

Supporting SEND children in wraparound care

Research report

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➤ **Section One: Introduction**

Beginning in September 2024 and continuing through to September 2026, the government's wraparound childcare programme was launched to ***provide all parents with vital access to childcare from 8 am to 6 pm, empowering them to pursue employment.*** A critical aspect of this initiative is the creation of new, inclusive childcare places for all children, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

As stated in the (*National Wraparound Childcare Programme Handbook, Published Feb 2024*)

“It is important to recognise the different needs of children who will be accessing wraparound care and ensure that new and existing provision is accessible to all, including children with complex needs and those in specialist school settings.”

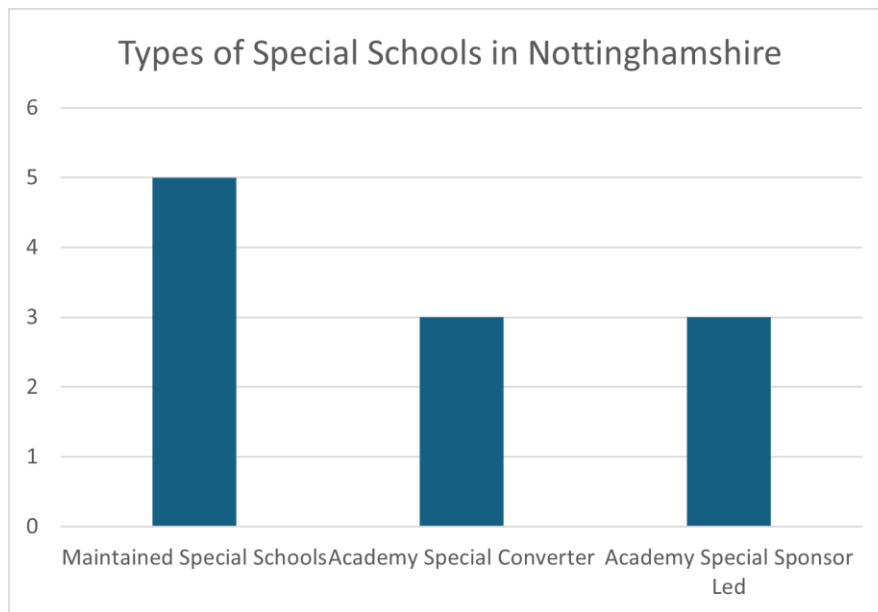
“All providers are expected to make reasonable adjustments for children with disabilities, in accordance with their duties under the Equality Act 2010, whether or not they have SEND.”

Our research for the Nottinghamshire County Council wraparound programme explored existing wraparound care options for children with special needs, uncovered the barriers preventing access, and identified opportunities for improvement. Our ultimate goal was to ensure all children with SEND could access suitable wraparound provision, whether in mainstream or special-school settings, and to significantly improve accessibility for working parents of children with SEND.

➤ **Section Two: Starting point of the programme:**

Surveys:

Surveys were sent to all maintained primary schools, including special schools, to understand what wraparound childcare was already in place for children within Nottinghamshire. Nottinghamshire County Council has **287 schools** and **11 special schools**.



In the early stages of the programme, it was unknown if special schools offered any kind of wraparound care for parents. Part of the task was to find this information out by resending the schools survey to special schools as well as maintained schools. We also sent the parent survey to find out if parents wanted wraparound care but couldn't access any.

➤ **School Surveys:**

Out of the **eleven** special schools, we had **three responses** back which stated that either they: ***'Didn't have any kind of wraparound provision in place'*** or ***'Didn't intend to'*** or they ***'had a partial offer in place to cater for afterschool care for the children and families that needed it in their setting'***. Survey results showed that the special school with the partial offer in place said that: ***'They were full with a waiting list, and we're reviewing their options for what they we're able to currently offer, as well as exploring the idea of external providers'***.

However, when we contacted the school to ask them about an extension of their provision, they explained that they were having to stop their provision for numerous reasons, with one of them being that: ***'it was no longer financially viable due to funding restraints and lack of attendance'***.

The different funding routes and options we're explained, however, the school said that ***'due to the lack of interest and the constant deficit they had made over the years, the funding wouldn't cover the loss of money and wasn't warranted due to such low attendance'***. This has been left

in the hands of the school to consider their options, and they are aware they are able to contact us at any point in the future to receive support regarding reopening their wraparound provision.

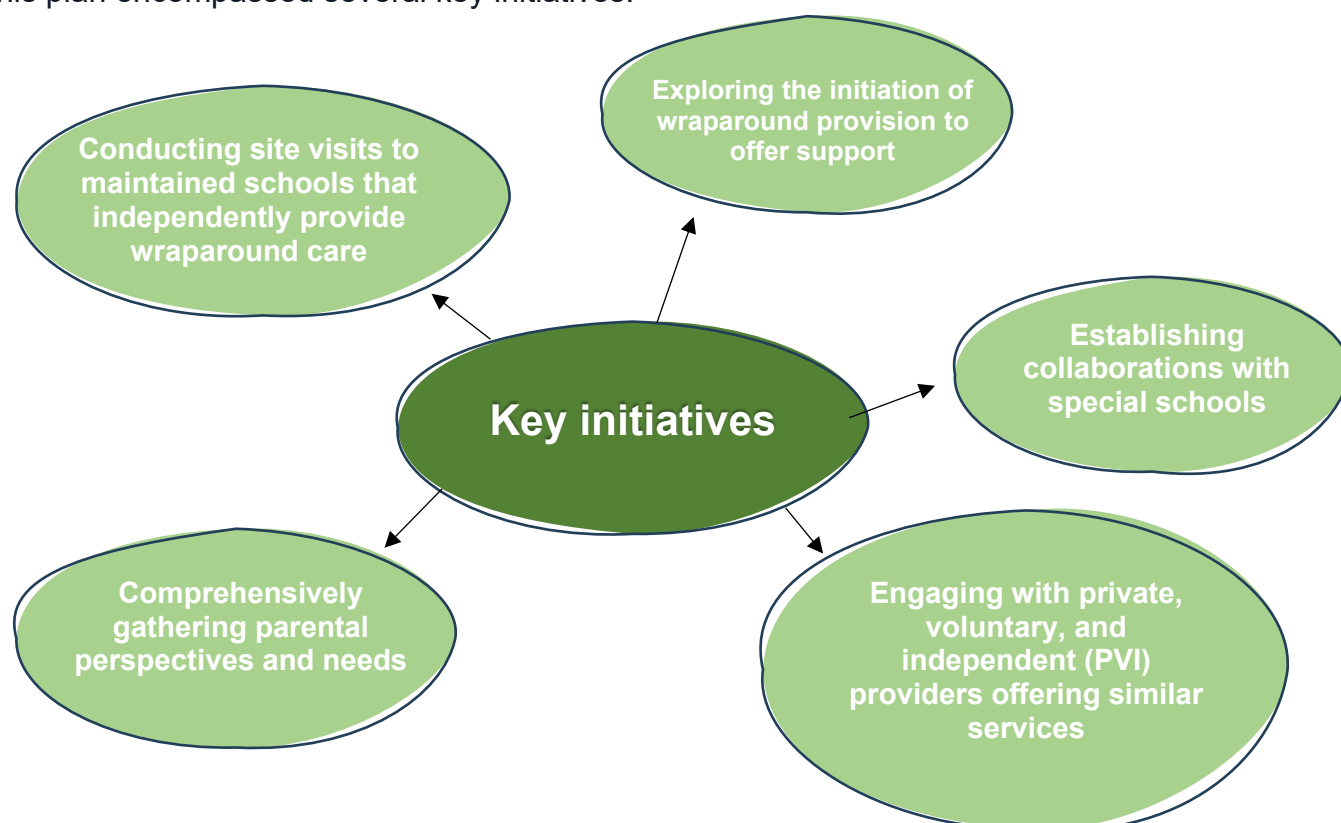
➤ Parental Surveys

In terms of parental surveys for SEND children accessing or not accessing wraparound provision, we had **0 responses**. However, we did have families directed to us from different services, to see if we were able to support them on an individual basis. We received comments from parents through the Parent carer forum. These can be found further on in the report under the sub heading *parent carer forum feedback*.

Our process involved evaluating maintained schools' wraparound childcare offerings through returned surveys, which were then assigned a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status. **A 'red' rating indicated the absence of wraparound provision, 'amber' signified partial provision (e.g., a breakfast club or an after-school club), and 'green' denoted comprehensive provision, encompassing both breakfast and after-school clubs operating daily from 8 am to 6 pm, or equivalent hours meeting parental demand.** Simultaneously, we assessed parental demand for wraparound childcare to determine if current provisions met family needs. This dual approach allowed us to identify schools requiring immediate attention, with 'red' schools being our primary focus. Data from parent surveys provided crucial evidence, presented to 'red' and 'amber' schools, to highlight the demand for wraparound provision among their attending families.

Section Three - SEND action plan:

A workplan was put in place to identify what actions needed to be taken to meet the target of making sure all children could access wraparound care if parents needed this to enable them to work. This plan encompassed several key initiatives:



Special schools:

We first contacted special schools by email, phone calls and through the special school's trust board in November 2024. ***Our initial findings were that special schools didn't offer wraparound provision due to barriers at the start and end of the school day, where children were likely to be transported in from home and back which didn't offer much flexibility for breakfast and after school care.*** As mentioned previously, although we managed to get in contact with a special school that had been offering a wraparound service on a limited basis, they had to stop this shortly after for a number of reasons, with the main being that it was no longer financially viable. We then turned our attention to two special schools that initially showed interest and curiosity to see if they could offer wraparound care to children who attended their setting. From this, meetings took place to discuss potential barriers, parental demand, staffing, and costs. Information was also shared regarding the wraparound programme in place, allowing schools to access funding to support them financially for 2 years, to set up wraparound care.

➤ **First special school:**

The first special school was very interested in setting up a wraparound provision, however, they had a few concerns which consisted of:

- *The large scale of children with complex needs that would potentially need the wraparound care*
- *How would children be cared for safely in terms of accommodating the right number of staff and covering the staffing costs of this*
- *The complexity of some of the children's needs in terms of only being able to have certain staff members who had built the relationships and bonds with these children to provide the wraparound care*
- *Potential risks were unveiled in terms of potentially breaking contracted hours for said staff members going over their working hours*
- *Whilst a rotation of staff was considered to counteract the above risks, it was thought that this would not be in the best interests of the children who could struggle tremendously with the inconsistency*

Solutions to the above barriers we've discussed, and it was suggested that a wraparound provision could be piloted from one day a week, being slowly built up to a manageable level, with a capped number of children to manage safety. This could potentially act as a trial run to see what works and how it could be adapted to suit the needs of the children accessing the wraparound provision, as well as the staff members providing the care, finding a balance for both.

We approached the **Department for Education (DfE)** to ask if this flexibility could be offered to special schools as a solution, rather than it being a barrier to the trialling this offer. This has been left in the hands of the school to consider their options and reach out if they would like any support with this in the future. Since these discussions, the DfE has recently announced an adaptation to the guidance for the option of partial funding. This may appeal to special schools particularly, as there is a lesser requirement for how many days and hours a wraparound must run for, through the vision that some wraparound is better than none. As mentioned later in the analysis section of the report,

this is something which is currently being explored, and contact has been made with special schools about this (Autumn 2025).

➤ **Second special school:**

The second special school already had an external provider running an activity club on a Saturday. We met with the provider to discuss the wraparound programme and how this could work with an external provider running the afterschool care. Information of the funding available was also shared to allow them to look at financial costings and if this would be viable for them to do. We also encouraged the provider to survey parents to see if the demand was there and to discuss with the headteacher the possibility of setting up wraparound care. Our next actions were to meet with both the headteacher from the special school and the external provider to discuss potential barriers and possible solutions. Unfortunately, these discussions did not result in any further developments.

Inclusive practice in mainstream provision:

Visits took place to different mainstream provisions to look their inclusive practice. These included:

- *Day nursery who provided wraparound care*
- *PVI provider within a school site*
- *Mainstream school who ran wraparound themselves.*

Providers made every effort to include all children in wraparound sessions, and examples of good practice in overcoming potential barriers demonstrated that:

- *Providers gathered information from parents before sessions began to help set realistic expectations. If a provider felt they couldn't meet a child's needs immediately, they allowed time to seek health advice and make necessary adaptations to the setting where possible.*
- *A common barrier was staff confidence in managing the complexity of some children's needs, whether medical or requiring one-to-one support. To address this, providers arranged additional training to enhance staff knowledge and skills.*
- *Although the funding did not cover one-to-one staffing—posing challenges such as maintaining lower staff-to-child ratios—the additional training helped boost staff confidence and improved their ability to accommodate individual needs.*
- *Activities were provided to meet the needs of all children, adaptations and reasonable adjustments were made to the environment to ensure inclusivity for all.*
- *Providers linked in with the school SENCO and parents where appropriate, to ensure they understood how best to support children's individual needs. This allowed them to plan activities accordingly to help children to adjust from a learning environment to a social environment, improving the opportunity for self-regulation to occur for a smoother transition.*

Some providers also contacted us along the course of the wraparound programme to see if there was additional funding available to support SEND children. The wraparound programme funding didn't cover staffing cost to support SEND children. Other funding streams didn't meet the criteria for additional staffing in wraparound care. This is a continuing issue for providers and something that needs to be considered moving forward for parents who need to access wraparound provision.

Parent carer forum feedback:

Questions were generated and asked at the parent/carer forum to see if families with children who had special needs, needed wraparound care and if the special schools offered it where their child attended. The responses and results from this showed that none of the schools offered before school or afterschool care, and instead revealed the barriers parents and carers we're facing:

- **Access to Viable Care Options:** One parent expressed their frustration by stating,

"I have absolutely zero answers; currently, it is impossible!"

- **Transport Challenges and Inflexibility:** The rigidity of transport services is another limiting factor. Some families report that transport services won't make adjustments, even for minor route changes. It was stated that,

"I know of a family where they refused to drop off at Dad's house when the parents split up, even though it was a few streets away"

- **Impact on Parents' Work Hours and Employment:** For some parents, adapting work hours to align with school schedules becomes the only feasible option, emphasizing the impact on career choices and family income. One parent stated that,

"I ultimately ended up having to change my hours to 9am-3pm for this reason,"

Similarly, it was also said that,

"Unless there is a close family member who is confident in meeting the care needs of the child, a huge proportion of families aren't able to work or have significant career changes"

- **Lack of Specialised Care in Existing Wraparound Services:** Many wraparound services don't offer the level of care required for children with complex needs.

"Even if I took her to the local wraparound service that I use for my other two children, they would not be able to meet the needs of my third child and they couldn't provide 1-1."

- **Hiring a Personal Assistant (PA) as a Solution:** A possible solution mentioned was hiring a PA who can handle the morning and afternoon routines, but this comes with high costs- the cost of care is significantly higher than typical childcare because a 1:1 hourly rate is required. A PA would need to manage the morning routine, see the child off on transport, and be available for drop-off until a parent arrives. Finding PAs with the necessary skills, for a child who possibly has medical needs, that is willing to take on such short, split shifts is a significant barrier. It was commented that,

"It is really hard to be able to get someone for a short amount of time in the morning and afternoon. I don't know of anyone who has managed that"

Some parents were able to use wraparound care if the maintained school their child attended offered that as part of their provision, however, once a child had a place at a special school, this proved considerably more difficult. Parents suggested that their wish would be a dedicated wraparound provision within special schools to provide the specialised care these children need, which mainstream options currently cannot offer.

We explored with **short breaks**, childminders and if parents could use personal assistants. From speaking to different professionals, these services faced barriers including:

- *Issues with collection and drop offs before and after school.*
- *Short breaks didn't meet the criteria for wraparound provision and would still need the parent to pick up from school and take to the short break service.*
- *Childminders couldn't financially care for children with complex needs alone and funding wouldn't cover the costs of having an assistant working on a lower ratio.*
- *Personal assistants are expensive and not financially an option for some parents.*
- *Short breaks money cannot be used to provide care for parents to access work. However, this is currently being reviewed and some changes may occur in the next 18 months.*

➤ **Transport issues:**

While the need for specialised transport does limit the possibility of using wraparound care, this lack of provision significantly affected parents' ability to work or pursue promotions and better-paid (high commitment and longer hours) jobs. As some children travel long distances to attend their special school, the extended transport time can provide those particular parents with more available time. However, for those families living closer to the school, the shorter commute means children return home earlier and parents have less time available to manage their commitments, including work. In some cases, children's specific needs may cause them to become fatigued, meaning they wouldn't be able to stay for extended periods in after-school care regardless.

➤ **Significant training required:**

Another significant barrier includes the need for staff to be trained to be able to safely support children with individual care/medical needs, such as administering medication, feeding, and providing personal care.

➤ **Misconceptions:**

It was also noted that there is a misconception that school staff are available to be hired by families to provide additional care after school hours. There may be people from the school staff who can be available to employ at holidays but not as a wraparound service.

The feedback from families with children who have special needs highlights a critical gap in wraparound care provision within special schools. Currently, no before- or after-school care options are available in these settings, creating significant challenges for parents and carers. Transport limitations, inflexible services, high costs, and the need for highly trained staff compound these difficulties. While some families manage by hiring personal assistants or accessing limited wraparound care in mainstream schools, these solutions are often financially and practically unfeasible. Addressing these barriers is essential to support families, enhance children's care continuity, and enable parents to maintain employment and improve their quality of life.

Training needs of the workforce

Next, we focused on understanding the current skill set of the workforce supporting SEND children in wraparound care, as well as the areas in which they needed further development to feel more confident in this role.

To gather this information, we conducted a workforce development survey among wraparound providers to identify their training needs and it was revealed that:

- *SEND training emerged as the second most commonly requested option.*
- *The sector expressed a strong demand for training focused on supporting children with SEND within maintained provisions.*
- *Upskilling staff was seen as a crucial element for ensuring the sustainability of settings in meeting the needs of SEND children in wraparound care.*
- *Further research revealed that while training for early years is relatively accessible, private businesses face challenges in finding suitable training for primary-aged children.*

We met with Short Breaks to discuss if there could be links into wraparound care with staff who may already have skills and knowledge of supporting older children. It was revealed that short breaks money couldn't be used to pay for wraparound care to support parents to work. Nottinghamshire Short Breaks aims to; **'enable children and young people with SEND to participate in positive activities which promote independence, and, to provide parents/carers a break from caring.'** Providers receiving short break payments need to be registered with short breaks as a registered provider, for payments to be set up and authorised. Wraparound providers are not registered with short breaks and instead provide a universal offer where parents must pay for the service.

➤ **Care Skills Academy:**

A meeting took place with Integrated Children's Disability Services (ICDS) to discuss what training their staff received and if wraparound staff could link into any services. Online training is provided for staff in ICDS through Care skills academy which is a yearly package paid for to enable 80 staff to access this. It was thought that this could be a good source to signpost providers to who may need to develop their care skills for children who have medical needs. The information was later shared with the sector through a wraparound bulletin that the advisors produced termly.

➤ **Families First Training:**

We also found a training provider that offered a package of inclusive practice, safeguarding and business support with an inclusive thread running through all the topics. Meetings were put in place to look thoroughly at the training package and to see if it met the needs of the training required. As a county council, we were able to offer 400 Places to staff for free, to upskill their inclusive practice knowledge. Our own staff were also able to access the training enabling us to up skill them. This gave them knowledge to support settings in looking at their inclusive environment, business planning and sustainability and able to offer advice which would support adaptations to include children with SEND in the wraparound provision.

The training is in the early stages of creation since Summer 25. Work is undergoing to promote this through emails, bulletins and on face-to-face visits to settings.

Section Four – The barriers found through research and discussions:

Barriers:

From the research that took place, we came across some barriers to supporting children in wraparound provision who have SEND. These included:

- *Special schools don't offer wraparound care due to high staffing costs; children's complex needs and the appropriate staff to support them outside the school day, transport issues for parents who wish to work beyond the school day hours.*
- *Staff confidence in being trained to support SEND children*
- *The affordability for Settings wanting to provide lower staffing ratios to ensure children are safely supported*
- *Environments needing to be more inclusive for SEND children*
- *Additional staffing costs to support complex needs children*
- *Wraparound childcare staff not knowing who they can go to for support with children who present with SEND*
- *Childminders provide a homely environment but are unable to work on lower ratios*

Furthermore, discussions with special schools highlighted that:

- *No additional funding creates a barrier for special schools to ensure the safety of the children in wraparound care, due to not being able to offer 1:1 for complex needs children.*
- *Charges would need to be a lot higher than what other providers would charge, to make it financially viable. Special schools felt that by doing this, it went against offering an inclusive provision for all children.*
- *Children who have transport arrangements would have difficulty accessing wraparound care, as parents would need to make alternative arrangements. The transport arrangements cannot be altered to any other times or drop off other than their home address.*

➤ **Staff Training**

Some staff have progressed into the role in a wraparound provision as parental demand has changed and more staff needed. Children are presenting with more complex needs, and we are aware nationally, that early identification of emerging SEND is on the rise. Not all Wraparound staff are SEND trained or have the experience of working with children with complex needs. Staff feel less confident in meeting all children's needs and felt they needed additional training to support children with SEND. To be able to support children with SEND, depending on the needs of the child, some providers want to offer a lower adult: child ratio. This is a challenge when recruitment is an issue into childcare and wraparound care. We know this is also a national issue and in Nottinghamshire we have been promoting working in childcare, including wraparound, through a recruitment campaign.

➤ **Environment changes and other provision:**

For some wraparound providers, they wanted to make their environment more inclusive to meet the rising numbers of SEND in their settings. However, budgets are tight and there is no additional funding to meet SEND needs in wraparound. The wraparound programme is to create new or expand wraparound places. The provision should be inclusive and consider the needs of all children, including those with SEND and additional needs. Due to rising numbers in SEND children, providers wanted to extend their facilities to accommodate for this such as building separate areas or creating spaces within the room they used. The cost to do this was a barrier for some providers.

➤ **Unique Capital Funding Initiative for Inclusive Environments**

Following discussions with panel members on how best to support providers in enhancing their settings, it was agreed to introduce a **Unique Capital Funding** stream. This initiative enables providers to apply for funding by outlining the specific changes or resources needed to create a more accessible and inclusive environment for children and service users with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The aim is to remove barriers to participation and ensure that all children can thrive in high-quality, supportive settings.

Some children with special needs would benefit more from a homely environment for wraparound care and lower numbers of children such as a childminder. We know childminders care for children with special needs as our data shows this:

	Children with DAF with a Childminder¹	Children with Early years inclusion funding with a Childminder²	Children with a EHCP with a Childminder³
Summer term 25	7	3	3

These numbers are low across the county with **401 childminders** registered to deliver care to early years and primary aged children. Some childminders have experience of working with SEND children and can accommodate them in their setting. However, from a financial perspective, it isn't viable to provide care to children with more complex needs if they need lower adult to child ratios. Through our survey to providers, some childminders also told us that it was difficult to do this working alone and not having other adult support throughout the day.

➤ Ratios

To meet the needs of some children with SEND, and offer a lower adult: child ratio, this incurs an additional cost. Small wraparound providers or providers who have just set up, don't have the budget to provide 1-1 care for children with more complex needs. For children with lower complex needs, they looked at their environment and how they can adjust it to meet the needs of the child.

➤ Partnership working

Finding the right professional support to advise and signpost staff who work in a private wraparound provision is still a challenge. Where children have support in school, partnership working takes place with the schools SENDco. However, if a private wraparound care provider identifies a child in their setting who may be presenting with special needs, the pathway for private providers is unclear to who they should be signposted to.

➤ Cost

Wraparound care is a paid for service to allow parents to access employment and children be cared for before and after school. Wraparound programme funding was set up to help establish provision where it was most needed. It didn't include funding to cover additional staffing to support SEND children. We considered if SEND inclusion funding could be accessed by providers to enhance staffing to support children with SEND. Unfortunately, the government have not been committed to funding this as part of the wraparound programme. We concluded that it would be unfair to allow the use of programme funding for enhanced staffing to support SEND children during the Wraparound programme, as it wouldn't be sustainable for the setting. Additional staffing costs would then need to

¹ Disability Access Fund (DAF) is to support early years providers make reasonable adjustments so children with SEND can access a place. Children will be in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA). Payment is £938 per annum for year 2025 -2026.

² Early years inclusion funding is available for all children identified as having emerging, targeted and higher level needs. Funding can be used for additional staffing, specialist interventions or training.

³ An education, health and care plan (EHCP) is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support.

be found by the provider at the end of the 2-year programme to support these children. Different funding streams were explored but couldn't be accessed for the use of wraparound care. This is still a huge barrier for providers who want to take children with high level or complex needs. Providers were expected to write this into their business plan, whilst still offering an affordable paid for service to parents. Schools had to ensure that the wraparound care was self-sustainable after the two years and didn't impact financially on the schools' budget. Special schools found this a barrier as their charges would need to be higher than parents would expect to pay to cover the staffing ratios.

Section Five - Building on what works well:

➤ Liaising with other local authorities:

Another local authority had supported two special schools to set up wraparound provision. We met with them to take on board their learning from this process. Through liaising with the DFE, we were confident that special schools could offer a staggered approach to set up wraparound provision, if accessing the programme funding. This would help with staffing costs and lower the financial risk of set up until this became established. We went back to the two special schools to feed this back but unfortunately had no further interest in the wraparound care.

Throughout the wraparound programme, an amendment was made from the DFE for providers to be able to offer partial funding. The view was that some wraparound care is better than none. Following this, reengagement took place from September 2025 with special schools, to try to see if any of the schools were prepared to look at offering some wraparound care. This could be with a view of less days and shorter hours, if parental demand showed that this met their needs.

➤ What is working well

From our visits to various settings, we learned that successful wraparound providers typically have strong connections with both the school SENDCo and the parents or carers of the children they support. Before offering a place, these settings gather detailed information from parents to ensure they can meet the child's specific needs. If additional support is required, settings often reach out to health professionals or specialist services to develop appropriate care plans.

There is an open line of communication with parents, where providers are transparent about their ability to meet the child's needs. If at any point the setting feels they cannot fully support a child, they collaborate with parents to explore solutions, such as adjusting attendance days to reduce the number of children, thus ensuring higher staff-to-child ratios.

Some settings also offer dedicated spaces for children with SEND to regulate their emotions or have a quiet area when needed. Staff are assigned to support these children and plan activities that address their individual needs. In these settings, activities are adapted to ensure accessibility for all children, and reasonable adjustments are made to the environment. Maintaining lower staff-to-child ratios where possible further helps to support children with less complex needs within the wraparound provision.

➤ Support tools

We also aimed to create a toolkit to guide settings in accessing information, guidance, policies, and tools to support them in assessing their environment and enhancing the accessibility of their services for children and families with SEND. While gathering evidence for this, we identified a useful toolkit produced by the DfE, NASEN, and Mott MacDonald.

It was decided that this toolkit would be shared through various channels, including Networks, bulletins, emails, and during visits to settings. The toolkit can be accessed via the following link:
[Creating-Inclusive-Provision-Toolkit.pdf](https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/10000/Creating-Inclusive-Provision-Toolkit.pdf)

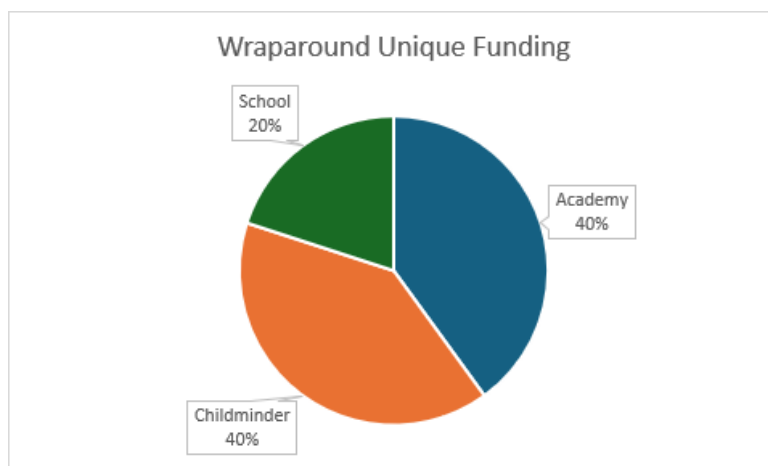


➤ The creation of Unique Capital Funding

The wraparound programme funding was made available to all providers and after careful consideration within the first round, an additional application form was created to apply for Unique Capital funding. Settings were able to apply for funding to make their provision more accessible and inclusive to children and families with additional needs who attended the setting. The Unique Capital funding was assessed on a case-by-case scenario and discussed at panel to see how the projects could enhance accessibility for SEND children in a wraparound provision. Some examples of these were:

- Extending a current SEND space to allow more children to use this due to increasing numbers of SEND children
- The widening a path to make it more accessible for wheelchair users
- Creating a sensory room that would also allow the community to use it such as childminder groups and family hub groups

At the time of writing, the below chart shows the types of providers who applied for Unique capital funding:



Section Six - Analysis:

Children with low-level special educational needs can generally have their needs met through adaptations in mainstream wraparound care, whether provided by mainstream schools or private providers. However, when children present with more complex needs, it becomes more challenging for providers to fully support them due to staffing ratios. Wraparound care often operates on a 1:30 ratio for children in reception and above, and there is no additional funding allocated specifically for SEND children in this setting. Providers must factor in the costs of meeting SEND needs into their business plans to ensure the sustainability of their provision.

Many wraparound settings have to account for expenses such as room or hall rentals, staff wages, resources, food, and other business-related costs. Recruiting additional staff for wraparound roles can be particularly difficult unless there are existing staff members seeking extra hours. The timing of wraparound services also presents challenges, as it is often hard to recruit staff willing to work flexible hours that align with families' schedules or those needing full-time positions.

Special schools are keen to support parents by offering wraparound care, but face barriers such as the need for higher staff-to-child ratios and transport-related issues. For some children, extending the school day may be emotionally overwhelming, making wraparound care unsuitable. Additionally, some parents still struggle with limited working hours due to transport schedules that conflict with school pick-up and drop-off times. Although different options to support the barriers around transport in terms of wraparound care has been explored to the best of our ability, this still appears to be one of the most significant hurdles and something that will be on-going to help find possible solutions.

The sector is committed to supporting children with additional needs, but providers feel they need further training to do so effectively. There is currently a shortage of special needs training specifically aimed at staff working in primary-age wraparound care. To address this, we will continue to signpost providers to the inclusive training resources offered by Families First. Furthermore, we are keen to promote the inclusive toolkit that was been created (mentioned earlier in the report) to ensure that this is continued to be shared far and wide.

The increasing complexity of SEND needs presents a significant challenge for wraparound care provision. The current funding does not help cover the cost for staffing a lower ratio based on children's need, where a potential enhancement could support this. Whilst children may get funding and receive additional support through the hours of the school day, this cannot be extended through to wraparound care due to reaching capacity of their entitlements which can prove challenging for children needs extra support and as well as the staff providing the care. Providers must consider how to adapt existing services to be more inclusive, but without additional funding, it can be difficult to secure the resources needed for such projects. It should be noted, however, that we are raising awareness in terms of the Tax-Free Childcare that is available to families where they are able to access an additional £2,000 if their child has any additional needs. Moreover, changes have recently been made to the guidance in terms of partial funding options available, where more lenience has been given in terms of how many days and what hours are expected of wraparound providers, potentially changing the direction of support in a positive way for special schools. This is now being explored and we are reaching out to special schools to see if the changes in the funding can help support them provide a form or wraparound provision at their setting.

Section Seven - Next steps:

- Continue to reach out and retain engagement with Special Schools to see if we are able to support them in creating a partial offer
- Monitor the Unique Capital funding projects to complete all case studies to show progress before, during and after
- Share the Inclusion training with providers through various ways of communication until all spaces are filled
- Continue to promote the childcare works inclusion toolkit through visits and place on [Nottshelpyourself](#)
- Ensure schools list their wraparound offer on their website and share with [Nottshelpyourself](#)
- Continue to look for solutions to support providers with their costings to support SEND children, including continuing to raise this with other services.

Case Study: Papermoon Day nursery Sutton in Ashfield**About the setting:**

Papermoon Sutton In Ashfield is a 136-place setting registered to take children 0-5 years old. Sutton in Ashfield has a population of 36,404 in 2021. It is the largest town in the district of Ashfield. In the summer term 2025, 170 children were on roll, of these, 21 children were SEND children.

Creating an inclusive environment:

Papermoon is a large setting that serves the community of Sutton in Ashfield in the Skegby ward, along with 2 other day nurseries, 2 childminders and 3 schools who take 3 & 4 year olds. The setting wanted to create an environment where children's sensory needs were met. Many of the children have complex sensory needs particularly proprioceptive sensory needs. To regulate their emotions, they have a need to hang, swing and climb, which can be unsafe indoors and become overstimulating. The project proposal was to install accessible, inclusive outdoor play equipment to create a calming, sensory rich outdoor environment. The funding would help to adapt the outdoor area.

The staff recognise that Some children may not have the opportunity to develop their physical skills at home due to limited space, lack of outdoor equipment, or restricted access to active play. This can impact their overall physical development, coordination, and confidence in movement. At nursery they wanted to provide a rich environment where all children can explore and strengthen their physical abilities, regardless of their home circumstances.

Boys in the early years often have higher energy levels and a natural drive for movement, making climbing and active play essential for their development. With a large number of boys displaying signs of ADHD, they hoped to give the opportunity for small group, high energy activities to give the brain a chance to receive learning.

The setting already have small areas where they can work with SEN children on a 1:1 or small group ration, however they are finding that taking away the constriction of walls and ceilings has a positive impact on the SEN children's ability to engage, feel safe and ground themselves which is extremely important when considering the needs for Social Emotional and mental health needs in SEN children.

The new equipment would allow staff would be able to take small groups or 1-1 children to the outdoor play equipment, when they become overstimulated. Staff had started to notice that removing children from the indoor environment and taking them to the outdoors, supported children to regulate their emotions. The large play equipment enhanced the environment, particularly for children with SEND. The SENCO had provided additional staff training in looking at meeting children's needs and using the indoor and outdoor environment appropriately and most importantly, when it is needed, not at set times of the day. The nursery took a whole setting approach to support SEND children further.

Project completed:



Impact:

The space now provides an open space where children can climb, run, and release their energy in an open space where they are not confined by walls. Noise levels are reduced by the restriction of walls, which helps some children to regulate their emotions enabling them to be more ready to learn. Inside can cause sensory overload for some children who just need to release their energy in other ways. By taking groups of children out to the new equipment, we can support them in taking risks safely and allow them to run and climb developing their physical skills. Children are also learning communication and language skills by staff being able to take children out in small and large groups. This can

become a targeted piece of work following children's individual targeted plans, staff can focus on what children's developmental needs are at that time. Once children have released that energy from their bodies, they are more likely to be ready to learn and this includes in fun and exciting ways!

The nursery has been able to provide experiences to some children who wouldn't otherwise have access to gardens or local play parks. Some families live in flats and therefore have limited access to large equipment or the ability to develop gross physical skills. This equipment has given opportunities for all children, including those with SEND, to safely take risks and experience large outdoor equipment.

SEND children are making progress in their development at a faster rate than they previously did. Individual tracking shows children developing in their physical development and communication and language, as self-regulation takes place on the large equipment and ability to burn off excess energy, which then results in children focusing more when returning to the indoor environment. It has been noted that children were previously “stuck’ on certain development milestones and slower in progressing in their development. It is now happily noted that this has improved with evidence of children’s tracking to show this.

“The SENCO and the team at Papermoon Nursery-Sutton in Ashfield offer excellent care to children with additional needs and their families. The provision that they offer is fantastic and inclusive of each child’s individual needs. Both the indoor and outdoor spaces provide opportunities for children to learn through play in a safe and nurturing environment. The team are receptive to support from outside agencies and ensure that any advice and strategies are implemented. They carefully support families to navigate the referral and diagnosis pathways. The nursery is a valuable asset to the local community and positively impacts the children and families that access their service.” (SEND inclusion Service)

Summary:

Children are offered opportunities to release contained energy outdoors on the large play equipment, which then helps them to self-regulate their emotions. Some SEND children have specific targets that includes being able to climb, hang and use their gross motor skills, which supports them to be able to focus better in their learning.

Children are now beginning to recognise when they need to use the equipment when experiencing sensory overload indoors and asking staff to go to the outdoor play equipment. Staff have also noticed this is when noise levels increase indoors, and children need to freely run and release energy or experience a natural environment.

Some children who live in flats who don’t have a garden, are offered experiences to play on large outdoor equipment, that they wouldn’t ordinarily be able to do as green space parks are limited in the surrounding area.

The nursery would like to be able to offer a safe space for parents with SEND children to be able to support each other and share their journeys with. It is hoped that this will help parents to gain confidence in parent days and events and seeing their value within the nursery.

Case Study: Oceans Day nursery Hucknall**About the setting:**

Oceans day nursery is a 110-place setting registered to take children 0-5 years old. Hucknall has a population of 35,849 in 2021. It is a market town in the Ashfield District.

In the summer term 2025, 170 children were on roll.

Creating an inclusive environment:

The nursery is a large setting that serves the community of Hucknall along with 8 other day nurseries and pre-schools, 18 childminders and 1 new provider due to open Autumn 2025.

The nursery is seeing an increase in children presenting with SEND.

Within the nursery there is a small sensory room that has limited resources and space for the children to access. Staff felt that the limited equipment in the room didn't create enough opportunities for children. At the time, the nursery was supporting children with SEN the best they could but wanted to do more. The proposed project was to make a bigger sensory room in an empty classroom on site, that would allow more children to access a sensory room with more equipment to support children's development needs. The nursery propose that this will also attract more children to the nursery especially parents who are looking for provision that will support children with SEND.

Hucknall has many providers in the community, the nursery also wanted to open the sensory room up to other providers who would be able to book a session and bring children to the sensory room. Part of the model would be to allow childminder groups, and SEN groups from the community to use the facility. Other settings acknowledged that they could use children's EYPP funding to arrange transport to the sensory room and pay for the hire of the room.

Staff in the nursery could see how this opportunity would also support all children in the nursery, as at times, they need support to self-regulate when they become overstimulated. The sensory room will provide opportunities to take groups of children from the nursery who need to be in a calm and relaxing environment. It will help them with their sensory processing and then allow them to concentrate and continue in their learning environment.

It was noted by the nursery owners that the local community had very little opportunities for SEND children. They wanted to provide something to give back to the community, where parents feel valued and inclusive. Having tried to find groups locally to support SEND children, it was recognised that these were limited. The owners realised they were fortunate to have additional unused space and to use this to create something for children and families in the local community. Children would be able to access a room filled with calming lights, textures and equipment to meet sensory needs such as sensory mats, bubble tubes and a sensory smelling board.

Project before:



Project After:



[Oceans Of Fun - Google Drive](#) Video for promotion

Impact:

Some children find it difficult to self-regulate in the main nursery rooms. Staff have found that by taking small groups of children to the sensory room throughout the day, they are able to self soothe and regulate their emotions. When children then go back to the main nursery room, they can again begin to focus on their learning, supporting them to take small steps in their learning and development.

The room provides a large open space but with sensory equipment that allows children to regulate using their senses in a safe space.

Staff bring small groups at time to keep the space quiet and not over stimulating.

Other local settings have been invited to come and use the sensory room through the Hucknall network group. It will also be shared through the SENCO network meeting and a video link to settings and Family hub.

Community Sensory Room Summary

The new community sensory room in Hucknall aims to support the growing number of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Recognizing the importance of sensory experiences, this space offers settings an additional resource to enrich children's development. Each setting will assess whether it's appropriate and practical to bring children to the room, considering their individual needs and comfort with new environments. The initiative also encourages participation from Family Hub and SEND groups, ensuring broad access and inclusive use of the facility.