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Securing sufficient childcare in West Sussex

2023-2024



West Sussex County Council: Childcare Sufficiency Report

This report covers the period of 01 September 2023 to 31 August 2024

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to:

- Provide information on the current childcare market, identifying potential gaps including steps taken to address these.
- Identify opportunities that may exist for further expansion where required to meet the demands from changes to legislation, new housing and/or population increases.

The Legislation

Sections 6 and 11 of the [Childcare Act 2006](#) place a duty on the Local Authority (LA) to secure sufficient childcare for working parents.

[Early Education and Childcare: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities](#) (updated January 2024) outlines the LAs responsibilities in assessing and ensuring sufficient childcare places.

This guidance applies to:

- the duty on local authorities to secure early years provision free of charge.
- the duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents, including wraparound childcare.
- the duty to secure childcare free of charge for eligible working parents of 3- and 4-year-olds.
- the provision of information, advice, and assistance to parents, and
- the provision of information, advice, and training to childcare providers.

It also supports the introduction of the following working parent entitlements:

- from April 2024, the 15 hour entitlement for children of eligible working parents from the age of 2.
- from September 2024, the 15 hour entitlement for children of eligible working parents from the age of 9 months.
- from September 2025, the 30 hour entitlement for children of eligible working parents from the age of 9 months

To secure sufficient childcare places, Local Authorities are required by legislation to:

Secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 to 14 or up to 18 for disabled children.

Please see Appendix 1 Early Education and Childcare: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (January 2024) - Part B: Securing sufficient childcare, for the full section on securing sufficient childcare.

The guidance also requires LAs to report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and make this report available and accessible to parents.

How is this achieved in West Sussex?

West Sussex carries out sufficiency monitoring at District and Borough levels, which is updated at least termly. The monitoring includes an action plan, which identifies potential gaps, actions and monitors the progress made towards these.

This monitoring information is collated to inform the annual 'Securing Sufficient Childcare in West Sussex' report.

The eight planning areas in West Sussex are:

- Adur
- Arun
- Chichester
- Crawley
- Horsham
- Mid Sussex
- Worthing
- South Downs National Park

The assessments consider the following data sets and sources of information:

- Information from our database (Synergy) which includes information on:
 - Ofsted Outcomes.
 - Places and Vacancies.
 - Opening hours.
 - Flexibility – including information on how Early Years Funded Entitlement (EYFE) places are offered.
 - The number of 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds accessing EYFE places (from September 2024 this also included 9-month-olds).
 - Brokerage cases (supporting parents and carers who are experiencing difficulty in finding suitable childcare), including the success of brokerage specifically targeted at families where the child has special educational needs or a disability (SEND).
 - Area profiling including demographics, planned developments and potential premises.
- Local intelligence.
- Any relevant national or local consultation outcomes.
- [WSCC Planning School Places document](#).
- Housing allocations as per District and Borough planning documents.
- Comparisons with relevant national data sets.
- Consultation with parent and carers.
- Consultation with providers, including regular Setting Review Meetings.

Regular sufficiency updates and challenges are also shared with the Department for Education and Ofsted.

Stimulating the childcare market

The duties in the Childcare Act (section 6) require LAs to shape and support the development of childcare in their area to make it flexible, sustainable and responsive to the needs of the community. We should encourage existing providers to expand their provision and new providers to enter the local childcare market (Appendix 1).

In West Sussex we currently achieve this by:

- Ensuring the requirements for new/additional Early Years places are included in all large-scale building developments, and smaller developments where there is a clearly evidenced need. Please see Appendix 2 for details on how the need is calculated.
- Referring both new and existing providers to this document when planning new places to understand where there are potential gaps in provision.
- Offering [New Business Support](#) which can be requested by any individual, school or organisation wanting to start a childcare business.
- Providing support to existing childcare providers for a range of business issues which may impact on sustainability. This includes supporting providers who wish to expand their provision.
- Offering local networks/events covering local issues to support the delivery of high quality, sustainable Early Years and Childcare provision.
- Both developing and signposting to [business tools](#) to support new and existing providers.
- Developing a [Market Research Guidance](#) tool to empower new and existing providers to clearly assess need and demand for their current and planned services.
- Carrying out Early Years Funded Entitlement audits to ensure parents are able to access their places within the statutory guidance.
- Identifying suitable available premises in areas recognised as having a potential [childcare sufficiency need](#), including schools where there is surplus accommodation.
- Including business related articles and information in the weekly newsletter for Early Years and Childcare Providers.
- Signposting childcare providers to relevant [funding streams](#) to support the development of new childcare places.
- Providing opportunity to access a flexible Early Years and Childcare Training Programme including a variety of both face to face and online training courses.
- Sharing feedback from consultations with providers to inform their planning.
- Sharing any potential business opportunities to take on Early Years and Childcare provision through the weekly newsletter.

Childcare expansion

From Autumn term 2024, funding initiatives were made available to support the expansion of childcare across the county. These initiatives align with the UK government's transformative reforms to childcare, as outlined in the Spring Budget 2023, which sought to make childcare more accessible, affordable, and responsive to the needs of working families.

These reforms include:

- The introduction of **30 hours of free childcare for children over the age of nine months**. This is being introduced in phases and means that:

- from April 2024 qualifying working parents of 2-year-olds can access 15 hours a week,
- from September 2024 qualifying working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3 years old can access 15 hours a week,
- from September 2025 qualifying working parents from 9 months to 3 years old can access 30 hours a week.

Investing £289 million in start-up funding to **increase the supply of wraparound care in primary schools** – tackling the barriers to working caused by limited availability of wraparound care. This programme will enable providers (including schools) and local authorities to test flexible ways of providing childcare and gather evidence of what works.

Early Years and Childcare providers including schools in West Sussex, are able to apply for Childcare Expansion Capital Funding and/or Wraparound Childcare Programme Funding. These [funding streams](#) aim to increase the availability of early years and wraparound childcare in areas where demand is expected to exceed current provision.

Working with schools

To assist schools in exploring opportunities and models for providing early years and childcare on school sites, WSCC has developed specific [Guidance for Establishing Early Years and Childcare Provision in Schools](#).

Schools can also [access support](#) with opening a high quality, sustainable early years and childcare business. This can include working with a Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) provider to offer this service on school site.

Wraparound childcare

There are many benefits to wraparound childcare, for children, families and schools. These can vary by school and circumstances, but may include:

- enabling parents to work or study.
- supporting vulnerable children.
- offering enriching activities that children enjoy.
- attracting parents to the school.
- supporting a soft start to the school day and attendance

The [National Wraparound Childcare Programme](#) is part of the childcare reforms announced at the 2023 Spring Budget. The government's ambition is that by 2026, all parents and carers of primary school-aged children who need it will be able to access term time childcare in their local area from 8am-6pm, so that parents can access employment and improve labour market participation.

To support this ambition, the government announced that it will provide up to £289 million of start-up funding over two academic years to support local authorities and providers in England to introduce or expand childcare provision on either side of the school day, which parents of primary school-aged children will be able to pay to access.

This programme will only focus on primary school-aged children from reception to year 6, Monday to Friday during term time. The expectation is that all wraparound provision is 8am-6pm, enabling parents to work a full day with travel time, unless data shows that local demand is for different hours, for example reflecting local labour market patterns.

WSEC has developed [Wraparound Childcare Programme Funding Guidance for Schools and Childcare Providers](#) to detail how WSEC plans to expand the provision of wraparound childcare between September 2024 to September 2026 and how funding awarded to WSEC as part of the National Wraparound Childcare Programme will be allocated to providers.

The Department for Education (DfE) expects all new or expanded wraparound childcare places to be available to parents by September 2025 at the latest. The funding period will run until April 2026, and the DfE expects that most schools will be able to deliver wraparound childcare that is self-financing and sustainable by September 2026.

Wraparound provision can be offered by schools and private, voluntary and independent (PVI) providers (including childminders and early years settings). Provision can be run on a school site or at another setting in the area. It should not require parents to pick their children up from school and drop them off at another location.

[Responding to requests for wraparound childcare guidance](#) (February 2024) has been produced to help maintained schools and academies (including free schools) understand how to respond to:

- parents' requests that the school that their child attends consider establishing wraparound and/or holiday childcare, and
- childcare providers' requests to use school facilities for wraparound and/or holiday provision at times when the school is not using them.

This guidance aims to maintain school autonomy and avoid imposing unnecessary administration burdens on schools, whilst ensuring schools understand the basis on which they should be responding constructively to requests for wraparound childcare.

Ofsted has also produced a guidance document for schools called [registering school based provision](#) which gives advice and requirements for schools setting up their own wraparound childcare.

Schools and local childcare providers can provide wraparound and/or holiday care independently or by working in partnership.

Breakfast clubs

In September 2024 the DfE published information on the [Breakfast club early adopters scheme](#) inviting schools to express interest in taking part in the Government's new breakfast club programme.

The Early Adopters scheme for the breakfast club programme will trial breakfast clubs in up to 750 state-funded primary schools, including those beyond mainstream provision, starting from April 2025. As well as helping children thrive academically and socially, breakfast clubs give parents and carers more choices in childcare, and support families with the cost of living.

As part of the scheme breakfast clubs must run for a minimum of 30 minutes prior to the start of the school day, including provision of healthy food, and be available to any pupil regardless of their background or financial circumstances. Early adopter schools will receive funding to support food, delivery and staffing costs, with further details of the funding package expected in January 2025, at which point participating schools will be confirmed.

School based nurseries

In September 2024 the Government announced the first step of their plan to deliver 3,000 nurseries by upgrading spare spaces in primary schools, and long-term plan to make early years education and childcare more widely available, accessible, and high quality.

During autumn term 2024 state-funded primary schools were invited to bid for capital funding to create or expand on-site nurseries. As is currently the case, these nurseries can be school-run or delivered by schools partnering with private and voluntary early years providers on school sites.

Schools interested in bidding for this first funding round are urged to start discussions with their local authorities, governing organisations and wider stakeholders to consider pupil place planning, local childcare sufficiency and next steps for setting up and running new or expanded nurseries.

The Department for Education (DfE) will use the first phase to take learnings for future years and better understand how they can best support underserved and poorer areas.

Schools will be able to express interest for future phases of the programme to help assess demand in different parts of the country, and the DfE will engage with the sector on the most appropriate model to extend the programme across the country in its second phase.

Early Years and Childcare workforce

Nationally in 2024 (based on fieldwork data carried out between May-July 2024) there was an estimated total of 368,100 childcare staff working directly with children. This is an increase of 20,200 from 347,900 in the previous reporting period. The number of paid childcare staff working for school-based providers increased by 4,000 (or 7 per cent) and the number of paid childcare staff working for group-based providers increased by 18,600 (or 7 per cent). The number of childminding staff fell by 2,300 (or 7 per cent).

Source: [Childcare and early years provider survey, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

Ofsted's annual report, covering September 2023 to August 2024, highlighted ongoing challenges in the early years sector, particularly in workforce recruitment and retention. The report emphasized the impact of staffing shortages on the quality of early years provision and noted this is exacerbated by the steady increase in unqualified staff in recent years. In nurseries, one in five staff (22%) do not have a level 2, level 3 or accredited graduate early years qualification. In 2018, the figure was 14%. Most of this increase can be attributed to a decline in the number of staff holding a level 3 qualification.

Source: [Education, Children's Services and Skills 2023/24](#)

Holiday Activity and Food programme

The Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme is a DfE funded programme designed to enable children who receive benefit related free school meals to take part in activities that they would not normally have access to and receive a healthy meal.

The aims of the HAF programme are to support children to eat healthy and be more active during the holidays, reduce isolation and support them to take part in engaging and enriching activities.

Within West Sussex the HAF programme ran for 1 week at Christmas 2023, 1 week at Easter 2024 and 4 weeks in Summer 2024. We worked with 72 different providers offering a wide range of activities including, forest schools, sports clubs, holiday clubs cooking and theatre and drama sessions. The West Sussex HAF programme supported a total of 3679 different children with 35,215 sessions attended during this period.

For more information on the HAF programme please visit www.westsussex.gov.uk/HAF

Countywide sufficiency overview

West Sussex is a mainly rural county with the South Downs National Park running through it. The main population centres are along the coastal strip and in the north of the county which includes Gatwick airport.

The county has a two-tier local Government arrangement with the county council and district and borough councils.

Labour market overview and employment trends in West Sussex (2023-2024)

The percentage of 16-64 year olds in West Sussex who are economically active (people who are either in employment or unemployed) is 80.6%. This is lower than the South East at 82.3% but higher than nationally at 78.4%. (July 2023 - Jun 2024). This is an increase from 79.6% in the previous reporting period. [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics](#)

[For West Sussex as a whole, the employment rate is 77.5%, which is a slight decrease from 78.1% in the previous year \(2022-2023\).](#) This is on level with the regional average (77.50%) and higher than the national average (76%). [West Sussex Economy Snapshot - June 2024](#)

Registered providers

Nationally, on 31 August 2024, there were:

- 61,200 childcare providers registered with Ofsted, down by 1,030 (2%) since 31 August 2023. (Most of this decline was due to a fall in the number of Childminders).
- 26,000 childminders registered with Ofsted, down by 1,060 (4%) since 31 August 2023.

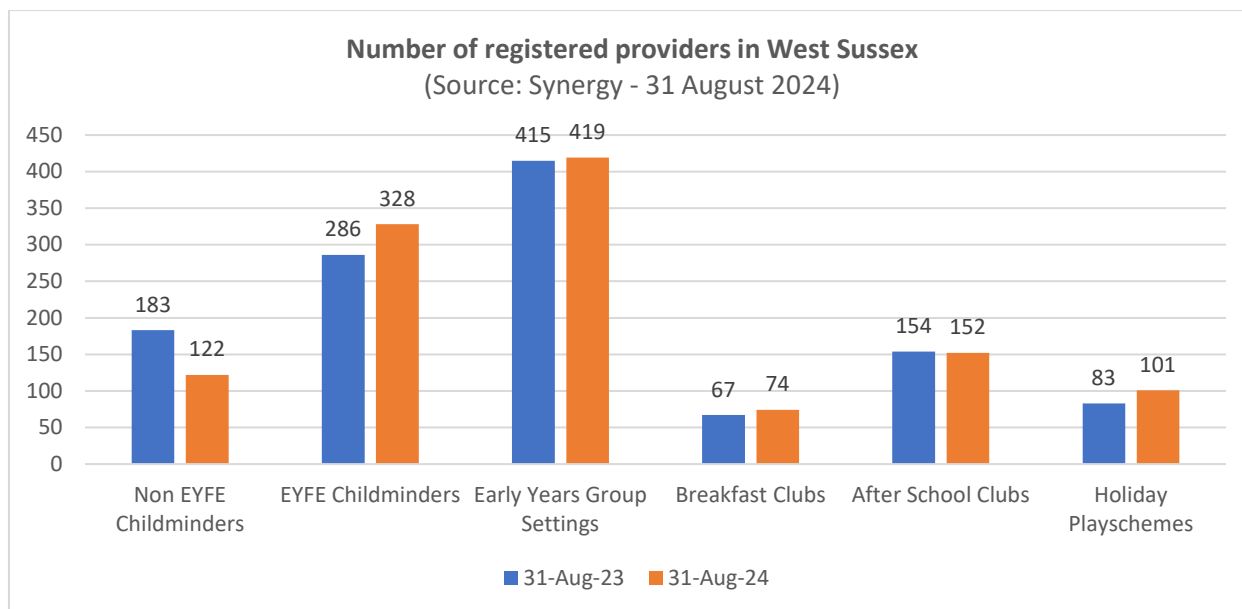
[Main findings: childcare providers and inspections as at 31 August 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

In West Sussex, on 31st August 2024, there were:

- 1,196 childcare providers registered with Ofsted, an increase of 8 (0.6%) from 1188 on 31 August 2023
- 450 childminders registered with Ofsted, down by 19 (4%) from 469 on 31 August 2023, which reflects national figures.

In general, Early Years group-based provision has remained stable with a slight increase over the last year.

The decline in Childminders registered with Ofsted reflects national figures and will continue to be monitored closely to ensure sufficiency of places.



Early Years Funded Entitlement (EYFE) places

As per the [Early education and childcare - GOV.UK](#) statutory guidance, WSCC has a duty to secure childcare free of charge for eligible children. In West Sussex free childcare is referred to as [Early Years Funded Entitlement](#) (EYFE).

Universal EYFE

WSCC has a statutory duty to ensure that there is access to 570 hours per year of funded high quality early education for all eligible 3-and 4-year-olds whose parents would like to take up a place for their child. From April 2024 this was extended to working parents of 2-year-olds. In West Sussex this is referred to as Universal EYFE.

LA Issued EYFE (2-year-olds)

From September 2014, in line with national criteria, this offer was extended to the most disadvantaged 40% of 2-year-olds relating to family income criteria and/or children with specific characteristics such as children looked after, adopted or with special guardianship orders and/or children with SEND in West Sussex from the term after their 2nd birthday. In West Sussex this is referred to as LA Issued EYFE.

Extended EYFE

The universal EYFE offer was then extended to 1140 hours a year (30 hours per week over 38 weeks of the year) for eligible 3-and 4-year-olds in working families from September 2017. In West Sussex this is referred to as Extended EYFE. The additional 15 hours is available to families where both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family), and each parent earns, on average, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage or national living wage, and less than £100,000 per year. Working will include employed and self-employed persons.

From April 2024 as part of the phased expansion to childcare this offer was further extended to enable working parents of 2-year-olds to access up to 15 hours of childcare a week (570 hours per year).

Education provision: children under 5 years of age (January 2024)

Nationally, an average of 75% eligible 2-year-olds benefitted from a funded place in 2024, up from 74% in 2023 and 72% in 2022. Whilst West Sussex has seen a slight decrease from last year it continues to be higher than the national average by 10%. A drop in birth rate for the total number of eligible 2-year-olds has contributed to a slight reduction in the take up of the 2-year-old offer. Additionally, feedback from our Family Hubs indicate there is a higher number of families who have applied for funding, but we cannot evidence that they are taking up a place in West Sussex, which is also a contributing factor.

Description	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
England	68%	69%	62%	72%	74%	75%
West Sussex	87%	84%	76%	88%	87%	85%

3- and 4-year-olds benefiting from the Universal EYFE has increased by 1% nationally this year.

Description	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
England	93%	93%	90%	92%	94%	95%

Source [Education provision: children under 5 years of age](#), January 2024 (published July 2024).

The falls in the numbers in 2021 and the subsequent rises in 2022 and 2023 likely reflects the impact of COVID-19 uncertainty on providers and parents followed by some reversal as the uncertainty eased.

These January 2024 statistics do not cover the expanded entitlements for children of eligible working parents which includes, from April 2024, the 15-hour entitlement for 2-year-olds and, from September 2024, the 15-hour entitlement for children aged 9 to 23 months. It is expected that next year's release will cover figures on the expanded entitlements.

Extended Early Years Funded Entitlement (30 hours)

Nationally, in January 2024, 361,800 3- and 4-year-olds registered from the Extended Early Years Funded Entitlement (EYFE) – down 0.3% from the previous year ([Education provision: children under 5 years of age](#)).

In Spring term 2024 in West Sussex 5,992 3- and 4-year-olds accessed the Extended EYFE hours. This is an increase from 5,973 in spring term 2023. The percentage increase in take up is approximately 0.32% and is higher than the national trend which saw a slight decrease from the previous year.

Data for this year shows that for families accessing the Extended EYFE on average, children accessed 12.2 hours of their 15 hours extended entitlement. This is a slight decrease from 12.5 hours from the previous monitoring period. During this same period the average number of universal hours accesses increased slightly to 14.4 from 14.3 where it had remained consistent over the previous 3 reporting years.

Early Years Pupil Premium

Children who meet the eligibility criteria will attract additional funding to the hourly base rate. EYPP **must** be used in ways which improve the quality of the provision for all children but with particular regard to the children it has been paid for. Providers **should** produce a written policy or statement which outlines how they plan to utilise the funding. It is up to the provider to demonstrate to Ofsted, during an inspection, how the EYPP has been spent and evidence how this has improved the learning outcomes for the children in attendance.

1,329 children benefitted from EYPP in the spring term 2024, taking up on average 14.5 hours per week of the Universal 15 hours, which is 0.1 hours higher than all children access the Universal EYFE. The total number of children benefitting from EYPP is 86 less than spring 2023.

From April 2024 EYPP was extended to eligible 2-year-olds accessing EYFE (universal 15 hours). In summer term 2024 447 children benefitted from EYPP with the most disadvantaged 2-year-olds accessing on average 13.6 hours. Children accessing working family EYFE for 2-year-olds took up an average of 14.6 hours per week of the Universal 15 hours.

A deprivation supplement per hour is also automatically applied to all children in receipt of Early Years Pupil Premium. Information on the current funding rates can be found on the [Early Years Funding](#) webpages.

Disabled Children's access to childcare

All childminders and Early Years and Childcare settings must operate an inclusive admissions policy in accordance with Ofsted requirements and must have a [Local Offer statement](#).

A specialist brokerage service is offered to families which can support by:

- Organising additional support to attend visits with families when looking at different childcare options.
- Working with the families' chosen childcare provider to ensure that the child's specific needs are met by staff with the right training and equipment.
- Working in partnership with a wide range of agencies.

The majority of children with additional or special educational needs will not require special resources or enhanced staffing to be successfully included in a setting. Most providers will meet the additional needs of their children very well. However, some children require adjustments to be made to practice and provision to be enabled to participate with their peers.

Funding can be awarded to support the inclusion and participation of children with severe/complex needs and/or a disability that are accessing an EYFE place with an Early Years provider.

Early Years providers can also access funding through the [Disability Access Fund \(DAF\)](#). This aids access to early years places by, for example, supporting providers in making reasonable adjustments to their settings and/or helping with building capacity (be that for the child in question or for the benefit of children as a whole attending the setting).

145 children benefitted from DAF in spring term 2024, taking up on average 14 hours per week of the Universal 15 hours. During this reporting period eligibility for DAF applied to 3- and 4-year-olds accessing EYFE. Children will be eligible for the DAF if they are in receipt of child Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and receive EYFE. The eligibility is being expanded in line with the expanded entitlements.

Childcare costs and affordability

The cost of childcare has been identified as the greatest barrier to employment for parents by several surveys, including the recent [Coram Group Childcare Survey 2024](#). The survey reports that the price of childcare continues to rise, as it has done year on year since the survey began, with even bigger jumps this year. The average cost of a part time childcare place for a child under two in a nursery in Great Britain is now £157.68 per week (£7,569 per year) and £151.72 for a two-year-old (£6,264 per year).

There are several sources of funding to [help families with childcare costs](#). These include:

- 15 EYFE hours for all 3- and 4-year-olds.
- 15 EYFE hours for eligible families receiving additional forms of support (for 2-year-olds)

- 15 and 30 EYFE hours for eligible working families.
- Tax Credits for Childcare
- Universal Credit for Childcare
- Childcare Vouchers: employers may offer a salary sacrifice scheme saving families Tax and National Insurance Contributions on some, or all of childcare costs. Please note this scheme is now closed to new applicants.
- Tax Free Childcare.
- Support whilst you study.

These are promoted to families via the West Sussex County Council website, the Family Information Service and via [Childcare Choices](#) which has an eligibility checker to help families identify what they may be entitled to.

Vulnerable Children

Spring Term Data 2024 shows that 67% of 2-year-olds and 88% of 3- and 4-year-olds who are on Early Help Plans accessed an EYFE place. 69% of 2-year-olds and 89% of 3- and 4-year-olds on Children In Need (CIN) and Child Protection (CP) Plans accessed an FE place.

For those not attending provision, WSCC proactively work with these families to encourage take up of a place, as appropriate, and offer support and learning resources to use at home.

WSCC is committed to working with our partners to ensure that services are fully coordinated, providing seamless pathways for children and families so that they have access to high quality universal services, as well as additional support where required. The [Right From The Start: West Sussex Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2024 to 2027](#) details our ambition to create a system-wide approach to early years and childcare, supporting families from birth and beyond, which puts children first, as part of the overall children first vision.

A specialist brokerage process is in place to support vulnerable families to access a childcare place.

Since the last reporting year there has been a 34% decrease in brokerage cases. There were a total 223 closed brokerage cases from September 2023 to August 2024 with a 69% success rate. 1% were classed as failures with the remaining 30% closing either because contact with the parent had been lost or the service was no longer required.

Of the total cases, 103 (46%) were specifically to support children with SEND access a place to meet their needs.

As per statutory guidance, WSCC requires foster parents to apply to the local authority, as the corporate parent, to assess eligibility for EYFE and to ensure that parents engaging in paid work outside their role as a foster parent is consistent with the child's care plan. This will be considered on a case by case basis by WSCC Children's Social Care and the Virtual School.

Quality of provision and Ofsted outcomes

Evidence shows that access to high quality early education improves educational outcomes for children and has a positive impact on their life chances. While Ofsted are the arbiters of quality, as a local authority, West Sussex works with the sector to provide support to settings to review the quality of their provision and the impact this has on the children attending. We offer each setting an annual Setting Review Meeting with additional visits provided if required.

As of 31 August 2024, 98% of providers on the Early Years Register (EYR) nationwide were rated good or outstanding. During this period, West Sussex also had 98% of providers rated good or outstanding, matching the South East region's average. In West Sussex the number of inadequate providers has remained low at 1%, which is a decrease of 1% from the previous year and is in line with regional and national rates.

A Targeted Setting Support process is carried out by the Early Years and Childcare Team to support these providers to improve their practice and provision. This is offered to all early years and childcare providers who receive an Ofsted rating which is less than "Good".

Area	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Number of Inspections
West Sussex	14%	84%	1%	1%	860
South East Region	15%	83%	1%	1%	9,256
England	14%	84%	2%	1%	47,216

Source: [Childcare providers and inspections as at 31 August 2024](#)

Provider Survey: Childcare Expansion

In November 2023, all early year's providers were surveyed to understand the challenges and opportunities presented by the Childcare Expansion. Separate surveys were produced for group based providers, i.e. Day Nurseries and Pre-School, and childminders. A summary of the responses is below.

Group based providers

366 responses were recorded in the Early Years Funding Expansion Survey representing **99%** of all group based settings across the county.

- 72% of respondents expressed intent to offer places to eligible 2-year-olds when the EYFE funding extends to working families in April 2024.
- The majority of providers estimated that 0-25% of their 2-year-old cohort are currently eligible for the existing 2 year EYFE funding under the current criteria.
- 47% of providers anticipate an increase in the numbers of their current 2-year-old cohort who will become eligible. Those providers anticipate 50-100% of current 2-year-old children will become eligible for funded places from April 2024.
- 67% of the providers currently offering places to children who are aged under 2 intend to offer funded places from September 2025, with a further 18% stating they were unsure until the funding rates were published.

The three main challenges for group based providers at the time of the survey were stated as:

- Recruitment and Retention of staff
- Sustainability
- Lack of information on the detail of the scheme

Childminders

216 responses were recorded in the Early Years Funding Expansion Survey representing **99%** of all childminders across the county.

- 76% of childminders expressed intent to offer places to eligible 2-year-olds when the EYFE funding extends to working families in April 2024.
- 69% of the childminders currently offering places to children who are aged under 2 intend to offer funded places from September 2025.

The three main challenges for group based providers at the time of the survey were stated as:

- The increase in administration around claiming the funding.
- Sustainability.
- Access to support and networking opportunities.

Countywide sufficiency priorities for 2024-2025

Based on the analysis of the data, the priorities moving forward are to:

1. continue to plan for the implementation of the Childcare Expansion, identifying areas where there may be potential gaps and how these can be addressed for all types of early years provision and funding streams.
2. continue to review the supply and demand of wrap around care, as part of the childcare expansion, and work to stimulate the market in areas identified as having potential gaps for school age children.
3. develop and implement a workforce plan to support the recruitment and retention of a high-quality early years workforce, including a childminder recruitment campaign and professional development pathways.
4. undertake further analysis of the supply and demand of childcare places for disabled children across the county and continue to improve access to childcare by ensuring providers have the knowledge and skills to support children with special educational needs or a disability (SEND).
5. ensure that a clear and transparent process is in place around S106/Community Infrastructure Levy funding for the development of new Early Years and Childcare Places to ensure sufficiency of places within those areas for all types of childcare and existing/new funding offers, in response to planned housing development.
6. ensure planning and monitoring of childcare sufficiency aligns with our [Right From The Start: West Sussex Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2024 to 2027](#)

Commentaries by District/Borough councils

Introduction

The county is divided into seven Districts and Boroughs within which there are eight planning authorities including the South Downs National Park. The information below sets out how WSCC is planning to secure sufficient childcare across the county in the District and Borough areas. There is a greater level of certainty in the short term, with many of the proposed schemes already coming forward. However, this document seeks to give an indication as to possible requirements to mitigate future planned development in the longer term.

Funding to support these projects will be made up of private investment, Government grants and contributions from developers.

District and Borough Local Plans

Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) must prepare and maintain an up-to-date Local Plan for their area covering a 15 year period from adoption. The LPAs in West Sussex are at different stages of Plan preparation. There are key stages that every authority needs to undertake when preparing a Local Plan.

These include:

- Early consultation (Regulation 18)
- Pre-Submission Representation Period (Regulation 19)
- Submission
- Public Examination
- Proposed Modifications – if required by Inspector
- Adoption

The table over the page sets out which stage in the Plan preparation process each of the LPAs had reached in February 2025. The local plan process is subject to review and if up to date information is required the District / Borough website should be checked.

This document sets out the requirements for Early Years and Childcare places to mitigate allocated strategic sites in the Local Plans. Further Early Years and Childcare places will be required to meet the needs of development across the county in order to deliver the overall housing requirements.

Local Plans (Source: WSCC planning Policy and Infrastructure Team - February 2025)

Adur District

- [Adur Local Plan](#) Adopted - December 2017 – a minimum of 3,718 dwellings 2011 - 2032
- Local Plan review has commenced.
- [Shoreham Harbour Joint Area Action Plan](#) Adopted by ADC/BHCC/WSCC - November 2019

Arun District

- [Arun Local Plan](#) Adopted - July 2018 – a minimum of 20,000 dwellings 2011-2031
- Local Plan Review has commenced.

Chichester District

- [Chichester Local Plan](#) adopted - July 2015 - 7,388 dwellings 2012-2029
- [Chichester Site Allocation Development Plan](#) adopted - January 2019
- [Chichester Local Plan Review](#) at Examination

Crawley Borough

- [Crawley Local Plan](#) adopted – September 2024 – 5,330 dwellings by 2040

Horsham District

- [Horsham Local Plan](#) adopted – Nov 2015 at least 16,000 dwellings 2011-2031
- [Horsham Local Plan Review](#) at Examination

Mid Sussex District

- [Mid Sussex Local Plan Adopted](#) - March 2018 a minimum 16,390 dwellings 2014 - 2031
- [Mid Sussex Site Allocations DPD](#) adopted June 2022
- [Mid Sussex District Plan Review](#) at Examination

South Downs NPA

- [South Downs National Park Local Plan](#) Adopted – July 2019 4,750 dwellings 2014 – 2033
- [South Downs Local Plan Review](#) – Reg 18 Consultation January to March 2025

Worthing Borough

- [Local Plan](#) Adopted March 2023 3,672 dwellings 2020-2036

Neighbourhood Plans

All District and Boroughs, except for Worthing and Adur, have 'made' neighbourhood plans in their area. Detailed information can be found on the relevant local authority webpage.

An adopted Neighbourhood Plan must be considered alongside the local plan by planning officers when making a decision on development applications.

Adur and Worthing - Area overview

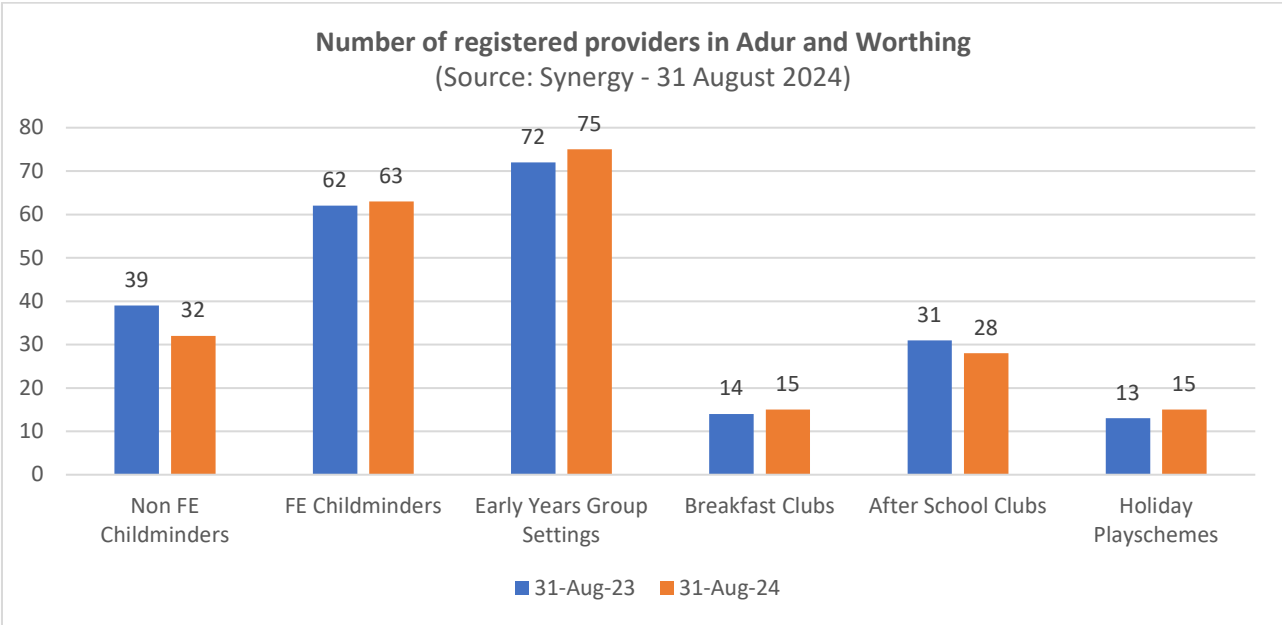
There are approximately 3,077 children who are under five years of age in the district of Adur (ONS mid-year population figures 2023). The number of under 5's has decreased by 92 from 3,169 (3.7%) since the 2021 figures.

There are approximately 5,031 children who are aged under five across the borough of Worthing. In Worthing the numbers of under 5's has decreased by 394 from 5,425 (7.6%) since the 2021 figures.

Source: [Estimates of the population for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#) (ONS)

The employment rate for 16-64 year olds in Adur is 77.6% which has stayed at around the same rate as the previous year. This is slightly higher than the average for the county at 77.5%. Source: [Adur's employment, unemployment and economic inactivity - ONS](#)

The employment rate for 16-64 year olds in Worthing is 82.3% which is an increase from 76.5% in 2022. This is higher than the average for the county 77.5%. Source: [Worthing's employment, unemployment and economic inactivity - ONS](#)



The net total number of registered providers has slightly decreased by 1.3% in Adur and Worthing from 231 to 228. This is lower than the national decrease of 2%. However, there has been an increase in the number of Childminders offering EYFE along with an increase in Early Years Group Based settings, Breakfast Club and Holiday Playschemes.

Sufficiency overview and area priorities

Data shows that across Adur and Worthing there is currently sufficient Early Years and Childcare provision to meet the needs of the majority of families needing or wanting it. However, this will need constant monitoring to maintain levels, particularly considering the new childcare expansion.

In Adur, the overall housing requirement of 3,718 dwellings over the plan period 2011-2032 would generate a need for 235 Early Years and Childcare places in total.

Based on the 2023 housing trajectory, over the plan period we can expect that the number of Early Years and Childcare places required to meet the increased demand generated by the additional housing in Adur to be:

Description	Years 1-5	Years 6-10	Years 11-15
Planned number of dwellings	1444	712	0
Potential number of Early Years and Childcare Places required to meet increased demand	91	45	0

Please note that these are indicative and needs and current provision will be reassessed as applications are received and more details of the developments are known, including the proposed type of dwellings. This assessment will use methodology as per Appendix 2.

Worthing refers to 3,672 dwellings in the period 2010-2026, which would generate a need for 232 Early Years and Childcare places in total.

Based on the 2023 housing trajectory, over the plan period we can expect that the number of Early Years and Childcare places required to meet the increased demand generated by the additional housing in Worthing to be:

Description	Years 1-5	Years 6-10	Years 11-15
Planned number of dwellings	1874	500	0
Potential number of Early Years and Childcare Places required to meet increased demand	118	32	0

As above, please note that these are indicative and needs and current provision will be reassessed as applications are received and more details of the developments are known, including the proposed type of dwellings. This assessment will use methodology as per Appendix 2.

Changes to government childcare entitlements, the level of development coming forward and the take up of places, across both Adur and Worthing, may also change this need and therefore the requirement for provision. This will be reflected in subsequent documents.

In addition to the countywide priorities, Adur and Worthing early years and childcare sufficiency action planning will continue to monitor the progression of all planned housing development across the area. Priority will be given to working in partnership with the developers, where required, to support the development of new high quality, sustainable childcare places.

Adur and Worthing early years and childcare sufficiency action planning will monitor the impending changes to childcare policy and work with local providers to identify potential gaps in the market in order to build capacity and to support the sustainability of existing provision. Any further changes to policy could impact on the requirement from future planned developments and mean a potential increase in need for Early Years and Childcare provision. This will be reflected in subsequent documents.

Childminder places across Worthing will be monitored, with actions put in place as appropriate, to ensure sufficient flexible places for working families.

The sustainability of the sector will be monitored to ensure appropriate levels of support are available to providers in financial difficulty, including signposting to relevant partners as well as offering targeted support as appropriate, particularly where a potential sufficiency issue is identified.

Consideration will be giving to available funding streams through the Childcare Expansion Capital Grant and Wraparound Programme Funding to address areas where gaps in provision is identified.

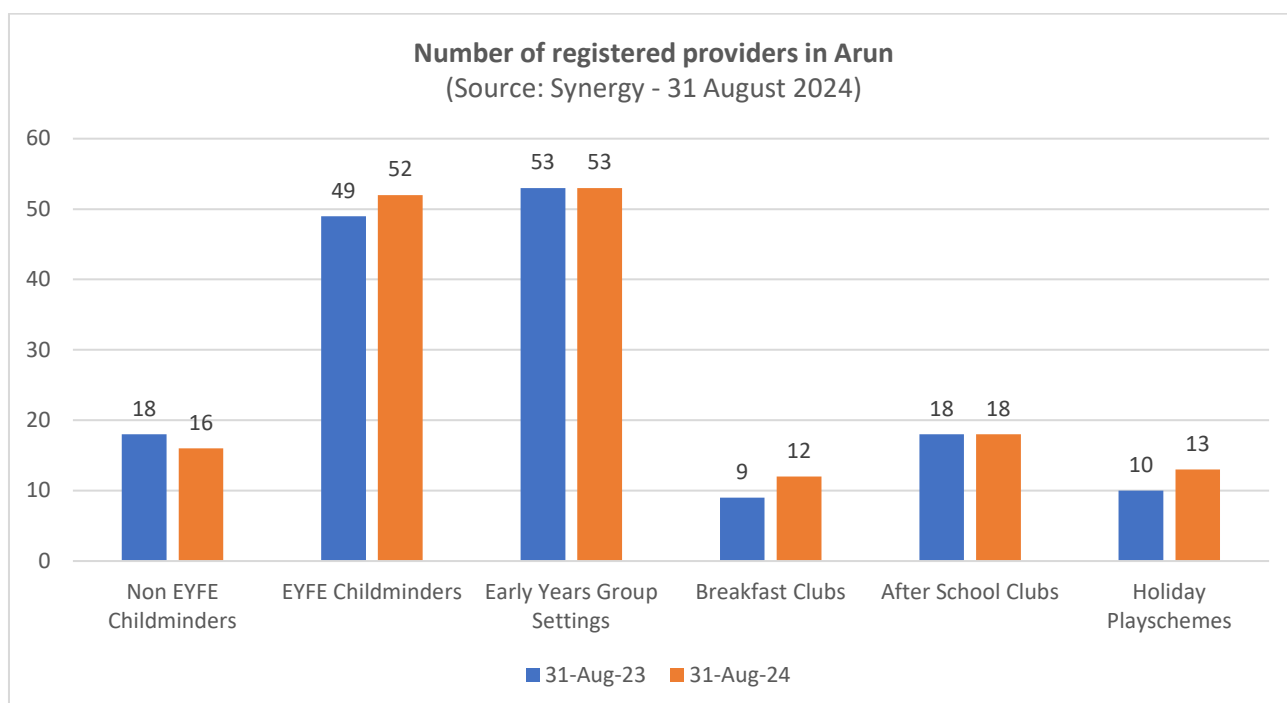
Arun - Area overview

There are approximately 7,124 children who are under five years of age in the district of Arun (ONS mid-year population figures 2023). The number of under 5's has decreased by 336 from 7,533 (5.4%) since the 2021 figures.

Source: [Estimates of the population for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#) (ONS)

The employment rate for 16-64 year olds in Arun is 80.6% is a decreased from 81.8% in 2022. This is higher than the average for the county 77.5%.

Source: [Arun's employment, unemployment and economic inactivity - ONS](#)



The net total number of registered providers has increased by 4% in Arun from 157 to 164. Whilst there has been a slight decrease in Childminders who do not offer EYFE, there has been an increase in Childminders offering EYFE and a slight increase in the net number of childminders overall.

Early Years group settings have remained stable along with after school childcare and the area has seen an increase in the availability of childcare before school and during school holidays.

Sufficiency overview and area priorities

Data shows that across Arun, there is currently sufficient Early Years and Childcare provision, in most areas, to meet the needs of the majority of families needing or wanting it. However, this will need constant monitoring to maintain levels, particularly considering the new childcare expansion.

In Arun, the overall housing requirement of a minimum of 20,000 dwellings over the plan period 2011-2031 would generate a need for at least 1,263 Early Years and Childcare places in total.

Changes to government childcare entitlements, the level of development coming forward and the take up of places across the area may change this need and therefore the requirement for provision. This will be reflected in subsequent documents.

Based on the 2023 housing trajectory, over the plan period we can expect that the number of Early Years and Childcare places required, to meet the increased demand generated by the additional housing in Arun, to be:

Description	Years 1-5	Years 6-10	Years 11-15
Planned number of dwellings	7074	4908	2637
Potential number of Early Years and Childcare Places required to meet increased demand	447	310	167

Please note that these are indicative and needs and current provision will be reassessed as applications are received and more details of the developments are known, including the proposed type of dwellings. This assessment will use methodology as per Appendix 2.

In addition to the countywide priorities, Arun early years and childcare sufficiency action planning will continue to monitor the progression of all planned housing development across the area. Priority will be given to working in partnership with the developers, where required, to support the development of new high quality, sustainable childcare places.

Arun early years and childcare sufficiency action planning will also monitor the impending changes to childcare policy and work with local providers to identify potential gaps in the market to build capacity and to support the sustainability of existing provision. Any further changes to policy could impact on the requirement from future planned developments and mean a potential increase in need for Early Years and Childcare provision. This will be reflected in subsequent documents.

Places for children aged 2 years and under in Littlehampton will be monitored carefully, and potential premises will be explored to consider opportunities for developing new places where there is evidenced unmet demand.

The sustainability of the sector will be monitored to ensure appropriate levels of support are available to providers in financial difficulty, including signposting to relevant partners as well as offering targeted support as appropriate, particularly where a potential sufficiency issue is identified.

Consideration will be giving to available funding streams through the Childcare Expansion Capital Grant and Wraparound Programme Funding to address areas where gaps in provision is identified.

Chichester - Area overview

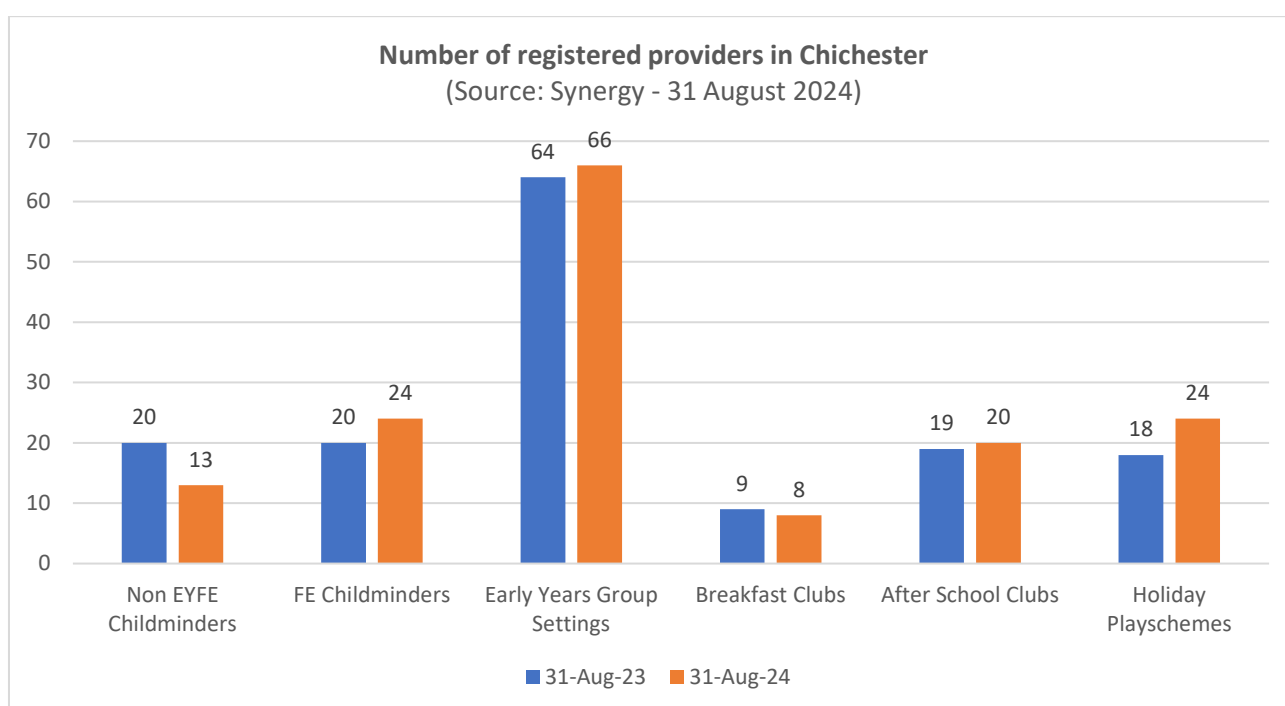
Chichester is covered by two planning authorities, namely Chichester and the South Downs National Park.

There are approximately 5,475 children who are under five years of age in the district of Chichester (ONS mid-year population figures 2023). The number of under 5's has decreased by 21 from 5,496 (0.4%) since the 2021 figures.

Source: [Estimates of the population for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#) (ONS)

The employment rate for 16-64 year olds in Chichester is 65.5% which is an increase from 63.1% in 2022. This is lower than the county average of 77.5%.

Source: [Chichester's employment, unemployment and economic inactivity - ONS](#)



The net total number of registered providers in Chichester has increased by 3% from 150 to 155. Whilst there has been a decrease in Childminders who do not offer EYFE, there has been an increase in Childminders offering EYFE.

The number of Early Years group settings has increased, and the area has also seen an increase in the availability of childcare after school and during school holidays. There has been a slight decrease in breakfast club provision.

Sufficiency overview and area priorities

Data shows that across Chichester district, there is currently sufficient childcare to meet the needs of the families needing or wanting it. However, this will need constant monitoring to maintain levels, particularly considering the new childcare expansion.

In Chichester, the overall housing requirement of 7,388 dwellings over the plan period 2012-2029 would generate a need for at least 467 Early Years and Childcare places in total.

Changes to government childcare entitlements, the level of development coming forward and the take up of places across the area may change this need and therefore the requirement for provision. This will be reflected in subsequent documents.

Based on the 2023 housing trajectory, over the plan period we can expect that the number of Early Years and Childcare places required to meet the increased demand generated by the additional housing in Chichester to be:

Description	Years 1-5	Years 6-10	Years 11-15
Planned number of dwellings	2106	1427	653
Potential number of Early Years and Childcare Places required to meet increased demand	133	90	41

Please note that these are indicative and needs and current provision will be reassessed as applications are received and more details of the developments are known, including the proposed type of dwellings. This assessment will use methodology as per Appendix 2.

In addition to the countywide priorities, Chichester early years and childcare sufficiency action planning will continue to monitor the progression of all planned housing development across the area. Priority will be given to working in partnership with the developers, where required, to support the development of new high quality, sustainable childcare places.

Chichester early years and childcare sufficiency action planning will also monitor the impending changes to childcare policy and work with local providers to identify potential gaps in the market to build capacity and to support the sustainability of existing provision. Any further changes to policy could impact on the requirement from future planned developments and mean a potential increase in need for Early Years and Childcare provision. This will be reflected in subsequent documents.

Increasing the number of Childminders, including those offering EYFE places will continue to be prioritised, particularly in the rural areas.

The sustainability of the sector will be monitored to ensure appropriate levels of support are available to providers in financial difficulty, including signposting to relevant partners as well as offering targeted support as appropriate, particularly where a potential sufficiency issue is identified.

Consideration will be giving to available funding streams through the Childcare Expansion Capital Grant and Wraparound Programme Funding to address areas where gaps in provision is identified.

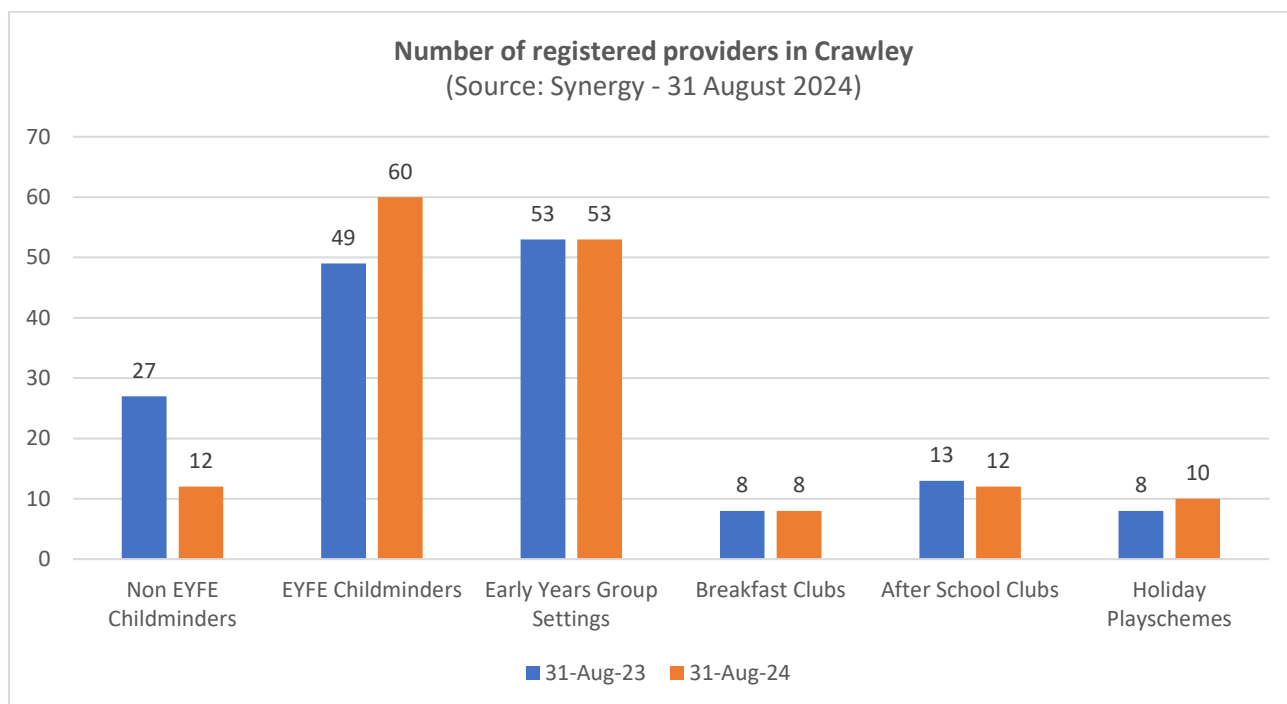
Crawley - Area overview

There are approximately 7,852 children who are under five years of age across Crawley (ONS mid-year population figures 2023). The number of under 5's has increased by 88 from 7,764 (1%) since the 2021 figures.

Source: [Estimates of the population for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#) (ONS)

The employment rate for 16-64 year olds in Crawley is 78.6% which is a decrease from 79.5% in 2022. This is higher than the average for the county of 77.5%.

Source: [Crawley's employment, unemployment and economic inactivity - ONS](#)



The net total number of registered providers has decreased in Crawley by almost 2% from 158 to 155. The Early Years group settings have remained stable and wraparound provision has also largely remained stable with a small decrease in after school childcare. The area has seen an increase in provision available during school holidays.

Crawley has seen a large decrease in the number of Non EYFE Childminders however some of this reduction can be accounted for by the 22% increase in the number of Childminders who provide EYFE.

Sufficiency overview and area priorities

Data shows that across Crawley district, there is currently sufficient childcare to meet the needs of the families needing or wanting it. However, this will need constant monitoring to maintain levels particularly considering the new childcare expansion.

In Crawley, the overall housing requirement of a minimum of 5,100 dwellings over the plan period 2015-2030 would generate a need for at least 322 Early Years and Childcare places in total.

The additional approximate 5,000 'unmet' need not included in the Local Plan would also generate a need for an additional 316 Early Years and Childcare places, if this were to come forward.

Changes to government childcare entitlements, the level of development coming forward and the take up of places across the area may change this need and therefore the requirement for provision. This will be reflected in subsequent documents.

Based on the 2023 housing trajectory, over the plan period we can expect that the number of Early Years and Childcare places required to meet the increased demand generated by the additional housing in Crawley to be:

Description	Years 1-5	Years 6-10	Years 11-15
Planned number of dwellings	1461	2307	21
Potential number of Early Years and Childcare Places required to meet increased demand	92	146	1

Please note that these are indicative and needs and current provision will be reassessed as applications are received and more details of the developments are known, including the proposed type of dwellings. This assessment will use methodology as per Appendix 2.

In addition to the countywide priorities, Crawley early years and childcare sufficiency action planning will continue to monitor the progression of all planned housing development across the area. Priority will be given to working in partnership with the developers, where required, to support the development of new high quality, sustainable childcare places.

Crawley early years and childcare sufficiency will also monitor the impending changes to childcare policy and work with local providers to identify potential gaps in the market in order to build capacity and to support the sustainability of existing provision. Any further changes to policy could impact on the requirement from future planned developments and mean a potential increase in need for Early Years and Childcare provision. This will be reflected in subsequent documents.

Places for children aged 2 years and under will be monitored carefully, and potential premises, including schools, will be explored to consider opportunities for developing new places across the borough in areas where there is evidenced unmet demand.

The sustainability of the sector will be monitored to ensure appropriate levels of support are available to providers in financial difficulty, including signposting to relevant partners as well as offering targeted support as appropriate, particularly where a potential sufficiency issue is identified.

Consideration will be giving to available funding streams through the Childcare Expansion Capital Grant and Wraparound Programme Funding to address areas where gaps in provision is identified.

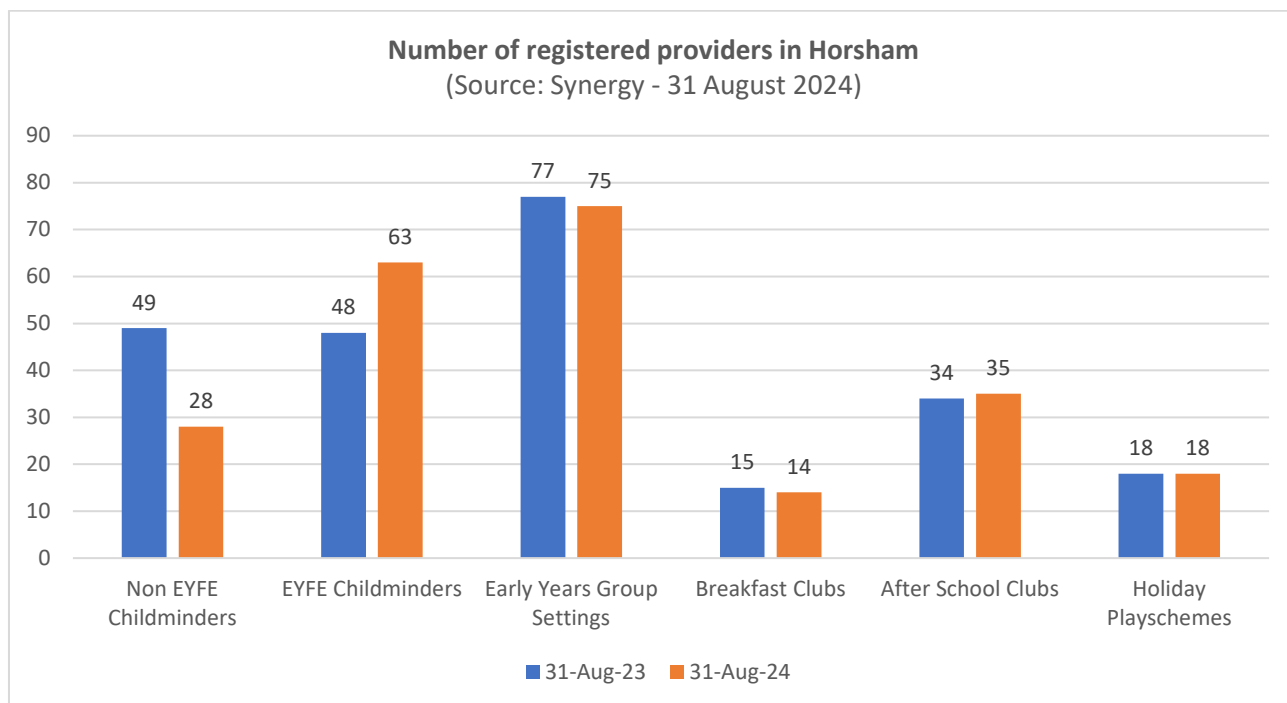
Horsham - Area overview

There are approximately 7,237 children who are under five years of age in the district of Horsham (ONS mid-year population figures 2023). The number of under 5's has decreased by 122 from 7,359 (1.6%) since the 2021 figures.

Source: [Estimates of the population for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#) (ONS)

The employment rate for 16-64 year olds in Horsham is 78.0% which is a decrease from 90.1% in 2022. This is higher than the average for the county of 77.5%.

Source: [Horsham's employment, unemployment and economic inactivity - ONS](#)



The net total number of registered providers has decreased in Horsham by 3% from 241 to 233. Horsham is the only area of the county to have also seen a decrease in Early Years group settings. Wraparound provision has largely remained stable with a small decrease in breakfast clubs, increase in after school childcare and holiday provision remaining stable.

Horsham has seen a large decrease in the number of Non EYFE Childminders however some of this reduction can be accounted for by the 31% increase in the number of Childminders who provide EYFE.

Sufficiency overview and area priorities

Data indicates that despite recorded closures during the reporting period, Horsham district currently has enough Early Years and Childcare provision to meet the needs of most families who require or want it. However, this will need constant monitoring to maintain levels, particularly considering the new childcare expansion.

In Horsham, the overall housing requirement of a minimum of 16,000 dwellings over the plan period 2011-2031 would generate a need for at least 1010 Early Years and Childcare places in total.

Changes to government childcare entitlements, the level of development coming forward and the take up of places across the area may change this need and therefore the requirement for provision. This will be reflected in subsequent documents.

Based on the 2023 housing trajectory, over the plan period we can expect that the number of Early Years and Childcare places required to meet the increased demand generated by the additional housing in Horsham to be:

Description	Years 1-5	Years 6-10	Years 11-15
Planned number of dwellings	3194	3772	2071
Potential number of Early Years and Childcare Places required to meet increased demand	202	238	131

Please note that these are indicative and needs and current provision will be reassessed as applications are received and more details of the developments are known, including the proposed type of dwellings. This assessment will use methodology as per Appendix 2.

In addition to the countywide priorities, Horsham early years and childcare sufficiency action planning will continue to monitor the progression of all planned housing development across the area. Priority will be given to working in partnership with the developers, where required, to support the development of new high quality, sustainable childcare places.

Horsham early years and childcare sufficiency action planning will monitor the impending changes to childcare policy and work with local providers to identify potential gaps in the market to build capacity and to support the sustainability of existing provision. Any further changes to policy could impact on the requirement from future planned developments and mean a potential increase in need for Early Years and Childcare provision. This will be reflected in subsequent documents.

The impact of the overall decreasing number of Childminders will continue to be prioritised, particularly in the rural areas.

The sustainability of the sector will be monitored to ensure appropriate levels of support are available to providers in financial difficulty, including signposting to relevant partners as well as offering targeted support as appropriate, particularly where a potential sufficiency issue is identified.

Consideration will be giving to available funding streams through the Childcare Expansion Capital Grant and Wraparound Programme Funding to address areas where gaps in provision is identified.

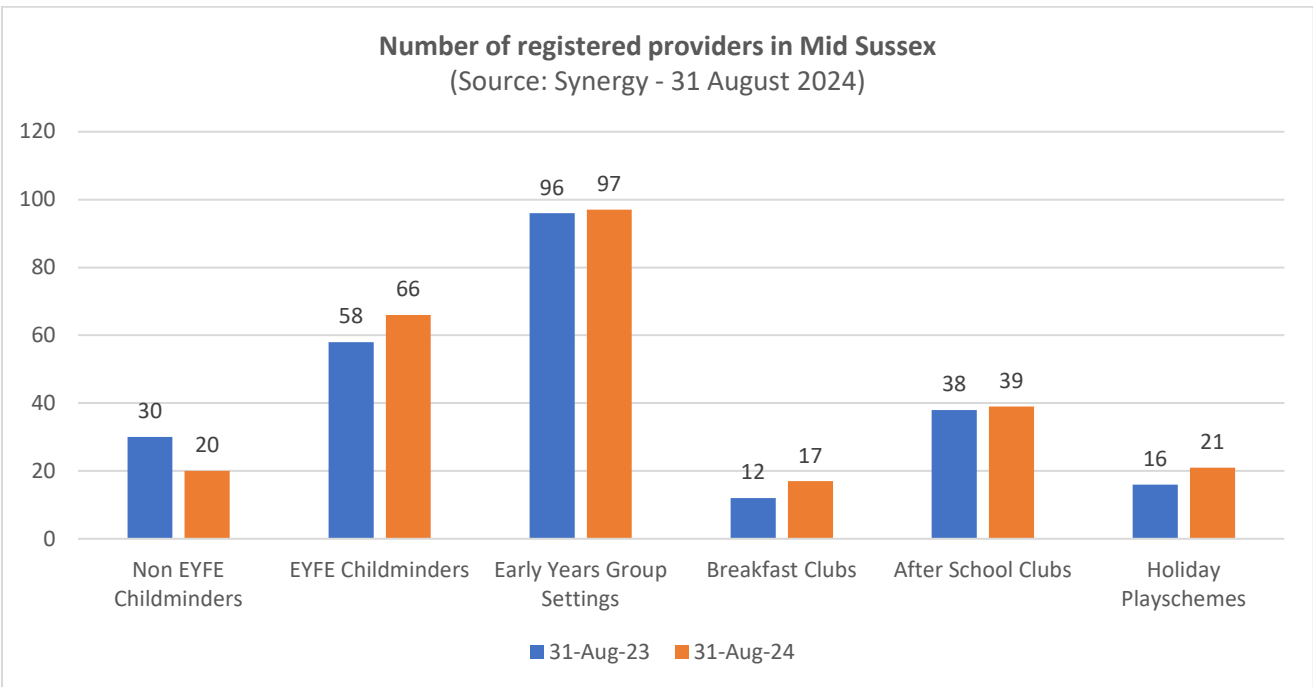
Mid-Sussex - Area overview

There are approximately 8,582 children who are under five years of age in the district of Mid Sussex (ONS mid-year population figures 2023). The number of under 5's has increased by 200 from 8,382 (2.4%) since the 2021 figures.

Source: [Estimates of the population for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#) (ONS)

The employment rate for 16-64 year olds in Mid Sussex is 78.7% which is a decrease from 82.7% in 2022. This is higher than the average for the county of 77.5%.

Source: [Mid Sussex's employment, unemployment and economic inactivity - ONS](#)



The net total number of registered providers in Mid Sussex has increased by 4% from 250 to 260. Whilst there has been a decrease in Childminders who do not offer EYFE, there has been an increase in Childminders offering EYFE. This is an overall net decrease of 2 Childminders.

The number of Early Years group settings has increased, and the area has also seen an increase in the availability of wraparound childcare and provision available during school holidays.

Sufficiency overview and area priorities

Data shows that across the District, there is currently sufficient childcare, in most areas, to meet the needs of the majority of families needing or wanting it. However, this will need constant monitoring to maintain levels particularly considering the new childcare expansion.

In Mid-Sussex, the overall housing requirement of a minimum of 16,000 dwellings over the plan period 2014-2031 would generate a need for at least 1010 Early Years and Childcare places in total.

Changes to government childcare entitlements, the level of development coming forward and the take up of places across the area may change this need and therefore the requirement for provision. This will be reflected in subsequent documents.

Based on the 2021 housing trajectory, over the plan period we can expect that the number of Early Years and Childcare places required to meet the increased demand generated by the additional housing to be:

Description	Years 1-5	Years 6-10	Years 11-15
Planned number of dwellings	4960	6860	4468
Potential number of Early Years and Childcare Places required to meet increased demand	313	433	282

Please note that these are indicative and needs and current provision will be reassessed as applications are received and more details of the developments are known, including the proposed type of dwellings. This assessment will use methodology as per Appendix 2.

In addition to the countywide priorities, Mid Sussex early years and childcare sufficiency action planning will continue to monitor the progression of all planned housing development across the area. Priority will be given to working in partnership with the developers, where required, to support the development of high quality, sustainable childcare.

Mid Sussex will monitor the impending changes to childcare policy and work with local providers to identify potential gaps in the market in order to build capacity and to support the sustainability of existing provision. Any further changes to policy could impact on the requirement from future planned developments and may mean a potential increase in need for Early Years and Childcare provision. This will be reflected in subsequent documents.

Out of School provision in rural areas, including Turners Hill, will be monitored and actions put in place as appropriate. For example, recruitment campaign for new childminders and wraparound programme funding promoted.

The sustainability of the sector will be monitored to ensure appropriate levels of support are available to providers in financial difficulty, including signposting to relevant partners as well as offering targeted support as appropriate, particularly where a potential sufficiency issue is identified.

The impact of the decreasing number of Childminders, including those offering EYFE places will continue to be prioritised, particularly in the rural areas.

Consideration will be giving to available funding streams through the Childcare Expansion Capital Grant and Wraparound Programme Funding to address areas where gaps in provision is identified.

Appendix 1: Early Education and Childcare: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (January 2024)

Part B: Securing sufficient childcare

Outcome: parents are able to work because childcare places are available, accessible and affordable and are delivered flexibly in a range of high-quality settings.

To secure sufficient childcare places, local authorities are required by legislation to:

B.1 Secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 to 14 or up to 18 for disabled children.

To secure sufficient childcare places, local authorities should take into account:

- what is 'reasonably practicable' when assessing what sufficient childcare means in their area
- the state of the local childcare market, including wraparound provision, including the demand for specific types of providers in a particular locality and the amount and type of supply that currently exists
- the state of the local labour market including the sufficiency of the local childcare workforce
- the quality and capacity of childcare providers and childminders or childcare providers registered with a childminder agency, including their funding, staff, premises, experience and expertise

Local authorities should:

- encourage schools and other childcare providers in their area to offer childcare from 8.00am until 6.00pm and in school holidays
- aim to identify and remove barriers that prevent existing providers from expanding their provision and new providers entering the local childcare market if needed
- encourage providers to take a sustainable business approach to planning and signpost providers to resources to support them, for example, [the business sustainability tool kit](#)

Local authorities are encouraged to:

- advise providers to consider the suitability of existing wraparound provision and the needs of parents
- understand the minimum standards required across all wraparound settings, such as registration with Ofsted and, where required, the Early Years Foundation Stage standards, and ensure that provision is inclusive and has considered the needs of all children, including those with SEND and additional needs

B.2 Local authorities should report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare. This report should be made available and accessible to parents.

Local authorities are responsible for determining the appropriate level of detail in their report, geographical division and date of publication. It is advised that the level of data required to map supply and demand is proportionate. It should aim to minimise the burden on childcare providers. The report should include:

- a specific reference to how local authorities are ensuring there is sufficient childcare available to meet the needs of: children with special educational needs and disabilities children from families in receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit, children with parents who work irregular hours, children taking up free early education and childcare places, school age children, and children needing holiday care
- information about the current and projected supply and demand of childcare for particular age ranges of children, and the affordability, accessibility and quality of provision
- details of how any gaps in childcare provision will be addressed

Appendix 2: Early Years and Childcare requirements in major new developments

This document provides guidance for West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and other agencies in determining a requirement for Early Years and Childcare places to support new housing developments.

It is essential that an appropriate amount of Early Years and Childcare provision is available early in the development of the new community to meet the immediate needs of the residents.

WSCC has a statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for children with SEND).

Demand for places

The starting point is to calculate the number of children in each age group expected from the new housing. The West Sussex Section 106 planning obligations (2016) has indicated an adjusted population multiplied by average child product for houses of 14 children per year of age per 1,000 persons and for flats of five children per year of age per 1,000 persons.

Where there is an outline planning application or an allocated site, it is presumed that the development is a mixture of houses and flats ($\frac{3}{4}$ houses and $\frac{1}{4}$ flats). The average house size and average persons per household for that District or Borough is used in the calculation, with a 2011 census basis. Using this calculation, gives an average child product of 12 children per year of age, per 1000 homes.

Where the housing mix is not yet determined, the average occupancy rate used to calculate Early Years and Childcare requirements is 2.28 persons per dwelling.

Based on this, a development of 1,000 homes would indicate a population of 2,280 persons. Using a child product of 12 children per year of age per 1,000 homes gives 27 children per year of age ($12 \times 2.28 = 27.36$).

Therefore, based on historic trends in take up data, on average, WSCC assume the need for 63 new Early Years and Childcare places per 1,000 houses:

Age	Percentage of Cohort	Number of places required
0 -1 year olds	12.5%	3
1 year olds	50%	14
2 year olds	65%	18
3 year olds	77.5%	21
4 year olds	25.8%	7

Figures will be adjusted to take into account the proposed types of dwellings when known.

New schools should consider space for wrap around provision as per the government wraparound childcare programme where all primary schools should have access to care 8am-6pm

Where developments impact on existing/established Early Years and Childcare provision, developers must ensure they also take into consideration the impact of the loss of existing places when planning for childcare requirements.

Universal Early Years Funded Entitlement (EYFE) is Government funding for all eligible children regardless of their individual needs or their citizenship status. EYFE consists of up to 570 hours per year of flexible funded childcare available to all 3- and 4-year-olds and eligible 2-year-olds. Some 3- and 4-year-olds are eligible for an additional 570 (up to 1,140) hours per year, which we call Extended EYFE, if they meet the eligibility criteria.

Research shows that attending high-quality early education and care can significantly improve a child's learning and development. It also helps equip children with the essential skills for when they go to school, setting them up for long-term academic and personal success. Additionally, it plays a crucial role in supporting families, helping to break the cycle of poverty.

The demand for universal 3- and 4-year-old funded places is high and trend data in West Sussex indicates that at least 96% take up this entitlement. It is therefore, expected that there will be continued high demand from this age group within any new housing development.

Although most 4 years olds take up their school place in the September following their 4th birthday, there is still a high demand for pre-school and nursery places which increases over the course of a school year as children turn 4. The take up of EYFE in West Sussex increases by approximately 1/3 in the summer term which evidences this on-going demand.

The demand for 2-year-olds continues to grow with 40% of children eligible for families who meet certain low income level criteria and/or family characteristics. The exception is that the eligibility will primarily be based on an income assessment and/or other family characteristic.

To qualify, children become eligible the term after they become 2 years old and the family is in receipt of one or more of the [benefits or family characteristics detailed online](#).

Where developments are to provide a high number of social housing residences, it is considered there will be the potential for greater demand for affordable childcare and access for 2-year-old funded provision. It is likely that this childcare will be required to support employment activities and, therefore, any provision to support lower income families should have regard to the flexibility of opening and closing times of childcare to meet the employment or return to learning requirements of parents and carers.

Following the Spring Budget announcements in March 2023, starting from April 2024, existing childcare support for parents will be expanded in phases. By September 2025, most working families with children under the age of 5 will be entitled to 30 hours of EYFE a week.

The changes are being introduced gradually to make sure that providers can meet the needs of more families. This means that:

- From **April 2024**, working parents of 2-year-olds will be able to access up to 15 hours of childcare a week.
- From **September 2024**, up to 15 hours of childcare a week will be extended to working parents of children from the age of 9 months to 3-year-olds.
- From **September 2025**, working parents of children under the age of 5 will be entitled to up to 30 hours of childcare a week.

Space requirements and regulations

The space required to fulfil these requirements is stipulated within the [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework \(EYFS\)](#).

Section 3 outlines the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements and sets out expectations for safety and suitability of premises, environment and equipment. The minimum space requirement stated in the guidance indicates:

3.66. The premises and equipment must be organised in a way that meets the needs of children. Providers must meet the following indoor space requirements:

- Children under 2 years: 3.5 m² per child
- 2 year olds: 2.5 m² per child
- Children aged 3 to 5 years: 2.3 m² per child

Ofsted is the regulatory body that all Early Years and Childcare operators must register with. Ofsted will inspect an organisation's ability to meet expected standards that are covered within the EYFS.

It is expected that all Early Years and Childcare providers are able to meet requirements to deliver EYFE places for children at the highest quality and West Sussex providers are expected to achieve and maintain "good" and "outstanding" inspection results.

What developers should provide

Early Years and Childcare provision must include teaching rooms with wet play areas; a separate baby room for children under the age of 2 years; adequate toilets (of which one would be fully accessible); kitchen area with cooking facilities; laundry facilities (required to be a separate area from the kitchen); office area; area for staff to take breaks away from children; separate toilet facilities for adults; nappy changing area; sleep room; free flow access to outdoor play area; parking and setting down and picking up area for parents. The childcare planning should allow for flexible hours of opening and covering at least 7am to 7pm for full day care. Further guidance is available in the EYFS Statutory Framework and within a study undertaken by WSCC.

Out of school childcare for school age children could be met through this facility but a separate room would be required or use of school buildings, if available.

An acceptable alternative to the provision of a new purpose-built building to cater for early education and childcare would be the use of another building within the development (for example a community centre) with a formal hiring agreement. However, suitable facilities will need to be provided, in particular storage, direct access to secure toilets and a secure outside play area. Calculation of area requirements is based on the EYFS Framework.

For small developments, contributions may be sought for provision within the local area if a need is demonstrated. Such provision could, for example, consist of enhancing the use of existing early education and childcare facilities or other community buildings in the area through physical adaptations and extensions or through management arrangements.

Data shows that parents prefer to access Early Years and Childcare within a one to two mile radius of their homes. Information from the take up of Early Years Funded Entitlement shows that 81.5% of 2 year olds and 77.4% of 3 and 4 year olds accessed their funded place within 2 miles of their home address. 64.5% of 2 year olds and 59% of 3 and 4 year olds travelled 1 mile or less to access their place (Source: Synergy, Spring term data 2024).

The childcare market has also seen parents preferring provision that is close to, or on the site of, Primary schools.

Timing of the Early Years and Childcare development

There should be early consideration of the allocation of the sites and/or premises for Early Years and Childcare. It is recommended that such provision is considered at the same time as that for Primary schools.

This is especially important within developments that have little or no Early Years and Childcare provision adjacent to the new housing development.

The impact of a new housing development alongside current capacity in the Early Years and Childcare market should also be considered in terms of early occupation of families and their ability to access provision and whether any interim measures are put in place prior to thresholds of dwellings occupied being reached.

Scalable solutions may be suitable for large multi-phased developments, where appropriate.

How this should be provided

The planners/developers should make provision for Early Years and Childcare facilities within their plans for the housing developments. Childcare facilities should either be associated within/alongside community facilities or in dedicated space identified and available for development. In either case, we suggest that there are advantages with locating adjacent to, or combined with, Primary school sites.

It is assumed that the sites will be made available through an open and transparent process to interested Early Years and Childcare providers, or through District Councils and community associations, where childcare is expected to be operated within community facilities.

The location of any provision must allow for good walking access, as well as having strong public transport and motor vehicle links, and be within a 1-2 mile radius of the main housing development.

West Sussex is able to provide costs estimates for Early Years and Childcare provision. The figures provided are broad estimations to indicate relative order of costs likely to be required to support the delivery of early year's provision. It is important to note that the cost estimates come with a range of caveats and that more accurate costs will be applied to selective proposals as they progress through the development process.

The criteria that are set out in this document are intended to guide the identification and consideration of options. However, it is recognised that it may not be possible to identify sites which meet all criteria. In this case, the criteria will be used to guide thinking about the acceptability or otherwise of the available options and identification of the most suitable option.

Contact

WSCC's Family Information Service can be contacted to discuss any support requirement in selection of appropriate high quality Early Years and Childcare providers or any aspects of the regulation and legislation requirements.

- Telephone: 01243 777807
- Email: family.info.service@westsussex.gov.uk
- Opening Hours: Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm