

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

Summer Term 2024

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Introduction

The Childcare Acts 2006 and 2016 place a specific duty on local authorities to secure sufficient childcare provision within their area. In order to do this, 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 0-14 or up to 18 for disabled children.
- Secure sufficient free early years provision for eligible young children.

In order to evidence the sufficiency of childcare provision within their area, local authorities should report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare. Local authorities are responsible for determining the appropriate level of detail in their report, geographical division and date of publication, but should include:

- A specific reference on how the local authority is 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 the Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit.
 - Children with parents who work irregular hours.
 - Children taking up funded early education and childcare places.
 - School age children.
 - 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.

The Worcestershire Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2024 is a summary of the Worcestershire childcare market during the Summer Term 2024; it reports on the information available at a specific point in time and should be used for guidance purposes only.

National Context

In March 2023 the Government announced the 'Childcare Expansion', a series of initiatives to support working families:

- Increased household income threshold for child benefit payments
- Increase in the amount of financial support available via Universal Credit
- Increase in the Early Years Entitlements phased over 2 years
 - April 2024: 15 funded hours per week for two year old children of working parents
 - September 2024: 15 funded hours per week for children aged 9 months of working parents
 - September 2025: 30 funded hours per week for children aged 9 months – 3 years of age of working families
- Increased availability to wraparound childcare for primary aged children by September 2026

To support the increased supply of childcare places needed to deliver the increased Early Entitlements, the hourly funding rates paid to providers have been increased, as a one-off grant for September 2023 – March 2024, and then through an increase to the Early Years element of the Designated Schools Grant from April 2024, which is paid to Local Authorities for the delivery of the Early years Entitlements.

Childminder Grants were also announced to support the start-up costs of becoming a childminder for those registering between March 2023 – March 2025; childminders registering with Ofsted are eligible for £600, those registering with a Childminder Agency are eligible for £1200.

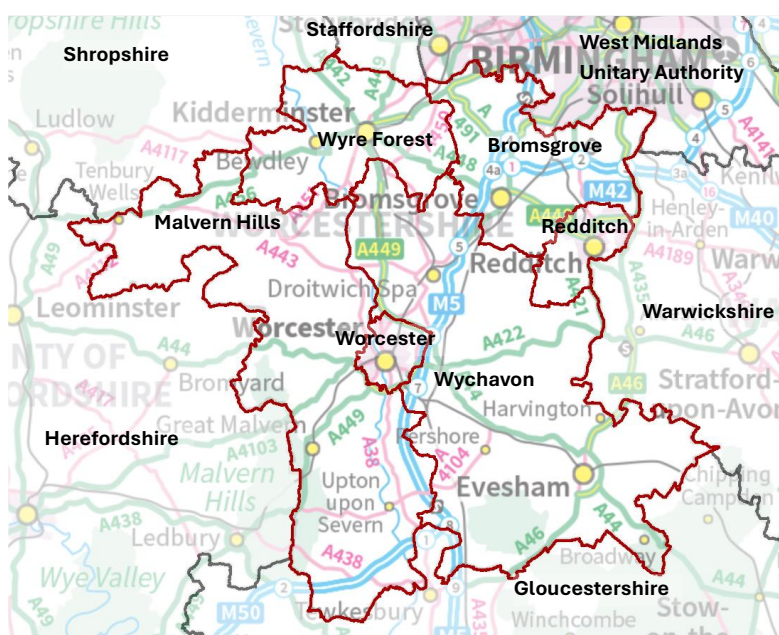
In addition, financial support has been made available to support local authorities to increase the sufficiency of both Wraparound and Early Entitlements (Nursery Education Funding) provision. Worcestershire is using the assessed sufficiency of provision as the key criteria to allocate the available funding.

Worcestershire Context

Worcestershire County sits within the West Midlands to the southwest of Birmingham. The county is surrounded by five other counties, Shropshire, Herefordshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Gloucestershire, and to the northeast is the West Midlands Unitary Authority.

Worcestershire is a two tier authority with mix of rural and urban areas, divided into six District Council areas: Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, Worcester, Wychavon and Wyre Forest. Each district is divided into wards, 112 in total across Worcestershire.

Image 1: Map of Worcestershire, including districts.



Worcestershire has a population of 617,557 ¹(2024), with 16% (100,820) aged 0 – 14 years of age.

Table 1: Worcestershire children by age-cohort in each district 2024

District	0-4 Year Olds	5-9 Year Olds	10-14 Year Olds	Total 0 – 14 yr olds
Bromsgrove	5,167	6,057	6,610	17,834
Malvern	3,264	4,059	4,834	12,157
Redditch	4,716	5,272	5,549	15,537
Worcester	5,314	5,302	5,928	16,544
Wychavon	6,524	7,484	8,045	22,053
Wyre Forest	5,051	5,635	6,009	16,695
Total	30,036	33,809	36,975	100,820

¹ [Population statistics and projections | Worcestershire County Council](#), October 2024

Live birth rates in Worcestershire have been decreasing over the past 10 years. Whilst the district of Wychavon has seen an increase across the 10 year period, most other districts have seen a reduction in live births, in line with England as a whole.

Table 2: Live birth rates in Worcestershire, October 2024²

Location	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Worcestershire	6,070	5,892	6,019	6,070	5,897	5,705	5,623	5,388	5,473	5,334
Bromsgrove	871	906	898	940	931	956	920	913	858	896
Malvern Hills	598	598	563	566	626	562	541	524	565	554
Redditch	1,068	1,108	1,080	1,065	986	972	1,014	937	984	912
Worcester	1,349	1,184	1,279	1,200	1,175	1,121	1,135	1,011	987	991
Wychavon	1,092	1,052	1,110	1,188	1,186	1,106	1,121	1,135	1,219	1,154
Wyre Forest	1,092	1,044	1,089	1,111	993	988	892	868	860	827
England	664,517	661,499	664,399	663,157	646,794	625,651	610,505	585,195	595,948	577,046

With live births decreasing by just over 12% in Worcestershire between 2013 and 2022, the number of 0 to 4 year olds across the county are now projected to increase slightly over the next 6 years up to 2030.

Table 3: Predicted numbers of 0-4 year olds in Worcestershire by district³

District	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Predicted Change
Bromsgrove	5,122	5,139	5,029	5,167	5,203	5,234	5,267	5,294	5,317	5,337	+4.2%
Malvern	3,095	3,144	3,132	3,264	3,275	3,285	3,296	3,310	3,318	3,325	+7.4%
Redditch	4,918	4,947	4,947	4,716	4,675	4,653	4,645	4,640	4,640	4,646	-5.5%
Worcester	5,226	5,228	5,276	5,314	5,292	5,286	5,289	5,295	5,303	5,315	+1.7%
Wychavon	6,246	6,263	6,270	6,524	6,587	6,640	6,693	6,744	6,789	6,830	+9.1%
Wyre Forest	4,784	4,661	4,554	5,051	5,049	5,050	5,060	5,073	5,086	5,104	+6.7%
Total	29,381	29,382	29,181	30,036	30,081	30,148	30,250	30,356	30,453	30,557	+4%

Childcare Surveys

To support the findings of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, a parent/carer survey and a childcare provider survey were conducted across the county to collect views on childcare within Worcestershire. The surveys were published on the Council website, via social media, through sector based communication and at online training events to try and maximise accessibility. Whilst response rates to both surveys were low, information collated from the surveys has been used to inform the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and the subsequent Action Plan.

² <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>, August 2024

³ <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>, October 2024

Parent/Carer Survey

71 responses were received to the parent/carers survey, with parents/carers responsible for 118 0 – 10 year old children within Worcestershire, 69 within the early years age-group and 49 within the school age-range.

The cost of childcare was identified as a concern for parents/carers of children of all ages, with 64% (36) of parents/carers of children aged 0-4 years and 32% (13) of parents/carers of children aged 4-10 years stating that they would like to reduce their childcare costs. Conversely, 38% (21) of parents/carers of children aged 0-4 and 24% (10) of parents/carers of children aged 4-10 years would like to access more hours of paid childcare.

When choosing childcare, the quality of childcare was the most important factor to parents/carers, followed closely by the days/times that the childcare was available. 56% of respondents stated that they thought it was quite difficult to find information about childcare in Worcestershire

19% ((23) of the children of respondents had a Special Educational Need and/or Disability, 9 of which were within the Early Years age-group and 14 school-aged; almost all these families stated that finding childcare that adequately meets the needs of their children was a barrier to accessing childcare. Finding childcare that could meet their child's SEND needs was also a priority when choosing childcare, with 19 of 23 identifying this within their 3 most important factors when choosing childcare.

Provider Survey

28 responses were received to the provider survey, primarily from day nursery and pre-schools (19), but also from childminders, before and/or after school providers and school based settings, covering provision from 0 years to over 8 years.

Whilst 48% (13) of respondents have seen an increase in occupancy since April 2024, the launch of the Childcare Expansion, 70% (19) do not currently have waiting lists for families looking for immediate childcare. Positively, 75% of respondents stated that their provision is currently financially viable, however there is little interest in expanding provision with only 7% (2) of respondents considering increasing the age-range and 14% (4) of respondents interested in offering more places. Of the 8 respondents offering provision for children over the age of 5 years, there was no interest in expansion at all.

54% (15) of respondents have experienced difficulties in recruiting and/or retaining suitable staff during 2024, however only 14% (4) have had to reduce the number of places offered due to these staffing issues. Despite this, 71% (20) respondents currently have staffing vacancies.

71% (20) of respondents currently have children with SEND attending, with only 1 setting stating that they have had to refuse a place for a child with SEND due to being unable to recruit a 1:1 member of staff. However, 21% (6) of respondents indicated that they have had to implement a reduced timetable for 1 or more children within SEND.

Early Years Provision

Types of Early Years Provision

Childminders

Registered childminders are self-employed childcare professionals who work in a home setting; they may be registered with either Ofsted or with an Ofsted registered Childminder Agency. They are registered for small numbers of children and will often care for a range of ages. Childminders may work in partnership with other childminders or employ up to 2 assistants to increase the number of children they can care for at any one time.

Following the introduction of the Childminder Grant in 2023, Worcestershire has seen a significant increase in the number of childminders registered with a Childminder Agency; between Summer Term 2023 and Summer Term 2024, the number of Agency registered childminders has increased from 2 to 14 childminders.

Group-based settings

Group-based settings are Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) settings that include:

- **Pre-schools** which tend to offer term-time only provision on a sessional basis for children aged 2-5 years of age.
- **Day nurseries** which normally open at least 8am – 6pm daily, all year round for children aged from 6 weeks to 5 years of age.
- **Early Years registered Out of School care** which includes before and/or after school provision wrapping around the school day as well as holiday care that operates during the school holidays.

School-run settings

School-run settings include academy, maintained and free school nursery classes, Governor Led provision (which are operated by a maintained school Governing Body but are outside of the school's age-range), maintained nursery schools, independent school nursery classes and before and/or after school settings. The provision tends to operate on a term-time only basis for children aged between 2 – 5 years.

Supply of Early Years Provision

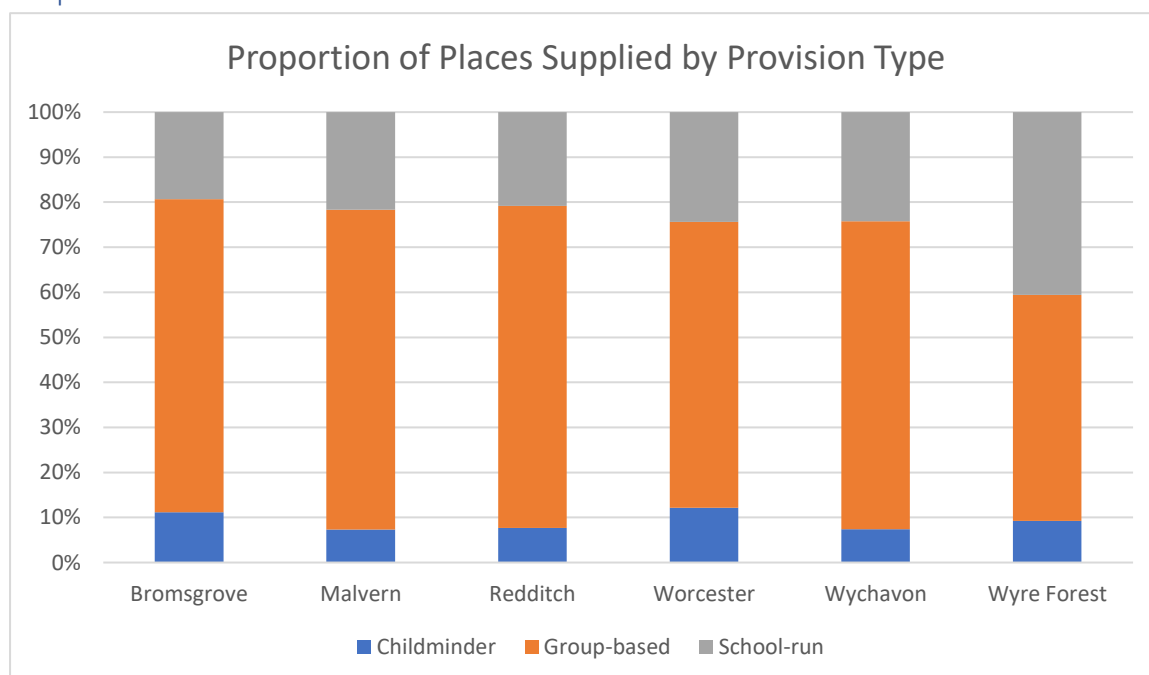
In the Summer Term 2024, there are 668 Ofsted registrations operating within Worcestershire with a further 24 organisations registered with either a Childminder Agency or the Independent Schools Inspectorate. 513 of these registrations operate early years provision, the remaining registrations are mainly out of school providers.

Table 4: Breakdown of early years provision by provider type

Provider Type	Number of Settings
Childminder	204
Group-based	190
School-run	119
Total	513

There is a spread of all provision types across each Worcestershire district with proportionately more early years places provided by school-run provision within Wyre Forest. Historically, nursery classes in Worcestershire were placed in areas of deprivation; as the Wyre Forest is the most deprived district in the county with 22.7% of children living in Relative low-income families⁴ and 17.2% of children living in Absolute low-income families, this is to be expected.

Graph 1: Provision across Worcestershire districts



56% of early years provision operates on an all year-round basis, the remaining 44% offering term-time only provision. Of the all year-round settings, 55% are childminders (157/286) and 44% are group-based settings (126/286).

⁴ JSNA (worcestershire.gov.uk)

The average weekly opening hours across Worcestershire early years provision is 42.5 hours per week. 47% (239/513) of provision is open for at least 50 hours per week, only 9% (45/513) is open for less than 30 hours per week.

Early Years Provision Changes

Following a significant number of closures (137 Early Years registrations) between 2020-2021 after the Covid-19 pandemic, the market in Worcestershire has not only stabilised but is now showing signs of recovery, evidenced by the increasing number of providers opening. This is in contrast to the national picture, where Ofsted continue to report decreasing numbers of childminder registrations⁵.

Table 5: Breakdown of opening/closing registrations during 2023/24

Provider Type	Closed	Opened	Net Change
Childminders	16	24	+8
Group-based	10	13	+3
School-run	0	0*	0
Total	26	38	+12

*Maintained to Academy converters excluded if there were no changes to early years offer.

Quality of Early Years Provision

Ofsted inspects all providers who are on the Early Years register at least once every 6 years, with new providers normally inspected within 30 months of registration. The inspection evaluates the overall quality and standards of the early years provision, in line with the principles and requirements of the statutory framework, the [Early Years Foundation Stage](#).

The quality of early years registered provision in Worcestershire is high, with 97.5% of inspections achieving a Good or above outcome. This is slightly above the most recent Ofsted data publication, which reports that nationally, 97% of childcare providers that have had a full inspection were judged to be Good or above.

Since March 2020, the proportion of childcare providers judged as outstanding has fallen from 18% to 14% nationally, which is significantly lower than the percentage of providers within Worcestershire who are currently judged as Outstanding (24%).

However, between September 2023 to March 2024, 12% of inspections that took place in Worcestershire (5 of 41) resulted in a judgement of Inadequate/Not Met, which is significantly higher than the national average of 6%. In contrast, only 2% of inspections had an outcome of Requires Improvement during the same period, compared to 7% nationally.

50 registrations are awaiting their first inspection; they receive support from the Early Years Improvement Advisors until their first inspection, after which support is targeted towards

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childcare-providers-and-inspections-as-at-31-march-2024/main-findings-childcare-providers-and-inspections-as-at-31-march-2024>

those who are judged as Requires Improvement, Inadequate or Not Met as well as those that are due to be inspected within the next 6 – 18 months. Support is also provided for settings that are identified as a ‘Setting Causing Concern’; this is primarily following a safeguarding concern/issue but also allocated for reasons of SEND concerns, sustainability issues or via referral from other professionals and/or the setting themselves.

Table 6: Breakdown of Ofsted inspection judgements by provider type as at June 2024:

Ofsted Judgement	Childminder	Group-based	Overall Percentage
Outstanding	30	32	24%
Good	60	115	67.5%
Met	16	0	6%
Requires Improvement	0	1	0.5%
Inadequate	3	2	2%
Not Met	0	0	-

Early Years Provision Key Messages

- 1. There are 513 organisations operating early years provision within Worcestershire.**
- 2. More provision opened than closed during 2023/24.**
- 3. The proportion of early years settings judged as Outstanding in Worcestershire is 10% above the national average.**
- 4. The proportion of recent Early Years inspections resulting in a judgement of Inadequate was significantly higher than the national average between September 2023 – March 2024.**

Sufficiency of Nursery Education Funded provision

The sufficiency of funded childcare places is assessed in hours, comparing the total number of hours available at a childcare setting to the number of hours each child is eligible to access funding for, assuming each child accesses their full Nursery Education Funding entitlement on a term-time basis.

The demand for funded childcare places is assessed using the known children data supplied annually by the NHS, the estimated proportion of children eligible for each type of Nursery Education Funding entitlement and the take-up trends and patterns. Anecdotal information is also collated and analysed via parent/carer surveys and direct feedback to the Local Authority.

Each term the number of childcare places available and the estimated demand for places is analysed at both individual ward level and across neighbouring wards (locality area), to ascertain if there are sufficient places available in each locality to enable the Local Authority to meet their statutory sufficiency duty for funded early education hours.

Types of Nursery Education Funding / Early Entitlements

There are a range of Early Entitlements available, depending on a child's age and their family circumstances:

Table 7: Types of Nursery Education Funding / Early Entitlements

Funding Offer (15 hours)	9 months – 2 years	2 – 3 years	3-4 years
Universal offer			✓
Targeted offer for two-year-old children: - families in receipt of Government support - child specific criteria - families with No Recourse to Public Funds		✓ ✓ ✓	
Targeted offer for working families	✓	✓	✓
Targeted offer for fostered children	✓	✓	✓

Universal Offer

All 3 & 4-year-old children are eligible for 15 hours of funded childcare per week for 38 weeks of the year, from the term after the child turns 3 years of age.

Targeted offer for two-year-old children

Two year old children from families in receipt of specific economic benefits, as well as children in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, that have a current Education, Health and Care Plan, that are looked after or have left care through a Special Guardianship Order, Child Arrangements or Adoption Order, are eligible for 15 hours of funded childcare per week for 38 weeks of the year, from the term after their 2nd birthday.

Children of non-EEA citizens without recourse to public funds and with a household income of less than £26,500 are also eligible for the targeted offer for two-year old children.

The application process is managed by Worcestershire County Council.

Targeted offer for working families

From the term after a child turns 2 years of age, children with parents working at least the equivalent of 16 hours per week at National Minimum Wage, are eligible for 15 hours of funded childcare per week, for 38 weeks of the year. For 3 & 4-year-old children, this is in addition to their eligibility to the Universal offer. The application process is managed by HMRC, via www.childcarechoices.gov.uk.

From September 2024, the required age will be lowered to include children from the term after they turn 9 months. From September 2025, the entitlement will be increased to 30 hours per week.

Targeted offer for fostered children

Children in foster care, where the foster parents are in paid work outside of fostering and the child's care plan supports access to childcare, are eligible for 15 funded hours per week for 38 weeks of the year, from the term after their 2nd birthday.

From September 2024, the required age will be lowered to include children from the term after they turn 9 months. From September 2025, the entitlement will be increased to 30 hours per week.

Supply of Nursery Education Funded Provision

The Department for Education provides statutory guidance for local authorities outlining the expectations on both local authorities and childcare providers with regards to early years funding: [Early education and childcare, January 2024](#). To be eligible to offer funded places, a provider must be one of the following:

- An early years provider, other than a childminder, registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register.
- A childminder registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register.
- A childminder or childcare provider registered with a childminder agency which is itself registered with Ofsted.
- School taking children aged 2 and over which are exempt from registration with Ofsted as an early years provider.

In addition to being registered as above, providers must meet quality requirements, outlined within the statutory guidance:

Table 8: Quality requirements for each funding stream

Inspection Judgement	Funding for Working Families	Funding for Two Year Olds in receipt of additional Government support	Universal 3&4 year old Funding
Not yet inspected	✓	✓	✓
Good/Outstanding/Met	✓	✓	✓
Requires Improvement	✓	X	✓
Inadequate/Not Met	X	X	X

Providers who meet the above requirements can choose to sign-up to offer funded provision within Worcestershire. When choosing to offer funded early years provision, Worcestershire providers are expected to offer seamless transition for children as they age, until the child starts school.

The majority (90%) of early years registered provision within Worcestershire choose to offer Nursery Education Funding (NEF). Of the 50 registrations not offering NEF, 46 are childminders; early data indicates that the number of childminders offering NEF will increase from September 2024 in line with the next phase of the Childcare Expansion.

Table 9: Breakdown of NEF Registered Provision by type

Provider Type	Number of Providers*	Proportion of Overall NEF Providers
Childminder	162	35%
Group-based	182	39%
School-run	119	26%
Total	463	N/A

*Open and registered for NEF during the Summer Term 2024

Whilst the overall number of childminders has decreased since 2020, proportionately more offer funded places; 79% (162/204) are currently registered as compared to 65% (198/304) in July 2020.

Group-based NEF registered provision has also seen a decrease in the overall number of providers. Whilst the total number of day nurseries has remained relatively stable over the past 4 years, the number of pre-school playgroups has almost halved since Summer 2020, with many rural provisions struggling to remain sustainable with low numbers of children within their local area and a number of others being replaced with school-run provision.

Table 10: Breakdown of NEF Registered Group-Based Providers

Types of Group-based Provision	Number of Providers July 2020	Number of Providers July 2024	Change +/-
Day Nursery	128	130	+1.5%
Pre-School Playgroup	90	52	-42%
Out of School	7	0	-100%
Total	225	182	-18%

Although the overall number of school-run providers has remained relatively stable, there has been a decrease in the number of specialist provision with a corresponding increase in the number of mainstream school-run settings.

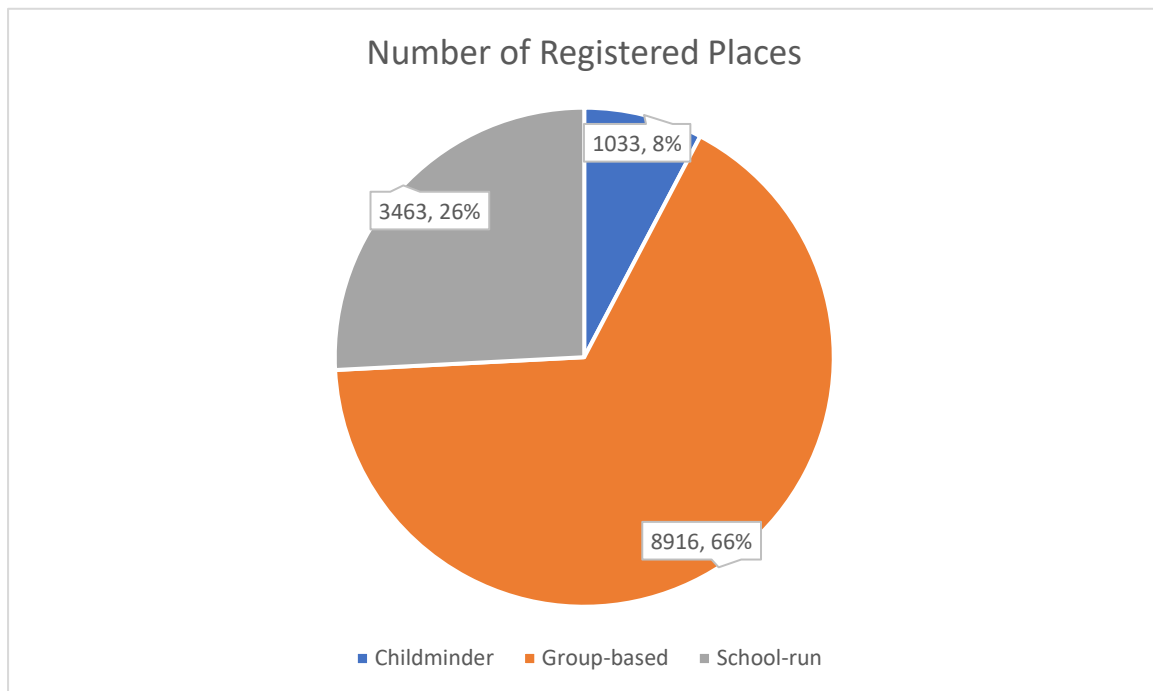
Table 11: Breakdown of NEF Registered Mainstream School-Run Providers

Types of School-run Provision	Number of Providers July 2020	Number of Providers July 2024	Change +/-
Academy Nursery Class (including Language Classes)	24	50	+108%
Academy Special School Nursery Class	2	0	-100%
Free School Nursery Class	1	1	-
Maintained Nursery Class (inc. Language Classes)	31	28	-10%
Maintained Nursery School	1	1	-
Maintained Special School Nursery Class (including Nursery Plus)	7	3	-57%
Governor Led	46	32	-30%
Independent School Nursery*	3	4	+33%
Total	115	119	+3.5%

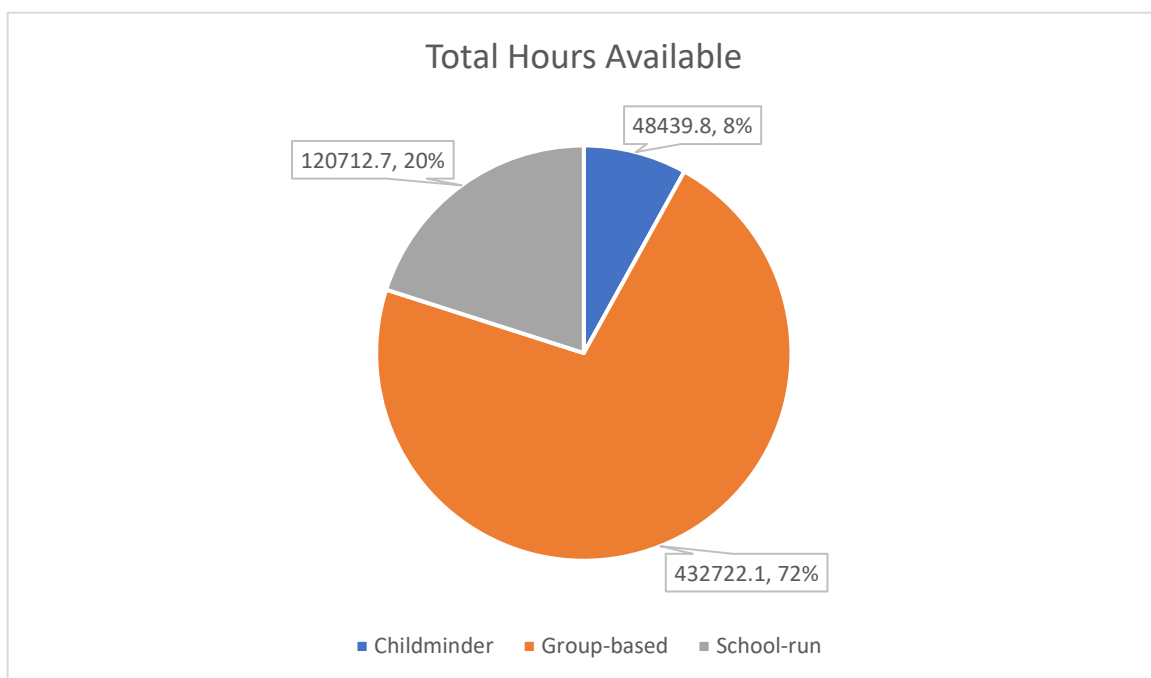
*Without an Early Years Ofsted registration

Although group-based provision makes-up only 39% of the registered settings, they supply 66% of places within Worcestershire and 72% of the available hours of early years provision, evidencing the importance of the PVI sector within Worcestershire.

Graph 2: Breakdown of total places offered by NEF registered provider types



Graph 3: Breakdown of total hours offered by NEF registered provider types



Since 2020, there has been a steady year-on-year increase in the number of NEF registered providers offering funded places for two-year-olds; this has increased further with the implementation of the Childcare Expansion with eligibility for two-year-olds of working families commencing at the start of the Summer Term 2024.

Table 12: Percentage of NEF registered providers offering two-year-old funded provision

Provider Type	Percentage of Providers July 2020	Percentage of Providers July 2024
Childminder	82%	99%
Group-based	91%	98%
School-run	47%	60.5%
Total	78%	89%

Early indications suggest that the majority of providers who are registered with Ofsted to offer places for children under the age of 2 will choose to offer funded places for this age-group when the next phase of the Childcare Expansion launches in September 2024.

Demand for Nursery Education Funding

In the Summer Term 2024, there were an estimated⁶ 14,984 2-4 year old children living within Worcestershire.

Take-up of the early years entitlements in Worcestershire is higher than the national and regional averages. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, take-up of funded provision decreased both nationally and locally; take-up of 3&4 year old funding has now recovered and is only just below pre-pandemic levels, whilst take-up of two year old funding is higher than it was pre-pandemic.

Table 13: Take-up of funded provision by 3 & 4 year olds during Summer Term 2024

	No. of Children	Estimated No. of children eligible for funded hours	No. accessing funded hours	Take-Up
3 & 4 Year Olds eligible for Universal hours	9224	9224	8897	96.5%
3 & 4 Year Olds of Working Families		5247	5414	58.7%

⁶ NHS Known Children Data, September 2023

Graph 4: Published⁷ percentage take-up of 3 & 4 Year Old Funding in Worcestershire 2019 - 2024

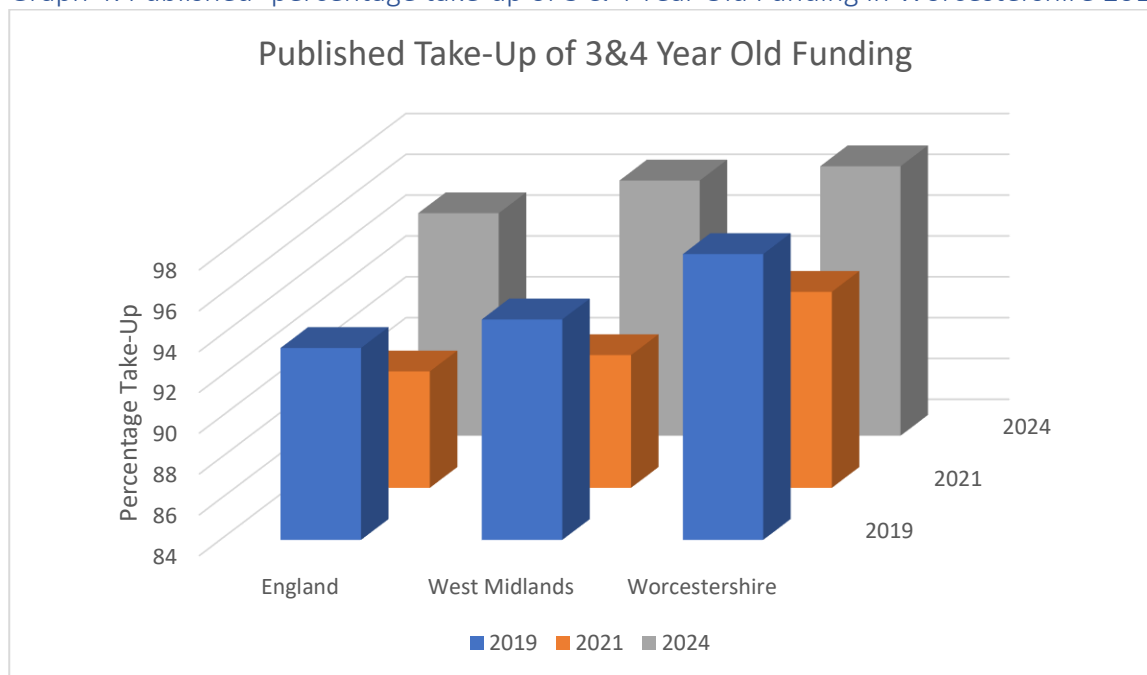


Table 14: Take-up of funded provision by two year olds during Summer Term 2024

	No. of Children	Estimated No. of children eligible for funded hours*	No. of children accessing funded hours	Take-Up**
Two Year Olds identified by DWP	5760	1306	875	67%
Two Year Olds of Working Families		3395	2742	80.8%
Total Eligible Two Year Olds		4701	3617	76.9%
All Two Year Olds		5760	3617	62.8%

*Estimated number of two year old children eligible under the Working Families criteria is based on historical take-up of 3 & 4 year olds eligible under the same criteria. This estimate does not take into account the number of families who have applied for an Eligibility Code via Childcare Choices.

**Take-Up reflects places that are accessed up within Worcestershire childcare settings.

Whilst 81% (4701 of 5760) of two year olds are estimated to be eligible for some type of early years funding, demand for places for two year olds of Working Families was below the levels seen for 3&4 year old children that meet the same criteria. After only one term of take-up, it is too early to

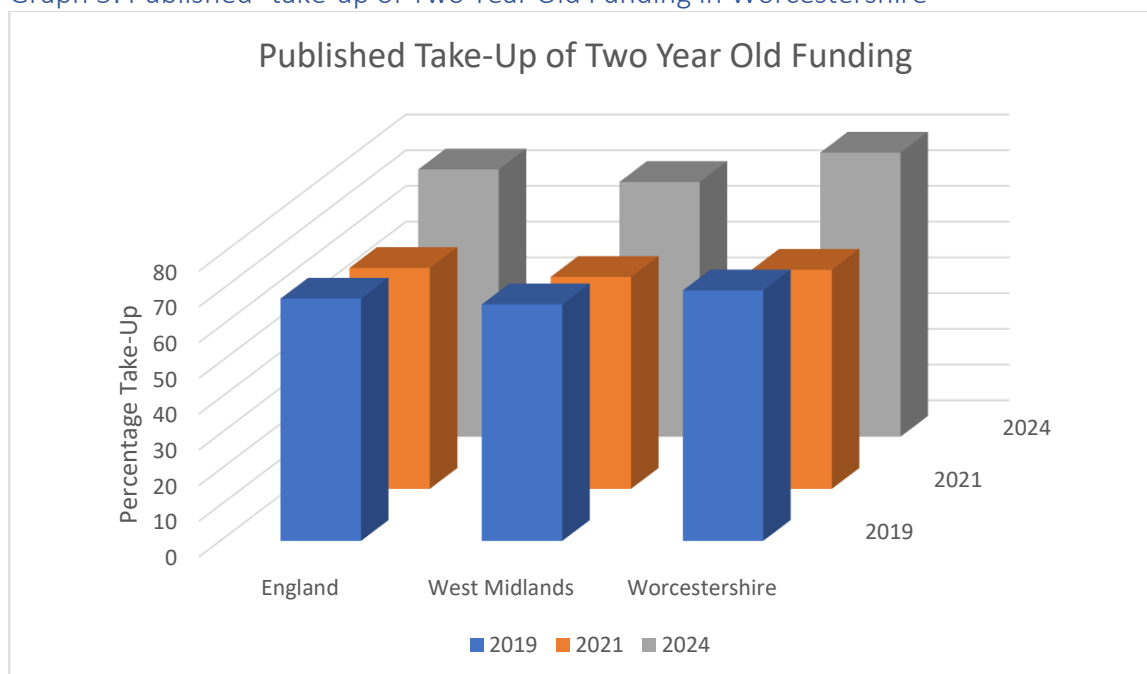
⁷ [Education provision: children under 5 years of age, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/explore-education-statistics)

determine if this pattern will continue but should be monitored and used to refine the local authority demand data, if the pattern continues.

It is worth noting that whilst the take-up rates of funding for two year olds from families in receipt of additional Government support are lower than in previous years, there is an early pattern developing of families who are eligible for both types of funding choosing to access via the Working Families criteria. 19 children who had applied via the DWP criteria went on to access Working Family hours and an estimated 47 children whose families could have applied via the DWP criteria did not apply but instead accessed the Working Family hours.

Including these children within the take-up rates for two year olds from families in receipt of additional Government support would increase the take-up rate to 72% for the term. As the guidance suggests these children should be funded via the Disadvantaged criteria wherever possible, a process to manage this needs to be implemented.

Graph 5: Published⁸ take-up of Two Year Old Funding in Worcestershire



Of the additional hours accessed by 3 & 4 year olds of Working Families during Summer Term 2024, 71% were accessed within a group-based setting, 24% within a school-run setting and only 5% with a childminder. In contrast, 53.5% of Universal hours were taken within a group-based setting, 45% within a school-run setting and 1.5% with a childminder.

Comparatively, the hours accessed by two year old children of Working Families during Summer Term 2024, 84% of funded hours were accessed within a group-based setting, 7% within a school-run setting and 9% with a childminder. In contrast, of the hours accessed by two year olds in receipt

⁸ [Education provision: children under 5 years of age, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/education-provision-children-under-5-years-of-age-reporting-year-2024)

of additional Government support, 75% were taken within a group-based setting, 21.5% within a school-run setting and 3.5% with a childminder.

The take-up patterns align with our recent parent/carer Childcare Survey, where 70% of respondents stated they required childcare that was available all year round, which is primarily supplied by childminders and group-based settings.

Sufficiency of Nursery Education Funded Provision

At Local Authority level, there is sufficient childcare available for all 2, 3 and 4-year-olds to access their statutory entitlements, with surplus available to support the increased entitlement from September 2025. Whilst there is not sufficient surplus to enable all eligible children to access an additional 15 hours per week, 48% of all hours accessed in the Summer Term 2024 under the Working Family criteria, were accessed on a 'stretched' basis; settings open for more than 38 weeks can choose to offer the funded hours over the whole year, with children accessing less funded hours per week but over more weeks of the year.

This would indicate that the demand in September 2025 will be similar.

Table 15: Extract of the Early Years Sufficiency Tool Summer 2024 summarising the total maximum demand for funded hours per week

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 2, 3 and 4 year old children	19,196
Number of NEF Providers	464
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	287,940
Weekly hours of childcare available	492,864
Difference	+204,924 hours
Assessment of County Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst the countywide assessment of sufficiency evidences there is sufficient provision available, 25% (14) of respondents to the parent/carer Childcare Survey stated that they'd had difficulty finding childcare in the right location and 16% (9) wished they had more choice of childcare providers. Therefore, whilst there is sufficient provision available, as evidenced by the high take-up of Nursery Education Funding, it is not necessarily in the areas that parents/carers would like it to be.

With projected increasing numbers of 0 to 4 year olds in Worcestershire and the Early Entitlements expansion aiming to increase the number of working families by making childcare more affordable, the demand for childcare is likely to increase over the foreseeable future, therefore further reducing parental choice. It is important to ensure that the financial support available to support access to funded provision is directed to areas of the county where sufficiency risks or issues have been identified and parental choice is limited.

See 'Sufficiency by District' below for a detailed breakdown of provision at district and ward level.

Nursery Education Funding – Key Messages

1. There has been a decrease in the number of NEF registered providers since July 2020.
2. Over two thirds of NEF provision is supplied by group-based providers.
3. There has been an increase in the number of providers offering NEF for eligible two-year-old children.
4. Reported take-up of 2, 3 and 4 year old funding entitlements in Worcestershire is above national and regional take-up.
5. There is sufficient funded provision within Worcestershire to enable all eligible children to access their statutory funded entitlement, however it may not be in the settings/locality that parents/carers would ideally choose.

Vulnerable Children

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

All Early Years settings within Worcestershire are expected to offer inclusive provision. Additional funding (Inclusion Supplement) is available to support settings to meet the needs of children who have an identified need, with higher rates paid for children with more complex needs. The Inclusion Supplement is paid as an hourly increase to each funded hour accessed. 16% of funded 3 & 4 year olds (1386 of 8517) and 6% of funded two year olds (216 of 3511) received an Inclusion Supplement during the Summer Term 2024.

Table 16: Breakdown of Graduated Response claims for funded two, three and four year olds

Inclusion Supplement	Two Year Olds	3&4 Year Olds
GR2	105	659
GR3	35	226
GR4	23	156
GR4+ and Exceptional	53	345
Total	216	1386

Within Worcestershire, there are a number of specialist and/or enhanced early years settings available for children with complex additional needs to attend; there are currently 5 early years language classes, which offer speech and language support for children who have an identified communication need, and 2 enhanced nursery classes, one within a Special school and one within a mainstream school.

The majority of funded children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) access early years provision within a mainstream setting or combine attendance across both a specialist and mainstream provider; of 126 children (3 and 4-year olds) accessing specialist provision during Summer 2024, 104 (83%) split their NEF entitlement with a mainstream provider.

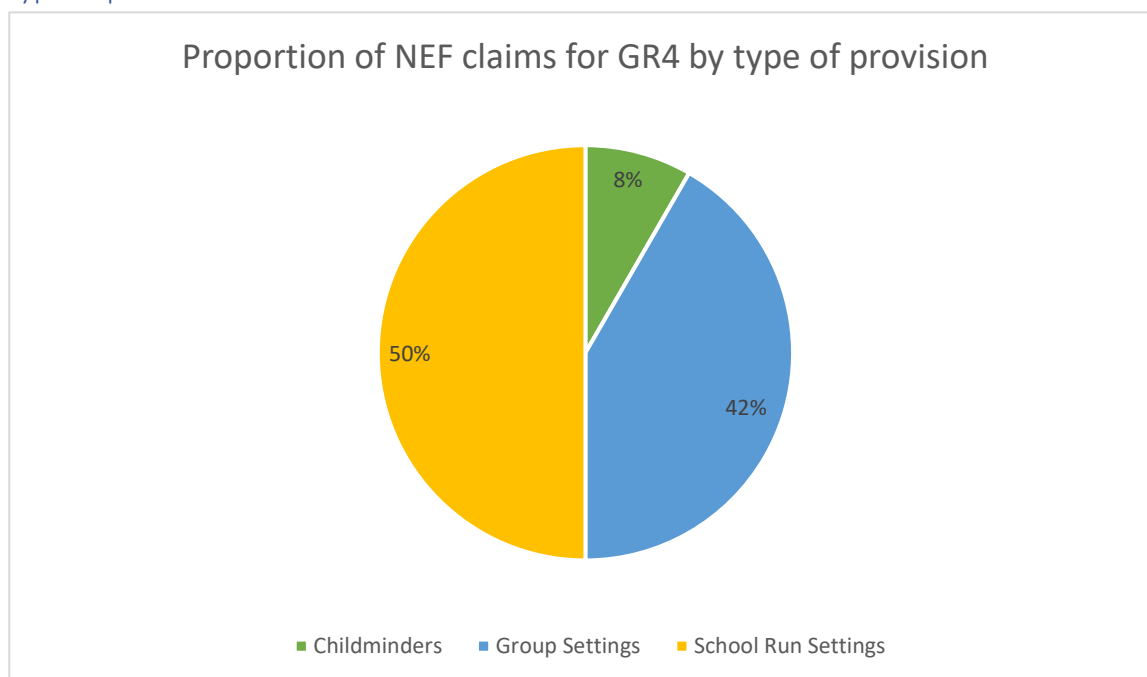
In March 2024 there were 12 early years children within Worcestershire who were unable to access their Nursery Education Funding due to their complex SEND and 44 2-4 year old children who were unable to access their full NEF entitlement for the same reason, although were accessing some funded provision within a mainstream setting.

In the recent parent/carer Childcare Survey, 16% (9) of parents reported difficulties in finding childcare that adequately meets the needs of their child, however only 1 parent/carer stated that they weren't accessing all of their child's funded hours for this reason.

It is recognised that there is limited availability for children with complex additional needs. A commissioning process is currently taking place to increase the number of Enhanced Early Years provisions available across the county to ensure that children who are unable to access mainstream provision are still able to access their early education entitlement.

Of 464 providers claiming NEF between September 2023 – August 2024, 299 claimed NEF for a child they identified as having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (GR1 or above). Childminders make proportionately less claims for children with SEND, with only 1% of NEF claims in the Summer Term 2024 including an Inclusion Supplement for children identified as GR4 or above. School-run settings however are providing 50% of funded hours for children identified as GR4 or above, despite providing only 20% of all NEF hours.

Graph 6: Proportion of overall NEF Claims for children receiving GR4+ during Summer Term 2024, by type of provision



In addition to the Inclusion Supplement, support is also available for settings and practitioners to enable mainstream settings to identify and support children with SEND. The Early Years Inclusion Process (EYIP) was introduced in November 2023 to both improve the way in which support is allocated and to improve the quality of records held by the Local Authority to support resource management and forward planning. The introduction of the EYIP is encouraging settings to make referrals when a need is first identified, allowing support to be provided earlier. Prior to the introduction of the EYIP, the majority of referrals were made during the child's pre-Reception year, when they were 3 or 4 years of age; whilst this is still the case, the number of referrals made prior to the child turning 3 is now significant and likely to increase as the process is embedded.

Table 17: Number of requests for early years SEND support by age

Child's age when referral submitted	Number of referrals made April 2023 – June 2024
0	4
1	8
2	82
3	93
4	11

Deprivation

18% of children aged under 16 in Worcestershire are living in Relative low-income families, whilst almost 14% of children are living in Absolute low-income families⁹, which is below the national average.

In addition to the targeted NEF offer for two-year-olds from families in receipt of additional Government support, additional funding supplements are available to support settings to meet the needs of children who are identified as being from economically vulnerable families.

Deprivation funding is in place to support children who live in a postcode classified by the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) as deprived (classifications A to D out of A to G), to support settings to meet any needs the child may present with and in particular, to enable the setting to support the child's cultural capital¹⁰, the essential knowledge that children need to be educated citizens. The Deprivation supplement is paid as an hourly supplement for every funded hour that a child accesses.

Alongside Deprivation funding, there is also Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) for children from families in receipt of income-related benefits or if the child is looked after by Worcestershire, or has left care through adoption, a special guardianship or a child arrangements order. EYPP is paid as an hourly supplement for up to 15 funded hours per week, up to a maximum of 570 hours per year and is in place to support settings to provide any additional support a child may need.

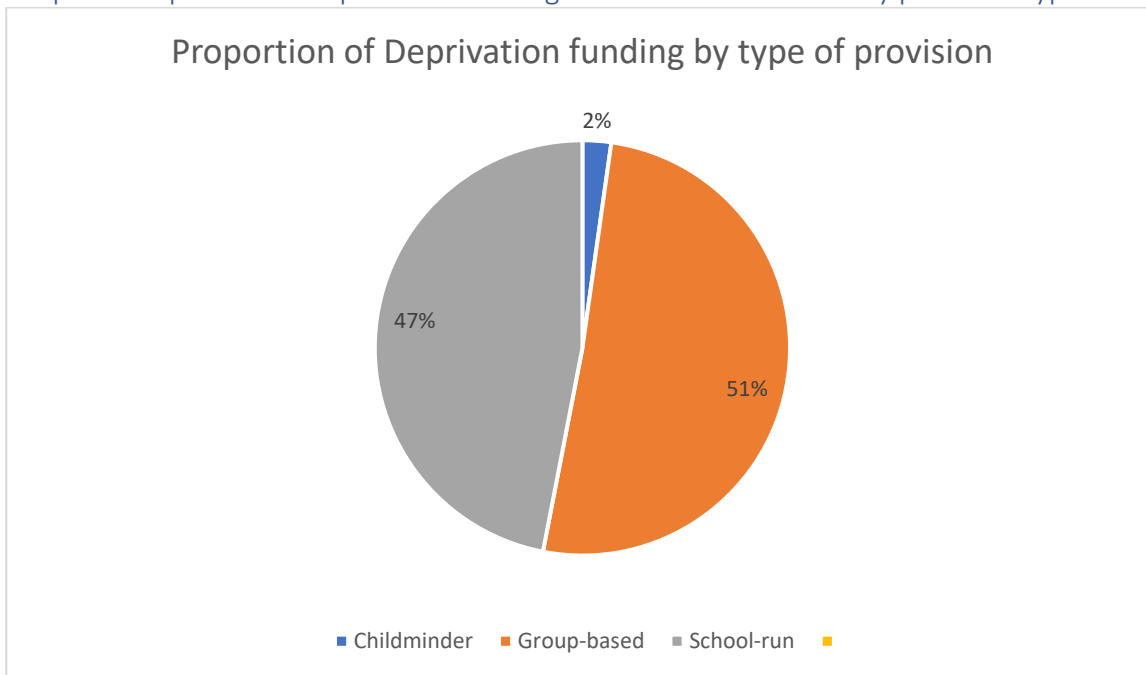
In the Summer Term 2024, 9% (1145 of 12486) of children accessing Nursery Education Funding were allocated the Deprivation Supplement and 11% (1367 of 12486) were allocated EYPP. Overall, 17% (2164 of 12486) of children accessing Nursery Education Funding received a supplement to support deprivation, which is in line with the 18% of children reported to be living in Relative low-income families.

Similarly to children in receipt of the Inclusion supplement, children in receipt of EYPP are more likely to attend a school-run setting, whilst the attendance of children in receipt of Deprivation funding is more evening split between group-based and school-run settings.

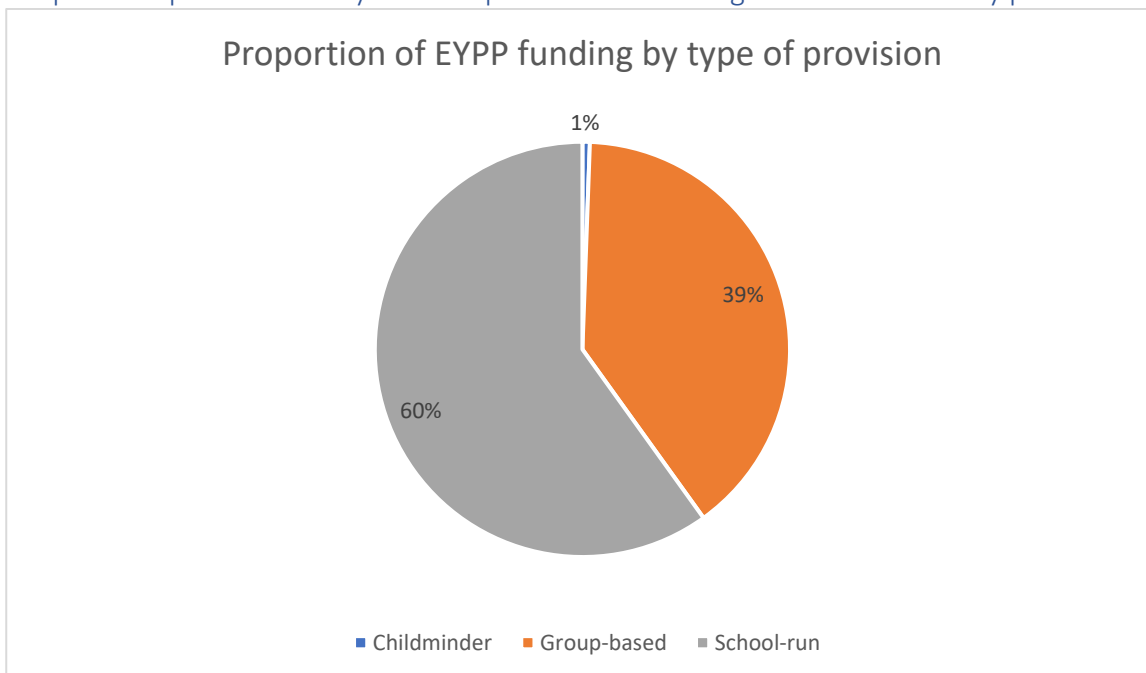
⁹ [JSNA \(worcestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/jsna)

¹⁰ [Early years inspection handbook - GOV.UK](#) (paragraphs 187 and 189)

Graph 7: Proportion of Deprivation funding in Summer Term 2024 by provision type



Graph 8: Proportion of Early Years Pupil Premium funding in Summer 2024 by provision type



Children who are Looked After

Early years children who are looked after by Worcestershire County Council are monitored by their Social Worker; once the child accesses a childcare setting, the setting also monitors and safeguards the child. Once the child is two years of age, Worcestershire Virtual School provide support to the family and childcare setting and completes an Early Years Personal Education Plan, which forms part of the child's Care Plan.

Two-year-old children who are looked after by Worcestershire County Council are eligible for funded provision via the 'Targeted offer for two-year-old children'; this eligibility is awarded automatically with foster carers provided with an EY Voucher Code confirming the child's eligibility to the childcare setting. In the Summer Term 2024, 36 two-year-olds were looked after by the Local Authority, of which, 69% (25 of 36) accessed funded hours during the term.

In addition, fostered children are eligible to access the funded hours for Working Families, if their foster carer works outside of fostering and it is considered in the best interests of the child. Worcestershire issued 13 Eligibility Codes confirming eligibility for the Summer Term for 3 & 4-year olds, 12 of which were used to access funded hours.

Vulnerable Children – Key Messages

- 1. The majority of children accessing specialist/enhanced early years provision also access a mainstream setting.**
- 2. Children with more complex needs are more likely to attend a school-run setting.**
- 3. Following the introduction of the Early Years Inclusion Process, referrals for support for children with SEND are being received earlier.**
- 4. 21% of respondents to the Provider Survey indicated that they had implemented a reduced timetable for a child with SEND.**
- 5. Children in receipt of EYPP are more likely to attend a school run setting, with less than 1% attending a childminding setting.**

Working Families

Working families need access to childcare that is accessible and available at the times they need it. Due to the diverse nature of family need, it is important to have a range of childcare options available for families to choose from. 73% (79) of respondents to the parent/carer survey indicated that they needed childcare all year round or in the school holidays. 67% (33) of respondents with school aged children also indicated they would ideally use before and/or after school provision, with 64% actually accessing before and/or after school provision.

All Year-Round Childcare

For early years children, working families will often need provision that operates all year-round. 54% (252) of funded early years providers operate on an all-year-round basis. Whilst NEF entitlement is based on 38 weeks of the year, providers can choose to offer less hours over more weeks of the year, to stretch the entitlement. This enables families who need all year-round provision to spread their childcare costs evenly over the year. 36% (166) of NEF registered providers have a stretched funding offer, which equates to 44% of all funded places.

For school aged children, working families continue to need to use holiday provision. 81 providers in Worcestershire operate a holiday club during the school holidays, alongside 220 providers who operate provision all year round for school-aged children. The number of holiday clubs has decreased slightly since 2020, when 94 clubs were in operation.

Wraparound provision

In recent years, the out of school sector has self-managed their market. Schools without private provision operating for their school community, have opened their own provision to meet parental demand. Following the announcement of the Wraparound Programme, the Local Authority has become more instrumental in the market management, as we work towards meeting the Government agenda of wraparound provision being in place from 8am – 6pm for all primary aged pupils who need it.

Across Worcestershire, 53% of schools with primary age pupils in the Summer Term 2024 have wraparound provision serving their school community from at least 8am to 6pm daily. A further 42% of schools have some form of provision in place, however this is often only before school care. Use of the Wraparound Programme funding will support the expansion of wraparound provision, increasing availability across more schools and improving accessibility as more provision extends their opening hours to meet the national agenda.

Affordability

As the Early Years Funding Expansion continues, childcare should become more affordable as families will be paying for less hours per week. However, the average cost per hour of childcare in Worcestershire is £6.09, which is £1 per hour above the rate providers receive for 3&4 year-old funded hours. As the funding rates paid to providers do not include the costs of meals, consumables or additional services, and there is often a gap between the normal charge and the funding rate, providers are passing on the cost of the meals, consumables and additional services to families.

To support affordability, all childcare providers are encouraged to register for Tax Free Childcare, to support families to pay for childcare; over 75% (348) of funded settings are advertised as offering Tax Free Childcare and only 17 settings have indicated they are not registered, the remaining have yet to update their details.

Working Families – Key Messages

- 1. 73% of respondents to the parent/carer survey indicated they require childcare on an all-year-round basis.**
- 2. 36% of NEF registered providers have a stretched funding offer in place to support working families.**
- 3. There has been a decrease in standalone holiday provision since 2020.**
- 4. 53% of primary-phased schools in Worcestershire have wraparound provision available between at least 8am – 6pm for their pupils.**
- 5. The gap between typical charges for childcare and the funding rate for 3 & 4-year olds is £1 per hour.**

Information about Childcare

Worcestershire County Council Public Health commission community services for children and families via Action for Children, Barnardo's and Redditch and Bromsgrove District Council. As part of the delivery of early childhood services, there is access to information relating to childcare, support for parents, community activities and volunteering opportunities.

Information is also available on the Worcestershire County Council website including a search facility of all local Ofsted registered childcare providers that have provided consent to be advertised, as well as links to www.childcarechoices.gov.uk, the national information gateway for parents/carers.

Sufficiency by District

NEF Provision – Summer 2024

Using the supply and demand data we hold, as outlined above, we have assessed the sufficiency of NEF provision based on all potentially eligible children taking up their full early years funding entitlement, on a term-time only basis. The forecast does not yet take into account any additional hours purchased by families or when funding is accessed on an all-year-round basis. We would therefore expect to see more hours available than are required, to enable access to additional childcare as required.

District-based maps highlighting any identified sufficiency concern are available in Appendix 1.

NEF Provision – Autumn 2024

With the implementation of the next phase of the Early Entitlements Expansion, funding for children from 9 months to 2 years of age, taking place from September 2024, we have forecast for the Autumn Term 2024 using the 3&4 year old take-up of the Working Family entitlement to estimate future eligibility for 9 month – 2 year olds.

Bromsgrove

Bromsgrove is a district of Worcestershire located in the northeast of the county. The district borders the counties of West Midlands Unitary Authority to the north, Warwickshire to the east, Redditch District to the southeast, Wyre Forest District to the west, and Wychavon District to the Southwest.

The district has four main towns, Bromsgrove, Hagley, Rubery and Wythall and is made up of thirty wards, with the largest wards covering the rural areas of the district and the smaller wards covering the town centres of Bromsgrove, Rubery, and Wythall.

Bromsgrove had a population of 103,281 mid-2023¹¹. In Summer 2024 there were 3,773 known 0- to 4-year-old children living in the Bromsgrove district registered with a Worcestershire GP.

NEF Provision – Summer 2024

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 2, 3 and 4 year old children	3219
Number of NEF Providers	100
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	48,285
Weekly hours of childcare available	105,301
Difference	+57,016 hours
Assessment of District Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst there is sufficient provision available within the Bromsgrove district for all eligible two to four year old children, 10 out of 30 wards have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area. There is a significant surplus of provision available across the district as a whole.

NEF Provision – Autumn 2024

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 9 month - 4 year old children	2869
Number of NEF Providers	100
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	43,035
Weekly hours of childcare available	132,362
Difference	+89,327
Assessment of Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst there is sufficient provision available within the Bromsgrove district for all eligible 9 month to four year old children, 8 out of 30 wards have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area. There is a significant surplus of provision available across the district as a whole.

¹¹ <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>, August 2024

Wraparound Provision

District	8am – 6pm provision available	Before and after school provision available but not 8am – 6pm	Before and/or after school provision not available
Bromsgrove	73.3% (22)	23.3% (7)	3.3% (1)

Only one school in Bromsgrove does not have before and after school provision in place, however there are 7 schools that are not yet offering 8am – 6pm provision.

Malvern Hills

Malvern Hills is a district of Worcestershire located in the west of the county. The district borders the counties of Shropshire to the north, Herefordshire to the west, and Gloucestershire to the south, with Wychavon and Worcester Districts bordering to the East, and Wyre Forest sharing the northern most border.

The district is largely rural and has three main towns, Malvern, Tenbury and Upton-upon-Severn. Malvern Hills is made up of eighteen wards, with the smallest five wards covering the town centre of Malvern and the remaining twelve wards cover the large rural areas of the district.

Malvern Hills had a population of 81,894 mid-2023¹². In Summer 2024 there were 2,414 known 0- to 4-year-old children living in the Malvern Hills district registered with a Worcestershire GP.

NEF Provision – Summer 2024

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 2, 3 and 4 year old children	2,001
Number of NEF Providers	61
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	30,015
Weekly hours of childcare available	62,919
Difference	+32,904 hours
Assessment of District Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst there is sufficient provision available within the Malvern district for all eligible two to four year old children, 3 out of 18 wards have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area.

¹² <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>, August 2024

NEF Provision – Autumn 2024

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 9 month - 4 year old children	1,909
Number of NEF Providers	61
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	28,638
Weekly hours of childcare available	76,734
Difference	+48,096 hours
Assessment of Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst there is likely to be sufficient provision available within the Malvern district for all eligible 9 month to four year old children, 4 out of 18 wards have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area.

Wraparound Provision

District	8am – 6pm provision available	Before and after school provision available but not 8am – 6pm	Before and/or after school provision not available
Malvern	46% (16)	49% (17)	6% (2)

Malvern has a large number of small, rural schools with low Pupil Admission Numbers; it is therefore challenging to open sustainable wraparound provision and explains the low percentage of schools with 8am – 6pm provision in place.

Redditch

Redditch is a district of Worcestershire located in the east of the county. The district borders the county of Warwickshire to the east, Bromsgrove District to the north, and Wychavon District to the south and west.

The district has one main town, Redditch, which covers the northern half of the district, with the southern half comprising mainly rural areas. Redditch is made up of nine wards, with the eight wards breaking up the built-up areas of Redditch town, and one large ward covering the southern half of the district.

Redditch had a population of 85,209 mid-2023¹³. In Summer 2024 there were 3,828 known 0- to 4-year-old children living in the Redditch district registered with a Worcestershire GP.

¹³ <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>, August 2024

NEF Provision – Summer 2024

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 2, 3 and 4 year old children	3,258
Number of NEF Providers	61
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	48,870
Weekly hours of childcare available	60,788
Difference	+11,918 hours
Assessment of District Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst there is sufficient provision available within the Redditch district for all two to four year old eligible children, 3 out of 9 wards have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area.

NEF Provision – Autumn 2024

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 9 month - 4 year old children	3,138
Number of NEF Providers	61
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	47,070
Weekly hours of childcare available	75,926
Difference	+28,856 hours
Assessment of Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst there is likely to be sufficient provision available within the Redditch district for all eligible 9 month to four year old children, 2 out of 9 wards have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area.

Wraparound Provision

District	8am – 6pm provision available	Before and after school provision available but not 8am – 6pm	Before and/or after school provision not available
Redditch	84% (21)	0%	16% (4)

Redditch has a high proportion of schools with 8am – 6pm wraparound provision in place.

Worcester

Worcester is the smallest district of Worcestershire located in the centre of the county. The district is enveloped by Malvern Hills district to the west and Wychavon district to the east.

The district comprises sixteen wards which cover the built-up areas of Worcester City and its suburbs.

Worcester had a population of 102,319 mid-2023¹⁴. In Summer 2024 there were 4,120 known 0- to 4-year-old children living in the Worcester district registered with a Worcestershire GP.

NEF Provision – Summer 2024

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 2, 3 and 4 year old children	3,434
Number of NEF Providers	68
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	51,510
Weekly hours of childcare available	78,212
Difference	+26,702 hours
Assessment of District Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst there is sufficient provision available within the Worcester district for all two to four year old eligible children, 5 out of 16 wards have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area.

NEF Provision – Autumn 2024

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 9 month - 4 year old children	3,275
Number of NEF Providers	68
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	49,125
Weekly hours of childcare available	96,257
Difference	+47,132 hours
Assessment of Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst there is likely to be sufficient provision available within the Worcester district for all two to four year old eligible children, 4 out of 16 wards have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area.

¹⁴ <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>, August 2024

Wraparound Provision

District	8am – 6pm provision available	Before and after school provision available but not 8am – 6pm	Before and/or after school provision not available
Worcester	73% (16)	27% (6)	0%

All schools in Worcester have wraparound provision in place, with the majority already offering 8am – 6pm provision.

Wychavon

Wychavon is a district of Worcestershire and covers the larger rural areas to the east of the county. The district borders the counties of Warwickshire to the east, and Gloucestershire to the south, Wyre Forest district to the north, Bromsgrove and Redditch to the northeast, and Malvern Hills and Worcester Districts to the west.

The district has three main towns, Droitwich, Pershore and Evesham. Wychavon is made up of twenty-seven wards, with ten smaller wards covering Droitwich (four wards) and Evesham (six wards) town centres, and the remaining seventeen wards covering larger rural areas across the district.

Wychavon had a population of 137,101 mid-2023¹⁵. In Summer 2024 there were 4,955 known 0- to 4- year-old children living in the Wychavon district registered with a Worcestershire GP.

NEF Provision – Summer 2024

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 2, 3 and 4 year old children	4217
Number of NEF Providers	100
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	63,255
Weekly hours of childcare available	109,141
Difference	+45,886
Assessment of Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst there is sufficient provision available within the Wychavon district for all two to four year old eligible children, 8 out of 27 wards have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area. There is also 1 ward, Badsey & Aldington, that is not mitigated by local provision.

¹⁵ <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>, August 2024

NEF Provision – Autumn 2024

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 9 month - 4 year old children	4,040
Number of NEF Providers	100
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	60,600
Weekly hours of childcare available	132,688
Difference	+72,088 hours
Assessment of Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst there is likely to be sufficient provision available within the Wychavon district for all 9 month to four year old eligible children, 8 out of 27 wards have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area. There is also 1 ward, Badsey & Aldington, that is not mitigated by local provision

Wraparound Provision

District	8am – 6pm provision available	Before and after school provision available but not 8am – 6pm	Before and/or after school provision not available
Wychavon	52% (30)	41% (24)	7% (4)

Wychavon has a large number of small, rural schools with low Pupil Admission Numbers; it is therefore challenging to open sustainable wraparound provision and explains the low percentage of schools with 8am – 6pm provision in place.

Wyre Forest

Wyre Forest is a district of Worcestershire located in the north of the county. The district borders the counties of Staffordshire and Shropshire to the north, Bromsgrove District to the east, Wychavon District to the south, and Malvern Hills District to the South and West. The district has three main towns, Kidderminster, Bewdley and Stourport-on-Severn.

Wyre Forest is made up of twelve wards, with the largest three wards around the periphery of the district and the remaining nine smaller wards covering the town centres of Kidderminster and Stourport.

Wyre Forest had a population of 103,872 mid-2023¹⁶. In Summer 2024 there were 3,507 known 0- to 4-year-old children living in the Wyre Forest district registered with a Worcestershire GP.

¹⁶ <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>, August 2024

NEF Provision – Summer 2024

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 2, 3 and 4 year old children	3067
Number of NEF Providers	74
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	46,005
Weekly hours of childcare available	76,504
Difference	+30,499
Assessment of Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst there is sufficient provision available within the Wyre Forest district for all two to four year old eligible children, 4 wards, Bewdley & Rock, Foley Park and Hoobrook, Lickhill and Wribbenhall & Arley, have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area.

NEF Provision – Autumn 2024

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 9 month - 4 year old children	2992
Number of NEF Providers	74
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	44,880
Weekly hours of childcare available	89,116
Difference	+44,236
Assessment of Sufficiency	Sufficient

Wraparound Provision

District	8am – 6pm provision available	Before and after school provision available but not 8am – 6pm	Before and/or after school provision not available
Wyre Forest	32% (9)	61% (17)	7% (2)

Wyre Forest has the lowest number of schools with 8am – 6pm provision in place. This is likely to be due to the higher levels of deprivation found in the district, with 22.7% of children in Wyre Forest living in Relative low-income families¹⁷.

¹⁷ [JSNA \(worcestershire.gov.uk\)](http://JSNA.worcestershire.gov.uk)

Childcare Sufficiency Action Plan 2025

Action	Tasks	Outcome	Lead
Improve the forecasting of early years sufficiency information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a way of assessing demand for non-funded hours - Update the Early Years Sufficiency Tool to take into account stretched NEF offers 	The accuracy of early years sufficiency forecasting is improved.	Sufficiency and Place Planning
Support the expansion of early years provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce the Provider Support Fund to support the costs of expanding early years provision whilst demand grows - Allocate the Childcare Expansion capital funding to target areas with identified sufficiency risks and issues - Support the School Based Nurseries Capital Grant Process to prioritise funding to areas with identified sufficiency risks and issues, without putting additional risk on the rest of the childcare market 	The supply of early years provision is sufficient to meet the demand for both funded and non-funded childcare.	Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency and Improvement Lead
Support the development of additional childcare places for children with SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support the implementation of Enhanced Early Years Provision in South Worcestershire - Support the development of Enhanced Early Years provision in North Worcestershire 	All children with SEND can access their early years entitlement.	Head of Inclusion Support Services
Support recruitment, training and retention of the childcare workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Free marketing of job vacancies via social media - Develop training to support early years and childcare practitioners to provide ongoing CPD - Maximise the NEF funding rates to support provider sustainability and enable appropriate salaries to be paid to practitioners 	Sufficient childcare provision continues to be available.	Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency and Improvement Lead