

**Childcare Sufficiency Assessment  
Annual Report  
September 2022 to August 2023**



**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 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 2022 to August 2023**.

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

## Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership

Our Safeguarding Children Partnership is working together to make sure that **children and families get the right support, in the right place at the right time**. We believe that every child in Devon should have the best possible start in life and the opportunity to thrive.

The Children and Young People’s Plan [Children and Young Peoples' Plan 2019 - 2023](#) outlines our commitment.

We believe all children and young people in Devon have the right to:

Life Chances	Be Healthy and Well	Feel Safe	Be Protected from Harm
Achieve their potential with the opportunities to thrive	Have the best start in life, stay well and thrive. With good information and specialist help when they need it.	Be protected from neglect and supported when vulnerable	Be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation.

### The Best Place Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025

Devon County Council's plan focuses on how we will help the county to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, build on the resilience of local people and communities to create a fairer, healthier, and more caring place, and grasp the opportunity to create a greener, more prosperous, and inclusive future for all.

The best place to grow up, live well and prosper.

Our priorities

- Respond to the climate emergency.
- Be ambitious for children and young people.
- Support sustainable economic recovery.
- Tackle poverty and inequality
- Improve health and wellbeing.
- Help communities be safe, connected, and resilient.

### The Early Years and Childcare Service

Our Service focusses on supporting the development of nursery, 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 and reach their potential at the end of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) 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.

The teams in the early years and childcare service

- **Funding and Provider Support Team** – manage all the processes in relation to funding allocations to settings for the entitlements, supplementary payments, allocation of inclusion funding and oversight of the budgets and day to support to settings in terms of business and financial planning.
- **Sufficiency and Information Team** – manage all the information in relation to our providers, take up of funding, types of provision, information to parents in terms of their entitlements, working with providers in relation to statutory requirements in terms of space and ratios.
- **Early Years and Childcare Advisory (EYCA) Team** – support settings to meet their statutory duties in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). They support the development of new provision, work with childminders and Private, Voluntary, and Independent (PVI) settings to meet the safeguarding requirements, support the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team and provide training to settings. They deliver First Aid and Mental Health First aid training along with relevant and current updates. They work with out of school sector develop provision and to support quality. They support the quality assurance of providers that are part of the Holiday Activities and Food programme.
- **Early Years Consultants (EYC) Team** - support schools and settings to develop effective EYFS provision and pedagogy focussing on the quality of learning and development. Provide professional development and training to support high quality teaching and learning and inclusive practice, support children in care in partnership with the Virtual School. The team also provides the Area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo) role for all early year's settings in Devon. This includes ensuring that setting SENDCos can effectively meet the needs of all children, supporting them to meet the national and local requirements of the SENDCo role.
- **Early Years Complex Needs (EYCN) Team** – support families with children with the most complex special educational needs. They provide support in the home; a community offer where families can come together and start the journey towards early education in partnership with children's centres in some areas and in the early years settings to support inclusion and planning for transition to primary school. Our aim is that all children in the early years can access their early education in their community setting as far as possible.

# National and Local Updates 2023 - 2024

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

The Department for Education has announced that by September 2025, working parents will be able to claim 30 hours of funded childcare a week, for 38 weeks of the year or 22 hours per week across 52 weeks of the year. This will be available for children from 9 months old to up to their child starting school.

Eligible working parents<sup>1</sup> of three- and four-year-olds already get 30 hours a week of funded childcare. The increased offer will be 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.

- From **April 2024**, working parents of **two-year-olds** will be able to access **15 hours** of funded childcare (per week over 38 weeks, **570 hours per year**).
- From **September 2024**, **15 hours** of funded childcare (per week over 38 weeks), **570 hours per year** will be extended down to the age of **nine months for working parents**.
- From **September 2025**, working parents of children aged nine months and upwards will be entitled to **30 hours funded childcare** (per week over 38 weeks, **1140 hours per year**) right up to their child starting school.

Table 1: New funded childcare entitlements roll-out.

When	Age of children	Hours Per Week over 38 weeks	Hours Per Year
From April 2024	Two-year-olds	15	570
From September 2024	Nine months	15	570
From September 2025	Nine months	30	1140

Source: DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION (2023), Funded childcare: How we are tackling the cost of childcare<sup>3</sup>

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

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

### Wraparound Provision at Primary Schools

Local authorities and schools will be given more funding for wrap around care, so that parents of school-age children can access childcare in their local area from 8am – 6pm. This will be rolled out in September 2024 and the Department for Education expect that by September 2026, all parents will be able to access wraparound care, either from their school or other provider<sup>4</sup>.

## Provider Self Update – Devon County Council

A [new Provider Self Update](#) is coming in Spring Term 2024, where providers will be able to update information about their provision online which will be used by the Early Years and Childcare Service to help assess the sufficiency of provision and will be published to parents. This will replace the Annual Provider Survey and Pinpoint.

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

This means the Early Years and Childcare Service should receive more accurate up to date information from providers, helping us to make better judgements and predictions about whether there is enough childcare in Devon.

<sup>1</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Working parents who individually earn more than £8,670 (from April 2023) but less than £100,000 per year are eligible. Childcare Choices | 30 Hours Funded Childcare, Tax-Free Childcare and More | Help with Costs | GOV.UK

<sup>3</sup> [Free childcare: How we are tackling the cost of childcare - The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Free childcare: How we are tackling the cost of childcare - The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

## Summary of Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency in Devon

### Strengths

- ✓ Clear understanding of where we need to develop childcare and early education provision across the county.
- ✓ Sustaining above national take up of two-three- and four-year old funding.
- ✓ Increased take-up of the Early Years Pupil Premium
- ✓ Take up of the full extended entitlement hours by children in need has increased.
- ✓ The quality of provision has dipped but is now improving again.
- ✓ Significant increase in the number of checks being made through the [Citizen Portal](#)
- ✓ Partnership working across teams, including Public Health Nursing, Commissioning, Early Help
- ✓ The early years and childcare sector continues to contribute to the Devon economy with a GVA (Gross Value Added) of £54.5m

### Areas of Focus

- Development of provision to meet the demand for the new entitlements.
- Delivering the programme for wraparound provision in schools
- Developing setting and school capacity for financial planning
- Meeting the needs of children with SEND within mainstream provision and reducing the reliance on EHCPs.
- Develop our understanding of the take up of funding for vulnerable groups.
- Monitor and improve the take up of the full 570 hours by two-year-olds.
- Deliver the provider self-update and Find Childcare Devon website to support parents to find childcare.
- Meeting the childcare needs of parents who want to work more hours.

### Opportunities

- Increased funding rates and grant funding for developing new entitlements, wraparound support including capital funding.
- Closer working with more council teams and District councils to support the development of childcare in hot spots.
- Early years provision in new schools
- Working more closely with schools and MATs (Multi Academy Trust) to provider extended age ranges, longer hours and holiday provision
- Working across the Early Years Foundation Stage to improve transitions to reception for children with SEND.
- Working to develop family hubs model to enhance offer to parents including information sharing about entitlements and financial support for childcare

### Risks

- Reducing numbers of child minders
- Recruitment and retention in the sector
- Ongoing low funding for early years provision
- Lack of funding to support children with SEND in school age childcare.
- Continued closure of funded providers
- Slight dip in quality of provision due to recruitment and post COVID impact
- Reduced demand for childcare.
- Potential threat to providers on travel to work routes.
- Lack of suitable premises housing restrictions for childminders..
- Cost of living increase.
- Falling birth rates impacts on demand and sustainability of provision.
- Requirements on school leaders to be present for safeguarding responsibilities' when schools are open so restricts all year opening

# A Picture of Devon: Putting Childcare into Context

## Population

Table 2: Population Changes in Devon

Population of	Baseline 2021/22	Autumn Term 22	Spring Term 23	Summer Term 23	Summer Term 23 As %	End of Year 22/23	Direction since 21/22
Under-one-year-olds	6609	6418	6191	6127	4.3% <sup>5</sup>	6127	↓
Two-year-olds	6981	6845	6754	6794	4.8%	6794	↓
Three- and four-year-olds (not eligible for school)	12036	7274	9741	11585	8.2%	11585	↓
Under-five-year-olds	35241	34940	34704	34490	24.3%	34490	↓
Primary school aged children (4-11-year-olds)	64220	68630	65972	64019	45.2%	64019	↓

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2023), Health Data (April 2023)

Over the last year<sup>6</sup> the population of 0 to 16-year-olds has increased by 0.1% (169 children) to 141,660.

- Most Devon districts saw minor change in the population of 0 to 16-year-olds except for East Devon which saw an increase of 1.1% (289 children). This is due to the large housing developments at Cranbrook and on the eastern side of Exeter.
- The population of under-five-year-olds in Devon has decreased by 2.1% (751 children) and is predicted to continue to decrease.
- The population of two-<sup>7</sup>, three- and four-year-olds eligible for the Early Years Funding is predicted to continue to decrease over the next 12 months.
- The number of births in the first six months of 2023 has decreased by 104 compared with the first six months of 2022. All Devon districts have seen a decrease except for Mid Devon and South Hams which rose slightly. East Devon has seen the greatest drop in number of births when compared to previous year.

<sup>5</sup> Of total population 0–16-year-olds in Devon. Rounded up.

<sup>6</sup> Population of children as at 31/03/2022 compared with population as at 31/03/2023 – Health Data

<sup>7</sup> Based on DWP Eligibility list for Summer Term 2023



## Socio-economic Differences

We use the [Index of Multiple Deprivation \(IMD\) 2019](#)<sup>8</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 all the funding that they are entitled to, so they are given plenty of opportunities to learn and thrive.

In this section we look at:

- The number of two-, three- and four-year-old children living in the top 30% of disadvantaged areas and their take up of funding.
- The take up of the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) by all three- and four-year-olds because the eligibility for the EYPP is dependent on the receipt of state benefits.
- The take up of free school meals by two-, three- and four-year-olds that attend nursery classes in schools. To be eligible children must meet the free school meal criteria and attend both before and after the lunch period.

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'**. 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 would expect more providers to be receiving this funding and 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 places that are available all year round.

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

Table 3: Proportion of funded two-year-olds living in the top 30% disadvantaged areas and their take up of the full entitlement.

Two-year-old funding	Baseline 2021/22	Autumn Term 2022	Spring Term 2023	Summer Term 2023	Direction since 2021/22
Number of funded two-year-olds living in the top 30% most disadvantaged areas as a percentage of two-year-olds funded at Devon providers	20.9%	21.9%	21.8%	20.9%	↔
Percentage of two-year-olds living in top 30% most disadvantaged areas accessing a funded place who are taking up the full entitlement <sup>9</sup>	77.4%	77.7%	77.9%	78.1%	↑

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2023), Early Years and Childcare Service

The data in the above table tells us that there has been no change in the proportion of funded two-year-olds that live in our most disadvantaged areas. Of the children living in these areas more are taking up all the funded time that is available to them. This is good news.

There were 1440 funded two-year-olds in summer 2022 of which 301 were living in the top 30% (20.9%). There were 1183 funded two-year-olds in summer 2023 of which 247 were living in the top 30% (20.9%).

<sup>8</sup> The IMD 2019 provides a relative measure of deprivation in small areas, known as Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), across England.

<sup>9</sup> 570 hours a year that is often taken as 15 hours a week during term times.

Table 4: 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 funding	Baseline 2021/22	Autumn Term 2022	Spring Term 2023	Summer Term 2023	Direction since 2021/22
Number of funded three- and four-year-olds living in the top 30% most disadvantaged areas as a percentage of three- and four-year-olds funded at Devon providers	12.7%	12.6%	12.5%	12.7%	↔
Percentage of three- and four-year-olds living in top 30% most disadvantaged area accessing a funded place who are taking up the full universal entitlement <sup>10</sup>	88.9%	87.8%	88.9%	88.4%	↓
Number of funded three- and four-year-olds living in the top 30% most disadvantaged areas as a percentage of three- and four-year-olds accessing the extended entitlement <sup>11</sup> at Devon providers	9.9%	10.2%	10.4%	10.5%	↑
Percentage of three- and four-year-olds living in top 30% most disadvantaged areas accessing an extended place who are taking up the full extended entitlement	61.9%	61.2%	60.1%	64.6%	↑

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2023), Early Years and Childcare Service

There was no change in the proportion of funded three- and four-year-olds living in our most disadvantaged areas. There was small decrease (0.5%) in the proportion of children taking up the full entitlement compared to this time last year although the take up remains high.

The full take up of the 1140 extended entitlement hours is most pleasing. We would expect to see this because employment levels are high and therefore parents need childcare to enable them to work.

This means that there are still 35% of parents who 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 15.9% in summer 2022 (1,845 children) to 17.8% in summer 2023. Likewise, the proportion of funded three- and four-year-olds with both EYPP and the extended entitlement has increased from 23.1% in summer 2022 (427 children) to 27.6% in summer 2023 (558 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.

### Free School Meals

Parents who have applied for two-year-old funding through the Citizens Portal, and have given us their personal information so that we can check [Free School Meal Eligibility](#) will be contacted when their child takes up a funded place to tell them that they are eligible for a free school meal if their child attends both before and after the lunch period.

We have seen a slight increase of take up of free school meals in some reception classes, where the proportion of free school meals has risen from 15.1% in Summer 2022 to 15.7% in Summer 2023.

### Children in Need (CIN)

In Summer 2022 there were 159 two-year old children in need. In summer 2023 there were ninety-two two-year-old children in need and of these children 61 are accessing a place in summer 2022 there were 298

<sup>10</sup> 570 hours a year that is often taken as 15 hours a week during term times.

<sup>11</sup> 1140 hours a year for working families.

three- and four-year-old children in need. In summer 2023 there were 288 three- and four-year-olds (not in school) who are children in need.

Table 5: Take up of the funded entitlements by children in need.

Percentage of children in need	Summer term 2022	Summer term 2023	Direction since 2022	Compared with the percentage of all children
Accessing a two-year-old funded place	69.8%	66.3%	↓	85.7%
Taking up the full two-year-old entitlement of 570 hours	72.1%	73.8%	↑	73.5%
Accessing a three- and four-year-old funded place	92.6%	91.7%	↓	96.1%
Taking up the full universal entitlement of 570 hours	86.6%	86.4%	↓	88.8%
Taking up the extended entitlement	19.9%	27.3%	↑	57.3%
Taking up the full extended entitlement of 1140 hours	69.1%	73.6%	↑	61.2%

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2023), 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 the extended entitlement has increased significantly for children in need which is good news. A vast majority of these children take up their full entitlement which is well above the Devon average for all children.

Take-up in other areas is slightly down on last year. It should be noted that some of Devon's children in need use non funded special schools and these are not reflected in the figured above.

## 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.

The recent growth in Barnstaple Town has been mitigated with new primary and nursery provision at Roundswell Primary School which opened in 2020, however these do not include places for 2-year-olds and younger children. Similarly, the growth around Monkerton has been mitigated with new primary and nursery provision at West Clyst Primary School, and Monkerton Primary school which also opened in 2020. More recently, the Matford Brook Academy was delivered with early years provision to serve both Southwest Exeter and Teignbridge.

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

We will continue to work with the [School Place Planning Team](#) on developing provision in new schools planned because of large housing developments. An important aspect of this is ensuring requirements for early years and childcare provision are considered in responses to District Council Local Plans and [Section 106](#) requests. The county council will require 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. All new primary schools are expected to incorporate early years

provision reflecting an expected increase in children and demand for places in the areas where they are delivered. Therefore, any development in an area with a new primary school planned is required to make an early year's contribution towards the delivery of the school. For more information, please see the [Education Infrastructure Plan \(2021\)](#).

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 to

## **Supporting Children and Families of Asylum Seekers**

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Devon Early Years and Childcare Service has been working with the Devon Resettlement team supporting children and families that have been placed in the asylum hotels in Devon, with the aim to assist families to access early years provision, as well as early help support.

Where the asylum hotel is located in the local community, we have been able to introduce families to the local providers, so that children can access their 15 hours early years entitlement for two-, three- and four-year-olds.

One of the asylum hotels was in a more remote location which means early years provision, play parks, etc are not within walking distance of the hotel for the families. We had to think about alternative ways of supporting the families with young children, as there is no funding for transport for early years children to access early years provision. We looked at various options on how we could provide an early years' experience for the children, to ensure that they had play opportunities out of their hotel rooms. The only feasible option was for us as Devon Early Years and Childcare Service to offer a creche type provision at the hotel. We offered four sessions per week, staffed by our early years and childcare advisers with some support from the resettlement team. This enabled parents to leave their children and either attend English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) classes or have a break. During the time we operated the creche, we saw children's confidence grow, as well as an improvement in the English language skills. The creche has now been replaced by activities delivered by both the Children's Centre and voluntary groups.

We are continuing to work with the multi-agency team to try and establish transport funding so that the children in the hotel can access early years provision in the local community.

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme identified a HAF provider to offer a four-week programme for primary and secondary aged children and young people at the asylum hotel during the summer holidays. The HAF provider also included activities for families with early years children. This was very well attended and ensured that the children and young people were being physically active.

## Quality

### 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 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.

[Early Years and Childcare Advisers](#) and [Early Years Consultants](#) supported 31 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.

Table 6: Ofsted Outcomes of providers inspected in 2022/23

Type of Provision	Inadequate	Requires Improvement	Standards Not Met	Outstanding	Total Number of Inspection
Early Years childcare on non-domestic premises	2	8	NA	8	76
Childminders	2	2	NA	12	72
Primary Schools EYFS	0	9	NA	6	55
Childminders/Out of school provision			4		
Nursery School			NA	1	1

Source: Watchsted - Analysis

The table above shows that 86.8% of Devon’s early years group providers, inspected in 2022/23, were rated as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted compared to 88.9% nationally. Also, 94.4% of Devon’s childminders were rated as Good or Outstanding compared to 93.6% nationally. When looking at the latest Ofsted outcome over several years, 90.7% of Devon’s early years group providers were rate as Good or Outstanding compared to 92.2% nationally. The corresponding figure for Devon’s childminders was 95.8% compared to 92,6% nationally.

The Early Years teams have reviewed the process for suspending funding as we are aware that by removing funding, we are hampering settings capacity to improve and creating 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.

### Managing the Childcare Market

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Sufficiency of childcare encompasses the amount available, quality, accessibility, affordability, and flexibility of provision as well as supply and demand. This 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 side and with parents to establish demand and improve take up and affordability.

#### Supply and Demand

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.

The Local Authority is required by law to manage the early years and childcare market. All teams have a part to play.

We promote childcare as a career:

- Working with Job Centre Plus and attending careers fairs
- Running marketing campaigns to encourage people to take up childminding
- Offer fully funded introduction to child minding courses
- Work with Learn Devon to develop L2 qualifications and the skills bootcamp offer for Early Years
- Work with other providers of childcare qualifications to support them to market and promote their offer

We support this by working with new or 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 training 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 advertising vacant posts.
- To identify whether all children are accessing the funded entitlements.

### Demand for early years and childcare

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We have two 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 parents childcare survey.

### Unable to find childcare forms

There were ninety-one unable to find childcare forms submitted in 2022/23. These were mainly for out of school and holiday provision for 4–11-year-olds but were spread across Devon.

Table 7: Number of children needing childcare as reported on unable to find childcare forms submitted.

District	Exeter	East Devon	Mid Devon	North Devon	Torridge	South Devon	Teignbridge	West Devon	Total
Under 2-year-old provision	3	1	1	1	3	2	5	1	17
2-year-old provision	1	4	1	1	0	2	1	0	10
3- and 4-year-old provision	2	3	1	1	1	2	3	1	14
Holiday Provision - 4–11-year-olds	0	2	1	4	1	1	1	0	10
Out of School Provision - 4–11-year-olds	3	4	9	7	1	3	8	1	36
Out of School Provision - 11–16-year-olds	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	3
Holiday Provision - 11–16-year-olds	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>91</b>

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2023), Early Years and Childcare Service

If a parent provides contact details, a member of the early years and childcare service will contact the parents to help them find childcare.

Of the ninety-one forms submitted 82 parents asked to be contacted. Of these, 14 were helped to find suitable childcare, 13 were still unable to find suitable childcare and for 55 parents the outcome was unknown.

## 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 32595 emails and 23879 texts were sent.

There were 2879 responses to the Parents Survey in Summer Term 2023 from parents in Devon. This related to 5931 children. This is almost 4 times the number of responses to that seen in Summer 2022.

There is a population of 160097 0-18-year-olds in Devon. This is a potential response rate of 3.70% (0.86% in Summer 2022).

Table 8: Number of children by age who lived with parents responding to the Parents Survey in Summer 2023

	Number of children
<b>Under 2-year-olds</b>	616
<b>2-year-olds</b>	456
<b>3- and 4-year-olds</b>	1062
<b>Primary school aged children</b>	3040
<b>Secondary school aged children</b>	700
<b>17–18-year-olds with additional needs</b>	57

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2023), Early Years and Childcare Service, Parent Survey Summer 2023

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

78.4% of respondents had not completed the parents survey in the Spring Term 2022.

### Use of formal childcare

75% (2158) of parents reported that they used formal childcare and 25% (721) reported that they did not.

Of those that used formal childcare, 63.1% (1361) reported that they could get as much childcare as they needed whilst 36.9% (797) reported that they could not. The majority of these required a holiday club (429) or an out of school club (422).

Of those that did not use formal childcare, 82.7% (596) reported that did not need to use formal childcare now, whilst 17.3% (125) reported that they did need to use formal childcare now in order to work or take up training. Of those that reported that they did need to use it, 31.2% (39) reported that they were aware that Devon County Council could help them find childcare whilst 68.8% (86) were not aware.

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
<b>Under 2-year-olds</b>	35	192	227
<b>2-year-olds</b>	24	143	167
<b>3- and 4-year-olds</b>	16	309	325
<b>Primary School aged Children</b>	148	847	995
<b>Secondary School aged Children</b>	34	158	192
<b>17–18-year-olds with additional needs</b>	1	17	18

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2023), Early Years and Childcare Service, Parent Survey Summer 2023

There are 1924 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 (282), followed by Clyst Vale (115) and Bideford (108).

### Type of childcare required

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	34	200	234
Day Nursery	35	216	251
School Nursery	12	76	88
Childminder	23	161	184
Before School Club	29	288	317
After School Club	49	422	471
Holiday Club	57	429	486
Nanny	8	49	57

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2023), Early Years and Childcare Service, Parent Survey Summer 2023

Those not using childcare but needed to use childcare mainly 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 mainly need out of school provision.

### Where is childcare needed?

70.5% (1707) of parents reported that they needed childcare close to home (similar to that seen in summer term 2022, 69%)

35% (847) reported they needed childcare close to a school (higher than summer term 2022, 15%)

9.8% (238) reported that they needed it close to work (slightly higher than summer term 2022, 12%).

### Recommendations

- Raise awareness of the Early Years and Childcare Service and the unable to find childcare form through social media.
- Increase awareness of help with the cost of childcare.
- Promote stretching funding with parents and providers.
- 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 and tax-free childcare to parents of younger children so they are aware before they reach the age they are used.
- Promote the new 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.
- Check which schools are local to the 214 parents who reported there was no out of school provision, check to see whether they have out of school provision and encourage them to set up provision if viable or signpost to a local provider.

## Supply of Childcare

### Changes to the amount of provision available

The [types of Early Years and Childcare Providers factsheet](#) explains the differences between provision in Devon.

Table 11: Number of childcare providers by type of care on 31 August 2023 compared with 31 August 2022

Type of Provider	Total 2021/22	Total 2022/23	Difference
Day Nursery	135	138	+3
Pre-school	161	156	-5
Nursery unit of Independent School	14	14	0
Academy Nursery Class	81	82	+1
Maintained Nursery Class	53	55	+2
Out of School Club	260	252	-8
Weekend Clubs	7	6	-1
Holiday Scheme	122	110	-12
Childminder	375	352	-23
Home Child Carer	113	109	-4
<b>All Provision</b>	<b>1321</b>	<b>1274</b>	<b>-47</b>

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2023), Early Years and Childcare Service

The total number of providers has decreased by 47 over the last year. These have mainly been childminders, but this is in line with the national trend. There have been pre-schools that have closed that are now managed by a school and there has been a continued slight growth in the number of private day nurseries opening.

Table 12: The regional and national decreases in overall provider numbers (as a percentage), for the period March 2022 to March 2023

	Devon	Southwest	England
Decrease in the number of Ofsted registered providers	-6%	-8%	-7%
Decrease in the number of childminders	-11%	-13%	-11%

Source: OFSTED, Childcare providers and inspections, Table 1: Registered childcare providers and places<sup>12</sup>

Overall, the total number of providers has decreased over the last year. However, this decrease has not been as great as the decrease in providers seen across the Southwest and has been on par with what has been seen nationally.

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

Funding for two-year-olds is based on [national criteria](#). A proportion of two-year olds will be funded for 570 hours a year and all other parents of two-year-olds must pay for the childcare they use. Every six weeks we receive a list of potentially eligible parents' names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). An invitation is sent to these parents, which directs them to check their eligibility for two-year-old funding through the [Citizen's Portal](#). If a parent applies through the Citizens Portal and is found to be eligible, they will receive confirmation of entitlement which they will need to show to their chosen childcare provider.

Parents who do not receive an invitation can check their eligibility on the [Citizens Portal](#). Some parents will need to request help through the Citizens Portal and submit evidence of eligibility. These will be parents who may be eligible for other reasons rather than income and benefits.

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

<sup>12</sup> [Early years and childcare statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) [Accessed November 2023]

arrangement order the parent/carer needs to apply through the Citizens portal and attach evidence (the Order) to support the application.

From September 2022, the Department for Education (DfE) extended the entitlement to the following additional groups with no recourse to public funds (NRPF):

1. those with a UK ancestry visa
2. those with temporary protection status under Section 12 of the Nationality and Borders Act; and
3. those with pre-settled status with no qualifying right to reside.

These families are subject to the maximum income thresholds as follows:

- £26,500 for families outside of London with one child.
- £30,600 for families outside of London with two or more children.
- A maximum capital threshold of £16,000 in all areas.

Families should apply through the Citizens Portal and will need to submit evidence so that eligibility can be confirmed.

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

Parents can use [2info@devon.gov.uk](mailto:2info@devon.gov.uk) to contact us about two-year-old provision.

Table 13: Percentage of two-year-olds accessing funding and percentage taking up the full entitlement.

Percentage of two-year-olds	Baseline 2021/22	Autumn Term 22	Spring Term 23	Summer Term 23	Direction since 21/22
Accessing a funded place (percentage of the DWP number) <sup>13</sup>	89.6%	87.5%	88.2%	85.7%	↓
Accessing a funded place who are taking up the full entitlement	71.9%	72.9%	72.0%	73.5%	↑

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2023), Early Years and Childcare Service

This year has seen the number of children on the DWP list decreasing which is in line with the total population of two-year-olds decreasing.

The take-up of funded places by eligible two-year-olds in Devon has decreased from 89.6% in Summer 2022 to 85.7% in Summer 2023. This decrease has coincided with the introduction of emailing and text messaging parents on the DWP list to prompt them to check their child’s eligibility on the Citizen’s Portal. It was expected to take a few terms for parents to become familiar with the change in communication from postal invitation to instant messaging and it is expected that take-up will once again increase in upcoming terms. It should be noted that Devon remains well above the national average take-up of 74% (summer 2023).

The take-up of the full entitlement has increased this year from 71.9% to 73.5% in Summer 2023.

<sup>13</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.

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

Funding for three and four-year-olds is a universal entitlement. We fund early years providers for children from the start of the funding period<sup>14</sup> following their third birthday until they start at school or until they reach compulsory school age. The entitlement is for 570 hours a year. Many parents take this as 15 hours a week during term times only, but working parents often stretch the entitlement taking fewer hours each week over more weeks of the year.

The take-up of universally funded places by three- and four-year olds has decreased slightly over the last year from 96.6% in Summer Term 2022 to 96.1% in Summer Term 2023.

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 remained the same as last year at 88.8%.

The take-up of the extended entitlement continues to increase with 57.3% of all funded three- and four-year olds taking up some hours in Summer Term 2023 up from 53.3% in Summer Term 2022.

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. Parents can report this to us on the '[unable to find suitable childcare feedback form](#)'.

## Sufficiency of provision for children from families in receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit

Families in receipt of Universal Credit or the childcare element of working tax credit may be eligible for a [Free School Meal, Early Years Pupil Premium and two-year-old funding](#).

Table 14: The number of people aged 16-49 on universal credit.

July	The number of people aged 16-49 on universal credit <sup>15</sup>
2023	40776
2022	37901
2021	40100
2020	40737

Source: DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS (2023), 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 Department for Work and Pensions report this to be the case for the whole of the country and has been caused by the cost-of-living crisis<sup>16</sup>.

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 107 funded three-year-olds of working parents eligible for the extended entitlement in Summer 2023 that were receiving benefits based two-year-old funding in Spring 2023. This reflects the low wages in some businesses and sectors as well as the socio-economic differences seen within some areas of Devon.

<sup>14</sup> [Early education and childcare \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) - Points A1.6 and A1.7

<sup>15</sup> Job Centre Plus – Stat Explore – It is assumed that over 50-year-olds are less likely to have young children, therefore the analysis just looks at people on universal credit aged between 16 and 49.

<sup>16</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, 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 do not require it, for example, those who work term-time only. Other parents use their annual leave entitlement to cover holiday periods to reduce the need for childcare, whilst others will use friends or relatives to care for their children.

In the summer parents survey, 429 parents reported that they were currently using formal childcare but needed more holiday care, and fifty-seven 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 North Devon and 3 were for East Devon. We helped one parent to find suitable childcare. We were not able to help two parents and the outcome for 8 parents is unknown.

### Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)

The Department for Education (DfE) funded Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme aims to support children to eat more healthily, be more active over the school holidays and have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition as well as be more engaged with school and other local services.

Please note that the HAF programme covers 4 days at Christmas, 4 days at Easter, 16 days in the summer– it does not run in half term holidays.

A day is 4 hours and includes a nutritious hot meal.

We have over 190 providers offering 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 etc.

Eligible children are issued with a unique code to book on to the activities. We currently have 19,000 eligible children in Devon.

Table 15: Number of HAF places and children attending 2022/23

Holiday Period	Number of Places	Number of children attending
Christmas 2022	7195	2794
Easter 2023	6412	1899
Summer 2023	30,000	3372

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2023), Early Years and Childcare Service

There is an extended criteria element of the programme where 15% of the funding can be used for the following categories.

- children assessed by the local authority as being in need, at risk or vulnerable (for example, children on a Child Protection Plan, Children in Need or on an Early Help plan)
- young carers
- looked-after children or previously looked after children.
- children with an EHC (Education, Health, and Care) plan
- children who have low attendance rates at school or who are at risk of exclusion.
- children living in areas of high deprivation or from low-income households who are not in receipt of free school meals.
- children in transition phases between nursery and primary school or primary and secondary school

Table 16: Number of places and number of children attending HAF Programme 2022/2023

Summer HAF figures 2023	Primary	Secondary	Total
FSM-eligible + non-SEND	1604	600	2204
FSM-eligible + SEND	301	179	480
Not FSM-eligible + non-SEND	264	138	402
Not FSM-eligible + SEND	183	103	286
<b>TOTAL number of HAF funded FSM eligible attendees (sum of above)</b>	2352	1020	3372
Other (free)	0	0	0
Other (paid for)	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL number of attendees (sum of all including others)</b>	2352	1020	3372

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2023), Early Years and Childcare Service

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

- It's been amazing. As a single parent. It's a struggle to keep them occupied and financially take them places. XX and his team are so friendly and offer so much support to each child dependant on their need.
- They make friends. Learn new skills and have Fun. It gave me a couple of mornings where I didn't need to find ways to entertain my son. I also loved the staffed as they interacted in a way my son would communicate with them which made me more relaxed about using the HAF program.
- It helped me spend some time with my baby (7weeks) as well so could slow down a little.
- Provided an activity I otherwise wouldn't have been able to afford, provided a safe place for disabled child to play Great opportunities that I would not have been able to finance myself - reduced the burden, guilt and stress.

Feedback from Children and young people

- Its good, I would just be sat in my room not doing anything, but this is fun, like the dodgeball and the activities I get to see my friends before we go to big school.
- This is the best club, and you mustn't ever close it, it should stay open forever as it is so good!
- I enjoy the food, meeting and making new friends. Making a Loom Band to break the world record for the longest one. I
- really enjoy the food and the art activities I enjoy seeing friends.
- Really enjoyed the VR experience except when the spiders tried to get in the lift - that was scary as it felt real. My favourite game is Coca Cola, Fanta, Sprite (A fast jumping game)
- I like the sensory room and I make new friends.
- I can't believe that I am making music with fruit!! It's nice to come and be with my friends and make new friends.
- The grown-ups are nice and make up fun games I have made lots of friends from different schools.

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

## Sufficiency of provision for school aged children

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Demand for out of school provision (before school and after school clubs) for school-aged-children is usually met through the local schools that the children attend, where there is sufficient demand from parents to ensure sustainable provision. If the school does not or cannot deliver childcare provision where a need has been identified, 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. This is set out in '[Wraparound and holiday childcare: parent and childcare provider 'rights to request'](#)'. We have asked schools to inform us if they receive requests from childcare providers and parents. There have been no requests from parents or childcare providers that we are aware of although these may not have specifically been raised as a 'right to request' nor dealt with as such by schools.

In the summer parents survey, only 13.3% (256) parents of school aged children (primary and secondary) reported that they knew about the right to request. 86.7% (1669) reported that they did not know about this.

### Out of School Providers

We do 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. As a result, there may have been more places made available than we know about.

The government expect that by September 2026 most primary schools will be able to provide their own before and after school care. Parents were asked in the summer parents survey whether their primary school currently has out of school provision. 1148 parents reported their school had a before school club, 1154 reported their school had an after-school club, 298 parents reported their school had childcare during the holidays. 214 parents reported that their primary school did not have any out of school provision.

### Demand

In the summer parents survey, 288 parents reported that they were currently using formal childcare but needed more before school clubs and 422 reported that they needed more after school clubs. 29 parents reported that they were not using formal childcare but needed a before school club and 49 reported they needed an after-school club.

39 parents contacted us using the '[unable to find childcare form](#)' because they were looking for out of school provision. We helped four parents to find suitable childcare. We were not able to help ten parents and the outcome for 25 parents is unknown.

### 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, parents of primary school aged children were asked about the new funding. Thirty families (1.56%) reported that they were already using the funding. A further 238 (12%) knew about the funding and would be using it soon (13), chose not to use it (20), or were not eligible (205). 451 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.

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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 that most parents requiring childcare for irregular hours for their children of different ages wanted it before 8am. Just under a third of respondents in each age group (0-11). Just 17% of parents that responded with secondary school children wanted provision before 8am. Fewer parents reported that they wanted provision after 6pm (9%-13%). Very few (2%-4%) wanted overnight childcare and the same was true for childcare at the weekends (7%-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)

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Sufficiency is about more than having enough places, the 'sufficiency duty' means that places need to be good quality, accessible, affordable and inclusive.

Early years and childcare providers are required to be inclusive<sup>17</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](#).

### Support for Group Providers

Early Years Consultants (EYCs) provide the area SENDCo (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities coordinators) 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
- Training, 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 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.

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<sup>17</sup> Required through the [Equality Act 2010](#) and the [Children and Families Act 2014](#).



- 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, 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 2022/2023, 430 children were allocated places with Nursery Plus.

### **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 Education Needs and Disability (SEND) process, transitions into settings and schools, supporting requests for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

Between September 2022 and August 2023, the EYCN Service worked with 360 children. Any referrals not accepted are signposted to the right places.

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

The Early Years Consultants, 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 informed of this support. Through their Area SEND Co-ordinator role, the Early Years Consultants 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. Early Years Consultants 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 19 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.

- 1487 children have been funded through the SEND Individual Inclusion Fund in 2022/23 an increase of 104 since 2021/22.

Table 17: Comparison of the number of two-year-old children in receipt of individual inclusion funding between 2021/22 and 2022/23. N.B: These are the most disadvantaged two-year-olds.

Two-year-olds	Number of children funded 2021/22	Number of children funded 2022/23	Direction since 2021/22
Level 1	49	60	↑
Level 2	65	81	↑
Level 3	5	12	↑
Total	119	153	↑

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2023), Early Years and Childcare Service

Table 18: Comparison of the number of three- and four-year-old children in receipt of individual inclusion funding and the extended entitlement funding between 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Three- and four-year-olds	Number of children funded 2021/22	Number of children funded 2022/23	Direction since 2021/22
Level 1	157	243	↑
Level 2	209	301	↑
Level 3	36	56	↑
Total	402	600	↑

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2023), Early Years and Childcare Service

Table 19: 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 extended entitlement and in receipt of individual inclusion funding between 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Three- and four-year-olds	Number of children funded 2021/22	Number of children funded 2022/23	Direction since 2021/22
Level 1	444	513	↑
Level 2	692	694	↑
Level 3	128	127	↓
Total	1264	1334	↑

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2023), 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. The full allocation is made for three-year-olds, but a pro-rata amount will be made for four-year-olds starting school in September until we have clarification from DfE regarding the annual allocation.

- 177 children have been funded through the Disability Access Fund (DAF) in 2022/23. This is fifty more children than were funded in 2021/2022.

## Holiday Activities and Food Programme

Overall, there were 480 Free School Meals eligible children that had special educational needs and disabilities. An additional 286 children with special educational needs and disabilities, who did not meet the free school meal criteria, also attended.

This makes a total of 766 SEND children that accessed a place.

## 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. Support for parents

The Early education and childcare guidance <sup>18</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 this information is provided as follows:

You can access [Pinpoint](#) for a list of childcare providers and [tell us if you cannot find the childcare you need](#).

If you do not have access to the internet, please call 0345 155 1013.

Alternatively, write to:

Pinpoint Devon  
Room G59  
County Hall  
Topsham Road  
Exeter  
EX2 4QD

Or Email: [pinpoint@devon.gov.uk](mailto:pinpoint@devon.gov.uk)

Our [Early Years and Childcare Advisors](#) respond to the [Unable to find childcare forms](#) that you submit to us. [Please use this form if you cannot find the childcare you need](#).

### **Moving to 'Find Childcare' Devon from January 2024**

From January 2024 we will no longer be using Pinpoint as our website platform. Instead, we will move onto a new platform based around the Provider Self Update which will generate information for a website specifically designed to enable families to find childcare in Devon. Using the provider self-update information will ensure that the information for parents is more accurate and stays up to date (Find Childcare Devon). It also saves providers time and work as they only need to make an update if something has changed.

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<sup>18</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.

## Sufficiency of Early Years and Childcare Provision

### 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.

'Hot Spots' are areas in Devon where a need has been identified following the annual analysis of 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 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 2022:

Table 20: Review of Hot Spot areas August 2022

Hot Spot Area August 2022	Provision for	Update
Dartmouth	Need for childminders and all year-round places for two-, three- and four-year-olds	Is no longer identified
All Devon	Childminders and out of school childcare for primary-school-aged children	This is a national challenge
Cranbrook Sidmouth Exminster Ilfracombe Bideford Sherford Dawlish		Remain as hot spots, further information detailed below.

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2023), Early Years and Childcare Service

#### Hot Spot Areas August 2023:

Table 21: Hot Spot areas August 2023

Hot Spot Area August 2023	Provision for	Reason for being a hot spot and progress towards addressing the identified need:	Actions Taken to date
<b>Exeter, East and Mid Devon</b>			
<b>Cranbrook</b> and surrounding area	Under-five-year-olds and out of school provision	<b>Remains a hot spot.</b> This is due to the large housing developments in the area. As the community grows so does the need for childcare. There is expected to be increased demand for all year-round provision for under-five-year-olds as well as wraparound childcare for primary-school-aged children.	A proposed new nursery currently being built, was set to open in September 2024. We have been unable to contact the nursery operator but will continue to make efforts to do so.  Focus on encouraging schools and surrounding settings to take two-year-olds from the term after their second birthday rather than term before their third birthday.  Continue to promote childminding in the area.

<b>Sidmouth</b>	Under-five-year-old places	<b>Remains a hot spot</b> Following the closure of three settings there is a lack of venues that are suitable, affordable and accessible.	Ongoing efforts to encourage current provision to expand or extend their offer. Working with the school to review provision.  Monitoring opportunities in terms of venues or buildings that would be suitable premises for new provision to open.
<b>South of Exeter and Exminster</b>	Under-five-year-olds and out of school provision	<b>Remains a hot spot</b> due to housing developments.	Local provision is expanding to take under two-year-olds, either later this year or early next year – currently putting the infrastructure in place. The school have opened an out of school club and there is capacity within current provision. The delay in the opening of the nursery for 2,3- and 4-year-olds in the new school has had an impact.
<b>Cullompton</b>	Funded two-, three-, and four-year old places	Future increase in demand is expected due to housing developments planned for the area.	Worked with local pre-school to increase their opening times to include wrap around and all year-round places on a trial basis. Given the current level of housing development taking place, Cullompton <u>will</u> need a full day care nursery based in the town, suitable premises will be an issue. This has been discussed with the place planning team to review capacity within the housing development and new school proposals.
<b>Axminster</b>	Funded two-, three-, and four-year old places		Explore opportunities to support the expansion of current provision to expand age ranges, times etc. We will also promote childminding opportunities.
<b>North Devon and Torridge</b>			
<b>Ilfracombe</b>	Under-five-year-olds and out of school provision	<b>Remains a hot spot.</b>	The school are now taking a limited number of two-year-olds. New day nursery has opened which has increased capacity. Consideration is being given to using the Children Centre building to allow further nursery places. A focus on recruiting new childminders during the next 12 months and work with schools to develop wraparound and holiday provision. HAF project offers fee paying places for school aged children.
<b>Bideford and Northam</b>	Under-five-year-olds and out of school provision	<b>Remains a hot spot.</b> Due to housing developments	Contacting local provision re expansion. Two new nurseries proposed in Bideford, One at the Big Sheep opening January (pending Ofsted registration) and one proposal to open in spring 2024.
<b>Great Torrington</b>	All-year-round provision for under-five-year-olds		New Nursery plans linked to a current South Molton provision. Not sure on timeline as new building proposed.
<b>Fremington</b>	Funded two-, three- and four-year-old provision	Potential increase in demand due to housing developments planned for the area.	Provision expanding to offer more early years places from spring 2024.
<b>South Devon, Teignbridge and West Devon</b>			

<b>Sherford</b>	Under-five-year-olds and out of school provision	<b>Remains a hot spot.</b> This is due to the large housing developments in the area. As the community grows so does the need for childcare.	One childminder is now registered although the offer is limited due to restrictions placed on shared ownership properties. The EYCA (Early Years and Childcare Advisor) has attended the toddler group, lots of parents said they work in Plymouth so use all year full day care near their place of work. Identified need for more childminders. The school currently offers before and after school care but no holiday provision- this will be considered.
<b>Dawlish</b>	Under-five-year-olds and out of school provision	<b>Remains a hot spot.</b> This is due to the large housing developments in the area. As the community grows so does the need for childcare.	Working closely with the town council. hosting a 'Wanting to be a childminder' event on 22 November at Gatehouse School. Continually talking to the two pre-schools regarding expansion and looking for new premises.
<b>Okehampton</b>	Under-two-year-old places	New housing development means that this area will require further consideration	Rarely receive unable to find childcare forms but aware that there is more housing and only 1 day care nursery and a few childminders, plus the two school nurseries. Use the approach in Dawlish to promote childminding.

Source: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (2023), Early Years and Childcare Service

## Key Findings

- The data analysis indicates that overall, there appears to be sufficient early years and childcare provision within Devon. Although the rural/urban spread of different types of provision varies. Childcare Sufficiency Hot Spots (where we are concerned about sufficiency) have been identified.
- The overall number of providers has decreased by forty-seven, this is mainly in the childminder sector and is broadly in line with national trends.
- The population of under-five-year-olds has also decreased by 2.1% (751 children) compared with a decrease of 324 (0.9%) in 2022. However, in some areas the population is increasing both in terms of under-fives and school age children.
- The Early Years and Childcare Service recognises that there is a lack of out of school provision in some areas of Devon. There are several factors impacting on this including recruitment, low levels of pay and working hours and lack of demand. Parents are opting to use informal arrangements due to costs linked to the challenges related to the cost of living currently.
- The percentage of two-year olds taking up a funded place (85.7%) remains higher than the national average of 72%.
- The percentage of three- and four-year olds taking up the early years funding (96.1%) remains higher than the national average of 92% (4%). Children accessing their full universal entitlement and those taking up the extended (30 hours) entitlement has also increased.
- There is an increase in the numbers of children requiring additional support through our SEND services, 1487 two-, three- and four-year-olds were in receipt of Individual Inclusion Funding. 177 children have been funded through the [Disability Access Fund \(DAF\)](#) for early years providers to support children in receipt of Disability Living Allowance
- There has been a slight decrease in the percentage of providers graded as good or outstanding by Ofsted. This is indicative of the current recruitment difficulties, impact on children's social and emotional development following COVID restrictions. The Early Years One Devon process has ensured that all settings have improved during this period, and this has been recognised by Ofsted.
- HAF provision has been successful with a positive response from families and children. We continue to match national take up for FSM children and support others through the extended criteria. One of our providers, Football Fun Factory, has won provider of the year at the Club Central national awards.

## Focus for next year

The Early Years and Childcare Service will be focusing on the implementation of the new entitlements that have been introduced by the Government and the development of the programme to ensure all schools can offer wraparound care by 2026.

We will also:

- 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.
- Implement the provider self-update online system to support our understanding of where provision is offered, identify where there are gaps and provide support to develop provision in these areas. This will include support for the new entitlements and the school wraparound offer.
- Continue to monitor the quality of provision and support settings to sustain their quality or improve where Ofsted have judged them as requiring improvement or inadequate.
- Provide a range of training and professional opportunities to ensure settings meet their statutory duties including in relation to safeguarding and develop their skills and knowledge in providing high quality inclusive practice for all children.
- Work pro-actively across with other council teams including Learn Devon and other organisations such as DWP to continue to provide support for recruitment and retention of staff.
- Ensure that we continue to passport the maximum possible amount of funding to settings within the hourly rate and supplementary rates to support sufficiency and sustainability.

## Actions arising from the report

The Early Years and Childcare service will:

- Continue to assess sufficiency and identify hot spots through data analysis and discussion on the supply and demand of childcare with locality teams.
- Provide advice, guidance, and support to providers to open or expand their businesses in areas where there is insufficient provision or where we need more provision to meet the new entitlements.
- Use the provider self-update to inform our knowledge of provision across the county.
- Continue the data review of out of school provision to ensure accurate data is held through the provider self-update. Work with schools and providers to develop the wraparound offer in schools and holiday provision.
- Support providers through [Early Years ONE Devon](#) to maintain or become good or outstanding
- Work with providers to build greater flexibility and affordability into their provision for parents, where provision is open all year round but does not enable parents to stretch their funding for two-, three- and four-year olds.
- Promote the take of the entitlement and hours particularly for children with special educational needs and disabilities and those living in the most disadvantaged areas of Devon.
- Continue to survey parents regularly to gain a greater insight into the demand for childcare.
- Use data from the Devon County Council Economy team to help inform demand for childcare as working patterns change.
- Promote the use of the '[unable to find childcare form](#)' to parents as a way of feeding back to Devon County Council when they cannot find childcare, particularly in areas where places are limited, so that Devon County Council are informed when more places are needed.
- Promote childminding as a career, particularly in rural areas.
- Work with the School Place Planning Team to establish Early Years Provision in new schools and request Section 106 for early years provision where appropriate.
- Promote the take-up of the Early Years Pupil Premium to parents and providers and highlight the benefits to the child and the setting.

## Find out more.



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



Email [2info@devon.gov.uk](mailto:2info@devon.gov.uk) for two-year-old funding enquiries



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