



Childcare Needs Assessment

**Proposed Residential Development at Scholarstown House,
Scholarstown Road, Dublin 16.**

Client: Emmaville Limited

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Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This Childcare Assessment has been carried out to examine the need for a creche facility within the development proposed at Scholarstown House, Scholarstown Road, Dublin 16 to respond to point 5(c) of the Request for Further Information from South Dublin County Council dated 19th of December 2022. It has been prepared in accordance with governing childcare policy and supporting guidelines, which has directly shaped the methodological approach taken.

This report includes the following:

- A review of applicable planning policy,
- A review of available data pertaining to the study area; and,
- A review of the existing childcare facilities in the area.



Figure 1.1 – Aerial View of Site and Surrounding Context

1.2 Development Context

The 0.79 hectare site is currently comprised of a two storey dwelling, Scholarstown House which is listed on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS no. 322) and NIAH (Ref: 11216036), and a number of outbuildings located at the junction of Scholarstown Road and Orlagh Grove, Dublin 16. It represents a prominent corner off a local roundabout which is c. 350m away from the M50 motorway. The site is bounded to the east by St. Colmcille's Community School and to the south by a small parade of local services which include a Spar convenience store, a creche, a beauty clinic and two takeaways. There is an existing apartment development to the north of Scholarstown Road, and

a large Strategic Housing Development of 590 residential units was permitted on lands adjacent to the site, which is currently under construction and will be completed shortly.

Following the Request for Further Information issued by South Dublin County Council on the 19th of December 2022, a number of design changes were made resulting in the reduction in proposed unit numbers from 76 to 72 therefore reducing the scheme below the threshold in which a Childcare Facility would be required in line with the national Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities.

Planning Policy Context

2.1 Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities

The national Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities provide a framework to guide both local authorities in preparing development plans and assessing applications for planning permission, and developers and childcare providers in formulating development proposals.

Section 2.4 sets out the appropriate locations for Childcare Facilities which include:

- New communities/Larger new housing developments - Planning authorities should require the provision of at least one childcare facility for new housing areas unless there are significant reasons to the contrary for example, development consisting of single bed apartments or where there are adequate childcare facilities in adjoining developments. For new housing areas, an average of one childcare facility for each 75 dwellings would be appropriate. (See also paragraph 3.3.1 and Appendix 2 below). The threshold for provision should be established having regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas. Authorities could consider requiring the provision of larger units catering for up to 30/40 children in areas of major residential development on the basis that such a large facility might be able to offer a variety of services – sessional/drop in/after-school, etc.
- The vicinity of concentrations of work places, such as industrial estates, business parks and any other locations where there are significant numbers working - The site location and lay-out of facilities should optimise the opportunities for safe and efficient journeys to/from the workplace of parents/guardians. This may be achieved by locating the facility close to the entrance to the business park/industrial estate so that all parents/guardians would automatically pass it on their way to work and would not have to detour past their workplace in order to drop off children. Regard would need to be had to the traffic conditions in the vicinity of the proposed childcare facility. Care should be taken to ensure that any proposed childcare facility is located as far away as possible from premises where the process carried on or the machinery/equipment in use or emissions involved could be injurious to the health and safety of the children.
- In the vicinity of schools - This would facilitate parents to make one trip in dropping off school-going children and children attending childcare facilities. This could also facilitate the provision of afterschool childcare services, thereby taking a sustainable approach to use of built facilities and transportation.
- Neighbourhood, District and Town Centres - In existing built-up areas, many of the smaller neighbourhood centres are under competitive pressure from larger commercial centres. Those which contain vacant units are under pressure to convert to residential use. The Development Plan should have as an objective to safeguard the retention of this resource as appropriate locations for small-scale mixed-use development, in particular childcare facilities.

- Adjacent to public transport corridors, park-and-ride facilities, pedestrian routes and dedicated cycle ways.

Section 3.3.1 goes on to state the following in relation to suitable sites for full day care facilities:

".. In relation to new housing areas, a standard of one childcare facility providing for a minimum 20 childcare places per approximately 75 dwellings may be appropriate. This is a guideline standard and will depend on the particular circumstances of each individual site. Consideration of childcare facilities provision should be raised as early as possible in preplanning discussions for larger housing developments.."

2.2 Circular PL3/2016

In March 2016, the Government issued a circular in relation to childcare facilities under the early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. In accordance with the stated aspiration to increase access to childcare nationally, the circular requests that local planning authorities:

- *"Expedite all pre-planning application consultation requests from childcare facility providers in relation to proposals to extend opening hours, to increase capacity or to provide new facilities.*
- *Expedite, insofar as is possible, consideration of all planning applications or Section 5 declaration submissions in respect of childcare facilities in order to facilitate the expansion of required capacity as appropriate".*

2.3 Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments 2022

The Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines were updated in 2022, following a new direction from the Government with regard Build to Rent development. These Guidelines set out the parameters and standards for new apartment developments in Ireland, and in particular set out standards in relation to tenant amenities and facilities to support such developments, including the provision of childcare facilities.

Section 4.7 of the Apartment Guidelines states in relation to the requirement for Childcare Facilities in apartment schemes containing 1-bedroom units:

"Notwithstanding the Planning Guidelines for Childcare Facilities (2001), in respect of which a review is to be progressed, and which recommend the provision of one child-care facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 child places) for every 75 dwelling units, the threshold for provision of any such facilities in apartment schemes should be established having regard to the scale and unit mix of the proposed development and the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of the area. One-bedroom or studio type units should not generally be considered to contribute to a requirement for any childcare provision and subject to location, this may also apply in part or whole, to units with two or more bedrooms."

2.4 South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028

COS7 Objective 2 of the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028 relates to the provision of childcare facilities in schemes of over 75 no. residential units. It states that South Dublin County Council recognises that childcare facilities are an essential part of new development. The Council require the following in line with the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities:

“require provision of appropriate childcare facilities as an essential part of new residential developments in accordance with the provisions of the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001) or any superseding guidelines, or as required by the Planning Authority. The Guidelines recommend one childcare facility with a minimum of 20 places for each 75 units for new residential developments, with any variation to this standard being justified having regard to factors such as type of residential units, emerging demographic profile and availability of existing childcare services in the vicinity.”

Assessment

3.1 Methodology

In accordance with the Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities, this childcare assessment establishes the following:

- The existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities in the Study Area.
- Demographic Profile of the Study Area.

3.2 Proposed Unit Mix

The proposed development provides 72 no. residential units. A breakdown of the proposed mix of units is outlined in the table below:

Unit Type	No. of Units	Total %
1 Bed	30	42
2 Bed	32	44
3 Bed	10	14
Total	72	100

The Apartment Guidelines (2022) all excluding whole or in part 2-bedroom units when calculating childcare provision needs. This assessment takes a robust approach and includes all 2-bedroom units. Thus, excluding all 1-bedroom units in the scheme, 42 no. units can be deemed to generate childcare demand.

Utilising the State's average household size of 2.75 persons per unit, 42 no. units which are considered suitable to house families will yield a total population of 115 persons within the proposed scheme.

3.3 Pre-School Demand Resulting from the Proposed Development

Data extracted from the 2016 Census identified that 7% of children in the study area are aged 0-4 years old. The proposed development would therefore generate 8 no. of children¹ aged 0-4 years (pre-school age).

3.4 Existing Childcare

A total of 12 existing childcare facilities were identified within 1.25km of the subject site. This is outlined in Figure 2.1 below:

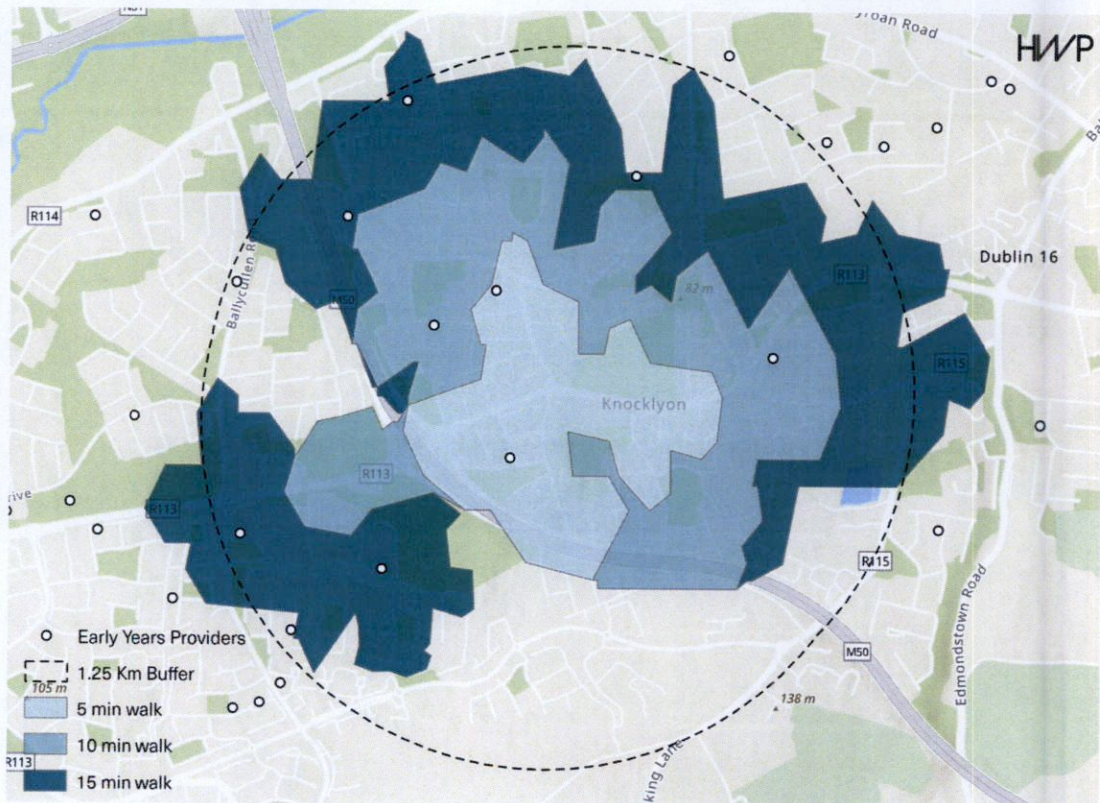


Figure 2.1 – Existing Childcare Facilities Within the Study Area

12 childcare facilities identified within the 1.25 km study area, which is a 15-minute walking distance of the subject site. Pre-school inspection reports from TUSLA are available for all of these, with summary figures on individual childcare facility capacity and available spaces reported in the area surrounding the site is outlined in the table overleaf:

¹ 7% of the total population generated as a result of the proposed development.

Facility No.	Name	Capacity	Available Places
Within a 15-minute Walk / 1.25km Distance of Site			
1	The Learning Curve	66	57
2	The Lodge Montessori School	16	6
3	Little Penguins	44	32
4	Eager Beavers Montessori	12	3
5	Let's Play Pre-School	22	5
6	Cool Kidz Creche	14	0
7	Chuckleberries	75	18
8	The Children's House Montessori	38	29
9	Ballycullen Montessori	28	6
10	Prospect Montessori School	18	3
11	Young Days Pre School and Montessori	12	2
12	Rainbow Cottage Childcare	5	0
Total		350	161

Based on the above published information, the creches identified have a total capacity of 350 places of which 161 or 46% of total capacity is available. It is recognised that this is a continuously fluctuating position in relation to both the capacity of creches themselves (as operational business models change) and in terms of the amount of attending children, however it is clear that there is ample capacity in the study area to serve the proposed development.

Nevertheless, we would also wish to highlight to the Council that in addition to the capacity identified within the existing childcare facilities identified in the study area, a creche suitable of accommodation 101 no. children is currently under construction within the 'Two Oaks' development² adjacent to the application site therefore increasing the available childcare spaces within the study area.

² SHD Reference: 305878

Conclusion

This current Childcare Needs Assessment details why the provision of childcare, with summarised conclusions below, is not proposed as part of the proposed development, notwithstanding the fact that the scheme does not meet the threshold identified in the national 'Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities' by where a childcare facility must be provided on site for any development of 75 no. units or above.

In addition, we note that the Apartment Guidelines (2022) exclude in whole 1-bedroom units and in part 2-bedroom units when calculating childcare provision needs. This assessment takes a robust approach and includes all 2-bedroom units. Thus, excluding all 1-bedroom units in the scheme, only 42 no. units of a total of 72 no. units can be deemed to generate childcare demand.

This assessment highlights a total of 12 existing childcare facilities within a 1.25km radius of the subject site, 11 of which are within a 15-minute walk. A review of available TULSA pre-school inspection reports highlights that there are presently 350 childcare spaces within this catchment of which available capacity relates to 161 spaces which is excluding the 101 no. childcare spaces which will be made available in the near future as part of the 'Two Oaks' development.

Based on the foregoing, adopted planning policy and childcare supply in the local area, it is concluded that a childcare facility is not required to serve the proposed development.



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