



Early Years and  
Childcare Service



# Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Annual Report

September 2023 to August 2024



**Making a child friendly Devon**

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## Introduction to Childcare Sufficiency

Each Local Authority is required to publish a [Childcare Sufficiency Report](#) for [elected members](#) and parents. This (duty) and other duties are set out in the [Childcare Act 2006](#).

### What you can expect to see in this report

Childcare Sufficiency reports [should include](#) information about the current and projected supply and demand of childcare, including specific references to how the Local Authority are ensuring there is sufficient childcare available to meet the needs of:

- [children aged two, three and four taking up funded places](#);
- [children from families in receipt of Universal Credit](#);
- [children needing holiday care](#).
- [school age children](#);
- [children with parents who work irregular hours](#);
- [children with special educational needs and disabilities](#);

When planning for sufficient childcare, Local Authorities must – as far as is reasonably practicable – ensure those places are accessible, affordable, and delivered flexibly, in a range of high-quality settings that meets the needs of children’s learning and development and enables parents to work or participate in training activities.

This report covers the period from **September 2023 to August 2024**.

All references to ‘we’, ‘our’, and ‘us’ in this report relate to the [Early Years and Childcare Service](#) which is part of [Devon County Councils Education Services](#).

We work in line with:

- Devon’s Safeguarding Children’s Partnership – its mission is that **all children and young people in Devon should feel safe and be protected from harm**. To fulfil this mission, our aim is to make sure that children and families get **the right support, in the right place at the right time**. For more information please see: [Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)
- [Devon County Council’s Best Place Strategic Plan](#) to make Devon ***‘The best place to grow up, live well and prosper.’***

Our service focusses on supporting the development of early years and childcare provision so that children:

- Can access early education and have the best start in life,
- Are supported to learn and develop so they can reach their potential at the end of the [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\)](#).
- Are supported to access good quality out of school provision which supports sustainable economic growth by enabling parents to work or access training.

This contributes to making a child friendly Devon where we work together to ensure all children are safe, healthy and can thrive with opportunities to fulfil their potential. It also contributes to supporting sustainable economic recovery and growth by allowing parents to return to work or access training.

## A retrospective look at sufficiency between September 2023 and August 2024

### What went well...

- ✓ Sufficient provision for two-, three- and four-year-olds to access funded childcare during term times.
- ✓ Innovative and progressive in the development of provision on school sites.
- ✓ 98% of providers were good and outstanding.
- ✓ Take up of the funded entitlements remained high.
- ✓ From April 2024 we successfully introduced the funding for working parents with two-year-olds.
- ✓ Successfully supported the creation of new before and after school places for primary school aged children through the Wraparound Childcare Programme.
- ✓ An additional 694 places for under three-year-olds were created through the Delivery Support Grant.
- ✓ Introduced monthly payments to funded providers to support cashflow from Spring 2024.
- ✓ Good relationships with providers.
- ✓ Encouraged more Holiday Activity and Food providers to register with Ofsted and open for children who are not eligible for a funded place.

### It would be even better if ...

- There are enough all year round places for under-five-year-olds in all areas.
- There are enough holiday provision for primary school aged children in all areas.
- Information available to parents on Find Childcare needs had been fully available
- Data about provision i.e. number of places, ages of children., waiting lists, capacity, opening times etc was fully complete.
- Data about the number of parents who work from home or those that use family and friends for childcare was available.
- Data on the numbers of babies currently attending day nurseries that can be used to project potential demand from September 2025 was available.

### What we plan to do next year...

- Work with Nursery Chains and Multi Academy Trusts to expand provision.
- Support and encourage schools and early years providers to take children under two.
- Use school sites and Devon County Council buildings all year round and not just during term times.
- Create more places through targeting the Childcare Expansion Capital Grant.
- Encourage Early years providers to run holiday provision for primary school aged children so parents can drop to one place.
- Focus on the take up of places and hours by targeted two year olds and children in need.
- Encourage term time providers to set up holiday play schemes.
- Use children's centre buildings that will not be used as Family Hubs to create new nursery places.
- Continue to promote national and local recruitment campaigns.
- Ensure providers are transparent about their funded offer and charges.

### Challenges we may face...

- Lack of suitable premises
- Cost of premises
- Building delays and difficulties. Lack of infrastructure for childcare.
- Decrease in the number of childminders.
- Targeted two-year-olds may not be able to access a place if providers prioritise working parents.
- Providers restricting the times when parents can access a funded place.
- Schools with an age range of 3-11 are unlikely to get children at 3 if they were funded elsewhere when they were 2.
- Recruitment and retention in the sector continue to be an issue.
- Ensuring we have accurate data through the provider self-update.
- Schools not opening outside of term times.
- Ensuring children with SEND are well supported and accessing the full entitlement.

## National and Local Updates 2023 - 2024

### New Government Entitlements for funded early years education and childcare.

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The Department for Education (DfE) announced that by September 2025, eligible working parents will be able to claim up to 1140 hours of funded childcare a year, which can be taken as 30 hours per week over 38 weeks of the year or fewer weekly hours for more weeks of the year (e.g. 22 hours per week across 52 weeks). This will be available for children from 9 months old to up to their child starting school, at some early year providers.

Eligible working parents of three- and four-year-olds already get up to 1140 hours a year of funded childcare. The increased offer is being rolled out in stages to allow childcare providers time to be able to implement the changes, making sure the places that are needed are available when the offers are introduced.

- **April 2024** working parents of **two-year-olds** can get **570 hours** (15 hours a week over 38 weeks).
- **September 2024** working parents of **nine-month-olds** can get up to **570 hours**.
- **September 2025** working parents of **nine months and until their child starts at school** can get up to **1140 hours** (30 hours per week over 38 weeks).

### What does this mean for Early Years and Childcare in Devon?

This means that there will be a significant increase in demand for early education and childcare as we expect more parents to take up more childcare once their child is funded.

New customers will start to use childcare; parents who:

- are unemployed and start work or training because childcare costs are no longer a barrier.
- use family and friends may start using formal childcare instead.
- work part time may work longer hours and need more childcare.
- return to work sooner after their maternity or paternity leave ends because their childcare bill is more affordable and manageable.

We recognised the impact of these funding changes and the need to ensure childcare providers have a regular and consistent cashflow to support them financially.

For many providers, their income comes from parental fees. A significant proportion of those fees will soon be replaced by funded hours from September 2025. There remain differences between the fees charged and the amount those charges differ from the funding rates we pay to settings for children of different ages.

As a result, we have changed our payment process. Upfront forecast payments have been changed to monthly payments for non-Devon County Council (DCC) providers who estimate the number of additional children attending that could be eligible for funding.

### Early Years Expansion Funding

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Devon was given **£122,570** revenue funding by the DfE to support the expansion of places for children aged two and under. Expressions of interest were requested for [delivery support funding](#) in November 2023.

Subsequently grants of up to £5000 were awarded. 74 applications were successful which created an additional 694 places for under-three-year-olds.

### Wraparound Provision

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Under the Conservative administration, the Department for Education (DfE) expected that by September 2026, all parents will be able to access wraparound care, either from their school or other provider<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [Free childcare: How we are tackling the cost of childcare - The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

Devon County Council (DCC) was awarded **£3,537,826.09** funding by the DfE to provide childcare for primary school aged children (reception to year six), linked to all schools that need it. Wraparound childcare extends the school day to enable parents to return to work or training. Wraparound care must start from at least 8.00 am and continue until at least 6.00pm for five days a week, during term time (unless local evidence can prove a need for alternative hours). The funding is allocated to support providers with the costs of setting up childcare and creating a “surplus” of places, to provide for the growing need for childcare. It is expected that parents will pay for this childcare.

### **What does this mean for Early Years and Childcare in Devon?**

This means there are funds to support the set up and running costs of breakfast and after school clubs. As more working families receive funding for their under-five-year-olds to attend full day care families will expect their children to be able to be cared for longer hours when they start at school.

The provision of more childcare supports parents to continue working and training which in turn has a positive impact on the economy.

### **Childcare Expansion Capital Grant Funding**

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DCC has been allocated **£1,482,972** by the DfE for the expansion of childcare places. The focus of funding will be on the development of additional places between 8:00 and 18:00 all-year-round for children from the term following the child reaching 9-months to the term in which they turn three-years-old.

The grant can also be used to fund the expansion of wraparound places for primary school aged children. These will be places available from 8:00 or earlier in before school and breakfast clubs, and until 18:00 or later in after school clubs. This funding will be awarded to Ofsted registered early years and childcare providers in receipt of the early years funding.

This funding will be used to support the repurposing of children’s centre buildings that are not being used as Family Hubs. It is intended that childcare providers will create new places within several centres across the county.

For more information please see: [Childcare Expansion Capital Grant](#)

### **What does this mean for Early Years and Childcare in Devon?**

These investments will have long term benefits for local communities through the creation of buildings and spaces for children that should be available for several years to come.

### **Provider Self Update – Devon County Council**

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Data is central to ensuring that we know about the supply of and demand for childcare. To gather the data on the supply of early years and childcare provision there are several questions that we ask providers. Things like how many children can attend that are of different ages, when they open and close and how many weeks of the year they open etc.

We listened to what providers told us about having too many surveys to complete and have for many months worked to move to a new system whereby providers only need to enter their data once. They only need to revisit the system to update it if anything about their provision changes. This should save a considerable amount of time for both providers and the local authority once all records have been completed.

The [new Provider Self Update](#) was introduced in February 2024, which replaced the Annual Survey of Providers and the Pinpoint website. The new [Find Childcare in Devon](#) website was launched in June 2024. This website takes the information that providers have entered into the Provider Self Update and publishes it for parents so they can see what childcare is available at their provision.

Due to the various technical issues, delays and teething problems, the Provider Self Update did not get off to the best start. Discussions with the software provider are ongoing.

This, we believe, impacted on the confidence of providers in completing their update. Responses have been slow coming in. Out of 1575 services, 962 (61%) have completed the Provider Self Update, 204 have partially completed and 409 have not completed any information<sup>2</sup>.

It should be noted that the majority of the providers who have not completed or partially completed are childminders and out of school provision so the data we hold covers the majority of children who are accessing their early years funding entitlements.

### **What does this mean for Early Years and Childcare in Devon?**

This means that the quality and completeness of data on the supply of childcare in Devon is not as dependable as we would want. To temporarily overcome this, we have used the information that is available to us. Through a combination of local knowledge, historical data and information on the funding given to providers we have arrived at an estimate of the provision we believe is available. When the Early Years and Childcare Advisors visit providers, they will check that the providers details are on [Find Childcare in Devon](#) and if they are not, they will support the provider to complete the Provider Self Update.

## **National Changes for 2024-2025**

### **Removal of the single word judgement**

As of the 2 September 2024, Ofsted will no longer provide a single overall grade of effectiveness when inspecting state schools. However, they will still receive the existing sub-judgements across different areas of school life. Early Years provision in maintained schools and academies for children aged two and above and Maintained Nursery Schools are included in this change.

The government is committed to replacing single headline grades in all the remits that Ofsted inspects in time, including the entirety of the Early Years sector. This will include considering how this impacts Childminder Agency inspections. Until this change is made, all early year's settings registered on the Early Years Register, including childminders and private, voluntary, and independent providers will continue to receive a single headline grade of overall effectiveness alongside the sub judgements. There will also be no change to Childminder Agency inspections at this time. Local authorities should continue to follow the regulations and statutory guidance regarding quality in their Early Years settings.

### **National School Breakfast Programme**

The Chancellor announced that up to 750 schools with primary aged pupils will be invited to take part in a **£7 million breakfast club pilot**. The funding will allow these schools to run free breakfast clubs for their pupils in the summer term (April-July 2025).

The Department for Education (DfE) will work with the schools selected as part of the pilot to understand how breakfast clubs can be delivered to meet the needs of schools, parents, and pupils when the programme is rolled out nationally.

This will help reduce the number of children starting the day hungry and ensure they come to school ready to learn. It will also support the government's aim to tackle child poverty by addressing rising food insecurity among children.

More information:

- [National school breakfast club programme](#)
- [National School Breakfast Programme](#)
- [Early Adopter Breakfast Club Form](#)

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<sup>2</sup> As at 21/10/2024



## School-based nurseries funding

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The first stage of the government's plan to deliver 3,000 nurseries by upgrading spare spaces in primary schools will begin in October 2024. Schools will be invited to bid for a share of **£15 million capital funding**, with capacity in the programme to deliver up to 300 new or expanded nurseries in this first round.

Schools will need to demonstrate how their proposals will respond to need in their local area, supporting the 2025 expansion of government-funded hours of childcare and early education for working parents to 30 hours a week.

Funding will be allocated to successful schools in Spring 2025 to support delivery for the first cohort of places.

For more information see: [School-based-nurseries-plan-kicks-off-with-15-million-funding](#)

## Removal of Value Added Tax exemption for Private School fees

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On 29 July 2024, the Chancellor announced that as of 1 January 2025, all education services and vocational training supplied by a private school, or a connected person, for a charge, will be subject to Value Added Tax ([VAT](#)) at the standard rate of 20%.

### What does this mean for Early Years and Childcare in Devon?

It is difficult to predict exactly what impact this will have on demand in Devon, given the lack of historical precedents. With respect to overall pupil numbers, the Institute for Fiscal Studies suggests the impact will not be significant, citing the increase in average fees over recent years and the relative stability of pupil numbers over the same period. In the longer term, a falling birth rate should also help mitigate the impact of any increased demand.

Children with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP), where the Local Authority has decided that a private school place is necessary to meet their needs, will be unaffected by the VAT changes. Where parents choose to send their child with [special educational needs and disabilities \(SEND\)](#) to a private setting, VAT will be applied to their fees. There is little available data on this group of children but what there is suggests the numbers are negligible and thus the impact should be minimal.

## New Flexibilities for Childminders

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From the 1 November 2024 there will be new flexibilities for childminders designed to help them join and stay in the profession. The new flexibilities will:

- Create a new category of childminder (childminder without domestic premises) who work entirely from non-domestic premises.
- Increase the total number of people that can work together under a childminder's registration from three to four (including the childminder)
- Give childminders and providers of childcare on domestic premises (CODPs) more flexibility, allowing them to spend more time operating outside of domestic premises, such as a community hall or school.
- Increase the number of people needed for CODPs to operate from 4 or more, to 5 or more people providing care (CODPs that were registered, or applied to register, before 1 November can continue operating with 4 or more people).

For more information go to: [New Flexibilities for Childminders](#) The revised [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework for childminders](#) is effective from the 1 November 2024.

## A Picture of Devon: Putting Childcare into Context

### Population

We study population data so we can predict whether there may be changes to the demand for childcare. The data tells us about different parts of the county as well as the different ages of children; this enables us to take a bespoke approach when planning to make sure there are enough places.

Table 1 : Population Changes in Devon

Population of	Baseline Summer Term 2023	Autumn Term 23	Spring Term 24	Summer Term 24	Summer Term 24 As %	Direction since 22/23
Under-one-year-olds	6127	6055	6079	6126	4.3% <sup>3</sup>	↓
Two-year-olds	6794	6946	7089	6933	4.9%	↑
Three- and four-year-olds (not eligible for school)	11585	7076	9394	11289	8.0%	↓
Under-five-year-olds	34490	34070	33825	33760	23.9%	↓
Primary school aged children (4-11-year-olds)	60045	58392	58908	59303	41.9%	↓

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Health Data (August 2024)

Over the last year<sup>4</sup> the **population of 0 to 16-year-olds has decreased** by 0.1% (113 children) to 141,547.

Most districts in Devon saw minor changes in the population of 0 to 16-year-olds **except for Exeter which saw an increase** of 1.5% (327 children). This is due to the large housing developments on the eastern side of Exeter.

The **population of under-five-year-olds in Devon has decreased** by 2.1% (730 children) and is predicted to continue to decrease.

The population of three- and four-year-olds eligible for the Early Years Funding is predicted to continue to decrease over the next 12 months. The population of two-year-olds increased over the last 12 months but is expected to decrease in the upcoming year.

The number of births in the first six months of 2024 has increased by 52 compared with the first six months of 2023. The biggest increases have been seen in the districts of Exeter and West Devon. Torridge has seen the greatest drop in number of births when compared to the previous year.

### Socio-economic differences

We use the [Index of Multiple Deprivation \(IMD\) 2019](#)<sup>5</sup> to define disadvantage. For more information on deprivation in Devon, please see the [deprivation section of the Devon Facts and Figures webpages](#), including the [Analysis of Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019](#).

**We are particularly keen to ensure that Devon's most disadvantaged children can access the funding that they are entitled to, so they are given plenty of opportunities to learn and thrive.**

For example, the criteria for accessing [two-year-old funding](#), [Early Years Pupil Premium \(EYPP\)](#) and [Free School Meals \(FSM\)](#) apply to parents receiving certain benefits and/or those on low wages. Therefore, in areas where employment levels are low, we expect more providers to be receiving this funding and therefore, we may need to plan for more places for two-year-olds.

In areas of high employment, we know that there are more working families who will be eligible for the 30 hours extended entitlement, and families that need childcare all-year-round and throughout the school holidays. Therefore, these areas need to have more places for three- and four-year-olds and for school aged children and more places that are available all-year-round.

<sup>3</sup> Of total population 0–16-year-olds in Devon. Rounded up.

<sup>4</sup> Population of children as at 31/03/2022 compared with population as at 31/03/2023 – Health Data

<sup>5</sup> The IMD 2019 provides a relative measure of deprivation in small areas, known as Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), across England.

This data helps us to plan for the supply and demand of early years and childcare to meet the needs of families and to ‘manage the childcare market.’

The **take up of the funded entitlements is an important measure when determining whether the gap between higher and lower income families has been narrowed.** Children starting their early education at two will have their needs met earlier and, there is more time to put interventions in place if they are needed, before the child starts at school. It also helps to develop good habits and should support regular attendance at school.

### Children living in the top 30% most disadvantaged areas.

Table 2: Proportion of targeted funded two-year-olds living in the top 30% disadvantaged areas and their take up of the full entitlements.

Two-year-olds living in the top 30% most disadvantaged areas in Devon	Baseline Summer Term 2023	Autumn Term 2023	Spring Term 2024	Summer Term 2024	Direction since 2022/23
<b>Targeted Funded Entitlement</b> Number of children as a percentage of all targeted funded two-year-olds in Devon.	20.9%	21.6%	20.2%	18.6%	↓
Percentage of targeted funded children who took up the full entitlement (570 hours per year).	78.1%	78.4%	77.0%	76.7%	↓
<b>Working Parents Entitlement</b> Number of children as a percentage of all two-year-olds in Devon who accessed the working parents’ entitlement.	N/A	N/A	N/A	9.1%	
Percentage of children who took up the full working parents’ entitlement (570 hours increasing to 1140 hours per year from September 2025).	N/A	N/A	N/A	74.2%	

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Early Years and Childcare Service

There was/were:

- A decrease in the proportion of targeted funded two-year-olds living in the most disadvantaged areas.
- 227 out of 1183 (20.9%) targeted funded two year olds lived in the top 30% in Summer 2023.
- 227 out of 1218 (18.6%) targeted funded two-year-olds lived in the top 30% in summer 2024.
- A decrease in targeted funded two-year-olds living in the most disadvantaged areas taking up all the funded time that is available.

**Two-year-olds living in the most disadvantaged areas are twice as likely to receive the targeted funding than the working parents funding.**

***In summer 2024, two-year-olds of working parents were entitled to 570 hours of funding (15 hours a week, term time) for the first time.***

Table 3: Proportion of three- and four-year-olds living in the top 30% of disadvantaged areas that access the full universal and extended entitlement and those that are taking up some of the extended entitlement hours.

Three- and four-year-old children living in the top 30% disadvantaged areas	Baseline Summer Term 2023	Autumn Term 2023	Spring Term 2024	Summer Term 2024	Direction since 2022/23
<b>Universal entitlement</b> Number of funded children as a percentage of all three- and four-year-olds funded in Devon.	12.7%	12.5%	12.4%	12.3%	↓
Percentage of children who took up the full universal entitlement (570 hours per year)	88.4%	91.4%	90.9%	91.0%	↑
<b>Working Parents Entitlement</b>	10.5%	10.2%	10.2%	10.3%	↓

Number of funded children as a percentage of all three- and four-year-olds in Devon who accessed the working parents' entitlement					
Percentage of children who took up the full working parents' entitlement (1140 hours per year)	64.6%	63.2%	63.8%	59.4%	↓

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Early Years and Childcare Service

There was/were:

- A slight decrease in the proportion of funded three- and four-year-olds living in our most disadvantaged areas.
- An increase (2.6%) in the proportion of children taking up the full entitlement compared to this time last year.
- **A decrease in the take up of the full 1140 extended entitlement hours over the last year. This may be because of the extra two-year-olds taking up funding but it is slightly concerning and should be monitored.**
- More than 40% of parents could take up more hours. It is possible that they work part time and do not need the hours, but it could indicate that places are not available during the days, weeks, and times that they are needed.

### Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

The proportion of funded three- and four-year-olds in receipt of EYPP who are accessing their early years funded entitlement has continued to rise increasing from 17.8% in summer 2023 (2,021 children) to 18.6% in summer 2024 (2,048 children).

Of these 2,048 children, 462 (22.6%) lived in the top 30% most disadvantaged areas; compared with only 12.3% of all funded children living in these areas. Looking further at funded children living in the most disadvantaged areas of Devon, 33.9% were in receipt of EYPP (compared to 18.6% Devon wide). This shows that **take-up of EYPP is much higher in the most disadvantaged areas.**

Likewise, **the proportion of funded three- and four-year-olds entitled to both EYPP and the extended entitlement has increased from 27.6% in summer 2023 (558 children) to 29.7% in summer 2024 (609 children).** This has been due, in part, to parents being able to give consent for EYPP checks to be made when initially applying for two-year-old funding through the Citizen's Portal.

**Funded two-year-olds were eligible to receive EYPP for the first time in summer 2024.**

- There were **867 (71.2%) two-year-olds receiving targeted funding and EYPP in summer 2024.** This is a high proportion of those funded but that is to be expected given these are our most disadvantaged two-year-olds.
- By contrast, only 35 (1.0%) two-year-olds with working parents funding were in receipt of EYPP.

### Children in Need (CIN)

A Child in Need (CIN) is a broad definition spanning a wide range of children and adolescents in need of varying types of support and intervention for a variety of reasons. A child is defined as 'in need' under section 17 of the [Children Act 1989](#), for further details see, [Local authority support for children in need \(England\)](#).

**In Summer 2024, there were 89 two-year old children in need and of these children, 66 were accessing a funded place.**

**There were also 189 three-and four-year-old children (not in school) in need and of these children, 166 were accessing a funded place.**

Table 4: Take up of the funded entitlements by children in need.

Percentage of children in need	Summer term 2023	Summer term 2024	Direction since 2023	Compared with the percentage of all children
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<b>Targeted Funded Entitlement</b> Accessing a two-year-old funded place	66.3%	76.4%	↑	87.4%
Taking up the full targeted two-year-old entitlement (570 hours per year)	73.8%	76.5%	↑	71.8%
<b>Universal Entitlement</b> Accessing a three- and four-year-old funded place	91.7%	87.8%	↓	95.8%
Taking up the full universal entitlement for three- and four-year-olds (570 hours per year)	86.4%	86.1%	↓	89.8%
<b>Working Parents Entitlement</b> Taking up the extended entitlement for three- and four-year-olds with working parents	27.3%	25.9%	↓	60.0%
Taking up the full extended entitlement (1140 hours per year)	73.6%	53.5%	↓	56.5%

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Early Years and Childcare Service

Some Children in Need may not be eligible for two-year-old funding, but the percentage reflects the total number of Children in Need against the number of children accessing their entitlement.

The figures used are projections based on the weekly hours claimed for two-, three- and four-year-old children at headcount; an accurate figure on the 570 take up can only be calculated when looking at the child's hours through three full terms. This is not possible for those children who have just started funding.

The table above shows that take-up of a two-year-old funded place has increased for Children in Need which is good news. Most of these children take up their full entitlement which is well above the Devon average for all two-year-olds.

**Take-up in other areas is down on last year which is a concern especially those that do not take up their full 1140 hours entitlement.**

## Supporting Children and Families of Asylum Seekers

Devon Early Years and Childcare Service continues to work with the Devon Resettlement Team supporting children and families seeking asylum in Devon with the aim to assist families to access early years provision, as well as early help support.

Where they are located within the local community, we have been able to introduce families to the local providers, so that children can access their early years funding for two-, three- and four-year-olds.

The asylum hotel is situated in a remote area, making it difficult for families to access early years provision. Consequently, we have had to consider alternative ways to support families with young children. Due to the lack of funding for transport to early years provision, we collaborated with East Devon District Council to secure additional bus tickets for families. This allows them to take their children into Exeter, where they can attend a pre-school. This arrangement has been beneficial for families, as it enables children to receive early education while their parents access services, such as the library, community centres, and English-speaking classes.

The [Holiday activities and food \(HAF\) programme](#) has continued to fund a HAF provider to offer a programme of activities over the Christmas, Easter and Summer holidays for primary and secondary aged children and young people at the asylum hotel. The HAF provider also included activities for families with early years children. These were very well attended and ensured that the children and young people were being physically active.

## Housing Developments

There are several areas in Devon where large new housing developments will increase the population and therefore the demand for childcare. Notably, Cranbrook, Sherford, and Exeter, particularly Southwest Exeter.

We work with the Pupil Place Planning Team in relation to strategic planning and sufficiency of early years places. An important aspect of this work is ensuring requirements for early years and childcare provision are considered in response to District Council Local Plans to secure Section 106 contributions from development. The County Council requires developer contributions towards early years provision where there is insufficient capacity for the proposed development and requests for contributions meet the statutory tests as set out in planning guidance.

This relationship has supported the delivery of several new schools with provision for early years in recent years including Roundswell Primary School which serves Barnstaple, West Clyst Primary School and Monkerton Primary School which provide places for development on the outskirts of Exeter and East Devon, and Matford Brook Academy which serves both Exeter and Teignbridge.

New schools with early years provision have also been delivered at Cranbrook and Sherford and significant growth is set to continue for these towns. Two new (420 place and 630 place) primary schools are planned to serve the Cranbrook expansion areas, both of which will include nursery provision, and two additional (420 place) primary schools with early years provision are planned to ensure sufficient early places in Sherford.

Where there is demographic growth, and in response to changes to national policy, we work collaboratively and proactively with schools to develop new and expand existing early provision to meet local need.

For more information, please see the Education Infrastructure Plan (2016-2033) and Education Approach for Developer Contributions (2021): [Pupil place planning - Planning \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/pupil-place-planning)

Devon is currently seeing a fall in early years numbers due to a sustained decrease in birth rates in recent years, but we will work with The School Place Planning Team to identify areas with sufficiency issues resulting from the new entitlements to ensure this is considered in the strategy going forwards.

## Employment

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Understanding employment and unemployment within Devon is central to determining whether there will be sufficient places available. Working parents need childcare to enable them to work and unemployed parents with two-year-olds are entitled to a funded place. The more that is understood about employment in Devon, the more accurate our analysis will be.

As of March 2024, 78.7% of the working age (16-64) population in Devon were in employment.

There is also some variance within Devon with extremely high employment rates in Exeter, Mid Devon, and South Hams whereas Torridge and North Devon have rates slightly below the national average.

Between March 2023 and March 2024, the percentage of the working age population in employment rose by 2%. This masks many underlying factors, such as the recent significant tailing off of jobs vacancies being advertised across the whole of Devon, along with the UK over the past year, which have fallen by 25% in the past year in Devon and 5.5% in the past quarter. It also masks underlying rises in unemployment over the past year, particularly between September 2023 and September 2024 where the number of unemployed claimants has risen in Devon by 24%, albeit from an extremely low base.

**Unemployment in Devon** is still, however, significantly below the national average at **2.4%** compared with 4.3% for the UK. Where jobs are being advertised, they are often in difficult to fill sectors and locations, often for roles requiring specialist skills and for jobs in the hospitality and care sectors. Also see the **Recruitment and Retention** section below.

**In Devon 56.2% of those employed are working full time** (considered 30+ hours per week) which is slightly lower than the UK rate of 57.6%.

In 2024, 68.4% of working age men worked full time compared with 44.6% of working age women. The percentage of both men and women working full time has risen since 2019 (pre-Covid), with a significant **jump in the percentage of women working full time in Devon from 39.2% to 44.6%** over this period.

## Term Time Only or All-Year-Round

Devon has a mix of term time only and all year-round places for children aged two to four. The expansion of provision for working families has meant that we needed to try and establish the proportion of families that are most likely to need places all-year-round, because they work throughout the year.

To keep the task manageable data was obtained from Devon County Councils (DCC) Human Resources Department. It shows that **34.7% (4640) of all staff employed by DCC (13369) are in term time only contracts. This relates to just 3.6% of corporate staff and only 55.0% of school staff.**

Apart from those working in schools and the private, voluntary, and independent childcare provision, there is not another sector where there are likely to be a high proportion of people working during term times only.

Using this information and data on the numbers of employees in different sectors we have estimated that **91% of working parents need childcare all-year round.**

## What does this mean for Early Years and Childcare in Devon?

This data indicates that there are more people in work, more people working full time (especially women who anecdotally we know are usually the main care givers) that there is more demand for provision that is open from 8am to 6pm.

With very few parents working term time only, there is a need for more all-year-round provision for children under five and holiday places for primary school aged children. As the working entitlement to 1140 hours of funded childcare per year becomes more established, we expect parents of under-fives will become used to having 8:00am – 6:00pm provision all-year-round and expect the same childcare provision to be in place when their children start at school.

## Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment and Retention of staff within the sector is a major issue across the country<sup>6</sup>. Here is what we are doing in Devon to address this issue.

### Recruitment and Retention Strategy

We have commissioned a yearlong **social media campaign** to promote careers in early years and childcare. The campaign started in April 2024 and to date we have had 246 respondents expressing an interest in working in the sector.

We have developed a **new advert promoting careers in the sector** which can be view the advert here: [Early Years and Childcare \(youtube.com\)](#)

We also launched our **new working in Devon webpages**: [Early Years and Childcare Service - Working for Devon | Devon County Council](#)

We also promote childcare as a career by:

- Working with Job Centre Plus.
- Liaising with secondary schools and colleges and where appropriate attending careers fairs.
- Promoting childminder start up grants.
- Offering childminding courses.
- Working with other providers of childcare qualifications to support them to market and promote their offer.
- Promoting apprenticeships: [Early Years Educator \(apprenticeships.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Retention+and+Return.pdf \(squarespace.com\)](#)

## Level 2 training

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The Early Years and Childcare Service (EYCS) has partnered with Learn Devon to offer the NCFE CACHE [Level 2 qualification for Early Years Practitioners](#). This initiative was developed in response to feedback from providers regarding challenges in accessing quality local training that adequately supports learners.

Learn Devon has been providing courses for adults in Devon for over 20 years and takes pride in its dedicated learning support team ([Learning and support - Learn Devon](#)). Their commitment is to assist learners in re-entering the workforce or advancing their careers.

We have seconded a member of the team to Learn Devon to be the lead for the delivery of the Level 2 qualification and they are supported by our advisory team in the delivery and assessment.

Currently, there are two cohorts of learners: the first cohort consists of fifteen participants, while the second includes an additional ten. The feedback received has been overwhelmingly positive, prompting plans to initiate a third cohort in the upcoming year.

The course is funded by the Adult Skills Fund, if learners earn under £25,000 per year or have not studied at Level 2 or higher, they are able to attend free of charge. This is the case for 90% of applicants, however we allow a small number of learners who do not meet the criteria to complete the course without charge and, for those learners, Learn Devon absorbs the cost.

## Professional Development and Support

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Devon Early Years and Childcare Service provide professional development opportunities at a subsidised cost (and in some cases fully funded) to support the continuing professional development (CPD) of individuals within the early years and childcare workforce in Devon.

Early years practitioners (and prospective childminders) can use the [Devon Education Services Shop](#) to book onto a range of short courses and eLearning. For more information about CPD opportunities please contact the Workforce Development Team [eywd@devon.gov.uk](mailto:eywd@devon.gov.uk)

## Quality of Early Years and Childcare Provision

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### Ofsted Outcomes

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Comparing data year on year is complicated by frequent changes to Ofsted. The data below is a snapshot taken from the reporting period with reference to southwest and national data.

Ofsted report the percentage of providers in Devon graded as good or outstanding at their most recent inspection has increased from 97.6% in March 2023<sup>7</sup> to 98.5% in March 2024<sup>8</sup> and is higher than the Southwest (97.8%) and national (97.5%) level. However, this does not include provision in schools which accounts for 39% of all early years and childcare services in Devon.

Devon County Council receive a data feed from Ofsted of proposed, newly registered, and closed providers with basic information including their Ofsted inspection outcome for provision that is registered with Ofsted. Early years and childcare provision in schools is not included in this data feed as they are not required to register separately with Ofsted. Inspection outcomes for schools are received separately and are combined with the Ofsted data feed so we can report on the full picture of the quality of places across the county.

**Local data shows that 94.5% of all services in Devon have been graded as good, outstanding, or met at their most recent inspection.**

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<sup>7</sup> [Childcare providers and inspections as at 31 March 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) [Accessed October 2024]

<sup>8</sup> [Childcare providers and inspections as at 31 March 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) [Accessed October 2024]



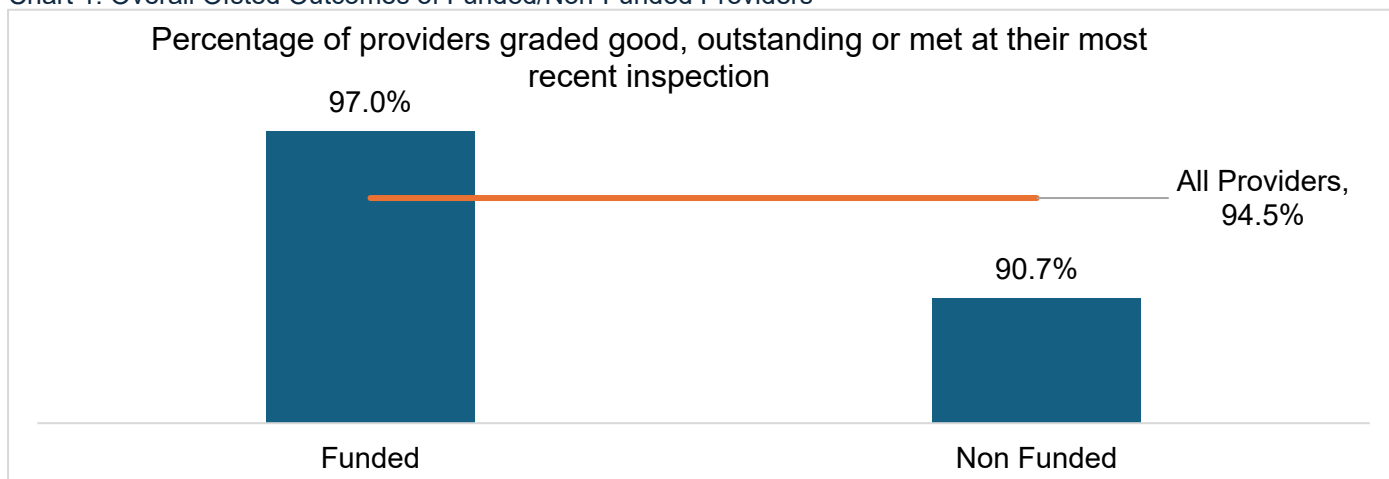
Table 5: Ofsted Outcomes of providers as of October 2024<sup>9 10 11</sup>

	Childminders		PVI Day Care Services <sup>12</sup>		School Day Care Services <sup>13</sup>		Out of School Services <sup>14</sup>		All Services	
Outstanding	49	18.7%	36	16.7%	4	6.7%	20	6.7%	109	13.0%
Good	183	69.8%	173	80.5%	49	81.7%	182	60.7%	587	70.1%
Met	28	10.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	67	22.3%	95	11.4%
Not Met (with actions)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	1.0%	3	0.4%
Requires Improvement	0	0.0%	5	2.3%	7	11.7%	23	7.7%	35	4.2%
Inadequate	2	0.8%	1	0.5%	0	0.0%	5	1.7%	8	1.0%
<b>Good/ Outstanding/ Met</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>99.2%</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>97.2%</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>88.3%</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>89.7%</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>94.5%</b>

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Early Years and Childcare Service

This shows that childminders have the best outcomes with 99.2% being graded as good, outstanding, or met at their most recent inspection, followed by PVI day care providers with 97.2%. School day care services had the fewest provisions graded as good or outstanding.

Chart 1: Overall Ofsted Outcomes of Funded/Non-Funded Providers



Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Early Years and Childcare Service

This chart above shows the percentage of funded providers graded as good, outstanding, or met at their most recent inspection is 97.0% which is higher than the average for all providers (94.5%).

Table 6: Percentage of providers graded good, outstanding, or met at their most recent inspection by type of provider.

	Childminders	Group Providers	All Providers
Funded	99.1%	95.4%	97.0%
Non-Funded	100.0%	89.5%	90.7%
All Providers	99.2%	92.3%	94.5%

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Early Years and Childcare Service

The table above shows that the funded and non-funded childminders and funded group providers are in line with or above the Devon average of those graded as good, outstanding, or met at their last inspection. **Non funded group providers have the lowest outcomes.**

<sup>9</sup> [Early years inspection handbook - GOV.UK](#) [Accessed October 2024]

<sup>10</sup> [Carrying out Childcare Register compliance inspections - GOV.UK](#) [Accessed October 2024]

<sup>11</sup> [Inspections explained: Independent Schools Inspectorate](#) [Accessed October 2024]

<sup>12</sup> This includes private, voluntary, and independent day nurseries, pre-schools, and nursery units in independent schools.

<sup>13</sup> This includes academy nursery classes, maintained nursery classes and schools and governor run pre-schools.

<sup>14</sup> This includes all before and after school clubs, holiday clubs and weekend clubs.

159 providers were inspected between 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024. Of these 117 providers had been inspected before and 42 providers had not. Of the 42 providers that were inspected for the first time this year 39 providers (92.9%) were graded as good, outstanding, or met.

Table 7: Ofsted Outcomes of providers inspected in 2023/24.

Previous Inspection Outcome	Inspection outcome in 2023/24					
	Outstanding	Good	Met	Not Met (with actions)	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
Outstanding	6	9	0	0	0	0
Good	8	61	3	1	6	1
Met	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not met (with actions)	0	0	2	0	0	0
Requires Improvement	0	13	0	0	3	0
Inadequate	0	2	0	0	1	1
	<b>Improved outcome</b>					
	<b>Remained the same</b>					
	<b>Worse outcome</b>					

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Early Years and Childcare Service

Of the 117 providers that were inspected this year and had a previous inspection outcome, 26 providers improved their outcomes, 74 maintained the same outcome and 17 received a worse outcome. 87 remained as good, outstanding, or met and 17 improved from not met, requires improvement or inadequate to good, outstanding, or met. 8 went from good, outstanding, or met to not met, requires improvement or inadequate and 5 remained as not met, requires improvement or inadequate.

## Early Years One Devon

The [statutory guidance for local authorities](#) on securing sufficient childcare states ‘childcare places’ should be made available in “high quality settings.” Places for two-year olds should only be funded by the local authority in good or outstanding provisions unless there is a sufficiency issue. The local authority should ‘rely solely on the Ofsted inspection judgement of the provider ... as the benchmark of quality.’

Early Years colleagues have reviewed the process for suspending funding as we are aware that by removing funding it may hamper settings capacity to improve and create a risk to sufficiency and quality. We have agreed that funding will be removed by exception only where settings are not engaging with the support provided.

[Early Years ONE Devon](#) is the overarching strategy to support early years setting quality and improvement in Devon. The strategy supports all early year’s settings to become ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ and ensure they meet the needs of all children. There is a strong focus on disadvantage as the aim is to support children to access their entitlement to high quality education and care and achieve their full potential.

If a private, voluntary, or independent provider is less than 'good' the service automatically provides support.

[Early Years and Childcare Advisers](#) and [Early Years Consultants](#) supported 41 providers who were judged as requires improvement or inadequate by Ofsted. The service worked with providers to develop a Post Ofsted Action Plan (POAP) and to work through the actions and issues identified during the inspection so they could achieve a good, or better, outcome.

We endeavour to contact good or outstanding providers at least once a year.

## Managing the Childcare Market:

The Local Authority is required, by law, to manage the early years and childcare market. We do this by working with new and existing providers:

- To identify what provision is needed, where and when.
- To set up more provision or grow what we already have by adding hours, days, or weeks to their offer.

- Sharing data on population, supply, and demand (and more) to inform providers business planning.
- To train them on how to apply for early years funding and understand the rules and regulations that apply.
- To health check businesses, identify business needs to support sustainability and ensure consistent high-quality services.
- To give expert guidance on the processes for registering with Ofsted including offering safeguarding and first aid training.
- Work with local partnerships and organisations to enable new provision to open by sourcing venues where possible and supporting new providers to set up in our hotspots.
- To signpost to professional development opportunities and specific support.
- To advise on staffing, ratios and qualifications, space, and organisation.
- To work in partnership to deliver joined up services for families.
- To support with recruitment and by advertising vacant posts.
- To identify whether all children are accessing the funded entitlements.

**Sufficiency of childcare encompasses the quality, accessibility, affordability, and flexibility of provision as well as supply and demand.** The statutory duty requires us to look at what is happening now and what we might expect to happen in the future. We work with providers on the supply of childcare and with parents to establish demand and improve take up and affordability.

The age of children and types of different providers are key factors when considering the supply and demand of childcare. Data on population changes, employment/unemployment, deprivation, housing developments, whether childcare is accessed close to home or nearer to work or on a travel to work route, opening times (hours, days, and weeks), whether funded children can take up a place and how much is charged are analysed so we know and understand what is available and happening now and in which areas. Ongoing monitoring of the data shows us what we might expect to see in the future and to plan for change.

## Demand for early years and childcare

We have three ways of finding out about parent’s childcare needs:

1. The online [Unable to find Childcare](#) form enables parents to tell us at any time when they cannot find childcare.
2. The online Annual Parents Childcare Survey.
3. Anecdotal feedback from our teams working in the localities.

### Unable to find childcare forms.

There were 109 unable to find childcare forms submitted by parents in Devon in 2023/24.

**Between January 2024 and June 2024 there was no public website for parents to search for childcare and therefore parents were encouraged to complete the unable to find childcare forms to receive information about what was available in their area.**

The forms were for out of school and holiday provision for 4–11-year-olds (41) followed by under-two-year-old provision (21). **The largest number of enquiries were from Exeter and the Dawlish areas.**

Table 8: Number of children needing childcare as reported on unable to find childcare forms submitted.

	East Devon	Exeter	Mid Devon	North Devon	South Hams	Teignbridge	Torridge	West Devon	Total
Under 2-year-old provision	3	4	0	1	3	5	4	1	21
2-year-old provision	1	3	2	3	2	3	1	0	15
3- and 4-year-old provision	2	0	3	1	2	4	3	1	16
Holiday Provision - 4–11-year-olds	4	1	0	0	0	4	2	0	11

Out of School Provision - 4–11-year-olds	6	4	5	3	5	14	3	1	41
Out of School Provision - 11–16-year-olds	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
2-year-old and 4–11-year-old	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Weekend Provision - 4–11-year-olds	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>109</b>

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Early Years and Childcare Service

Of the 109 forms submitted only 4 parents that we contacted were unable to find suitable childcare and (for 81 parents the outcome was unknown).

Where the parent was not able to find suitable childcare:

- Two were from the same rural school wanting after school provision until 6pm in Mid Devon. After school provision was established in this area and one school is exploring how wraparound childcare can be delivered from the school site. The Early Years and Childcare Service will continue to work with providers in the area to address these issues.
- One wanted day care for an under-two-year-old and a three- or four-year-old, three days a week during holidays in East Devon. There are childminders in this village. The Early Years and Childcare Service will continue to promote childminding as a career and encourage local providers to open for longer hours and more weeks per year.
- One wanted out of school provision until 6.30pm in South Devon. There is no wraparound provision at the school. The Early Years and Childcare Service will work with the school and local providers to address the issue.

### Parents Childcare Survey

This year the Early Years and Childcare Service sent texts and emails to parents in Devon who had used the Citizens Portal to apply for a school place and those who had used the eligibility checking service to check eligibility for two-year-old funding and free school meals. **A total of 19294 emails and 11934 texts were sent.**

**There were 2107 responses to the Parents Survey in Summer Term 2024** from parents in Devon. **This related to 4099 children.**

Most parents responding to the survey had children of primary school age.

### Key Findings:

- Use of formal childcare has increased from 75% last year to 83% this year.
- The proportion of parents using formal childcare reporting that they could not get enough increased from 37% last year to 46% this year. The majority of these required an out of school club or a holiday club.
- The proportion of parents not currently using formal childcare reporting that they did need to use it to take up work or training increased from 17% last year to 26% this year.
- Where the childcare is needed has remained similar to last year with most parents (77%) needing childcare close to home.
- There is a need for more all-year-round and full day care provision.
- Some parents are struggling as they need the funding to afford childcare but cannot get a job without the childcare.

*Use of childcare* related to the following numbers of children:

Table 9: Numbers of children requiring more childcare by age and whether they are currently using formal childcare.

	Not using childcare and need it	Using childcare and need more	Total
Under 2-year-olds	25	207	232
2-year-olds	15	157	172
3- and 4-year-olds	16	413	429

Primary School aged Children	93	727	820
Secondary School aged Children	18	124	142
17–18-year-olds with additional needs	3	19	22

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Early Years and Childcare Service, Parent Survey Summer 2024

There are 1817 children who need childcare or need more childcare. The majority of these were primary-school-aged children. Exeter saw the largest number of children who needed childcare or needed more childcare (614), followed by Barnstaple (222) and Clyst Vale (210).

Those parents who were not using childcare but needed to and those that were using childcare and needed more were asked *what type of provision* was required.

Table 10: Number of parents needing different types of childcare and whether they are currently using formal childcare.

What type of childcare is needed	Not using childcare and need it	Using childcare and need more	Total
Pre-school	16	248	264
Day Nursery	27	241	268
School Nursery	11	85	96
Childminder	165	130	295
Before School Club	18	317	335
After School Club	30	417	447
Holiday Club	32	369	401
Nanny	6	29	35
Specialist childcare for children with SEND	19	71	90

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Early Years and Childcare Service, Parent Survey Summer 2024

Those not using childcare but who needed to use it reported needing provision offering full day care and all year-round provision (childminder, day nursery) for children under five or after school and holiday clubs for children over five. Those using childcare but needing more needed all types of childcares.

In total, **53.6% of all funded two-year-olds accessed provision that was open all-year-round**; this is seen more starkly when looking at those two-year-olds receiving **targeted funding (28.7%)** and those receiving the **working parents' entitlement (62.5%)**.

Similarly, 32.2% of all funded three and four-year-olds accessed provision that was open all-year-round; 44.2% of those were receiving the additional working parents' entitlement. It is possible that more children, receiving the working parents' entitlement, would access all-year-round provision if that were available.

**Following this survey, the Early Years and Childcare Service will continue to:**

- Raise awareness of the Early Years and Childcare Service and the unable to find childcare form through social media.
- Improve the information for parents on Find Childcare by encouraging all providers to update their information on the Provider Self Update.
- Increase awareness of the help available with the cost of childcare.
- Promote stretching funding with parents.
- Support and encourage providers to offer the funded entitlements flexibly so parents are not restricted to using the funded entitlements at specific times.
- Encourage providers to open for longer hours and for more weeks of the year where possible to meet the needs of parents.
- Promote entitlements, stretched funding, universal credit for childcare and tax-free childcare to parents of younger children so they are aware before they reach the age they are used.
- Promote the funding for eligible service families to get 20 hours of funded 'wraparound' childcare before and after school for 4–11-year-old children during term times.
- Promote the 'Right to Request' with parents through social media.
- Encourage the 29 schools local to parents who reported there was not out of school provision at their local school to set up provision if viable or signpost to a local provider.

## Supply of Childcare

### Changes to the supply of childcare in 2023/2024

The [types of Early Years and Childcare Providers factsheet](#) explains the differences between provision in Devon. **There are 1498 providers in Devon offering 1725 services.** These are:

Table 11: Number of childcare services by type of care on 31 August 2024 compared with 31 August 2023

Type of Service	Total 2022/23	Total 2023/24	Difference
Day Nursery	138	143	+5
Pre-school	156	147	-9
Nursery unit of Independent School	14	13	-1
Academy Nursery Class	82	107	+25
Maintained Nursery School or Class	55	47	-8
Special School Nursery Class	2	2	0
Out of School Club	252	602	+350
Weekend Clubs	6	10	+4
Holiday Clubs	110	201	+91
Childminder	352	349	-3
Home Child Carer	109	104	-5
<b>All Provision</b>	<b>1276</b>	<b>1725</b>	<b>+449</b>

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Early Years and Childcare Service

The biggest increase has been seen in out of school club providers. This increase is due to a large amount of work cross checking data held in different places. Previously, data was collected together under the heading 'out school clubs,' it is now separated into before school clubs and after school clubs because they provide different services and have capacity for different numbers of children.

**There has also been a large increase in the number of holiday clubs this year due to encouraging [Holiday activities and food \(HAF\) programme](#) providers to register with Ofsted** and making sure they were all recorded. This has led to better data on what out of school and holiday provisions are available.

Overall, there have been 74 providers who have opened and 69 providers who have closed this year. There have been other providers who have still operated but may have added or closed an individual service.

Table 12: Services open and closed from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024

Service Type	Services Open		Services Closed		Net Change
	New Providers	Existing Providers	Closed Providers	Still Active	
Day Nursery	15	0	3	3	9
Pre-School	1	2	6	1	-4
Governor/Trust Run Preschool	0	2	2	0	0
Nursery Unit of Independent School	0	0	0	0	0
Academy Nursery Classes	12	0	0	0	13
Maintained Nursery Schools or Classes	0	1	11	0	-10
Special School Nursery Class	0	0	0	0	0
Out of School Care	15	15	14	41	-23
Weekend Club	4	1	0	1	4
Holiday Scheme	11	11	11	18	-7
Childminder	32	2	33	8	-7
Home Child Carers	4	0	9	0	-5
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>-29</b>

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Early Years and Childcare Service

NB: Some of the 449 additional services shown in table 11 are existing providers that will have been back dated (and have not newly opened during this year) and therefore figures in table 11 and table 12 will not add up.

There are two childminder agencies with childminders operating in Devon – these are [Tiney](#) and [Suffolk Childcare Agency](#).

Change in Provision:

- This year we have seen 12 schools with early years and childcare provision converted to become academies.
- There have been a further **two schools lower their age range from 3-11 to 2-11**.
- **The voluntary sector continues to be in decline whilst the private sector and school run providers continue to increase.**
- This shows that the greatest change in providers has been seen with a net decrease in out of school provision over the last year.
- There has also been a **net decrease in holiday clubs and childminders**.

Table 13: The regional and national decreases in overall provider numbers (as a percentage), for the period March 2023 to March 2024

	Devon	Southwest	England
Decrease in the number of Ofsted registered providers	-1.8%	-2.2%	-2.3%
Decrease in the number of childminders	-5.5%	-4.7%	-4.8%

Source: OFSTED, Childcare providers and inspections, Table 1: Registered childcare providers and places<sup>15</sup>

Overall, the total number of providers has decreased over the last year. The decrease in all providers has not been as great as that seen across the Southwest and across England. However, there has been a slightly higher percentage decrease in childminders in Devon than that seen in the Southwest or across England.

To combat this the Early Years and Childcare Service have been promoting childminding as a career and have a [recruitment and retention strategy](#). For more information please see: [Working in early years and childcare - Information for childcare providers \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)

## Sufficiency of Early Years and Childcare in Devon:

### Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency Hot Spots

Data held by the Early Years and Childcare Service about provision of early years and childcare in Devon and parental demand is analysed, assessed, and monitored as part of a comprehensive approach to planning for sufficient provision and to enable effective market management.

Data on the supply of childcare is taken from the data submitted on the Provider Self Update (PSU). At the time the analysis for the hot spot areas was carried out 620 out of 706 funded providers had completed the PSU. A further 55 providers had partially completed it and had provided information on capacity and opening hours which could be used to calculate Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Places needed for the analysis of the supply of childcare. There were 5 funded providers where the number of places were estimated due to providers not yet completing it.

The demand for childcare is calculated by using actual population figures, to project the number of children who may be living in an area at a given time, and current take-up rates; e.g. if there are an estimated 12 two-year-olds living in an area and that area currently has a take-up rate of 25% of children receiving the targeted funding, demand is forecast to be  $12 \times 0.25 = 3$  children. If that same area has a take-up of rate of 50% of funded children receiving the working parents' entitlement, the demand is forecast to be  $12 \times 0.5 = 6$  children. We are using Higher Level Wards<sup>16</sup> as areas to determine sufficiency.

'Hot Spots' are [areas](#) in Devon where a need has been identified following the annual analysis of supply and demand data. This could be a need for more provision or where further work is required by us to better determine if the current provision meets the potential demand. The data is put into a report that is shared

<sup>15</sup> [Early years and childcare statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) [Accessed October 2024]

<sup>16</sup> A Higher-Level Ward is the same as a Census Ward except for larger towns and urban areas in Devon where more than 1 Census Ward is combined into a Higher-Level Ward, e.g. the Census Wards of Ivybridge East & Ivybridge West are combined into the Higher-Level Ward of Ivybridge.

with our locality teams and their feedback is added. The hot spot areas are then agreed by our leadership team before publication.

## Review of Hot spot areas identified in August 2023:

Table 14: Review of Hot Spot areas August 2023

Hot Spot Area August 2023	Provision for	Update
<b>Cranbrook and surrounding area</b>	Under-five-year-olds and out of school provision	<p>The nursery that was expected to be built in Cranbrook by summer 2023 is still not in place. It is not known when it will be built and occupied but planners are indicating that it has been re-scheduled for 2025.</p> <p>Childminders have continued to register within Cranbrook.</p> <p>Lack of suitable and affordable premises in the area.</p> <p>No change to current provision within the area.</p>
<b>Sidmouth</b>	Under-five-year-old places	<p>No change to provision within the area. Suitable venues continue to be an issue.</p> <p>An existing provider tried to set up daycare within the <a href="#">Sidmouth Youth Centre</a> but it proved to be an unsuitable venue with limited days/times available. There has been talk of the Youth Centre being re-developed, so this is something to keep in mind.</p> <p>Opportunity was explored with the developers of the old East Devon District Council site -The Knowle- to no avail. Also, a site opposite this was explored, and found not suitable. The old fire station in Woolbrook was considered too and again was not suitable.</p> <p>The old Health Centre in the town came up for sale and a private provider was interested but priced out of the market. We continue to stay connected with this provider.</p> <p>We have continued to link with the local Councillor in terms of any suitable venues.</p>
<b>South of Exeter and Exminster</b>	Under-five-year-olds and out of school provision	<p>One new childminder registered to work in Exminster.</p>
<b>Cullompton</b>	Funded two-, three-, and four-year old places	<p>One new childminder registered to work in Cullompton.</p> <p>In surrounding areas:</p> <p><a href="#">Kingwood Children Muddifords</a> now offers wraparound childcare for <a href="#">Sampford Peverell Church of England Primary School</a> however there are recruitment challenges.</p> <p><a href="#">Willand Pre-School</a> has reduced the number of wraparound places because another provider is now working with the school with the older</p>



		<p>children. This change will increase the capacity for 2,3- and 4-year-olds.</p> <p><a href="#">Joyful Journeys Childcare</a> is a new nursery provision recently opened in Willand; it is a small provision offering 6 places.</p>
<b>Axminster</b>	Funded two-, three-, and four-year old places	<p>No change to provision within the area.</p> <p>On going work with <a href="#">First Federation</a> who took over from the <a href="#">Acorn Multi Academy Trust</a> in relation to early years and childcare on their school sites.</p>
<b>Ilfracombe</b>	Under-five-year-olds and out of school provision	<p>A new nursery, Beach Buddies Childcare, set up in May 2024.</p> <p>We are exploring whether a full day care nursery can be set up on the <a href="#">Ilfracombe Church of England Junior School</a>.</p>
<b>Bideford and Northam</b>	Under-five-year-olds and out of school provision	<p>One new childminder registered to work in Northam.</p> <p>In Bideford there has been Out of School Childcare expansion at St Marys Primary School <a href="#">St Mary's CofE Primary School</a> via <a href="#">Muddy Boots Pre-school</a>.</p> <p><a href="#">Tarka Tots</a> would have expanded but as the Childrens Centre building is being kept for use as a Family Hub they do not have the space.</p> <p>The potential to use the building after school for childcare could work as this is after main office hours. This will be determined, and action taken if that is an option.</p>
<b>Great Torrington</b>	All-year-round provision for under-five-year-olds	No change to provision within the area.
<b>Fremington</b>	Funded two-, three- and four-year-old provision	No change to provision within the area.
<b>Sherford</b>	Under-five-year-olds and out of school provision	One new childminder registered to work in Sherford.
<b>Dawlish</b>	Under-five-year-olds and out of school provision	<p><a href="#">Happy Holidays</a> a childminder in Dawlish has expanded her business to offer 50 places per day during the holidays 30 <a href="#">Holiday Activities and Food (HAF)</a> eligible children 20 paid for.</p> <p>One new childminder has registered to work in Dawlish.</p> <p>One new childminder is currently going through registration.</p> <p>In discussions with <a href="#">Dawlish College</a> to provide a site for a 0 – 4 all year round nursery.</p>

		<a href="#">Little Swans Preschool</a> have expressed an interest in taking under 2's and opening all year round.
<b>Okehampton</b>	Under-two-year-old places	Two new childminders registered to work in Okehampton.

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Early Years and Childcare Service

### Hot Spot Areas September 2024:

We know that there is **enough term time provision** across Devon for two-, three- and four-year olds to access the entitlement to funded childcare. However, we know that there are very few parents who only require childcare during term times (see [employment data](#)) and therefore there is a **need for more all-year-round provision**. Although the population is falling, there are a greater number of parents wanting to access childcare due to the introduction of the new funded entitlements for working parents (see [New Government Entitlements](#)).

**The following hot spot areas are based on current supply and demand for childcare from September 2025 when working parents will be entitled to 1140 hours of funded childcare a year from the start of the term following a child's nine month 'birthday'.**

Last year's Hot Spots have been included in the table below where there is a need for all-year-round provision.

**Across most areas of Devon (especially rural areas) there is a need for:**

Table 15: Need for childcare across Devon September 2024

Provision for	Reason for being a hot spot:	Actions for 2024/25
<b>All-year-round provision for all under-five-year-olds.</b>	<p>Increase in funded hours for children from 9 months from September 2024, increase in funded hours for two-year-olds from April 2024.</p> <p>A lot of provision is open during term times only and is not meeting local demand for all-year-round places.</p>	<p>Increase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the number of places available</li> <li>the ages of children taken</li> <li>the number of weeks open</li> <li>the number of hours open</li> </ul> <p>Use the Childcare Expansion Capital Grant to expand places.</p> <p>Promote the School Based Nurseries Grant.</p> <p>Support all providers to expand, especially from term time only to all year round.</p> <p>Support 2-11 providers to expand to take children under 2.</p> <p>Support providers to set up new provisions.</p> <p>Work with schools with a 3-11 age range to take two-year-olds.</p>
<b>Holiday provision for primary school aged children</b>	Lack of places for all ages.	<p>Encourage term time only early years providers to open all-year-round and to take older children.</p> <p>Encourage wraparound childcare providers to open during the school holidays.</p>

If funding continues encourage [Holiday activities and food \(HAF\) programme](#) providers to open places to non HAF children.

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Early Years and Childcare Service

We will also continue to work with schools and providers to **develop before and after school provision where there is a demand.**

**In addition to the hotspots in Table 23, there are some areas where there is not enough provision, even during term times.**

These are (NB: The areas listed below are higher level wards - previous years have referred to combined parishes.):

Table 16: Hot Spot areas August 2024

Hot Spot Area August 2024	Provision for	Actions for 2024/25
<b>Cranbrook</b>	Under-five-year-olds	<p>Continue to keep in contact with the new provider (<a href="#">Little Pioneers</a>) who will operate from the planned standalone nursery so we can establish when places may be available; currently indicating 2015 with a 100 place nursery.</p> <p>Continue to work with East Devon District Council planners to ensure we are up to date with developments.</p> <p>Continue to promote childminding in the area.</p> <p>Discuss with <a href="#">Cranbrook Education Campus</a> and <a href="#">St Martin's Church of England Primary &amp; Nursery School</a> whether they can expand the provision for under-fives by opening for longer hours and more weeks of the year.</p> <p>Monitor the use of the 30 hour expansion grant (September 2017) that was allocated to Cranbrook Education Campus to create all year round places for 3 and 4 year olds.</p> <p>Check whether schools are admitting children from their second birthday and if they are not, encourage them to do so.</p> <p>There are limited premises from where provision can run.</p> <p>Ensure children with SEND can access the full funded entitlement.</p>
<b>Cullompton</b>	Two-year-old provision	<p>Ask term time only providers to open all-year-round to increase the number of places available for two-year-olds.</p> <p>Identify potential premises from where a new provider could operate.</p> <p>Check that all providers taking two-year-olds offer places from a child's second birthday.</p> <p>Support applications for capital expansion in this area.</p> <p>Ensure children with SEND can access the full funded entitlement.</p>
<b>Exeter Northeast</b>	Two-year-old provision	<p>Support applications for capital expansion in this area.</p> <p>Continue to work with <a href="#">Monkerton Community Primary School</a> and <a href="#">Westclyst Community Primary School</a> and</p>

		<p><a href="#">Cornerstone Academy Trust</a> to consider expansion of early years places and opening all year round.</p> <p>Continue to promote childminding in the area.</p> <p>Identify premises that may potentially be used for childcare.</p>
<b>Honiton</b>	Two-year-old provision	<p>Support applications for capital expansion in this area.</p> <p>Extend the age range of <a href="#">Honiton Primary School</a> from 3-11 to 2-11. Encourage the school to open early years provision for longer hours and more weeks.</p> <p>Explore the expansion of two-year-old places with other providers by opening for longer hours or more weeks of the year as well as increasing places more generally.</p> <p>The Childrens Centre next to <a href="#">Littletown Primary Academy</a> in Honiton can be used (subject to DFE approval) for childcare.</p>
<b>Appledore, Northam &amp; Westward Ho!</b>	Under-five-year-olds	<p>Speak with the <a href="#">Atlantic Coast Co-operative Trust</a> in relation to <a href="#">Appledore School</a> extending the age range from 3-11 to 2-11</p> <p>Speak with <a href="#">Ventrus</a> about <a href="#">St George's Church of England Infant and Nursery School</a> and potential expansion of the nursery provision and changing the age range to 2-11.</p> <p>Work with existing providers to encourage them to open all-year-round and for longer hours each day.</p> <p>Identify premises from where new childcare providers could operate.</p> <p>Support applications for capital expansion in this area.</p> <p>Establish whether there is spare capacity within local schools that could be used to develop childcare.</p>
<b>Bickington</b>	Two-year-olds	<p>Ask all providers in Bickington, Roundswell, and Sticklepath if they can take two-year-olds, open for longer hours and for more weeks of the year.</p> <p>There is potential for the children centre building at <a href="#">Sticklepath Community Primary Academy</a> to accommodate more two-year-olds. The building has already been passed to the <a href="#">Tarka Learning Partnership</a> that runs Sticklepath Primary for them to use for the school nursery.</p> <p>Continue to promote childminding in the area.</p>
<b>Ilfracombe</b>	Two-year-olds	<p>Continue to encourage the infant school to admit children from their second birthday.</p> <p>Consider whether any providers can expand their provision for two-year-olds by opening for more hours or more weeks or by extending premises.</p> <p>Consider whether any providers that do not take babies could do so.</p> <p>Continue to promote childminding in the area.</p>

		<p>Work with governors and Diocese to explore whether a new nursery can be developed on the <a href="#">Ilfracombe Church of England Junior School</a> site.</p> <p>Ensure children with SEND can access the full funded entitlement.</p>
<b>Great Torrington</b>	Under five -year-olds	<p>Use the Childrens Centre building for all year-round provision for under-five-year-olds. Work with the school and Diocese on these developments.</p> <p>Encourage term time only providers to open all-year-round.</p> <p>Look for opportunities to expand early years provision in the town.</p> <p>Continue to promote childminding in the area.</p> <p>Support applications for capital expansion in this area.</p> <p>Ensure children with SEND can access the full funded entitlement.</p>
<b>Ivybridge</b>	Two-year-olds	<p>Support applications for capital expansion in this area.</p> <p>Determine whether there is spare capacity within any primary schools. Promote the school-based nurseries grant.</p> <p>Consider whether any providers in the area can expand their provision for two-year-olds by opening for more hours or more weeks or extending premises.</p> <p>Continue to promote childminding in the area.</p> <p>Check that all providers of two-year-olds places are offering them from when a child is two.</p>
<b>Okehampton</b>	Two-year-olds	<p>Support applications for capital expansion in this area.</p> <p>Encourage all early year's providers to expand and open for longer hours and for more weeks.</p> <p>Discuss with <a href="#">Okehampton Primary School and Foundation Unit</a> increasing places for two year olds.</p> <p>Discuss with <a href="#">St James Church of England Primary and Nursery School</a> the application they have made to Ofsted to register to take children under twos.</p> <p>Monitor the take of places and hours taken up by children with SEND.</p> <p>Identify suitable premises from where childcare provision could be made.</p>
<b>Ambrook (Villages South of Newton Abbot)</b>	Three- and four-year-olds	<p>Support applications for capital expansion in this area.</p> <p>Continue discussions with <a href="#">Denbury Primary School</a> and <a href="#">Kingskerswell Church of England Primary School</a> about setting up and expanding provision.</p> <p>Encourage term time only providers to open all year round between 8:00 and 6:00.</p> <p>Work with all providers to encourage them to expand and develop new places.</p>

		<p>Better understand how parents living in this area move/where they work, including into Newton Abbot and into Torbay.</p> <p>The Newton Abbot 3 development will have an impact on sufficiency in this area. Establish the best options for meeting the demand for childcare across the wider area.</p> <p>Continue to promote childminding.</p>
<b>Kenn Valley</b>	Three- and four-year-olds	<p>Support applications for capital expansion in this area.</p> <p>Work with local schools to set up and expand early years provision.</p> <p>Determine whether any schools have unfilled capacity that could be used to set up nursery places.</p> <p>Encourage all early year's providers to increase opening hours and weeks and expand places.</p> <p>Continue to promote childminding in the area.</p>

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Early Years and Childcare Service

## Sufficiency of provision for two-year-olds taking up early years funding

From April 2024 funding was introduced for all two-year-olds of working parents to receive 570 hours of funded childcare a year. In Devon this is called the **Working Parents Entitlement**. A further proportion of two-year-olds will be eligible to receive 570 hours of funded childcare based on [national criteria](#). In Devon, this is called the **targeted two-year-old funding**. All other parents of two-year-olds must pay for the childcare they use.

Every six weeks we receive details of parents who are potentially eligible for the targeted funding from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). An invitation is sent to these parents which directs them to check their eligibility through the [Citizen's Portal](#). If a parent is found to be eligible, they receive a confirmation which they must show to their chosen childcare provider.

Parents who do not receive an invitation can also check their eligibility on the [Citizens Portal](#). Some parents may need to submit evidence that must be checked; our funding helpdesk team support these applicants. They will be parents/carers who may be eligible for reasons other than being in receipt of benefits e.g. adopted child, EHCP, asylum seeker.

Parents who are unable to access the Citizens Portal can have an 'assisted application' where an eligibility check is carried out on their behalf. These parents should call the **Customer Service Centre 0345 155 1013**.

Our funding team processes applications for children that are in care to Devon County Council after having contacted their foster carer. If a child has left care and is under an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement order the parent/carer needs to apply through the Citizens Portal and attach evidence (the Order) to support the application.

More information is available for families on the [two-year-old funding webpage](#).

Table 17: Percentage of two-year-olds accessing funding and percentage taking up the full entitlement.

Percentage of two-year-olds	Baseline Summer Term 23	Autumn Term 23	Spring Term 24	Summer Term 24	Direction since 22/23
Accessing a targeted funded place (percentage of the DWP number) <sup>17</sup>	85.7%	91.9%	91.7%	87.4%	↑

<sup>17</sup> Two-year-old take-up is based on the number of children on the last DWP list of the term and EY hours taken up; no individual children are matched.

Accessing a targeted funded place who are taking up the full entitlement	73.5%	73.5%	71.5%	71.8%	↓
Accessing a working parents funded place (percentage of the population) <sup>18</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	49.3%	
Accessing a working parents funded place who are taking up the full entitlement	N/A	N/A	N/A	76.2%	

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Early Years and Childcare Service

The number of two-year-olds with parents on the DWP list increased slightly which is in line with the total population of two-year-olds also increasing.

**The take-up of funded places by eligible two-year-olds in Devon has increased from 85.7% in Summer 2023 to 87.4% in Summer 2024. However, the percentage has decreased by 4.3% since spring 2024. This decrease has coincided with the introduction of the working parents' entitlement from summer 2024.**

**We know that some parents are eligible for both the targeted (DWP list) and working parents' entitlement and that some have preferred to apply for the latter rather than the former.**

Historical figures show there were about 7 to 8% of parents who might qualify for both entitlements and the data are showing us that **parents appear to prefer to apply for the working parents' entitlement.** For those who apply for both entitlements, the targeted funding is prioritised. It should be noted that Devon remains well above the national average take-up of 74% (Spring 2024).

**The take-up of the full entitlement by those children accessing a targeted place has decreased this year from 73.5% to 71.8% in Summer 2024. The take-up of the full entitlement is much higher (76.2%) for two-year-olds with the working parents' entitlement.**

### **Sufficiency of provision for three- and four-year-olds taking up early years funding**

All three- and four-year-olds are entitled to 570 hours of funded childcare per year. We fund early years providers for children from the start of the funding period<sup>19</sup> following their third birthday until they start at school or until they reach compulsory school age. This is known as the **Universal Entitlement**. Many parents take this as 15 hours a week during term times only, but **often parents stretch the entitlement taking fewer hours each week over more weeks of the year.**

Three- and four-year-olds of working parents are entitled to 1140 hours of funded childcare per year. This is known as the **Working Parents Entitlement**.

**The take-up of universally funded places by three- and four-year olds has decreased slightly** over the last year from 96.1% in Summer Term 2023 to 95.8% in Summer Term 2024.

The decrease in take-up is not significant and Devon remains well above the national average take-up figure of 92%.

**The take-up of the full universal entitlement by three- and four-year-olds has increased** from 88.8% in Summer Term 2023 to 89.8% in Summer Term 2024.

**The take-up of the working entitlement continues to increase** with 60.0% of all funded three- and four-year olds taking up some hours in Summer Term 2024 up from 57.3% in Summer Term 2023.

Take-up remains high and data suggests that overall, there is sufficient provision to meet the current need for funded two-, three- and four-year-old places.

We recognise that there will be times of the day and weeks of the year when some families may not be able to access the places they need.

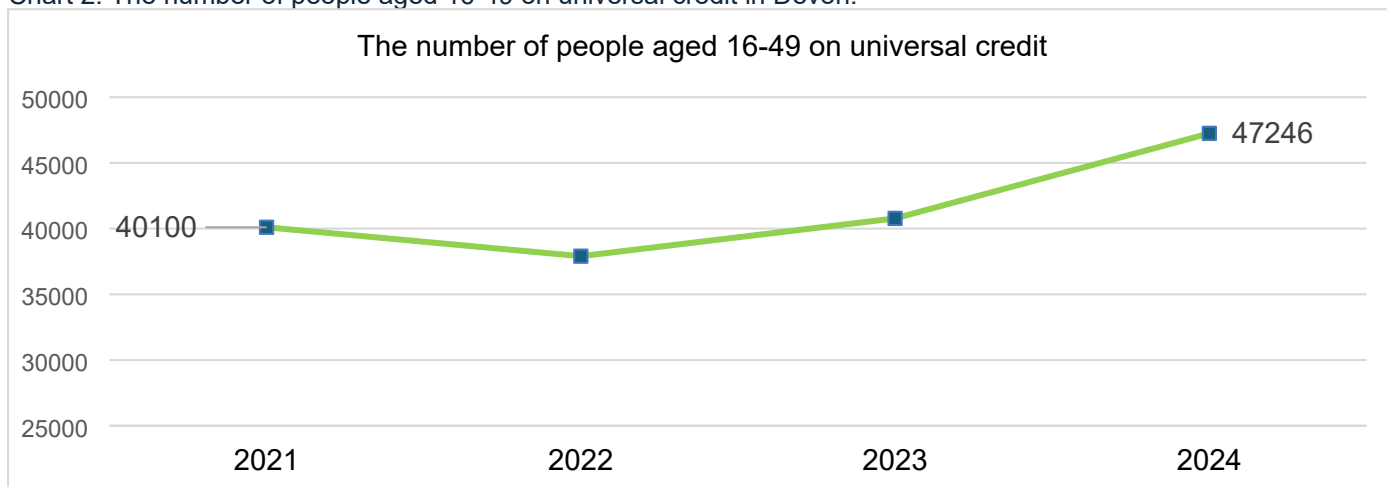
<sup>18</sup> Two-year-old take-up is based on the population of children in that term. It is likely that up to 60% of the two-year-old population may be eligible for the working parents' entitlement.

<sup>19</sup> [Early education and childcare \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) - Points A1.6 and A1.7

## Sufficiency of provision for children from families in receipt of Universal Credit

All claimants have now migrated to Universal Credit. 284,660 of individuals who were sent migration notices nationally, did not claim universal credit and have had their legacy benefit claims closed. Families in receipt of Universal Credit may be eligible for a [Free School Meal, Early Years Pupil Premium and two-year-old funding](#).

Chart 2: The number of people aged 16-49 on universal credit in Devon.



Source: DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS (2024), Stat-Xplore, People on Universal Credit

Across Devon **there has been an increase in the number of people aged 16-49 claiming universal credit** and has risen back to levels seen during the COVID-19 pandemic. The DWP report this to be the case for the whole of the country and has been caused by the cost-of-living crisis<sup>20</sup>.

Table 18: Percentage of the population on universal credit

	People on Universal Credit (16-49-year-olds - July 2024)	Population 16-49 (Population Estimate 2023)	Percentage of people on Universal Credit
Exeter	8397	73,352	11%
East Devon	7847	52,135	15%
Mid Devon	4967	30,378	16%
North Devon	6736	35,334	19%
Torridge	4514	21,767	21%
South Hams	4121	29,636	14%
Teignbridge	7787	46,718	17%
West Devon	2880	18,698	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47246</b>	<b>308018</b>	<b>15%</b>

Source: DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS (2024), Stat-Xplore, People on Universal Credit  
Source: OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS (2024), Nomis, Population Estimates 2023

There are approximately 15% of people aged 16-49 on Universal Credit in Devon. The highest proportion is seen in Torridge and North Devon with the lowest seen in South Hams. This means **there could be a greater demand for funded two-year-old provision in Torridge and North Devon with potentially a lower demand in South Hams**.

**We work with Job Centre Plus and providers to ensure that there is sufficient provision to meet the needs of all families including those in receipt of the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit. We work to increase the take up of all funding that is benefit related.**

There were **90 funded three-year-olds of working parents eligible for the extended entitlement in Summer 2024 that were receiving benefits based two-year-old funding in Spring 2024; this was 26.4% of all children turning three who were funded as two-year-olds**. This reflects the low wages in some businesses and sectors as well as the socio-economic differences seen within some areas of Devon.

<sup>20</sup> [The cost-of-living crisis in Britain has resulted in unprecedented levels of Universal Credit recipients | Consumer Rights \(consumer-rights.org\)](#)



## Sufficiency of provision for children requiring holiday care

With the seasonal nature of employment opportunities in the tourism and hospitality sectors, and fewer people on term time only contracts, it is important to ensure there is sufficient provision for parents needing to use holiday care to enable them to work.

Attendance in early years and childcare settings changes during the summer as some parents choose to use holiday provision whilst others use their annual leave entitlement to cover holiday periods to reduce the need for childcare and/or ask friends and relatives to care for their children. However, **assuming working parents get four weeks annual leave, even if both parents in a two-parent family take all their annual leave to cover holiday periods (eight weeks), this would not cover all school-based holiday periods (13-14 weeks).**

As there is a lack of holiday provision for primary school aged children, parents have to find alternative childcare for their primary school aged children so may also choose to use the same childcare arrangements for their under-five-year-olds, taking them out of their normal provision, masking the demand for holiday provision for under-five-year-olds.

If there was more holiday provision for primary school aged children, there could potentially be more demand for holiday provision for under-five-year-olds.

### Demand

In the summer Parents Survey, 369 parents reported that they were currently using formal childcare but needed more holiday care, and 32 parents reported that they were not using formal childcare but needed holiday care.

11 parents contacted us using the '[unable to find childcare form](#)' because they were looking for holiday provision. Four of these were for East Devon, four were in Teignbridge, two were in Torridge and one in Exeter. Nine of these were contacted but the outcome is unknown.

### Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)

The DfE funded [Holiday activities and food \(HAF\) programme](#) aims to:

- support children to eat more healthily.
- be more active over the school holidays.
- have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition.
- be more engaged with school and other local services.

The HAF programme covers 4 days at Christmas, 4 days at Easter and 16 days in the summer; it does not run during half term holidays. A day is 4 hours and includes a nutritious hot meal.

We had over 100 providers offering 40,000 places in an exciting programme of activities delivered across Devon including, Paddleboarding, Sports Activities, Cookery, Crate Building, Gardening, Swimming, Laser Tag, Canoeing, Kayaking, Surfing, Mountain Biking, outdoor adventures and more.

The programme is primarily for children who are eligible for benefit related free school meals. Eligible children are issued with a unique code to book on to the activities. There were 18,456 eligible children in Devon.

Table 19: Number of HAF places and children attending 2023/24

Holiday Period	Number of Places	Number of children that attended
Christmas 2023	10,000 over 4 days	1899
Easter 2024	10,000 over 4 days	2161
Summer 2024	40,000 over 16 days	3372
<b>Total</b>		<b>7432</b>

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Early Years and Childcare Service

Here are just a few of the things that parents said:

- I have a less anxious and more confident child.
- Made me feel Happy my children can do activities I would not be able to afford.
- It has made a massive difference; it has given my child a break.
- HAF has made my life easier.

Feedback from children and young people:

- I love dodgeball, I love making new friends, the food is the best.
- If I were not here, I would be home gaming playing FIFA.
- I would be at home sleeping if I were not here, I get to make new friends.
- I really enjoyed swimming and learning to roller skate.

For more information, please see the [Holiday Activities and Food programme web pages](#) and the [2023 Annual Report](#).

The Early Years and Childcare Service have worked with HAF providers to encourage **61 previously unregistered schemes to become Ofsted registered so that other parents can pay for the provision using current government funding streams.**

## Sufficiency of provision for school aged children

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Demand for before school and after school clubs for school-aged-children is usually met through the schools that children attend if there is sufficient demand to ensure sustainability. If the school does not or cannot deliver childcare, an external provider may want to set up in partnership with the school to provide this service from the school site. Many childminders offer wraparound childcare dropping children off at school and collecting them when the school day ends.

### Right to Request

**Parents have the 'right to request' that schools offer childcare and childcare providers can 'request to use school buildings'** from where they can operate childcare. It is the responsibility of the school governors or trustees to respond to these requests. For more information see [Wraparound childcare | Childcare Choices](#).

In the summer Parents Survey, only 19% (185) parents of school aged children (primary and secondary) reported that they knew about the right to request. 81% (785) reported that they did not know about this.

### Demand

317 parents reported in the survey that they were currently using formal childcare but **needed more before school clubs and 417 reported that they needed more after school clubs**. 18 parents reported that they were not using formal childcare but **needed a before school club and 30 reported they needed an after-school club**.

44 parents completed the '[unable to find childcare form](#)' because they were looking for out of school provision.

The government's intention with the wraparound funding programme is to create over provision and by doing so to test the market as well as create demand. The start-up funding will initially sustain the provider until demand has increased or it can be determined that the places are not needed.

### Out of School Providers

This year we have worked hard to find out where there is before and after school childcare in schools. We cross referenced all services on pinpoint, before the contract ended, and have cross referenced with the schools' census as well as adding the [Holiday activities and food \(HAF\) programme](#) funded providers onto the database where appropriate.

Despite this we may not always know about all schools running before and after school care as there is no requirement for it to be registered separately with Ofsted. Out of school providers were invited to complete the Provider Self Update, unfortunately the response was poor. As a result, there may have been more places made available than we know about.

## Wraparound

**The government expect that by September 2026 most primary schools will be able to provide before and after school care, where a need has been shown, or link to other local providers, e.g. childminders or other childcare provision.**

Parents were asked in the summer parents survey whether their primary school currently has out of school provision. 729 parents reported their school had a before school club, 744 reported their school had an after-school club, 217 parents reported their school had childcare during the holidays. **132 parents reported that their primary school did not have any out of school provision.**

In Summer 2024, surveys were sent to all schools and childcare providers to gauge the provision of wraparound childcare in schools. Results (from the surveys returned, and the provider survey update showed, 107 out of 313 primary schools already have full provision from 8.00am to 6.00 pm (or from 7.45am to 5.45pm i.e. a 10-hour day). 126 schools have partial provision, this could be a breakfast or afterschool club, but not both, or their provision finished before 6.00pm. **42 schools have no childcare provision.**

Devon has many small schools, and we are working with childminders and providers to be able to offer a childcare service linked to these schools.

Transport is a major concern in some of the rural areas. Some clusters of schools are investigating ways of transporting children from small schools to a neighbouring school at the end of the school day for childcare.

## Ministry of Defence Wraparound Childcare Scheme (WAC)

In Autumn 2022, the Secretary of State for Defence launched [The Wraparound Childcare scheme](#) for service families. Eligible Service personnel can register for up to 20 hours per week, per child, term time only of wraparound childcare funding for 4- to 11-year-old children attending before and after school childcare.

Service families can check if they are eligible and how to claim WAC funding by visiting the [Discover My Benefits](#) website.

In the summer parents survey, 22 families (2.3%) reported that they were already using the funding. A further 180 (18.8%) knew about the funding and would be using it soon (15), chose not to use it (28), or were not eligible (137). **270 families reported that they were unaware of this funding and thought they might be eligible.**

## Sufficiency of provision for children with parents who work irregular and atypical hours.

Parents who work irregular hours could be those who work variable shifts for example hospital staff, police, and supermarket staff. They will also be parents on zero hours contracts. Parents who work atypical hours could be those who work overnight, before 8.00am, after 6.00pm, bank holidays and weekends.

We will fund two-, three- and four-year-old places at weekends and bank holidays enabling providers to claim funding whenever they are open between 6.00am and 8.00pm.

The Summer Term Parents Survey told us a **third of parents (27-35%) require childcare before 8am** for under-two-year-olds up to primary-school-aged children. This halved for parents of secondary school aged children (15%). Fewer parents reported that they wanted provision after 6pm (11%-14%). Very few (1%-4%) wanted overnight childcare and the same was true for childcare at the weekends (5%-11%).

The low levels of demand make group provision during atypical hours unviable and so childminders are often the best option for parents who need atypical or irregular hours of childcare that can be offered flexibly.

## **Sufficiency of provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)**

Early years and childcare providers are required to be inclusive<sup>21</sup>. Support for group early years providers with inclusive practice is available through the [Early Years Consultants](#) and for childminders and group childcare providers through the [Early Years and Childcare Advisers](#).

Many working parents with children of all ages who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can face significant challenges in finding suitable childcare that meets their child's needs and fits their working hours. The rising number of children with SEND, combined with difficulties in recruiting enough qualified and experienced staff, has increased pressure on the childcare sector. Whilst some funding and support are available for early years children alongside funded entitlements, securing and maintaining places in wraparound and holiday childcare for older children is a persistent issue, even before considering the affordability of these services. However, we are utilizing the wraparound funding as an opportunity to try out ideas to look at this childcare issue.

### **Support for Group Providers**

Early Years Consultants (EYCs) provide the Area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities coordinators (SENDCo) role referenced in the [SEND Code of Practice](#) and will offer advice to Early Years Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinators (SENDCos) and relevant staff including the key person (Early Years and Childcare Advisers support childminders with these aspects of their practice) relating to:

- Promoting an inclusive environment
- Implementing the graduated response
- Becoming a new SENDCo
- Signposting to other agencies
- Completing appropriate referral forms and inclusion funding forms
- Professional Development, including regular SENDCo forums.
- Safeguarding concerns
- EYCs will also provide generic advice relating to specific areas of need i.e., speech language and communication, positive behaviour management and support of disadvantaged children. This advice will enable settings/schools to identify children with additional needs/SEND and promote inclusive practice for all children.

### **Individual Children**

Where a setting, school or childminder has taken all the necessary steps to support a young child through a graduated response, but is still concerned regarding a child's learning and development, they can request (with parental permission) support from an Early Years Consultant (EYC) who may:

- Give advice regarding target setting and strategies.
- Observe a session alongside a practitioner to identify areas of need and consider ways to support individual children.
- Offer advice to manage tricky conversations with parents and support liaison with partner agencies.
- Signpost to services who can support individual children in the setting/school.
- The focus of this support is to ensure that the setting feels enabled and confident in meeting the needs of all children in the setting.

### **Nursery Plus**

[Nursery Plus](#) is an educational outreach service funded by Devon County Council, supporting early years settings in receipt of early years funding to meet the needs of individual children identified with additional or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). There are twelve bases in schools across Devon.

Providers identify the children in the first instance and refer them to Nursery Plus for targeted support.

- During 2023/2024, 550 children were allocated places with Nursery Plus.
- 69% (380/550) children achieved the objectives set by the Nursery Plus service.
- A further 27% (147/550) did not achieve the objectives but good progress towards them.

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<sup>21</sup> Required through the [Equality Act 2010](#) and the [Children and Families Act 2014](#).

## Early Years Complex Needs (EYCN) Service

The [EYCN service](#) is an education-based service for children with significant or complex developmental delay in two or more areas of development. One of these areas must be cognition (acquiring knowledge or understanding).

- The service is affiliated to the [National Portage Association \(NPA\)](#) and is based on the principle that parents and carers are the key figures in the care and development of their child.
- It works closely with a wide number of professionals from health, education and care and is made up of a Service Lead, Team Leads, Early Support Advisory Teachers and EYCN Practitioners.
- The child and family will be supported by the EYCN team in the following ways:
  - ✓ Home visits by practitioners, providing parents with strategies, skills, and ideas to help their child's development,
  - ✓ Support to access community settings (such as pre-school and nursery; Children Centres and their 'Step by Step' groups which focus on supporting children with a disability, and groups specifically led by the EYCN Service).
  - ✓ The specialist teachers contribute to the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) process, transitions into settings and schools, supporting requests for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

**Between September 2023 and August 2024, the EYCN Service worked with 517 children.** Any referrals not accepted are signposted to the right places.

## Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Individual Inclusion Fund

The Early Years Consultants (EYC), Early Years Complex Needs and Nursery Plus teams have continued to promote the SEND Individual Inclusion Funding application process to ensure all providers are fully aware of this support. Through their Area SEND Co-ordinator role, the EYCs have offered additional advice with regards to the identification of children's needs and evidencing an 'assess, plan, do, review' process that settings are then able to include in the application process. EYCs and the Early Years Complex Needs and Nursery Plus teams have worked with individual settings to ensure that the funding is utilised to have maximum impact on progress.

The funding panel have noted that there continues to be waiting lists for therapy and delays in assessment.

There are six funding panel meetings a year, three routine meetings and three meetings to respond to applications coming in between the routine meetings. **Inclusion funding is only given for the funded time that children attend.**

In the figures below and in tables 17 to 20 some children may be counted more than once because the count is made term on term; so, if a child is funded for more than one term, they will be counted more than once.

**1527 children have been funded through the SEND Individual Inclusion Fund in 2023/24 an increase of 40 since 2022/23.**

Table 20: Comparison of the number of two-year-old children in receipt of individual inclusion and targeted funding between 2022/23 and 2023/24. N.B: These are the most disadvantaged two-year-olds.

Two-year-olds (targeted)	Number of children funded 2022/23	Number of children funded 2023/24	Direction since 2022/23
Level 1	60	42	↓
Level 2	81	98	↑
Level 3	12	7	↓
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>↓</b>

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Early Years and Childcare Service

Table 21: Number of two-year-old children in receipt of individual inclusion and working parents' entitlement from Summer 2024

Two-year-olds ( <u>working parents</u> )	Number of children funded Summer 2024
Level 1	5
Level 2	11
Level 3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Early Years and Childcare Service

Table 22: Comparison of the number of three- and four-year-old children in receipt of individual inclusion funding and the working parents' entitlement funding between 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Three- and four-year-olds	Number of children funded 2022/23	Number of children funded 2023/24	Direction since 2022/23
Level 1	243	300	↑
Level 2	301	297	↓
Level 3	56	38	↓
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>↑</b>

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Early Years and Childcare Service

Table 23: Comparison of the number of three- and four-year-old children not in school that are in receipt of either the 15-hour universal entitlement or the 30-hour working parents' entitlement and in receipt of individual inclusion funding between 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Three- and four-year-olds	Number of children funded 2022/23	Number of children funded 2023/24	Direction since 2022/23
Level 1	513	565	↑
Level 2	694	687	↓
Level 3	127	112	↓
<b>Total</b>	<b>1334</b>	<b>1364</b>	<b>↑</b>

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Early Years and Childcare Service

## Disability Access Fund (DAF)

The [Disability Access Fund \(DAF\)](#) is intended to aid access to places for three- and four-year-olds who are in receipt of the Disability Living Allowance, by supporting providers in making reasonable adjustments to their settings. Providers are entitled to receive a one-off payment of **£828 per year**.

**204 children have been funded through the DAF in 2023/24.** This is 20 more children than were funded in 2022/2023.

## Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme

There were **1089 children who had special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) who were eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)**. In addition, there were **538 children with special educational needs and disabilities, who did not meet the free school meal criteria, who also attended the HAF programme**.

Overall, there were 1627 children with SEND accessing a HAF place.

Table 24: Number of children with special educational needs and disabilities accessing the Holiday Activities and Food Programme

	Primary	Secondary	Total
Free School Eligible - SEND	701	388	1089
Non-FSM eligible SEND	345	193	538
<b>Total</b>	<b>1046</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>1627</b>

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2024), Holiday Activities and Food Programme

## Local Offer

Information on education, health, childcare and social care services and support for children and young people (0-25) with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), can be found in [Devon County Council's Local Offer](#), with more information on what is available for [0-5 year olds in Devon](#) and provision.

The Early education and childcare guidance <sup>22</sup>states that local authorities must clearly publish how those without access to internet or people with special educational needs and disabilities can access information. Local authorities should also provide a brokerage service for parents needing further support to find childcare suitable for their needs, signpost parents to the Family information Service and ensure that parents of children with special educational needs or disabilities can access relevant information about childcare quickly and easily.

In Devon parents can access [Find Childcare in Devon](#) for a list of childcare providers and [tell us if they cannot find the childcare they need](#).

Our brokerage service is provided by the [Early Years and Childcare Advisors](#) in respond to the [Unable to find childcare forms](#).

## Focus for September 2024 – August 2025:

- Sufficiency of places all year round for children under five.
- Expansion of before and after school places for primary school aged children.
- Creation of more holiday provision for all children.
- Specific Hotspot areas.
- Support recruitment and retention within the sector.
- Improve information for parents.
- The quality of provision.
- Accessibility for children with SEND.
- The charges made by providers and their admissions processes.
- Ensure sufficient places for targeted two-year-olds.
- All providers completing the Provider Self Update.
- Financial impact of the October 2024 budget on the sector.

## Actions arising from the report:

### Relating to the sufficiency of places:

- Promote DfE funding streams: School Based Nurseries, Breakfast clubs, Childminder Start up Grants, Childcare Expansion Capital Grant, particularly in areas where provision is most needed.
- Identify schools where there is surplus capacity that could be used for nursery provision.
- Enable the Childrens Centre buildings, which will not be needed for Family Hubs, to be used to accommodate childcare provision all year round.
- Identify suitable premises from where childcare could operate.

### Relating to the take up of the funded entitlements:

- Monitor the take of funded places and hours by children with SEND and follow up where children are not accessing a place and where children are not accessing the full entitlement hours. This will be used to inform a review of Individual Inclusion Funding as well as ensuring accessibility, inclusion, and sufficiency.
- Work with colleagues in Childrens Services Social Care to support the take up of targeted two-year-old places and hours and ensure that Children in Care, Children who were previously in Care and Children in Need are supported to access places and funding to improve their life chances.

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<sup>22</sup> [Early education and childcare - Statutory guidance for local authorities \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) Part C Information to Parents C.3, C.13, C.14, C.15.

- Monitor the take up of the current entitlements and the new entitlements and ensure that there is sufficient childcare and early education to meet the demand of parents for children from 9 months to the start of reception from September 2025.

### Relating to parents:

- Provide information to parents on the support that is available to help them with childcare costs and explain what charges, which are made by providers, are acceptable.
- Work with providers to build greater flexibility and affordability into their provision for parents, especially where provision is open all-year-round but does not enable parents to stretch the funded entitlements.
- Continue to survey parents regularly to gain a greater insight into the demand for childcare. Strive for a greater response from families with children under five.

### Relating to the quality of provision:

- Monitor the quality of provision.
- Support settings to sustain their quality or improve where Ofsted have judged them as requiring improvement or inadequate through [Early Years ONE Devon](#).
- Provide a range of professional development opportunities to ensure settings meet the statutory duties including those related to safeguarding and develop their skills and knowledge in providing high quality inclusive practice for all children.

### Relating to recruitment and retention of staff:

- Promote recruitment and retention campaigns, nationally and locally.
- Continue to work in partnership with [Learn Devon](#) to deliver early years qualifications.
- Continue to work with [Bootcamps - Train 4 Tomorrow](#) to deliver play work training for those entering the sector.
- Encourage childminding as a career, especially in rural areas, by promoting the new DfE flexibilities to support childminders in joining and remaining in the profession.

### Relating to information and its management:

- Increase the completion of the Provider Self Update and accuracy of data.
- Continue to monitor the Provider Self Update submissions to support our understanding of where provision is offered, identify where there are gaps and provide support to develop provision in these areas.
- Further develop the Find Childcare in Devon website to support parents to find childcare.

## Find out more.



Email [childcareinfo@devon.gov.uk](mailto:childcareinfo@devon.gov.uk) for childcare sufficiency enquiries



Email [eyef@devon.gov.uk](mailto:eyef@devon.gov.uk) for early years funding enquiries



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