2 Supply

- As can be seen from the table on page 13 the physical facilities need to be improved for some of the existing operations. Issues such as security of tenure and equipment storage also constitute major problems.
- Despite the provision of good programmes for the children based on their age there is a need for a standard curriculum – this is being addressed.

4.1.3 Staffing

- The report findings indicate that there is a dedicated, experienced and qualified team of people working in the childcare sector in the DDDA and hinterland. They do not have a high profile in the area. To continue attracting the number and calibre of people required to continue the provision of this service in the area greater recognition is required.
- Training is given high priority by management. The main barriers to training are:
 - Cost of Courses

- Cost of replacing staff (i.e. non CE staff)
- Additional supports e.g. Mentoring for CE participants
- Training regarding the growing multi cultural society
- On the basis of report findings there is some requirement for additional training in the areas of:
 - - Management
 - Administration
 - Special Needs
 - Tutoring
- There is a lack of standardisation of fees and salary scales
- There is a huge dependency on CE participants in the community sector. They form a large part of the core staff and this affects the ratio of trained to untrained staff. All the training and experience gained by the CE participants is lost to the childcare facility where they were employed as there is no funding for them to continue once the CE Programme ends.

4.1.4 Administration and Funding

- Funding comes from a wide range of Government Departments and other sources
- The childcare Manager frequently spends considerable time on making funding applications at the expense of managing and improving the facility.
- The extent of administrative support varies according to the structure of which the facilities form part. Where administrative support is not available there is no specific funding for this role.
- Volunteers provide a wide range of services including childcare, maintenance and building work.

4.1.5 Targeting and Focussing

- Both the community and the private sectors are very focussed on the needs of the children, are committed to training of staff and facilitating and responding to parents requirements.
- The community sector also deals with broader community issues. Local people are supported in accessing the CE Programmes. The participants are trained in childcare and they receive significant support and assistance, sometimes from

other staff members on a voluntary basis. The support given enables many of them to complete a FETAC childcare qualification.

- In addition to getting a qualification, there are benefits regarding both personal and community development. The childcare training can be used in the parenting of their own children. People from the local area become role models for both their own families and the wider community.
- Community and 'non profit' facilities act as feeders to local schools. Teachers from the local schools are encouraged to visit the pre-schools making the transition from pre-school to primary school easier for the children.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations address the main issues identified during the course of the research.

- **Profile:** Raise the profile of childcare needs in the area while recognising the excellence of the professionals already working in the sector.
- **CE Programmes:** All CE participants should be guaranteed five years to enable them to complete their training.
- **Training:** Provide an annual training budget with clearly defined terms and conditions, including the following areas:
 - Special needs training
 - Childcare for non CE childcare staff
 - Specialist tutors for literacy and numeracy

Also include in the training budget support for in service training days, workshops and support for attending conferences aimed at on going improvement and updating of skills.

- **Tenure of facilities:** Secure the tenure of facilities currently under threat in the area.
- **Physical facilities:** Upgrade facilities currently in need of refurbishment and extend, where possible, existing facilities to meet the demands of the area (including increasing the number of places for babies).
- **New Facilities:** Involve the Docklands Childcare Forum in the development and design of new facilities in the area.
- **Waiting List:** Develop a centralised Waiting List for the whole Docklands area under the jurisdiction of the Docklands Childcare Forum.
- **Staff Register:** Develop a central Register of Qualified Childcare Staff for use by all employers in the area. This will include those finishing CE who are obliged to leave their current positions but wish to stay in childcare.
- **Expand Forum:** Open up the Forum to all childcare providers within the Docklands area (community, not for profit and private facilities) so that they can network with each other regarding staff, training and other issues.

- **Salary Scales:** Consider standard salary scales throughout the sector (e.g. parity with other youth work scales) ideally paid through a central system/Department.
- **Best Practice:** Examine best practice both nationally and internationally.

APPENDIX 1 - Questionnaire

DUBLIN DOCKLANDS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

CHILDCARE QUESTIONNAIRE - 2006

SECTION 1

1.1 Contact Name:	1.2 Title:
1.3 Phone:	1.4 Email:
1.5 Name of facility:	
1.6 Address:	
1.7 Start Date:	
1.8 Holidays/Days Closed	

<i>Please tick where appropriate:</i>	
1.9 Private Ownership	1.10 Community Business

1.11 Associations:	Yes No:
1.12 Private: Part of a Group Community: Associated with community centre or charitable organisation.	1.13 If yes, who is association with and brief description of relationship:

1.14 STATE NUMBER OF CHILDREN THAT CAN BE ON THE PREMISES AT ANY ONE TIME:

1.15 DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT PLACES			
Type of Place	Full Time	Part Time	Start and Finish Time
<i>Babies</i>			
<i>Wobblers</i>			
<i>Toddlers</i>			
<i>Pre School</i>			
<i>Drop In</i>			
<i>Afterschool</i>			

1.16 Do you cater for any of the following?: Where appropriate please indication of the special need, number of referrals, etc.	
<i>Children with Special Needs</i>	
<i>HSE Referrals</i>	
<i>Other Referral (e.g. Vincent de Paul etc)</i>	

1.17 TYPE OF FEE CHARGED:	€ and Description of Fee
<i>Flat Fee</i>	
<i>Sliding Scale (e.g. means tested or discounts for second child etc.)</i>	
<i>Paid by 3rd Party (e.g. FAS, VEC contribution etc)</i>	

1.18 WHAT IS YOUR ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA:

e.g. is it always on a first come basis or is preference given to e.g. local children etc.

1.19 PROFILE OF CHILDREN

Children living in area

Parents work in area

Other

SECTION TWO

2.1 TOTAL NUMBER OF STAFF	Full Time	Part Time
<i>(1) Childcare Staff</i>		
<i>(2) Non Childcare Staff</i>		
<i>Managerial</i>		
<i>Administrative</i>		
<i>Reception</i>		
<i>Cook</i>		
<i>Cleaner</i>		
<i>Maintenance</i>		

				Social		
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2.2 FUNDING OF STAFF	Fees	CE	JI	Economy	EOCP	Other
<i>(1) Childcare Staff</i>						
<i>(2) Non Childcare Staff</i>						
<i>Managerial</i>						
<i>Administrative</i>						
<i>Reception</i>						
<i>Cook</i>						
<i>Cleaner</i>						
<i>Maintenance</i>						

2.3 QUALIFICATIONS OF CHILDCARE STAFF	Description/Numbers
<i>FETAC Level 4.5, etc.</i>	
<i>Montessori</i>	
<i>Degree/Diploma</i>	
<i>Training in Afterschool</i>	
<i>Special Needs</i>	
<i>None</i>	
<i>Other e.g. first aid, health & safety, etc.</i>	

2.4 DO STAFF ACCESS TRAINING DURING WORKING HOURS?	Yes/No
<i>If yes – how many</i>	
<i>Where does training take place – VEC, local etc.</i>	
<i>If yes – is there a cost of replacing staff</i>	

2.5 CHILDCARE STAFF CURRENTLY IN TRAINING		
Course	Number	Comment
<i>FETAC</i>		
<i>Montessori</i>		
<i>Degree/Diploma</i>		
<i>Training in Afterschool</i>		
<i>Special Needs</i>		
<i>None</i>		
<i>Other</i>		

2.6 WHAT DO YOU SEE AS BARRIERS TO TRAINING:

2.7 EXPERIENCE OF CHILDCARE STAFF	
	Number
<i>Up to one year</i>	
<i>1 – 3 years</i>	
<i>Over 3 years</i>	

2.8 PROGRAMMES FOR CHILDREN

<i>Are programmes structured?</i>
<i>Are programmes approved by Manager on regular basis?</i>
<i>Are programmes specific e.g. Montessori?</i>

2.9 WHAT SALARY SCALES ARE USED?
(e.g. Have you developed your own salary scales, do you use a HSE related scale, do you use the Border Counties Network Scale (BCCN))

Outline of scale used.

SECTION 3

3.1 WAITING LIST:

Do you operate a waiting list? Yes/No

If yes, how does it operate? e.g. only include youngest age group, advertise and take names at certain times of year etc.

3.2 TOTAL NUMBER ON WAITING LIST	Number
<i>3 months to 1 year</i>	
<i>1 year to 2 years</i>	
<i>3 years to 6 years</i>	
<i>6 years to 10 years</i>	

3.3 FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT	Comment
<i>Do you consider your facilities adequate for needs or are there areas that you would like to improve?</i>	
<i>Do you have an outdoor play area?</i> <i>Is it part of your premises or is it a nearby park etc.</i>	
<i>Is your requirement for replacing equipment a significant financial issue?</i>	

3.4 FUNDING	Comment
<i>Are you in receipt of operational funding from:</i>	
<i>Fees from Parents</i>	
<i>Pobal – EOCP</i>	
<i>Pobal – Social Economy</i>	
<i>FAS – Community Employment (incl materials)</i>	
<i>FAS – Jobs Initiative</i>	
<i>HSE (% of fees)</i>	
<i>Once off Ad Hoc Funding</i>	
<i>Other</i>	

3.5 WHAT ISSUES RELATING TO CHILDCARE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ADDRESSED?

3.6 HAVE YOU ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

APPENDIX 2

Qualifications

FETAC Level 4 Childcare
FETAC Level 5 Childcare
FETAC Level 6 Peer Mentoring
FETAC Level 5 Special Needs
FETAC Level 5 Youth and Community Skills

IPPA Foundation Course
Supervisors Course (DIT)

NCNA – Certificate

Certificate in Preschool Care
Certificate in Addiction Studies (NUI)
Certificate in Sepcial Needs (Colaiste Dhulaigh)
Certificate – Highscope (Bernardos)
Certificate in Childcare (Portobello)
Certificate in Childcare (CDVEC)
Certificate in Childcare (City & Guilds)

Childcare Foundation Studies
Child Development & Creative Play (Maynooth College)
NNEB Creche Management (UCD)

Anti Bias Training (PAVE Point)

Introduction to Montessori

Diploma in Montessori
Diploma in Management
Diploma – School of Practical Childcare

Children’s Nursing (SRN)

Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education
Degree in Early Childhood Care and Education
BA in Early Education (DIT)
Degree – Kindergarten
Degree in Child Psychology

Degree in Montessori (St Nicholas College)
Masters in Equality Studies

Non nationals have qualifications from their own countries including:

BA (Poland)

German Qualification in Child Psychology

Courses include:

Training in Afterschool

First Aid

Health & Safety HACCP

Manual Handling

Child Protection

Basic Youth Leadership

Health & Safety in the Workplace

Code of Practice for Youth Workers

Bereavement Counselling

Arts & Crafts

APPENDIX 3

Glossary of Terms

DDDA – Dublin Docklands Development Authority

HSE – Health Service Executive

LYCS – Lourdes Youth and Community Services

DCRAGA – Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs

VdeP – Vincent de Paul

LDTF – Drugs Task Force

CASPR – Community Afterschools Project, Creche and Training

DALC – Dublin Adult Literacy

DCC – Dublin County Council

HACCP – Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (Food Regulation)

JI – Jobs Initiative

EOCP – Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme
