



Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2023

A report on the Early Years and Childcare Sector in Nottinghamshire

Early Childhood Services

Children and Families Department

September 2023

Contents

1. Introduction
2. National and Local Context
3. Population of Children aged 0-4
4. Childcare Provision
5. Early Years Sufficiency Assessment
6. Demand for childcare and take up.
7. Vulnerable Children
8. Funding
9. Sustainability
10. Wraparound Provision
11. Parents
12. Conclusions, Actions and Recommendations
13. Useful Reading and Resources

1. Introduction

The Childcare Act (2006) (“The Act”) states that the Local Authority must make arrangements to secure that early childhood services in their area are provided in such a way that facilitates access to those services, and maximises the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents, and young children.

The Act currently¹ states that Local Authorities must secure free places offering 570 hours of Early Education and Childcare a year over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year and up to 52 weeks of the year for every eligible 2-year-old child in their area, and for all three and four-year olds until the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday.

The Childcare Act 2016 amendment states that the Local Authority must also secure an additional 570 free hours of Early Education and Childcare a year over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year and up to 52 weeks of the year, for qualifying children of working parents (1140 hours in total). **These children are referred to as having a *Funded Place***

Under section 11 of The Act there is a requirement on local authorities to produce an annual sufficiency report on the availability and sufficiency of childcare in their area. This information should be made available to parents and elected members.

In **March 2023**, the Government announced reforms to Childcare Support as part of the Spring Budget announcements and this increased the duty to provide funded childcare places for working families rolling out over the next three years, extending childcare to support more parents returning to work after their parental leave ends.

- By September 2025, working parents of all children over the age of nine months will be entitled to 30 hours of funded childcare.
- At the same time, the Government outlined the expectation that Local Authorities should develop an offer of what’s known as ‘wraparound care’ outside of normal school hours, so that parents of school age children can access childcare in their local area from 8am to 6pm. This could include breakfast clubs and after school clubs, on site or off-site provision or a childminding community. It is expected that by September 2026, all primary school areas have an offer in their community of before and after school care.

The 2023 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) report focuses on the availability of existing funded childcare places for children across the County, and the estimated availability in future years.

The CSA includes:

- Current supply and demand of funded places for vulnerable 2-year-olds and all 3- and 4-year-olds
- Supply and demand for the anticipated increase in places available for children aged two of working parents (15 hours from April 2024)
- The supply and demand for places for children and babies under two (15 hours from September 2024)
- Main effects on business sustainability and therefore future availability of places
- Early assessments of any “gaps” identified in provision for all children aged 9 months to 5 years who will be entitled to 30 hours of funded childcare by September 2025

¹ We anticipate revised guidance which amends the duties placed on Local Authorities to be published in due course, following the reforms to childcare support being announced.

- An early assessment of the supply and demand for places for statutory school aged children using Wraparound care.

1.1 Methodology

Definitions:

Included in the description of Childcare / Early Years Providers are Day Nurseries, Pre-schools, Childminders and Schools offering Early Years provision for children under Statutory School age.

Included in the description of Wraparound care for school aged children are schools and private providers.

Information was collected from:

- Summer 2023 Term Self Update from Providers delivering Funded places. This year we had a 77% return rate on our request for data.
- Department for Education (DfE) Local Authority Readiness Self-Assessment Data for the Expanded Early Years Entitlements and Wraparound Childcare (June 2023)
- Early Years Consultation group meetings.
- Contact with provision through the Early Childhood Services team.
- Information on tracking vulnerable children.
- Information and support for parents and carers.
- Families Information Survey
- Data on numbers of children attending a setting and those vulnerable children in receipt of supplementary funding to support them.

2. National and local Context

2.1 National Context

As mentioned in the Introduction, the expansion of childcare support will be rolled out in phases:

- From April 2024, working parents of 2-year-olds will be able to access 15 hours funded childcare.
- From September 2024, 15 hours funded childcare for working parents will be extended to all children from age of 9 months.
- From September 2025, working parents of children under the age of 5 will be entitled to 30 hours funded childcare per week.
- By September 2026, parents of children of statutory primary school age will have access to paid-for childcare wrapping around the school day.

All hours stated below are per week, for 38 weeks per year. Providers can offer a “stretched” offer across a full year. 15 hours then becomes 11 hours per week, and 30 hours becomes 22 hours per week.

	September 2023 (current offer)	April 2024	September 2024	September 2025	September 2026
Eligible 2 year olds	15 hours	15 hours	15 hours	15 hours	15 hours
All 3 and 4 year olds	15 hours	15 hours	15 hours	15 hours	15 hours
3 and 4 year olds of working parents	30 hours	30 hours	30 hours	30 hours	30 hours
2 year olds of working parents		15 hours	15 hours	30 hours	30 hours
All working parents of children aged 9 months to 5 years			15 hours	30 hours	30 hours
All Children of working parents in Primary Schools (5-11 years)			National wraparound support begins		Wraparound care 8-6 (Term time only)

There are further proposals in place to support the delivery of these places. This includes making substantial increases to the hourly rate paid to Local Authorities to fund providers in order to sustain current levels of early years provision, and potential investment to support an increase in the number of places that are available (where required).

- An increase (in year) on the current rate paid for eligible 2-year-olds and 3- and 4-year-olds effective from September 2023
- A further increase in the rate paid for 2,3- and 4-year-olds in April 2024.
- Schools and local providers will be able to access the Wraparound Pathfinder funding from September 2024, to enable development of wraparound childcare provision.

The Government also announced a further series of policy measures to support providers in sustaining and developing their provision:

- Changing staff: child ratios from 1:4 to 1:5 for two-year-olds in England to align with Scotland and provide greater flexibility for providers (September 2023) (optional for providers)
- The introduction of Childminder grants to attract new people into the childminding profession, with £1,200 for those who register with a childminder agency and £600 for those who register with Ofsted (Autumn 2023).
- Universal Credit reforms pay childcare support up-front when parents move into work or increase their working hours (June 2023)
- Changes to Early Years Foundation Stage requirements, to improve flexibility for providers and support the workforce. (Currently under consultation)

2.2 Local Context

Early Childhood Services, in partnership with Education, Learning and Inclusion colleagues are working with Early Years Providers, Schools and Parents and Carers to assess the supply and demand for early education, childcare and wraparound places. This will take in to account the current position and estimate any demand for additional places going forward in line with the expansion of funded childcare support detailed above.

We are mindful that Early Years providers continue to face challenges to their sustainability, and this poses a potential threat to the availability of places.

- There is less demand for sessional Pre-School places, and we are noting an increasing number of Pre-Schools struggling to remain sustainable, in particular those who rent premises and are subject to increasing running costs.
- Providers are struggling additionally with the higher costs associated with pension contributions and the National minimum wage increase.
- Nottinghamshire is also seeing a reflection of the National shortage of trained, qualified, and experienced staff. Providers are reporting that retaining a high-quality workforce is becoming an increasing challenge as Childcare / Early education is becoming increasingly demanding and poorly paid.
- Parents' working patterns and ways of working have changed since 2020 with some still using family for childcare and working from home.
- There are continued challenges for families with increased costs of living and therefore choosing not to pay for childcare as other household expenses rise.

However, it should be noted that in alignment with previous years' CSAs, Nottinghamshire appears (as of September 2023) to have sufficient places to meet current demand and anticipated demand for the roll out of the expansion of Early Years entitlements. Recent "Readiness Data" provided by the DfE recently, also indicated that we have a surplus of Early Years places. More detail on their assessment is to follow.

Wraparound Provision

This year the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment includes a new section assessing the current availability of Wraparound provision for Primary School aged children. Wraparound care is defined as before school childcare (for example breakfast clubs), and after school childcare (for example regular provision that runs until 6pm or later)². Much of this provision does not meet the Government's definition for Wraparound, as they do not run daily from 8am until 6pm and activity clubs do not cover the definition of Wraparound. The new proposals for wraparound do not include Holiday provision and neither do they cover Wraparound support for children accessing special schools.

Some of the current provision is run directly by the school, and not separately registered with Ofsted, some provision is run off site and private providers, including Childminders, offer a pickup service. Some Schools include Childminders in their Wraparound offer, and many Early Years providers offer out of School care under their Early Years registration for children up to the age of 8 years.

In this year's CSA, the assessment of Wraparound provision available for Primary School aged children is separate to the assessment of Early Years provision.

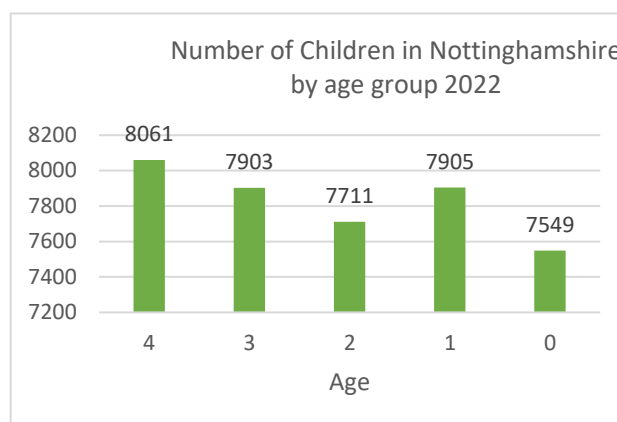
² [Department for Education \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

3. Population of children aged 0-4

According to the Office of National Statistics, the population aged 0-4 in Nottinghamshire is as follows (The latest being 2022 shown aged zero below).

There has been a 4.5% decrease in the number children resident in Nottinghamshire since 2021.

[Births in England and Wales: summary tables - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)



4. Childcare Provision

4.1 The Number of Early Years Providers.

In June 2023, there were 975 (compared to 1,003 in 2022) Ofsted Registered Early Years Providers, including Private, Voluntary, and Independent (PVI) Settings and schools delivering Childcare and Early Education across Nottinghamshire. Of those, 899 (92.2%) are registered to deliver funded places for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds.

265 schools (Maintained and Academies) are registered to provide Childcare and Early Education for 3- and 4-year-olds in a nursery or reception class. 16 currently offer places for funded 2-year-olds.

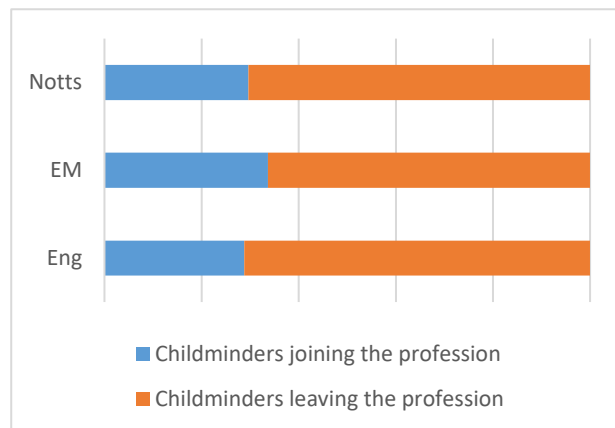
- Providing care in their own home, there are 401 Ofsted registered **Childminders** in Nottinghamshire most of which are registered to care for children from six weeks to eight years, and 338 (84%) are registered to deliver funded Places for 2,3- and 4-year-olds.
- In addition to Ofsted registered childminders, there are now also 49 childminders registered with Childminding Agencies, 38 of these childminders (74%) are registered to deliver funded places.
- **Day Nursery** settings provide care for children from six weeks to school age. There are 171 Day Nurseries operating in Nottinghamshire, all of whom deliver funded places for 2,3- and 4-year-olds.
- Generally, **Preschools** are used on a half-day or full-day basis and tend to operate only during term time. There are 77 preschools who all provide funded childcare places for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds.
- **Out of school provision** is currently defined as Breakfast club, after school, holiday care and out of school care, some of which offer Early Years provision. There are 58 Ofsted registered holiday clubs and a further 30+ breakfast clubs in addition to the numbers of Early Years providers who deliver wrap around / out of school care as part of their Early Years provision.

4.2 Changes in the Number of Providers

Overall, the number of settings in Nottinghamshire had been largely static for a number of years, hovering around the 1,000 mark. However, in the last five years there has been an overall net decrease in PVI providers of 16%, (5% in the last year). This has largely been driven by a decrease in childminder numbers. There has been a national decrease in the numbers of providers delivering Early Years places nationally, according to the latest Ofsted data (June 2023).³

Childminders

In England, there were 727 Early Years Registered Childminders who left the profession and 294 who newly registered between March and June 2023. In the same period, Ofsted report that In the East Midlands, 69 Childminders resigned and 35 new Childminders were registered and in Nottinghamshire 19 Childminders resigned and 8 joined the profession.



As part of the 2023 Spring Budget, the government announced measures for tackling a national short supply of childminders. Incentive payments of £600 will be piloted from Autumn of this year for those who sign up to the profession (rising to £1,200 for those who join through an agency). This will aid in increasing the number of childminders available and increase choice and affordability for parents.

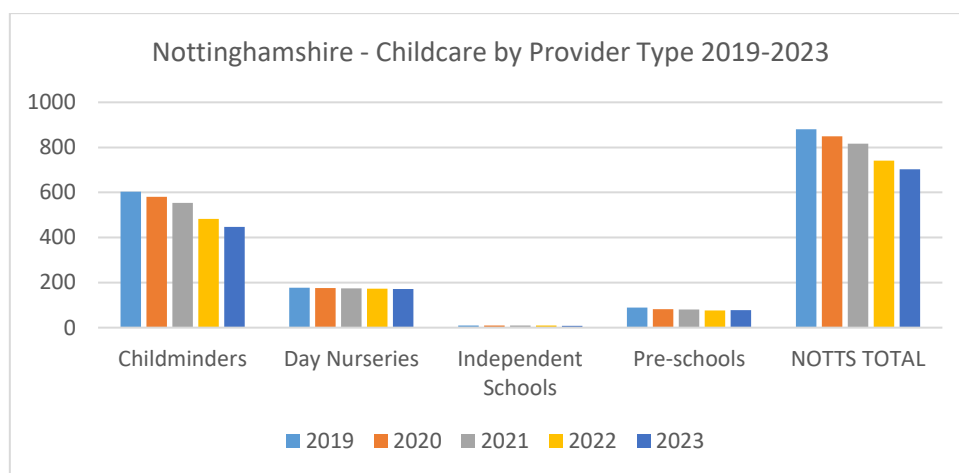
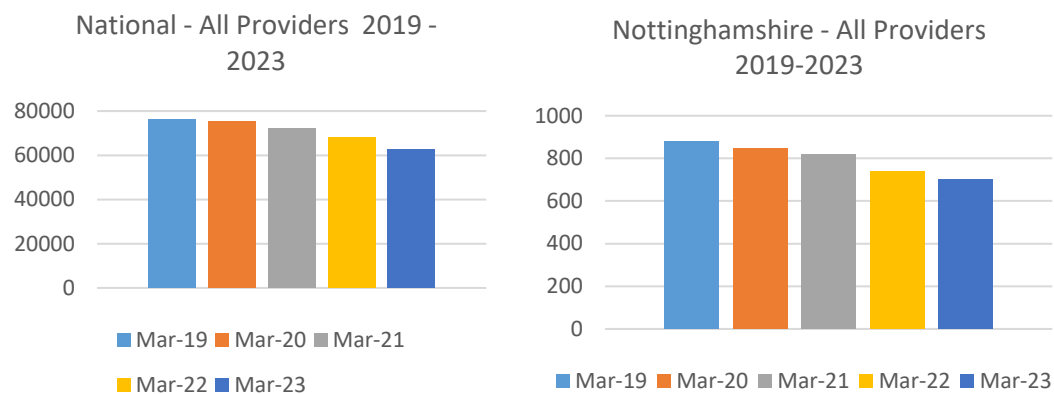
All Early Years Providers (Including Childminders)

In England, there were 1,181 providers on the Early Years Register who closed and 719 new providers opened between March and June 2023. In the same period, Ofsted report that in the East Midlands, 106 providers who closed and 57 new providers opened, and in Nottinghamshire there were 30 closures and 14 newly opened provisions.

Nottinghamshire is therefore mirroring national and regional trends for the number of providers who are joining and leaving the Childminding profession and for numbers of settings who are closing and new ones opening.

Number of providers Nationally (England and Wales) and Nottinghamshire:

³ [Management information - childcare providers and inspections as at 30 June 2023.ods \(live.com\)](#)



Number of Providers in Nottinghamshire by Provider Type:

Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	+/- change 2022 to 2023	+/- change 2019 to 2023	% change 2019 to 2023
Childminders	604	581	554	483	447	-36	-157	-26%
Day Nurseries	177	176	174	173	171	-2	-6	-3.4%
Independent Schools	10	10	9	9	8	-1	-2	-20.0%
Pre-schools	89	82	80	76	77	+1	-12	-13.4%
NOTTS TOTAL	880	849	817	741	703	-38	-139	-15.8%

Schools

There has been an increase over the last five years in the number of school based Early Years provision offering the extended entitlements for 3 and 4 year olds. There are 215 Schools registered to deliver Early Years Places, and 76% are now delivering up to 30 hours of funded Early Education and Childcare.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	+/-	% change
Schools funded to deliver Extended (30 hours) offer	117	130	146	155	163	+46	+39%

The number of schools offering extended hours has steadily increased since it's introduction 5 years ago. With the introduction of the new entitlements over the next 2 years we also expect to see an increase in schools lowering their age range and offering funded places to 2 year olds.

The table below shows the numbers of children claiming 2 year old funding by provider type in Summer 23, currently only 7.5% of 2 Year olds claim their funding in a school setting.

Academy	Childminder	Day Nursery	Independent School	Maintained School	Pre-school
92	135	1133	9	27	302
5.4%	8.0%	66.7%	0.5%	1.6%	17.8%

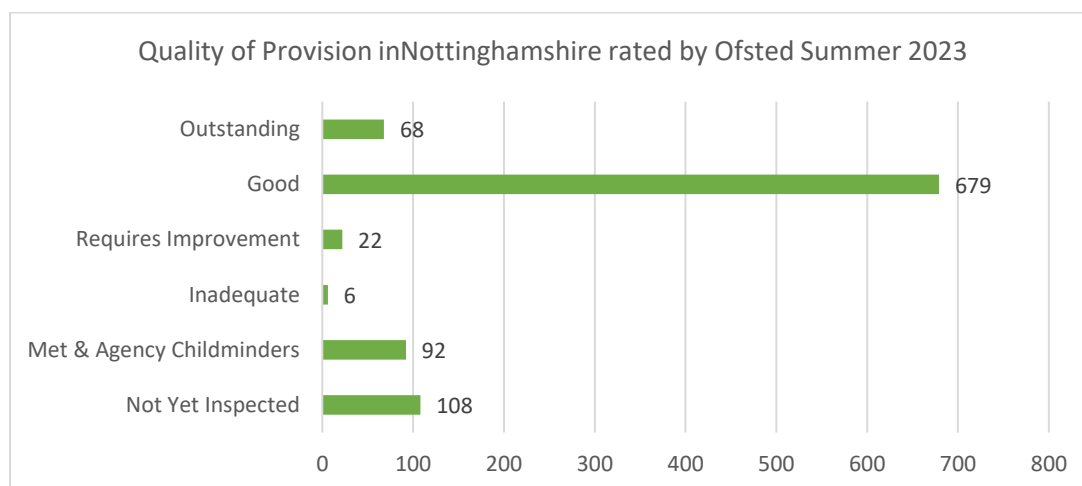
4.3 Quality of provision

Below is a table showing the number of settings rated by Ofsted as Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement or Inadequate.

Ofsted Grading	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Met & Agency Childminders	Not Yet Inspected	TOTAL
Academy School	9	76	4	0	0	31	120
Childminder	15	290	5	4	81	51	447
Day Nursery	24	120	2	1	7	17	171
Independent School	2	6	0	0	0	0	8
Maintained School	12	128	10	0	1	2	153
Pre-school	6	59	1	1	2	7	77

TOTAL	68	679	22	6	92	108	975
--------------	-----------	------------	-----------	----------	-----------	------------	------------

86% of the inspected provision in Nottinghamshire is classed as Good or Outstanding, with a further 10% judged as having Met ⁴ all requirements for registration. Under 3% of providers are judged as Requiring improvement, with under 1% judged as Inadequate, 11% of provision is yet to be inspected.



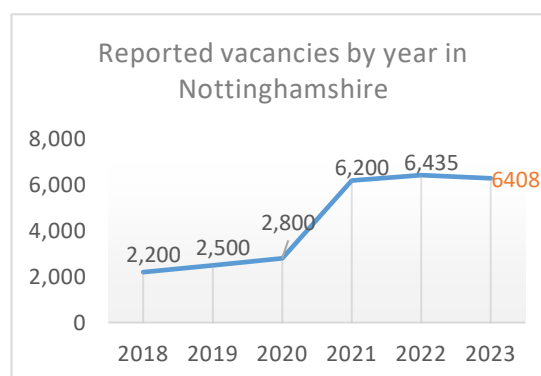
5. Sufficiency Assessments

5.1 Vacancies for Vulnerable 2-year-olds and 3- and 4-year-olds (Children funded by Early Education Entitlements)

Below shows the number of reported vacancies for funded children across Nottinghamshire, reporting a year-on-year increase, however this year we have seen 27 fewer vacancies than in 2022 demonstrating a slight decrease in the number of unfilled places.

2018 CSA	2019 CSA	2020 CSA	2021 CSA	2022 CSA	2023 CSA
2,200	2,500	2,800	6,200	6,435	6408

The fluctuation in the number of vacant funded places being reported across the providers in the county could be attributed to a number of factors:



- In 2023 there was a 5% decrease of providers which may suggest that there were less vacancies reported overall. From these closed providers, children may have accessed their early years place with an alternative provision (as detailed in section 4) With the successful implementation of

⁴ Some childcare providers and childminders may have no children on roll at the time the inspection is carried out, or may not have any children present, even though they have children on roll. As a result, no grades can be given against the 4 key judgements. The inspector will make a judgement only on the 'overall quality and standards of the early years provision', and offer a judgement as to whether this is Met or Not Met

Synergy during the Summer term of 2023, providers are more accurate with their reporting and data is subject to greater scrutiny.

- Although there was a slight increase with the birth rate in Nottinghamshire in 2021, the birth rate data for 2022 is now reporting a 4.5% decrease (as detailed in section 3)
- New Schools opening with new Early Years provision run by the school, are able to offer a greater number of places due to higher staff to child ratios and often larger classroom areas to accommodate higher numbers of children.
- Parents and carers working patterns and their demand for childcare continues to change, for example parents and carers are able to work from home, working weekends and out of hours shift patterns.
- Parents and carers are seeking alternative childcare through family members to support them financially due to the ongoing increases to the cost of living.
- Recruitment and retention of staff sometimes means that providers have to limit the numbers of children they can accept.

The map below shows at a glance the supply of FUNDED childcare by ward cluster, and details vacancies reported as a percentage of places available.

There are reported to be over 40% of available places that remain vacant	There are reported to be between 30% and 40% of available places that remain vacant	There are reported to be between 20% and 30% of available places that remain vacant	There are reported to be between 10% and 20% of available places that remain vacant	There are reported to be less than 10% of available places that remain vacant

There are no areas of the County where demand for funded childcare outweighs supply, but there are eight areas of concern where there could be insufficient places in the future and are reported as having under 10% vacancies. Having done further analysis there are a number of factors contributing to this:

- In some of the areas we did not receive returns from some of the larger providers and this has meant we are not able to accurately estimate vacancy levels.
- Some of the returns from Schools which were submitted in the summer term indicate their Early Years Provision is full, but for future terms this is not the case and there are some vacancies.
- In three of the areas, vacancy levels have been adversely affected by the closure of small nursery chains, who for business reasons have reduced their numbers of settings.
- One national provider has closed a percentage of its settings across the country which has affected supply in one of our wards.

There are six areas where there are more than 30% of available places that remain unfilled, which is a concern for the sustainability of providers in those areas which will therefore affect future supply.

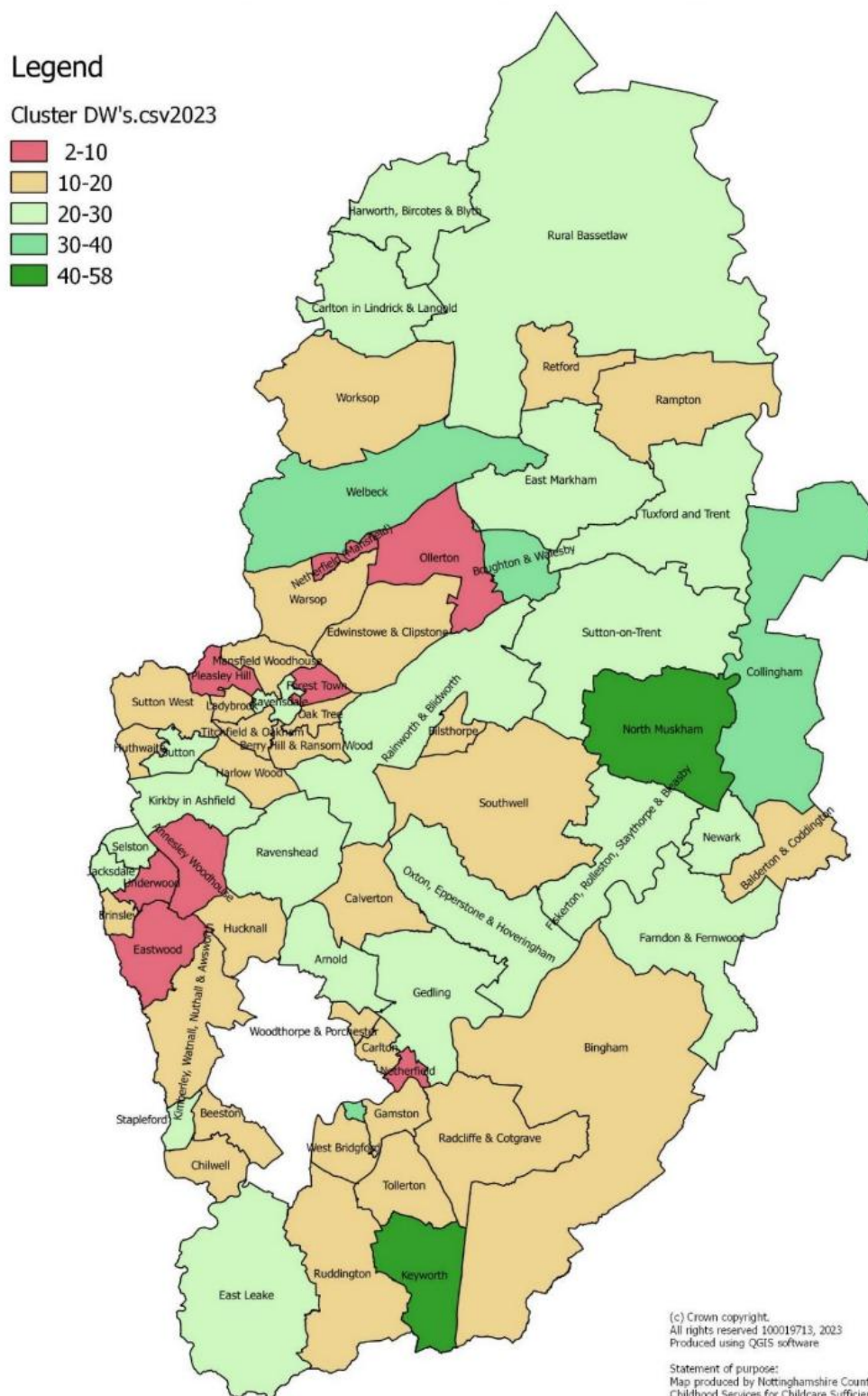
There are reported to be less than 10% of available places that remain vacant

There are reported to be over 40% of available places that remain vacant

It should also be noted that Early Childhood Services are using a different software system to collect sufficiency data this year, so a direct comparison with previous years is not possible. Sufficiency levels

have been estimated for approximately 8% of providers as they did not submit a sufficiency return (based on the known take up of places in the summer term).

Nottinghamshire - District Ward Clusters and Vacancy Rates % (Reported Vacancies for 2-4yr olds as a % of Reported Capacity) - Summer 2023



5.2 Children aged under 2 years

Childcare for children under the age of two is not currently funded through Early Years Entitlements, however, many providers, particularly Childminders and Day Nurseries, offer places for children from aged 6 weeks to five years. In the latest Provider Self-Update, we have included these numbers in our sufficiency report.

As we are now able to collect more detailed information from providers, we are able to assess childcare vacancies more accurately for all children. This is of particular significance as more children will be eligible for funded childcare from the age of nine months in the coming years. As mentioned in the Introduction, working parents will be able to access up to 30 hours of funded childcare for their child from the age of 9 months from September 2025.

In addition to the 6,408 vacancies reported for funded children aged 2,3 and 4 years old, we have a reported 1,125 vacancies for children under two years. Providers reported that they have capacity to offer 3,770 places. There is therefore a 30% vacancy rate for places for children under the age of 2 years.

The table below shows the overall vacancy levels across the county for the three age groups.



6. Demand for Funded childcare and take up rates.

6.1 Vulnerable 2-year-olds

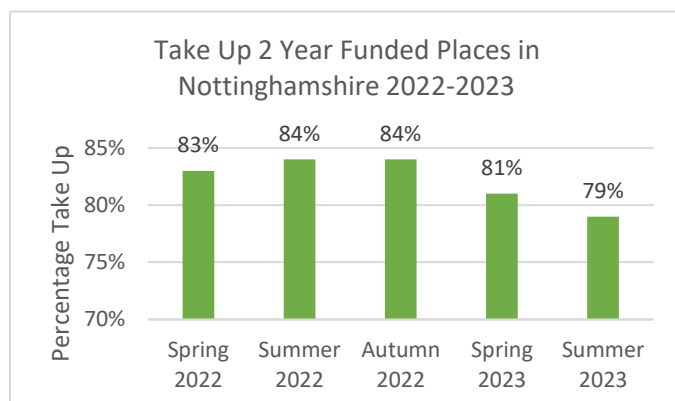
Two-year-olds qualify for a funded (15 hours) place if their home address is in Nottinghamshire, and

- if they are classed as a “looked after child”
- if they have left care through special guardianship or an adoption or residence order
- if they have an Education Health and Care Plan
- if their parents or carers are in receipt of certain benefits

From 1st September 2022 there was an added criteria applied allowing 2-year-olds from families with no recourse to public funds which may affect the numbers of children who are eligible in the future. Families entering the UK on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme or those from Afghanistan and Hong Kong have recourse to public funds and therefore can apply under the usual financial criteria.

Numbers of eligible children are identified through a list received from the DWP that details children who are in families in receipt of qualifying benefits.

2-year-old take up rates - Spring 2023 and Summer 2023 - numbers of children attending by location of provider



The numbers of 2-year-old children taking up their funded entitlements has decreased since the last CSA and is at an average of 81% for the academic year.

	Nov 2022 DWP list	Numbers taking up Spring 2023	% take up by district	March 2023 DWP list	Numbers taking up Summer 2023	% take up by district	% change in summer from spring 2023
Ashfield	431	347	80%	423	346	82%	2%
Bassetlaw	345	236	68%	337	237	70%	2%
Broxtowe	228	196	86%	225	169	75%	-11%
Gedling	272	244	90%	251	222	88%	-2%
Mansfield	408	294	72%	389	267	76%	4%
Newark & Sherwood	374	294	79%	365	260	71%	-8%
Rushcliffe	143	173	121%	135	147	109%	-12%
Totals	2201	1784		2088	1648		
% take up		81%			79%		
		31/03/23			03/08/23		

To ensure all children who are eligible for a place, our Children's Centre Service follows up any family where they have applied for a place but haven't taken it up. In the Summer term, 105 parents were contacted and their reasons for not accessing their entitlement were given as follows.

- Looking for childcare (20)
- Waiting for a place in their preferred setting (11)
- Place is confirmed for the future term (23)
- Parent feels the child is too young to attend nursery yet (8)

- Other (43) reasons include 'Parent doesn't want to send their child to Nursery', 'no transport', 'child has additional needs', 'additional charges are a barrier', or 'problems juggling childcare and other children'.

In many cases where a parent and carer has chosen not to take up a place the Children's Centre Service continues to engage with them through their Menu of Interventions and encourages them to take up a place in future terms.

6.2 3- and 4-year-olds

All 3- and 4-year-olds are entitled to 570 hours of funded Early Years Education per year. The tables below show take up rates for 3- and 4-year-olds by district. The data source is the ONS Mid-Year 2021 population estimates and therefore is a snapshot and does not consider a fluctuation in population. Take up is over 100% for both age groups as a significant proportion of children residing out of county are taking up places with Nottinghamshire providers and schools.

District Name	Population of 3 year olds (1)	Population of 4 year olds (1)	3s taking place (2)	4s taking place (2)	% take up 3s	% take up 4s
Ashfield	1,302	1373	1303	1336	100.08%	97.31%
Bassetlaw	1,161	1159	1050	1090	90.44%	94.05%
Broxtowe	1,001	1066	862	958	86.11%	89.87%
Gedling	1,134	1200	1007	1071	88.80%	89.25%
Mansfield	1,173	1167	1093	1157	93.18%	99.14%
Newark and Sherwood	1,219	1184	1153	1253	94.59%	105.83%
Rushcliffe	1,101	1183	1197	1222	108.72%	103.30%
			7665	8087		
Out of county resident/address not known			633	468		
Grand Total	8,091	8,332	8298	8555		
Sources:			Overall % take up for county resident children		95%	97%
ONS Mid year population estimates 2021 (1)						
Summer Term 2023 Headcount Data – Universal hours (2)						
			Overall % take up including out of county resident children		103%	103%

6.3 Extended entitlement (30 hours)

3- and 4-year-olds of working parents and carers are entitled to an additional 570 hours paid at the same hourly rate. To be eligible each parent and carer must expect to earn (on average) at least £152 a week (equal to 16 hours at the National Minimum or Living Wage). If either parent or carer is on maternity, paternity, or adoption leave, or unable to work because they are disabled or have caring responsibilities, they may still be eligible. Children are not eligible if either parent or carer expect to earn £100,000 or more per annum.

Take up of the extended childcare offer continues to improve, 97% of children with an eligible 30 hours code accessed their extended hours in Nottinghamshire this Summer term, up from 95.5% for the same period last year.

7. Vulnerable Children

Additional supplementary funding is made available to support Early Years Providers who are meeting the needs of the most vulnerable children. Details of the funding rates can be found below in Section 8.

7.1 Supplementary Funding take up

	Previous year	Sum 23
Inclusion Funding	13% of providers	13.39%
Disability Access Fund for Children on Disability Living Allowance	15% of providers	4.35%
Deprivation Fund for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds known to Social Care	39% of providers	25%
Early Years Pupil Premium	69% of providers	44.22%
Do not receive any supplementary funding	25% of providers	49.12%

7.2 Early Years Inclusion Funding

This fund is available for children identified as having emerging, targeted and higher-level needs. An application can be submitted for a 2-, 3- or 4-year-old child who is accessing a funded place and is living in Nottinghamshire.

Age	Number of Children 2022-2023	AUTUMN 22	SPRING 23	SUMMER 23
1yr	2			
2yrs	28			
3yrs	122			
4yrs	97			
5yrs	0			
Nottinghamshire Total 2022-2023		152	195	249
		Autumn	Spring	Summer
2021-2022 (for comparison)		111	140	194
2020-2021 (for comparison)		94	122	176

Numbers of children accessing the Early Years Inclusion Funding has risen by 28% since Summer 2022. This is attributed to Early Years Providers becoming more aware of the funding, and a clear targeted support offer for children identified earlier as having emerging needs. There has also been a marked increase in the number of applications received for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder characteristics and the number of children under five with identified high level needs continues to increase. There has been a rise in the numbers of children under five who have an Education, health and care plan in place which increases expectations for additional support and funding.

7.3 Deprivation Fund

Children eligible for the Early Years Deprivation fund are those 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds accessing their funded entitlement and who are known to Children's Social Care (CSC), i.e. Child in Need (CIN), Child on a Protection Plan (CPP) or Looked After (LAC). Funding is provided to back-fill key staff to participate in multi-agency meetings held each month to plan suitable interventions designed to improve the child's outcomes.

New for 2023: Communication and Language (C&L) payments are made to providers who have 3- and 4-year-olds (who were previously identified as eligible for 2yr old funding) if the child is not meeting the national Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) expected levels of development in C&L, as evidenced by termly provider data returns to Early Childhood Services.

District / Academic Year	Child in Need			Child Protection Plan			C&L Payments
District	Autumn 22	Spring 23	Summer 23	Autumn 22	Spring 23	Summer 23	Summer 23
Ashfield	38	54	16	19	24	20	145
Bassetlaw	18	21	6	14	14	14	62
Broxtowe	21	26	6	3	11	5	49
Gedling	22	31	11	14	9	3	51
Mansfield	29	32	15	21	23	14	63
Newark	15	21	6	24	18	4	71
Rushcliffe	10	14	5	4	7	4	67
Notts County Total 2022	153	199	65	99	106	64	508
Notts County Total 2022 for comparison	Autumn 21	Spring 22	Summer 22	Autumn 21	Spring 22	Summer 22	
	147	198	258	108	122	143	
Notts County Total 2021 for comparison	Autumn 20	Spring 21	Summer 21	Autumn 20	Spring 21	Summer 21	
	108	149	195	103	130	155	

For Autumn and Spring the numbers of children identified as both CIN and CPP have not significantly changed from the previous year.

Following consultation in 2022, there were changes made to cease payments of Deprivation Fund for children once they were stepped down from Child in Need or Child Protection Status. From Summer 2023 only children with a current plan are funded, however additional element of funding has started to be paid (see final column in table above) for earlier interventions for children not meeting expected levels of development in Communication and Language at the age of 3, who were previously vulnerable 2-year-olds, as mentioned above.

7.4 Early Years Pupil Premium

3- and 4-year-old children are eligible who meet the economic criteria for free school meals, and/or are Looked After by the Local Authority.

Numbers of Children receiving Early Years Pupil Premium (**Economic Factor**) in Academic Year 2022-2023 by district by term are shown below. The total number of children funded was 2,433 across the academic year.

District	Autumn 22	Spring 23	Summer 23
Ashfield	313	431	504
Bassetlaw	204	303	333
Broxtowe	147	214	226
Gedling	167	250	236
Mansfield	265	390	412
Newark	196	291	341
Rushcliffe	123	171	169
Out of county	72	100	104
Notts total 2022-23	1487	2150	2325
Notts total 2021-22 for comparison	1625	2093	2643
Notts total 2020-21 for comparison	1435	2037	2546

* NB Figures vary across the terms as children may be funded for one, two or three terms.

39 Children received Early Years Pupil Premium (*Children Looked After*) in Academic Year 2022-23 by district. This figure includes Children Looked After, previously Looked After and Adopted.

	Autumn 22	Spring 23	Summer 23
Notts Total 2022-23	21	35	26
	Autumn 21	Spring 22	Summer 22
Notts Total 2021-2022 for comparison	23	29	41
	Autumn 20	Spring 21	Summer 21
Notts Total 2020-2021 for comparison	20	28	36

* NB. Figures vary across the terms as children may be funded for one, two or three terms.

District figures not reported as generally less than 5.

7.5 Disability Access Fund

Numbers of children accessing Disability Access Fund (DAF) (for children on Disability Living Allowance) in Academic Year 2022-2023 by district. DAF is allocated to Local Authorities based on the numbers of children claiming DLA, although not all of those children are accessing a childcare place.

District	Autumn 22	Spring 23	Summer 23	Total
Ashfield	6	4	8	12
Bassetlaw	4	4	6	9
Broxtowe	6	5	9	13
Gedling	9	6	10	13
Mansfield	6	5	7	8
Newark	7	9	11	18
Rushcliffe	5	4	2	15
Notts Total 2022-23	43	37	53	133

	Autumn 21	Spring 22	Summer 22	Total
Notts Total 20-21 for comparison	27	26	35	88

The numbers of children accessing DAF has increased by 51% in the last year, with Summer 23 seeing the highest ever take-up of this funding. We attribute this to higher levels of publicity, information from the Early Health Notification process and better understanding of the entitlements.

8. Funding

8.1 Early Years Funding rates for 2021-2022 in Nottinghamshire

Funding for childcare places is provided from the Early Years block of the Dedicated Schools Grant which uses an Early Years Funding Formula to allocate funds to top tier local authorities. All Councils can retain up to 5% of the Early Years Block to pay for administration, create an Inclusion Fund and Deprivation Fund. Nottinghamshire has historically retained less than the 5% and in 2022-2023, 2.7% of the Early Years block was retained.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24 (Summer)
Early Years Base Rate:	Hourly Rate		
Eligible 2 year olds School & PVI settings	£5.39	£5.60	£5.66
Eligible 3 and 4 year olds in PVI settings	£4.31	£4.48	£4.70

Funding supplements:	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Early Years Pupil Premium for 3 and 4 year olds	£0.53	£0.60	£0.62
LAC Early Years Pupil Premium (all ages)	£0.53	£0.60	£0.62
Deprivation 3 & 4 year olds eligible for EYPP	£0.10 per hour	£0.10 per hour	£0.05 per hour
Deprivation for 3 and 4 year olds	£406 per annum for monthly CIN/CPP & LAC Meetings	£406 per annum for monthly CIN/CPP & LAC Meetings	£406 per annum for monthly CIN/CPP & LAC Meetings (current children only)
Deprivation for 2 year olds	£406 per annum for monthly CIN/CPP & LAC Meetings	£406 per annum for monthly CIN/CPP & LAC Meetings	£406 per annum for monthly CIN/CPP & LAC Meetings (current children only)
Deprivation for 'Emerging' EYFS Communication & Language for previously eligible 2yos.			£50 per term per 3 or 4 year old when evidence supplied
Disability Access Fund (DAF)	£615 per annum	£800 per annum	£828

8.2 Tax Free Childcare

Tax Free Childcare is for families with children under 12, a Tax-Free Childcare account can be worth up to £2,000 per year per child towards registered childcare, such as before and after school clubs, holiday clubs, childminders, nurseries, and pre-schools. This increases to £4,000 per year for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and goes up to the age of 17.

If parents are eligible, they set up an online childcare account for their child. For every £8 they pay into this account, the government will pay in £2 to use to pay the childcare provider.

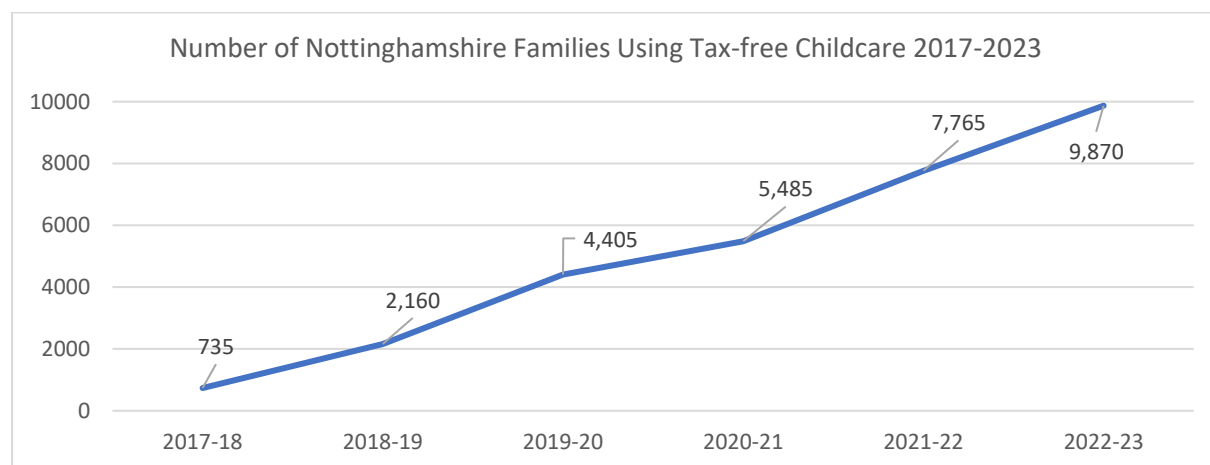
To be eligible both parents must be in employment, or one parent in a single-parent household, and be earning at least the National Minimum Wage for 16 hours per week on average and under £100,000 per year. This includes being self-employed, on maternity or parental leave, on sick leave or annual leave.

National Information - <https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-tax-free-childcare>

Local Information – [Tax-free childcare | Nottinghamshire County Council](#)

[Tax-free leaflet A5 \(nottinghamshire.gov.uk\)](#)

Take up of this offer is low Nationally, this is also reflected in Nottinghamshire. However, since its introduction in 2017, there has been a steady increase following increased National and local promotion.



9. Sustainability

Despite our findings that Nottinghamshire's supply of childcare remains stable and sufficient, we are hearing from our Early Years Consultation group and from our direct contact with providers, that there are concerns for the future sustainability of their provision. As described on Section 5 above, our statistics tell us that there are eight district ward clusters in County where they may be limited places available for the children in that area. However, what is also a concern is that there are six areas where there are more than 30% of available places that remain unfilled.

There continues to be a number of challenges facing the sustainability of the Early Years and Childcare Sector in Nottinghamshire.

- Providers report that the national Early Years Funding rate is a drop in real terms when considering wage increases and pension contribution pressures.
- Cost of living increases, for example, energy costs, food costs, travel costs and businesses not being eligible for the energy price cap in the long term.
- Numbers of children attending is dropping due to changing family needs and working patterns, and the recent drops in the birth rate.
- Settings are struggling to recruit to vacant posts and retain their current workforce which impacts on the numbers of children they can admit. Some Private, Voluntary, and Independent childcare settings are closing (parts of) their provision because they do not have sufficient staff. There are also fewer new childminders starting up than the numbers leaving the sector (detailed in section 4).
- Business planning and financial forecasting for a sustainable business model may be a barrier for some of the Nottinghamshire providers, in the last year this has been a particular challenge for voluntary managed settings.

Some of the ways we know that settings are challenged by the factors above:

- They tell us through regular communications through our Consultation Group and Provider Networks.
- The number of settings reporting sustainability issues and requesting support from the Early Years Project Officers has increased.
- Settings asking for up-front payments of the entitlement funding.
- A few settings have told us they are limiting numbers (and therefore income) due to a shortage of staff.
- Landlords are charging more rent because their costs are increasing.
- Numbers of providers decreasing (particularly Childminders and some smaller providers)
- Some small nurseries have been taken over by large chains when they are struggling. Larger organisations have more sustainable business models and economies of scale to mitigate against some of the challenges above.

10. Wraparound provision (*NEW* for 2023)

As mentioned previously, as the Government announced new Wraparound duties for Local Authorities to assess and report on, and potentially develop enhanced offers in some communities. We have therefore this year included an assessment of current provision for children of statutory school age to access Wraparound care. Because of the nature of the description of some form of Wraparound care, our assessment in 2023 on supply is limited, it is therefore challenging to report on sufficiency levels as provision is registered and described as many things, such as Breakfast Club, Out of School Club, After School Club or Wraparound.

Currently, there are several ways we seek to understand the supply of Wraparound provision for children aged 5-11 years.

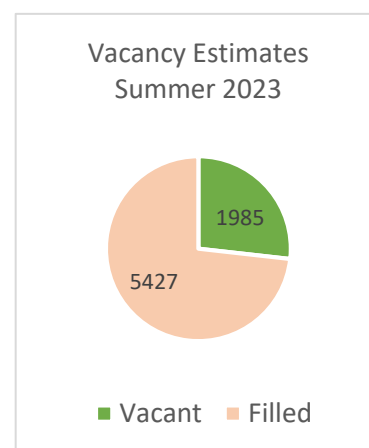
10.1 Sufficiency Assessment

Our Early Years providers report on **take up and vacancies** at the Sufficiency Assessment, and according to our 2023 returns:

We estimate that there are approximately 7,500 places available for children of school age currently being reported. We estimate that there are currently 1,980 (27%) vacant places available for children of school age currently being reported.

The Early Years data collected for the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment only collects data from those providers registered for Early Years Funding. (268 Primary and Infant Schools with Early Years provision, including Special Schools). Missing from this data is therefore:

- Any remaining primary schools that are not registered for Early Years funding.
- 26 Junior Schools.
- Childminders ONLY delivering Wraparound and not Early Years places.
- Out of School Provision ONLY delivering Wraparound and not Early Years places.

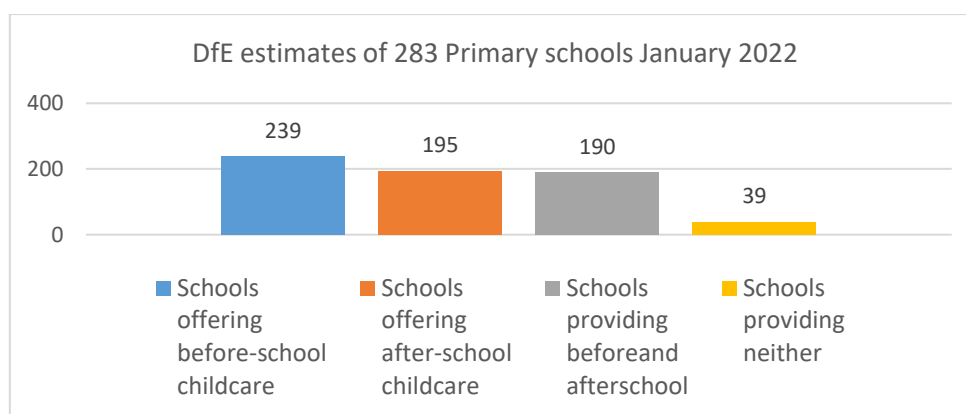


10.2 Schools Census data

Schools report on **Supply** at the time of Census (January 22). In June 2023 the Department for Education (DfE) provided Local Authorities on the Co-Design Group with data from the Schools Census. According to the DfE data, which only includes Schools:

Of 283 Schools with primary aged children

- 239 Offer some form of Before School care and of those, 195 Schools offer some form of After School Club.
- DfE estimate that there are 8,209 Before School places available for children of school age currently being reported.
- DfE estimate that there are 6,888 After School Care places available for children of school age currently being reported.

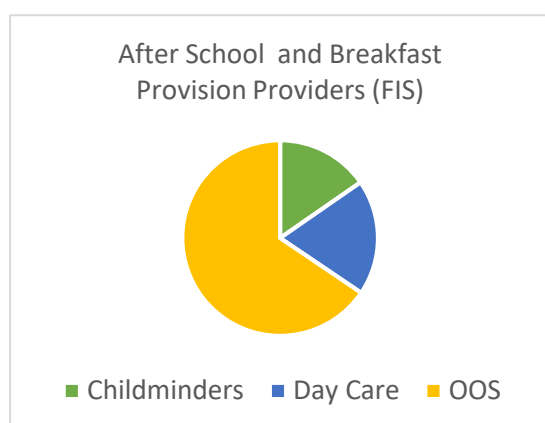


It should be noted that DfE data includes census data from all schools with primary Aged Children, which includes Primary, Infant and Junior. This data is reported by Schools, some of which will have included PVI or community provision in their returns and some of which will only have reported School run provision. Missing from this data is therefore:

- Childminders ONLY delivering Wraparound and not Early Years places.
- PVI Early Years Provision delivering Wraparound AND Early Years places.

10.3 Families Information Service

The Families Information Service collate numbers of providers who **advertise as offering** Out of School Care and publicise this on the Notts Help Yourself website. According to the Families Information Service data:



There are 267 Providers who advertise as delivering After School Clubs

There are 277 Providers who advertise as delivering Breakfast Clubs

The majority of this provision is based on a school site and run by an independent provider (OOS) and is not included in any other provider list – i.e., it is a standalone provider.

Families Information Service holds data on approximately 750 providers of Early Education and Childcare. This data set is therefore missing Schools, only reporting on services described as Childcare.

10.4 Assessment of Wraparound Childcare

In 2023 as we carry out the sufficiency assessment on the availability of Wraparound that meets the Government's expectation by 2026, we have become aware of the complex nature of measuring supply and demand.

Only by making some very broad assumptions for this year, can we estimate how many providers we have who report they are delivering some kind of wraparound care for children over 5 years. By doing so, we assume that the Out of School only Providers listed on our Families Information Service will be mostly included in the numbers reported on the Schools Census as they are largely on school sites.

As the National Wraparound Pathfinder Project develops from Spring 2024, we will be able to assess supply and demand more accurately for children using some form of Wraparound care outside the school day in their community and we have outlined our actions below in Section 12.

11. Information and support for Parents and Families

As well as Early Childhood Services own communications, we have worked closely with Notts Help Yourself, Families Information Service and Nottinghamshire County Council Corporate Communications teams to ensure parents and families are kept up to date with childcare information in Nottinghamshire.



The [Families Information Service \(FIS\)](#) fulfils the statutory duty laid out in Section 12 of the Childcare Act 2006 to offer a service providing information, advice and assistance about childcare and other activities to benefit parents, children and young people up to the age of 20, including activities to do at home and in the community, guidance on parenting challenges, child development, healthy lifestyles, volunteering, returning to work.

The [Families Information Service Facebook](#) page shares key messages about finding childcare, the different types of childcare funding and how to apply. Boosted Facebook posts are used to reach the wider Nottinghamshire community with childcare messages, each month there is a targeted Facebook post about either 2-year funding, 30 hours funding, tax-free childcare, DAF Funding, looking for childcare.

An [FIS Instagram](#) was launched September 2022 to reach out to a younger demographic.

nottshelpyourself.org.uk

Notts Help Yourself is a countywide directory and information website which provides a range of information for parents including childcare provision, wrap around care and holiday clubs.

The information from the FIS database populates the website www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk enabling parents to search for childcare in their local area. Childcare providers can self-update their information on the website to ensure parents are getting the most up to date information about their service.

11.1 Families Information Service Customer Survey 2023 Findings

Since 2019 there has been an annual user satisfaction survey conducted by the Families Information Service to find out from families, providers, and professionals whether they are aware of our services, the top reasons for using our services, and areas for future development. In 2023,

- 40% of respondents to the survey had heard of Notts Help Yourself before and 35% had heard of the Families Information Service; the general trend for people aware of these services is increasing year on year.
- The top 3 ways respondents find out about childcare and parenting information is 1. Internet Search e.g., Google, 2. Facebook, 3. Word of mouth
- There were 378 responses to the survey, a big increase compared to last year which had 94 responses.
- 24% of parents/carers who responded had children with SEN or a disability, a 10% increase on last year.

- When people have used Notts Help Yourself to find information, 95% have found the information they want, 87% said it was easy to find the information, 93% said the information was useful, and 95% said it was easy to understand. The Notts Help Yourself website was refreshed with a new look and design in October 2022 and the information in the Families Information Service section has been improved to make it more searchable as a Virtual Family Hub.
- The top 3 things people used Notts Help Yourself for were 1. To find about childcare funding, 2. To find things to do, 3. To find a support service.

What do parents and carers want?

- Sign posting to support for families with post-natal mental illness.
- It would be good if the pathways for getting a diagnosis and support for additional needs for children were made clearer.
- A process map of the SEN actions schools should take ... would be good.
- More family lifestyle help, such as budgeting, health, education, and things to do for all ages.

Top 10 things people want more information about?



- Childcare funding and the different types of childcare.
- Family friendly places to visit in the community.
- Managing children's behaviour.
- Parenting advice such as toilet training, getting my child to sleep.
- Crafts, play and early learning activities to do at home.
- Help my child be ready for starting nursery or school.
- Children's talking and communication.
- Emotional and mental health for me / my child.
- Services available to support my family or a family I am working with.
- Family Health and well-being, e.g., healthy eating, breastfeeding, smoking

12. Conclusions, Actions and Recommendations

In order to fulfil the duties placed on us as a Local Authority there are a number of considerations for the forthcoming year which are reflected in the Early Childhood Services Delivery Plan for 2023/24. The following actions and recommendations for Nottinghamshire County Council Early Childhood Services are summarised below:

12.1 Childcare Supply

There is no immediate concern about the supply of Early Years childcare across the County with similar numbers of vacancies being reported as in the last few years in the Early Years Sector. However, we have noted that there are pockets and areas where supply appears to be decreasing. Actions to address this include:

- We will identify those areas where there are less than 10% reported vacancies (shown in red above) and do further analysis of supply and demand on a local level to further understand the needs of those communities and providers.

- We will continue to target support for providers working in areas of high levels of disadvantage and where vulnerable children would be adversely affected if there were no provision available through Provider Support meetings and District Early Years meetings.
- We will work closely with schools who want to lower their age range (to secure future numbers) to ensure there is no oversupply. This includes supporting new schools struggling to fill their school places.
- We will develop further ways to ensure Providers update their details on Families Information Service to market their provision.

In order to ensure that the most disadvantaged families have access to good quality childcare:

- We will offer additional support for settings who are working with an ever-increasing number of children with high level needs and ensure they access appropriate supplementary funding to support those children.
- We will review Supplementary funding for younger children as 2-year-olds of working parents begin to access funded places from April 2024.

We recognise the need to have a fuller understanding of the supply of Wraparound Childcare for School aged children.

- We will work closely with School, Childminders and Nurseries to assess the supply of Wraparound childcare more accurately for school aged children.

12.2 Demand for Childcare

Take up of childcare for three- and four-year-olds continues to be over 100% (including out of county children). However, in the last few terms we have seen a reduction in the number of vulnerable two-year-olds taking up a place. We need to address this, particularly to ensure that these children get access to a place as the new entitlements for working parents are introduced.

- We will re-engage with the Two-Year Focus Partnership Group to review take up of vulnerable 2-year entitlements.
- We engage fully with Children's Centre Service teams to further embed a brokerage role to encourage and enable families to access their childcare entitlements.
- We will engage in a comprehensive consultation process with parents to assess their needs for childcare for children under the age of two.

In order to ensure that parents can maximise support for childcare costs:

- We will embark on a partnership approach to increasing the parental take up of Tax-Free childcare accounts through publicity materials made available to Providers, the Best Start Partnership and organisations working with families including targeting families who may be struggling financially.
- We will design and deliver a page for the NHS Red Book (Parent Held Child Record) promoting the value of good quality Childcare Support and Early Education Entitlements.

In preparation for the roll out of the National Wraparound Pathfinder we will assess demand and likely take up:

- We will engage in a comprehensive consultation process with parents to assess their needs for childcare for school aged children in Wraparound childcare.

12.3 Quality of Childcare

To ensure that all childcare offered across Nottinghamshire is of the highest quality we will:

- Continue to offer Workforce Development opportunities for the Early Years profession through our Training and Development offer.
- Engage with Stronger Practice Hubs to offer opportunities to the Early Years profession as defined in the Government's recovery programme:
 - Professional Development Programme 3 (Speech, language and communication)
 - Experts and Mentor support through local networks
 - National Professional Qualification in Early Years
- Develop provider webpages that are user friendly. Nottinghamshire providers will be able to access information that is informative and specific to the professionals' needs and requirements. It will support providers to deliver a high quality, inclusive and sustainable provision.

12.4 Sustainability of Provision

We know that, for the Early Years Sector, their biggest concern is sustainability in the years ahead, we will therefore:

- Continue to link with the Life Chances for Children and Families Partnership and the Council's Economic Regeneration Team to explore how business support can be provided, and to highlight the challenges faced by the Early Years Sector with District and Borough Councils and partners.
- Offer Provider Networks, Committee Workshops and ongoing support and guidance for settings who are struggling with sustainability, offering advice on marketing, recruitment, and local consultation.
- Encourage links with large organisations as the extension to childcare entitlements rolls out and more working parents are able to access funded childcare.
- Brief all partners on the extended offer for children in Early Years and promote the wraparound Offer in School communities.
- Work closely with all providers (Nurseries, Preschools, Childminders and Schools) to develop sustainable models when looking at the Wraparound offer.
- Strengthen the way we monitor and respond to provider closures, gather the reasons for closure and have quantifiable data to analyse and refer to going forward.

12.5 Funding

We want to increase childcare affordability for families whilst also ensuring that we make best use of Early Years funding provided to Nottinghamshire. We will therefore:

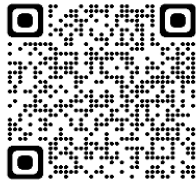
- Deliver a social media / awareness raising campaign through Notts Help Yourself, Families Information Service and the Children's Centre Service to increase the take up of Tax Free Childcare.
- Work with Providers to spread the messages about take up through their regular communications, through parental information and on invoices.
- Encourage new provision on the Wraparound Pathfinder to register with Ofsted and then for Tax Free Childcare to allow paid for childcare to be more affordable for families.
- Review funding rates paid to Early Years providers as they increase in line with Government announcements.
- Continue to audit the effectiveness of supplementary funding.

- Design and deliver a page for the NHS Red Book (Parent Held Child Record) promoting the value of good quality Childcare Support and Early Education Entitlements

13. Useful Reading and Resources:

The Coram Family and Childcare Survey 2023 ([available here](#))

Coram Family and Childcare finds that childcare costs continue to rise and that there is a drop in childcare availability across England over the past year.



Scan to view The Coram Family and Childcare Survey 2023

Spring Budget 2023 Factsheet ([available here](#))

In the Spring Budget the Government set out a package of measures designed to support people to enter work, increase their working hours and extend their working lives.



Scan to view the Spring Budget 2023

Ofsted management Information June 2023 [available here](#)

Management information aggregating registered childcare providers and inspections and their outcomes.



Scan to view current and historical management information and statistical data sets from Ofsted