



London Borough
of Hounslow

Childcare Sufficiency Annual Report 2021-22

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Introduction

Childcare is important to the Council as:

- access to high quality early years provision improves educational and social outcomes for children, particularly for those in areas of deprivation and those with SEND
- early intervention in childcare settings not only supports children's outcomes and life chances, but also impacts positively on expenditure as costs increase to intervene as children get older
- it is key in supporting the economy.

Regulations under the Childcare Act 2006 require local authorities to;-

- assess the local childcare market and work in partnership with childcare providers to influence the market place, in as far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure that there is sufficient childcare to enable parents to work, study or seek employment
- secure free early years provision for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds (570 hours a year over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year)
- secure the equivalent of 30 hours free childcare available for working parents
- report annually to elected Council members on how the duty to secure sufficient childcare is being met and make this report available and accessible to parents

Having sufficient childcare means that families are able to find childcare that meets their child's needs and enables parents to make a choice about taking up work and training. The Council is reliant on private childcare providers of early years provision to fully meet the statutory duties:

- to ensure there is sufficient childcare available to enable parents to take up or remain in work or to undertake education or training to assist them in obtaining work. This is also key in supporting economic recovery
- to secure early years provision free of charge (free entitlement places) for all eligible children:
 - 15 hours per week for all 3 & 4 year old children
 - 30 hours a week for 3 & 4 year old children in working households (within income thresholds)
 - 15 hours a week for disadvantaged 2 year olds.

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, the demand for and the supply of childcare has been influenced and shaped by families changing needs due to changes in working patterns, the permanent and/or temporary closure of settings, the permanent and/or temporary reduction of childcare places in individual settings due to staff shortages and the increasing cost of living.

NB: The majority of tables in this report use the 20 Wards that were in place in the borough before the boundary change in May 2022 to assist with comparisons to previous years.

Key findings and future actions

Although Hounslow is deemed to have sufficient childcare for 0-4 year olds there is a very real threat to the local authority continuing to be able to meet its sufficiency duty as well as to the future quality of early education and childcare. The Council is reliant on private childcare providers of early years provision to fully meet its statutory duties. However, childcare providers are being faced with major challenges not least being major issues with staff recruitment and cost of living increases.

Although take up of childcare places for 0-4 year olds has been increasing over recent months, for childcare providers to remain financially viable the income received for the childcare places they offer needs to be sufficient to cover costs. Childcare providers know they cannot keep passing on the increasing costs of delivering high quality childcare and education to parents - but they need to remain sustainable as businesses. This will have a more substantial impact on those providers who operate in areas of high deprivation as they will have even less opportunity to increase fees to cover costs.

For providers of out of school care, a judgement on sufficiency of places could not be made for this report due to insufficient data. However, the data that was made available showed that although there was not all types of provision in all Wards there were still many vacancies in breakfast clubs, out of school care and holiday playschemes around the borough. Additional holiday playscheme places were also created through the Holiday Activities and Food Programme funded by the Department for Education for school aged children from reception to year 11 who receive benefits-related free school meals.

Other key findings for this 2021/22 report are presented below followed by key focus and future actions.

Quality of childcare – page 22

- Children in Hounslow have access to high quality inclusive early years provision
- Of the early years provision with an Ofsted judgement:
 - 99% of **day nurseries and preschools** were graded as good or outstanding with 34% judged to be outstanding
 - 100 of schools with a **nursery class** were graded as good or outstanding with 29% judged to be outstanding
 - 96% of **childminders** were graded as good or outstanding with 9% judged to be outstanding
- Changes were made to Ofsted's inspection framework in September 2019 that resulted in the grades out of school settings could achieve following an inspection being reduced and renamed:
 - **Breakfast clubs** – 14% were graded as outstanding and 86% were graded as good or met (86%).
 - **After school care** – 16% were graded as outstanding and 84% were graded as good or met

- **Holiday playschemes** –7% graded as outstanding and 93% were graded as good or met (93%)
- Ofsted grades were not used to evidence the quality of provision funded through the **Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)** in this report as not all HAF providers are Ofsted registered and instead operate under an 'exemption Ofsted grades have not been used to evidence the quality of HAF provision as not all HAF providers are Ofsted registered and instead operate under an 'exemption to registration' criteria
- Each HAF provision in Hounslow was monitored by the local authority during their delivery period, rated against the HAF framework standards and reported back to the Department of Education (DfE).
- Of the 39 providers offering HAF provision, 35 were rated as being good or excellent with 13 rated to be excellent. 3 providers were rated as acceptable and 1 as poor.

Demand for childcare – page 27

- The demand for childcare places throughout the first two years of the pandemic was consistently lower than usual. The lack of demand was characterised by Covid related parental anxiety as well as changes to employment patterns, such as working at home, or employment changes such as furlough or redundancies
- In June 2021, childcare providers for 0-4 year olds were asked what they saw as their main challenge to their business remaining sustainable moving forward. The biggest response was 'the change in demand for places due to changing work circumstance and employment patterns.' It wasn't known at the time whether this would be a temporary or permanent change.
- An increase in occupancy levels, informed by a survey carried out in June 2022, showed an improving picture. The average occupancy had increased by 29% from June 2020 to June 2022 from 49% to 78%
- There was an increase in occupancy in 19 out of 20 Wards from June 2020 to June 2022, the exception being Feltham West
- Although occupancy increased in the majority of Wards from June 2020 to June 2022, 2 Wards, Hanworth Park and Hounslow Central, remained at less than 70% occupancy. It is also important to note that being financially viable does not only relate to a high occupancy level. The income received for the childcare places also needs to be sufficient to cover costs.

Demand for childcare - Take up of funded disadvantaged 2 year old places – page 30

- There had been an expectation, during the initial stages of the pandemic, that the number of eligible families would increase due to an increase in the number of families becoming eligible for Universal Credit. However, the number of families

eligible for a 2 year old funded place actually reduced from June 2021 to June 2022 from 1158 to 1012 eligible families.

- This is expected to change as the cost of living continues to increase and more families on a low income become eligible for Universal Credit – one of the criterion for a 2 year old funded place
- The Autumn 2021 take up was the highest it had been for some years including pre-Covid at 79%
- 3 Wards were showing less than 70% take up in Autumn 2021: Chiswick Homefields, Heston East and Hounslow South. There were vacancies in all 3 Wards at the time but in Hounslow South the only vacancies were with childminders
- Each term the Department for Education (DfE) conducts a survey on the number of eligible 2 year olds that have taken up a funded place. In January 2022, Hounslow ranked 1st out of its statistical neighbours, 5th out of the 19 outer London authorities and 89th out of 152 local authorities nationally

Demand for childcare - Take up of funded 3 & 4 year old places (15 hours) – page 33

- All 3 & 4 year olds can access up to 570 hours a year of funded early education, regardless of citizenship
- Hounslow has had an average take up of 85% over the last four years, with the Spring 2019 term take up being 86%. NB. Percentage take up data is only published once a year by the Department for Education (DfE) with data taken from the Spring Early Years Census
- 85% of 3 & 4 year olds were accessing a 15 hour funded place in January 2022. This exceeded the London take up rate of 82% but was below the National rate of 95%. Hounslow ranked 9th out of its statistical neighbours
- 15 Wards had below the borough average take up of 85% with 6 being below 70%: Hounslow South, Chiswick Homefields, Hanworth, Turnham Green, Chiswick Riverside and Brentford, with the lowest being in Hounslow South
- There were vacancies in the 6 Wards at the time in private and maintained provision. The least number of vacancies were in Chiswick Riverside and were only in private provision, not in a maintained nursery class. All 6 Wards border with another local authority so parents could have chosen to take up their child's 15 hour place out of borough.

Demand for childcare - Take up of funded 3 & 4 year old places (30 hours) – page 36

- Some 3 & 4 year olds from working families can access up to 1140 hours a year of funded early education and childcare

- Take up of 30 hour places decreased in Autumn 2020 from Autumn 2019. Childcare provision had only started to re-open in Summer 2020 and many parents were still on furlough and / or had been made redundant. Take up dropped again the following Autumn 2021 when furlough came to an end
- Taking up a 30 hour place is dependent on both parents being employed (if a two parent family). Unemployment in Hounslow began to rise sharply in September 2020 and did so to beyond London and England averages at that time
- By September 2021, unemployment rates had started to recover and this pattern was reflected in the 30 hour take up numbers increasing term by term from Autumn 2021
- The number of 3 & 4 year olds taking up a 30 hour place increased overall by 54 children from Spring 2021 to Spring 2022. However, in 7 Wards, take up had decreased, with the largest decrease being seen in Osterley and Spring Grove (-16).
- No group early years provision had closed in this Ward to account for this change in number. The 3 & 4 year old population had decreased marginally but there are other factors that could have affected take up, if not related to employment, such as other childcare arrangements being put in place (extended family / childminders / nannies) or children accessing provision in a neighbouring Ward/borough. Osterley and Spring Grove is the only Ward without a maintained school Nursery class. Early education and childcare places in this Ward can only be met through the private sector which limits parental choice.

Demand for childcare - Take up of 4-16 year old places in out of school provision – page 38

- Not all providers offering out of school provision responded to the annual data collection survey. Of the data that was provided:
 - 73% of breakfast club places had been taken up and 82% of after school places
 - there were 266 vacancies remaining in the borough in breakfast clubs and 205 vacancies in after school care
 - 3 Wards in particular had a high demand for Breakfast Club places: Chiswick Homefields, Feltham West and Syon. This could relate to the number of working families in these Wards and the need for wrap around childcare
 - 8 Wards had less than 70% take up in breakfast clubs
 - 3 Wards in particular had a high demand for afterschool places: Chiswick Homefields, Feltham West and Syon. This could relate to the number of working families in these Wards and the need for wrap around childcare.
 - 4 Wards had less than 70% take up in after school care schemes
- If demand for before and after school care is low and income doesn't cover costs, the provision will not remain viable and have no choice but to close. This will not only limit parental choice; it could also lead to a challenge to the Council in terms of sufficiency of places

- As part of their ongoing and regular engagement with parents, staff and the wider community, schools should make parents aware of their 'right to request' wraparound (before and after school) and holiday childcare and should not refuse a request without a reasonable justification. Wraparound childcare and holiday childcare can either be on a school's site, run in-house by the school or in partnership with a provider, or at a nearby school or provider
- It was not possible to collect data on the take up of places in Holiday Playschemes for this report. However, data is available regarding the Holidays Activities and Food Programme (HAF) take up.

Demand for childcare- The Holidays Activities and Food Programme (HAF) – page 41

- Research has shown that the school holidays can be pressure points for some families. For some children this can lead to a holiday experience gap, especially for children from low-income households. The Government's HAF programme is a response to this issue, with evidence showing that free holiday clubs can have a positive impact on children and young people
- In the Christmas 2021 holiday period, 56% of the HAF places were taken up, in Easter 2022, 69% of places was taken up and in Summer 2022, 67% of places were taken up.
- The most noticeable increase in take up was in Isleworth, with an increase of 308 children accessing a place in the Easter 2022 holidays compared to 455 in the Summer 2022 holidays. The biggest decrease in take up from Easter to Summer was in Chiswick Riverside where the number of children accessing a place reduced by 59 from 90 to 31

Supply of childcare – page 44

- Any assessment of childcare sufficiency can only represent a snap shot in time as the childcare market is extremely fluid
- The number of private early years Ofsted registered day nurseries and pre-schools, and the number of places they offer to 0-4 year olds, had been relatively stable for a number of years and it was deemed there were sufficient places in the borough. However, in 2021, the sufficiency of places was put under threat for a number of reasons:
 - setting closures, permanent and temporary
 - staff recruitment issues
 - 2, 3 & 4 year old entitlement funding rates.

Setting closures – page 44

- As there was in 2020 when the pandemic first started, there continued to be a number of periodic temporary closures of childcare provision due to Covid related incidents. 3 private day nurseries and 2 pre-school closed permanently resulting in a

loss of 221 childcare places. Two of the main reasons cited for the closures were low occupancy and difficulties with staff recruitment

- Further places were also lost by the closure of 14 Ofsted registered childminders since 2020. The number of childminders in Hounslow has gradually been declining over the years from 205 in 2017 to 166 in 2022. This reflects the national picture where childminder numbers have fallen by 27 per cent since August 2015
- 6 childminders registered with a Childminder Agency (CMA) in 2021. This was the first time since CMAs came into force in 2014 that a Hounslow childminder chose to register with an agency. The aims of CMAs are to attract new childminders to the profession, make life easier for childminders by providing a range of services such as marketing, administrative support and training and development opportunities to help further raise the quality of their provision

Staff recruitment issues – page 44

- Staff recruitment issues have been a national problem for some years now and have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Having sufficiently qualified staff has a positive impact on the overall quality of early years provision. Children who experience high quality provision are well placed to achieve higher outcomes at school and develop better social, emotional and cognitive abilities necessary for life-long learning
- Over a quarter of providers in day nurseries and pre-schools who responded to a survey carried out in June 2022 (25/95) reported that they had reduced the number of children they could accommodate temporarily as the required staff to child ratios could not be met. Two providers reduced their registered numbers on a permanent basis
- Recruitment challenges include:
 - a lack of applicants for roles
 - applicants lacking full and relevant Early Years qualifications
- A response from the Department for Education (DfE) on this subject included:
 - *“up to £153m in programmes to support workforce development have been announced”*
 - *“new early years training routes are being developed”*
 - they are *“working with the sector to build our understanding of the workforce” situation - including any issues related to recruitment and retention - and how providers and local authorities might be supported in this area.”*
- Day nursery and pre-school providers were asked in a June 2022 survey what they saw as their main challenge to their business remaining sustainable moving forward. The responses varied but the issues listed far more than any others was recruitment and retention of staff and the increasing cost of living

2, 3 & 4 year old childcare funding rates – page 46

- There is a fixed hourly rate payment for funded places for disadvantaged 2 year olds, all 3 and 4 year olds and additional funded hours for 3 and 4 year olds from working families. Early Years providers are clear that hourly rates for funded places do not cover their costs of delivery and assert that any increase in the funding rate is not aligned with increases in costs
- At the Spending Review 2021, it was announced that additional funding for the early years entitlements worth £160m in 2022/23, £180m in 2023/24 and £170m in 2024/25, compared to the 2021/22 financial year was to be invested. It is not yet known whether this additional funding will be sufficient to keep the early years sector sustainable
- In the 2022/23 financial year, the hourly rate in Hounslow, determined through the Early Years National Funding Formula, increased by 3.5% (21p) per child per funded hour for disadvantaged 2 year olds and 2.8% (17p) per child per funded hour for 3 and 4 year olds. However, with the costs of delivery increasing, not least due to increases in the National Minimum Wage and Living Wage, there remains a financial burden on early years providers with a possible impact on costs in fees to parents
- In July 2022, the Department for Education (DfE) launched a government consultation seeking views on proposed updates to the early years funding formulae for the 2023/24 financial year and annually thereafter. The changes were proposed because the formulae underpinning funding allocations no longer utilised the most up-to-date data. If the proposed reforms are implemented, there will be notable changes to local authority funding levels
- Further information on the consultation findings and future funding levels was not available at the time of writing this report. However, the consequence of a low increase in future 2, 3 and 4 year old funding rates could result in the sufficiency of free childcare places decreasing and statutory duties not met in terms of securing sufficient affordable, flexible and high-quality childcare places. This will prevent people returning to or taking up work, which will have a direct impact on economy growth

Supply of places for 0-4 year olds – page 47

- In Summer 2022, there were approximately 5538 places being offered to 0-4 year olds by private day nurseries, pre-schools and childminders with an additional 2568 places for 3 and 4 year olds being offered in school nursery classes. This was less than was being offered in 2019 (pre-Covid), when Hounslow was deemed to have sufficient places for 0-4 year olds. The decrease was due to a number of reasons:
 - 3 private day nurseries and 2 pre-schools closed between July 2021 and April 2022
 - There were 12 less Ofsted registered childminders since 2019
 - Less early years places were being offered due to staff recruitment issues

Vacancies in the borough for 0-4 year olds in private childcare provision – page 48

- There was a significant number of vacant places available for 0-4 year olds across the borough in June 2022
- In 3 Wards, there were no vacancies for some age groups:
 - Chiswick Homefield – no vacancies for disadvantaged 2 year olds
 - Hanworth - No vacancies for disadvantaged 2 year olds or 15 or 30 hour vacancies for 3 and 4 year olds
 - Isleworth – no vacancies for under 2s
- For all 3 Wards there were vacancies available in adjacent Wards and there is no projected population increase in 2023. Parents may have chosen to take up their child's place out of borough as 3 Wards borders with another local authority. In Isleworth 8 childminders did not provide their vacancy information
- Another point to note is that the Summer term is when private childcare provision for 0-4 year olds is usually at its fullest. Many more vacancies become available the following term once older children leave to take up their school nursery or reception class place
- Due to the number of vacancies across the borough in a term where childcare settings are at their fullest, very low or a reduction in population growth and no reported instances to Hounslow's Family Information Service of parents and carers being unable to access a childcare place, it was deemed that there continued to be sufficient childcare for 0-4 year olds in Hounslow in 2022
- Sufficiency of places in all Wards will continue to be monitored closely, not only due to the issues identified in Chiswick Homefields, Hanworth and Isleworth, but also because there are some Wards which had limited availability of surplus places. In Feltham North, Hounslow South and Hounslow West, for some age groups, the only vacancies were with childminders
- Only one of the Wards named above, Feltham North, had a projected population increase for 2023. However, the increase was not over 10 children in each of the age groups. The other five Wards had a projected population decrease in 2023
- There were a significant number of vacancies in maintained school nursery class provision for 3 & 4 year olds in Summer 2022. If occupancy does not increase in those most affected it could lead to a smaller nursery class intake in future academic years and in some cases, lead to closure until demand increases. This will not only limit parental choice but could also result in statutory duties not being met in terms of securing sufficient early education places for all 3 & 4 year olds.

Supply of places for 4-14 year olds – page 50

- Many working parents are dependent upon out of school provision such as breakfast clubs, after school care and holiday playschemes to provide childcare beyond the

school day and during school holiday periods. The number of each type of scheme in the borough had increased since 2020 but there was not a scheme of each type in each Ward

- There is no breakfast club or after school care provision in Heston West and no after school care provision in Hounslow Heath. There is no holiday playscheme provision in Bedfont, Chiswick Homefields, Heston West, Hounslow Heath, Hounslow South and Isleworth. Additional holiday playscheme provision was provided however through the Holidays Activities Fund Programme (HAF) for funded and fee paying children
- No providers were planning to open out of school provision in Wards without current provision

Vacancies in the borough for 4-14 year olds – page 52

- There were a significant number of vacancies in the borough in both breakfast clubs and after school care despite not all out of school providers offering out of school provision responding to the annual data collection survey. This would suggest sufficient before and after school care provision in the borough
- However, families in Heston West (before and after school) and Hounslow Heath (after school) would need to seek provision in a neighbouring Ward or in a location near to their workplace. Alternatively, they could secure the services of a childminder. Childminders can look after children from birth right through until secondary school, although their registration only regulates the care of children aged 8 and under.

Supply of places for 4-14 year olds - Holiday playschemes not funded through the Holiday Activities and Food Programme – page 54

- There were 6 Wards that did not have a holiday playscheme: Bedfont, Chiswick Homefields, Heston West, Hounslow Heath, Hounslow South and Hounslow West. One school in Chiswick Homefields had closed down their holiday playscheme citing 'business choice' as their reason for doing so. This suggests there was insufficient demand
- No schools in the 6 Wards named above indicated they would be opening holiday provision in the next 12 months. (However, in 2 of the Wards, Bedfont and Heston West, approximately 28 fee paying places were made available in the Summer 2022 holidays for children not eligible for the HAF programme.
- Further fee paying places were made available in HAF provision in other Wards offering approximately 368 places in total: Brentford, Cranford, Feltham North, Feltham West, Heston East, Hounslow Central, Isleworth, Osterley & Spring Grove, Syon and Turnham Green.)

- Families in Wards with no holiday playschemes would need to seek provision in a neighbouring Ward or in a location near to their workplace. Alternatively, they could secure the services of a childminder
- It was not possible to collect the number of vacancies in holiday playschemes for this report in order to complete an assessment on the sufficiency of places. However, data is available regarding the Holidays Activities and Food Programme (HAF) take up below.

Supply of places in the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) – page 55

- This holiday provision is for school aged children from reception to year 11 (inclusive) who receive benefits-related free school meals. Benefits-related free school meals (FSM) are available to pupils if their parents are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits, and have a claim verified by their school or local authority
 - In the Christmas holiday period, all participating children should benefit from a week of support which covers a minimum of 4 days
 - In the Easter holiday period, all participating children should benefit from at least a week of face-to-face provision which should be for a minimum of 4 days. For most children, each day at Easter should consist of at least 4 hours of provision, but the local authority should ensure that provision is tailored to need
 - In the Summer holiday period, all participating children should be offered at least 4 weeks of face-to-face provision, which cover a minimum of 16 days. For most children, each day during summer should consist of at least 4 hours of provision, but the local authority should ensure that provision is tailored to need
- At Christmas and Easter there was the opportunity to offer a total of eight days provision. Therefore, double the number of eligible children could be reached within these holiday periods
- Supply of HAF places Christmas 2021 to Summer 2022 (No HAF provision was available in Feltham North or Hounslow West):

	Christmas 2021	Easter 2022	Summer 2022
Total amount of places created	3999	2865	3563
Total amount of funded places accessed	2230	1985	2402
Number of providers	23	22	31
Number of venues	31	30	39
Average take up with each provider	65%	65%	80%
Percentage take up from secondary schools	21%	25%	10%
% of children with SEND accessing a place	4%	10%	13%

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) – page 57

- In February 2022, a Joint Area SEND Inspection took place in Hounslow. In the outcome letter inspectors reported that *'Early years practitioners feel well supported by the early years specialist SEND team in identifying children's needs early. Procedures for managing initial concerns when these are raised by setting leaders and/or parents are consistent. Specialist early years practitioners based centrally offer a range of bespoke and central training. Some parents commented that there is a high quality and joined-up service in the early years.'* It also stated that *'Parents are confident in the support offered to children by early years settings. This means that children with a range of needs can access support locally and when it is needed.'*
- Transitions to next placements are well planned to ensure a positive experience for both parents and child
- Each early years provider is asked to provide information on their provision for SEND and make this available through the Hounslow Local Offer. At the time of writing this report, 84% of day nurseries and pre-schools had provided this information on the [Hounslow Family Services Directory](#)
- Early years providers demonstrate a commitment to inclusion and are confident about supporting children with a range of additional needs, including those with increasingly complex needs. Examples of good inclusive practice can be found in many early years provider Ofsted Inspection reports
- It is a requirement for all local authorities to have a SEN Inclusion Fund within their local funding systems for 3 & 4 year olds with SEN who are taking up a funded place regardless of number of hours taken. In consultation with relevant stakeholders, Hounslow extended the SEN Inclusion Fund eligibility criteria to include 2 year olds identified with a level of SEN to support early intervention and improve educational outcomes
- Many early years providers are now accessing and using funds effectively to support inclusion and remove barriers to access for children with SEND. In the academic year 2021/22 over 350 children with SEND accessed SEN Inclusion Funding
- Ensuring under 5s have access to high quality early years education is a key priority for London Borough of Hounslow. A key focus will therefore be to improve expertise in SEND by increasing the number of staff with an accredited SENCO qualification in early years settings. This will be done by promoting the Level 3 SENCO Qualification and supporting setting SENCOs to obtain this qualification which was a proposal within SEND Green Paper - SEND Review: Right support, Right place, Right time: March 2022

Education, health and care (EHC) plans – page 59

- An education, health and care (EHC) plan is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support. EHC plans identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs. The number of children with an education, health and care (EHC) plan in Hounslow 2018 – 2021 can be found in the table below

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Under 5	1	1	3	2
Age 5 to 10	37	45	43	61
Age 11 to 15	90	115	124	125
Age 16 to 19	57	47	54	54
Total	185	208	224	242

Future sustainability of day nurseries and pre-schools offering places to 0-4 year olds – page 60

- Day nursery and pre-school providers were asked about their expected income over a 6 month period. The change in their response from June 2020 to June 2022 was marked. 81% of providers expected to break even or operate at a profit, compared to 69% in June 2021 and 31% in June 2020
- It was important to identify if the providers who predicted to operate at a loss are in areas of high deprivation. This is because they have limited ability to make changes than providers in less deprived areas as there is less opportunity to increase their fees to cover costs
- The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) was used to identify areas of deprivation in the borough. IDACI represents the percentage of children in an area living in low income households and therefore represents a scale of deprivation within an area
- 18 day nursery and/or pre-school settings predicted that they would be 'operating at a loss' in the latter half of 2022. 11 of these settings had a reported occupancy of 70% or over, with 9 of them being over 80%. However, being financially viable does not only relate to a good occupancy level. The income received for the childcare places also needs to be sufficient to cover costs

Ward	Estimated IDACI 2021	Number of settings predicting to operate at a loss June - Dec 2022
Heston Central	40%	2
Hounslow Heath	39%	2
Heston East	38%	2

Hanworth	36%	3
Bedfont	35%	1
Hanworth Park	35%	3
Isleworth	34%	1
Feltham West	30%	1
Osterley & Spring Grove	25%	2
Turnham Green	25%	1

- In the same June survey, day nursery and pre-school providers were asked what they saw as their main challenge to their business remaining sustainable moving forward. The responses varied but the issue listed far more than any others was recruitment of staff, relating to both recruitment and retention
- Other key issues listed related to financial concerns including the funding rate paid for 2, 3 & 4 year old places and the increasing cost of living. The situation was exacerbated in August 2022 by a further increase in the rate of inflation
- Childcare providers realise that they cannot keep passing on the cost of delivering high quality childcare and education to parents who are already trying to cope with all their other rising bills - but they need to remain sustainable as businesses too.
- Support can be given to providers who need to change their operating models in order to remain viable and they can also be signposted to business support but, the future sustainability of early years settings throughout the Borough is fragile if they cannot increase their income. This may lead to a challenge for the Council in terms of ensuring sufficient places for 0-4 year olds in the coming year.

Cost of childcare – page 63

- Childcare costs are a recognised national issue and vary significantly across the borough
- There are several different schemes through which families can get support with their childcare costs, each with different eligibility criteria. There is extensive local marketing and support to ensure that families are aware of these schemes and support is also offered to access places
- Comparative data with average costs in Outer London showed that the average childcare costs in Hounslow for children aged under 2 and aged 2 years old were higher in 2021 than the average childcare costs in Outer London. However, it is important to note that in over half of all settings combined, Hounslow costs were lower than the Outer London average:
 - 44 day nurseries offering places for children aged under 2 years, 19 of them were currently charging less than the average Outer London rate (43%)
 - 61 day nurseries offering places for children aged 2 years, 30 of them were charging the same as the average Outer London rate or less (49%)

- 114 childminders offering places for children aged from 0-3 years, 84 were charging less than the average Outer London rate (74%)

Costs summaries 0-14 year olds – page 69

- Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure there is sufficient affordable childcare for families who need it and to identify any gaps in the market. However, legislation states that local authorities cannot intervene in how providers operate their private business. This includes charges for provision over and above a child's funded place
- For childcare to be sustainable, providers need to generate sufficient income to ensure they are meeting operating costs. At the same time, childcare needs to be affordable to parent and carers. If inflation increases, the cost of delivering high quality early education and care increases. Childcare providers obviously cannot keep increasing their fees to parents, who are already trying to cope with their own rising bills.
- The early years sector is fragile, and this presents a challenge to the sufficiency of early education and childcare both locally and nationally
- There are many vacancies around the borough for out of school provision and if providers cannot remain sustainable they will be forced to close. This will not only limit parental choice; it could also lead to a challenge to the Council in terms of sufficiency of places
- A key focus will be to promote the different ways all childcare providers can make their fees more affordable to parents at all income levels. This will include providing information to parents and providers about Tax Free Childcare, the Childcare Element of Universal Credit and Tax Credit.

Key focus and future actions

Key focus 2022/23	Key actions 2022/23
	To continue to carry out termly sufficiency tracking (supply and demand), identifying areas where sufficiency may be at risk and reporting to the Divisional Leadership Team.
Increasing the take up of disadvantaged 2 year old places and the take up of 15 and 30 hour places by 3 & 4 year olds in all Wards.	To continue to work with Corporate Communications to continually develop and promote 'the support with childcare costs marketing strategy' and social media posts.
To improve expertise in SEND by increasing the number of staff with an accredited SENCO qualification in early years settings.	To promote the Level 3 SENCO Qualification and supporting setting SENCOs to obtain this qualification which was a proposal within SEND Green Paper - SEND Review: Right support, Right place, Right time: March 2022.
To promote the different ways all childcare providers can make their fees more affordable to parents at all income levels. This will include providing information to parents and providers about Tax Free Childcare, the Childcare Element of Universal Credit and Tax Credit.	
To continue aiming for 100% of all types of settings to have a good or better Ofsted judgment, with an increased percentage of outstanding provision.	To continue to provide information, advice and training to childcare providers.
	To ensure parents are aware of their 'right to request' wraparound (before and after school) and holiday childcare.

	<p>To explore how the HAF programme can continue its growth within the allocated budget. This would include ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the amount of provision by Ward is determined upon demand and by areas of deprivation• the best use of funding is made when agreeing on future premises and their associated rental costs. This would include in Feltham North and Hounslow West where no HAF provision is in place.
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Types of Childcare Provider in London Borough of Hounslow

Families across the Borough have access to various types of childcare. This includes day nurseries, pre-school playgroups, childminders, breakfast clubs, after school care schemes and holiday play schemes. Many of these childcare providers offer flexible childcare to meet families' needs.

The types of provision and the different services offered in Hounslow can be found in the Family Service Directory which can be accessed via the following link www.hounslow.gov.uk/fsd

Information about the supply of each type of provision, the quality and the cost can be found further on in this report.

An average **day nursery** in London Borough of Hounslow provides full day care or part-time care for children aged between six weeks and five years and is open for 10 hours a day for 50 weeks of the year.

Preschools in London Borough of Hounslow provide part-time care for children in sessions from 3 hours to 5 hours long, either mornings or afternoons, for children aged between 2 and 4 years old. Preschools can also be called playgroups or Montessoris. They are usually only open during school term-time.

Childminders provide care for children in the childminder's own home. The average London Borough of Hounslow childminder offers childcare for just over 10 hours a day, 5 days a week and is open for business for 48 weeks of the year. Childminders are able to offer funded childcare places if a child is not accessing a funded place/all their full entitlement elsewhere.

Some parents find that childminding in a home environment can be more flexible than other forms of childcare. Childminders can provide care before and after school, including picking up and dropping children off. In the school holidays childminders can care for older children whilst their parents are at work.

Children with additional needs may benefit from a smaller group that a childminding service offers.

Before school care schemes also known as breakfast clubs provide care for school-aged children before the school day starts, provide a healthy breakfast and usually run for about an hour up to an hour and a half.

After school care schemes provide care for school-aged children after the school day has ended and usually run for about 3 hours. These schemes usually offer childcare for children aged from 4 to 11 in full time education. However, some (usually school run schemes) also accommodate nursery age children (3 and 4 year olds).

Holiday playschemes provide care for school-aged children during the school holidays, usually from 8am – 6pm.

The majority of out of school care schemes are based on school sites. Some offer a 'walking bus' service to deliver and collect children from nearby schools.

The **Holiday Activities and Food Programme** (HAF) is funded by the Department for Education (DfE) and is for school aged children from reception to year 11 (inclusive) who receive benefits-related free school meals (FSM). The programme offers the equivalent of 6 weeks' holiday provision to eligible children over the year as follows:

- Easter - at least 4 hours of provision for a minimum of 4 days
- Summer holidays that span 6 full calendar weeks - at least 4 weeks of face-to-face provision which covers a minimum of 16 days for a minimum for 4 hours per day
- Christmas - a week of face-to-face provision which covers a minimum of 4 days of 4 hours

Wraparound is defined as care for children aged 3 and 4 during the school day, delivered before or after the time they spend taking up their free 15 hours a week in a school nursery class.

NB. Some day nurseries and childminders offer pick-up and drop-off services at school and also offer childcare before or after time spent in a school nursery class.

The Play Team organises a wide range of out of school and holiday activities for children and young people across the borough. All projects are inclusive for children with special needs or disabilities and they also offer some specialist services to children with disabilities. Some services will require a referral from a professional.

Maintained primary school nursery classes are managed by the Local Authority. They provide 15 hours a week free early education for 3 and 4 year olds in their nursery classes, with the majority of children taking up their free entitlement as 5 mornings a week or 5 afternoons a week. Over half of schools now also offer the 30 hour free/funded early education entitlement, usually taken as 6 hours a day for 5 days a week.

Some **independent schools** also offer funded places for 3 and 4 year olds in their nursery and reception classes.

Quality of childcare

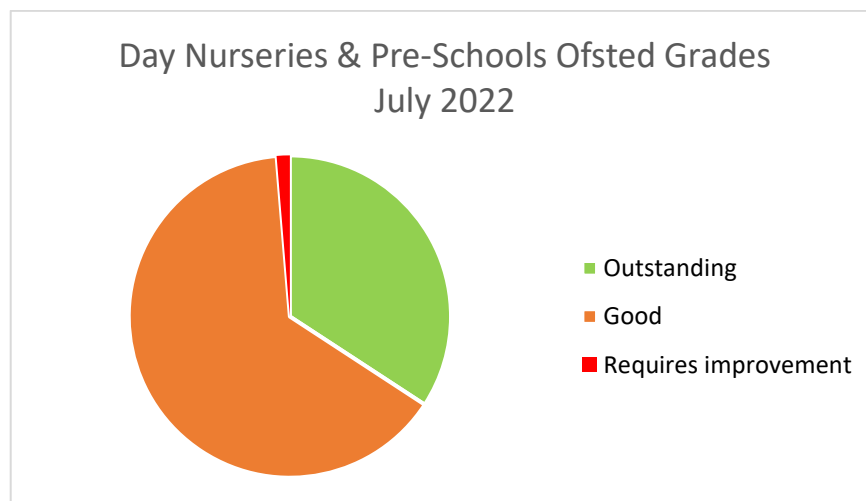
Children who experience high quality provision are well placed to achieve higher outcomes at school and develop better social, emotional and cognitive abilities necessary for life-long learning. Poor quality provision does not support children's learning and development in the long term.

In Hounslow, parents and carers are able to access good quality childcare in all areas of the borough. The quality of registered childcare is monitored through a statutory inspection framework from Ofsted.

Private day nurseries and playgroups (0-4s)

In July 2022 there were 89 private registered day nurseries and pre-schools in the borough, 13 of which were waiting for their first Ofsted inspection. An inspection should take place within 30 months of a setting opening.

Of the remaining 76 registered day nurseries and pre-schools with an Ofsted judgement, 75 were graded by Ofsted as good or outstanding (99%) with 26 (34%) judged to be outstanding. 1 was graded by Ofsted as inadequate (1%).

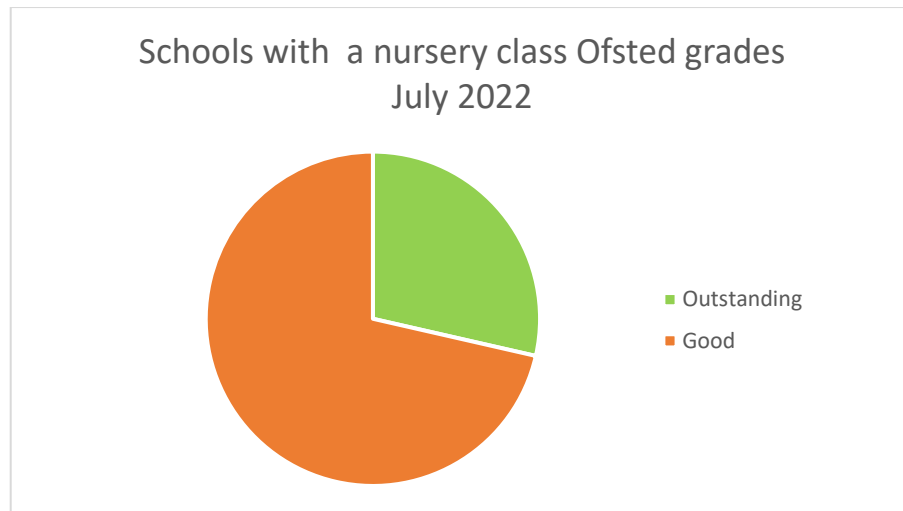


Schools with early years provision

In July 2022 there were 46 schools with a nursery class in the borough, 4 of which were waiting for their first Ofsted inspection.

Of the remaining 42, 100% were judged by Ofsted as having good or outstanding early years provision. 12 (29%) schools were judged to have outstanding early years provision.

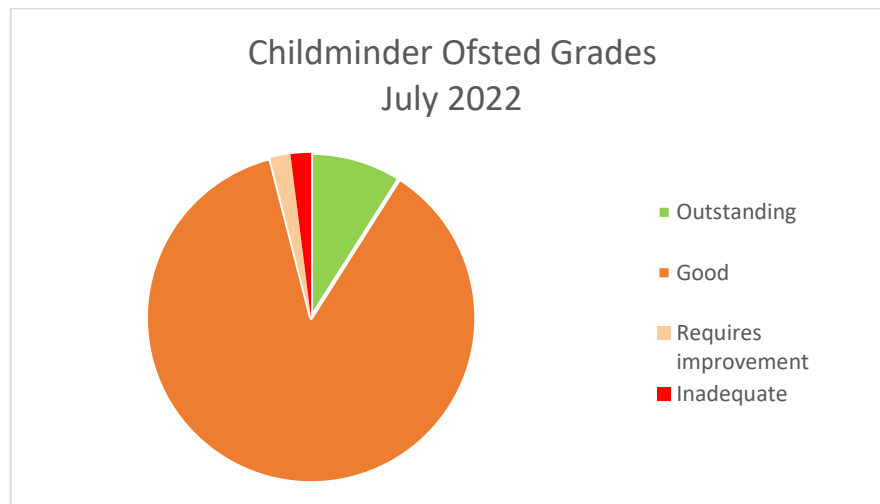
3 and 4 year olds can access their 15 hour education entitlement in a school nursery class. Over half of schools also offer the extended 15 hour entitlement, offering 30 hours in total.



Childminders

In July 2022 there were 166 registered childminders in the borough, 36 were waiting for their first Ofsted inspection, 24 had no early years children on roll and 6 childminders were registered with a *childminding agency.

Of the remaining 100 registered childminders with an Ofsted judgement, 96 were graded by Ofsted as good or outstanding (96%) with 9 (9%) judged to be outstanding, 2 were graded as requires improvement (2%) and 1 was graded by Ofsted as inadequate (1%).



* A childminder agency is an organisation that is able to register childminders in England and may provide a range of services to its members and parents. Introduced by the Department for Education (DfE) in 2013, childminder agencies are obliged by law to:

- ensure a childminder's suitability, including, where appropriate their capacity to deliver the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- support the training and development of childminders
- help parents find and work with a suitable childminder
- improve the quality of provision
- monitor the standard of care provided by the childminders they register.

Childminder agencies are inspected by Ofsted and assessed on three main areas:

- the effectiveness of the leadership and management of the agency
- the quality of the agency's services
- the impact of the agency's services on the quality of the education and care provided by its childminders.

Inspectors will visit a sample of childminders on the agency's books to assess the effectiveness of the agency's arrangements for assuring the quality of its childminders and the accuracy of the agency's evaluation of quality.

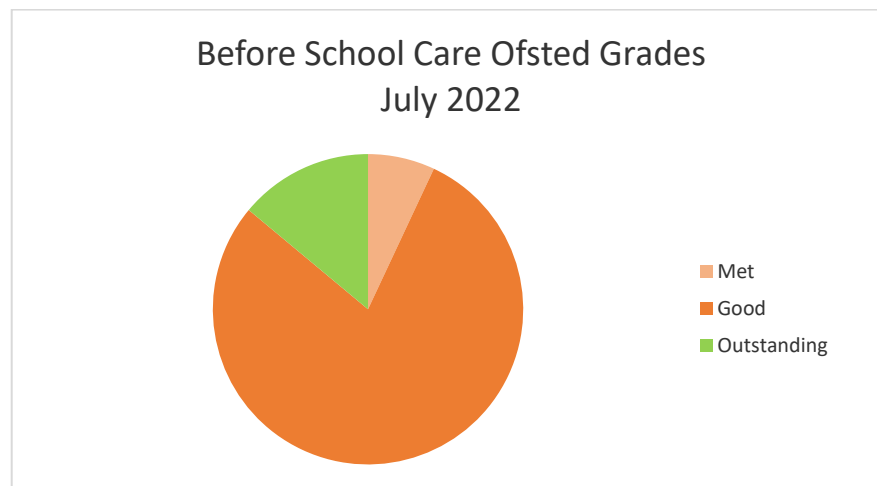
Following their inspection, childminder agencies will receive a grade of 'effective' or 'ineffective'.

Of the 3 childminder agencies who have a childminder on their register living and working in Hounslow, 2 have been inspected by Ofsted and graded as 'effective.' The third is awaiting an Ofsted inspection.

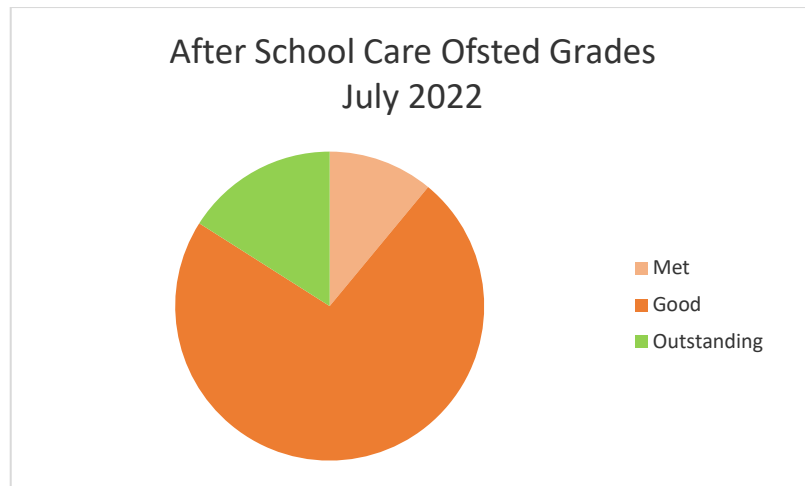
Out of school providers (4-11s)

Changes were made to Ofsted's inspection framework in September 2019 that resulted in the grades out of school settings could achieve following an inspection being reduced and renamed. Inspections pre-September 2019 resulted either in an outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate grade. Post September 2019, inspections resulted in a met or not met grade. NB. Out of school provision managed by a school on a school site has the same Ofsted grade as the school.

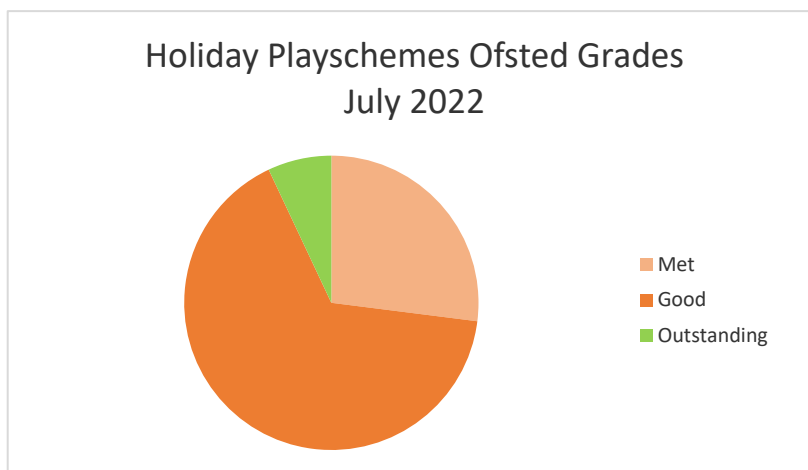
Breakfast clubs – in July 2022 there were 49 breakfast clubs with 6 awaiting an Ofsted inspection. Of the remaining 43, 6 were graded as outstanding (14%) and 37 were graded as good or met (86%).



After school care – in July 2022 there were 44 after school care schemes with 7 awaiting an Ofsted inspection. Of the remaining 37, 6 were graded as outstanding (16%) and 31 were graded as good or met (84%).



Holiday playschemes (not including HAF) – in July 2022 there were 27 holiday playschemes with 11 awaiting an Ofsted inspection and 1 that had no children on roll at the time of inspection. Of the remaining 15, 1 was graded as outstanding (7%) and 14 were graded as good or met (93%).



A key focus will be to continue aiming for 100% of all types of settings to have a good or better Ofsted judgment, with an increased percentage of outstanding provision.

The Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)

The Department for Education (DfE) has developed a framework of standards to provide a benchmark of what is expected from those delivering the Holiday Activities and Food Programme. One of the key roles of local authorities is to:

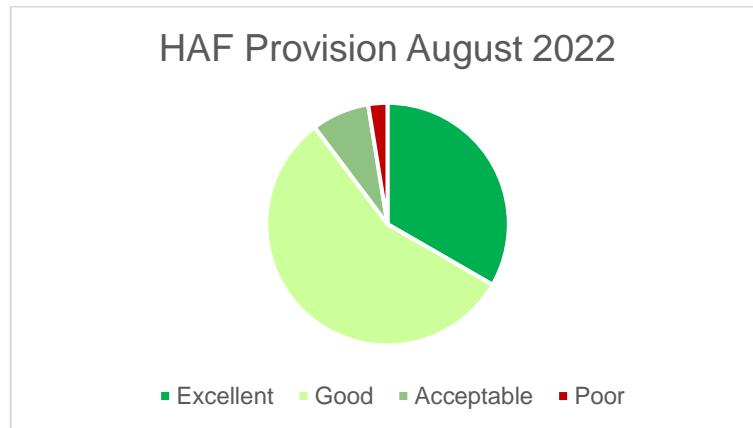
- improve the quality of provision across the local area
- ensure that providers are supported to meet the high-level standards

All providers that are funded through the programme are expected to meet the framework of standards and must be able to demonstrate that they have in place relevant and appropriate policies and procedures for:

- safeguarding, including the recruitment of staff and volunteers
- health and safety

- relevant insurance policies
- accessibility and inclusiveness

Each provision in Hounslow is monitored by the local authority during their delivery period, rated against the Holiday Activities and Food Programme framework standards and reported back to the Department of Education (DfE) after each delivery period. In August 2022, of the 39 providers offering HAF provision, 35 out of 39 providers were rated as being good or excellent with 13 rated to be excellent, 3 providers were rated as acceptable and 1 as poor.



NB. Ofsted grades have not been used to evidence the quality of HAF provision as not all HAF providers are Ofsted registered and instead operate under an 'exemption to registration' criteria.

Demand for childcare

The greatest demand for childcare is for children under the age of 5. This is because many parents begin to return to work, training or study once statutory maternity pay ceases or their child becomes eligible for funded early years childcare and education. Information relating to the different types of funded childcare for 2, 3 and 4 year olds and other support available for parents to help with their childcare costs can be found on page 63.

Demand in Hounslow varies enormously from Ward to Ward. A contributing factor to this variation is employment as this is a key driver for families needing childcare. Population changes, including migration, also influence demand. However, it is important to be mindful that this doesn't necessarily give the whole picture as some parents may not 'demand' childcare places for a range of reasons. This was particularly so during the first two years of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Population 0-4 years

The projected size of the population aged 0-4 years in 2021 was 19,642 children. The table below shows the projected population for 2021 and the difference between the indicated year and the 2021 baseline. The projected size of the population age 0-4 years decreases year on year from 2021 to 2024 and has an impact on the current and future demand for childcare and education.

Ward	Under 2s				Age 2				Age 3-4			
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2021	2022	2023	2024	2021	2022	2023	2024
Hounslow Central	529	20	18	15	269	6	10	9	493	19	15	14
Syon	450	10	8	7	218	2	4	3	439	7	5	5
Feltham North	388	7	6	5	188	2	3	3	353	7	6	4
Heston East	416	6	5	4	207	3	3	3	396	7	7	6
Hanworth Park	376	1	1	0	195	1	1	1	387	1	2	2
Hounslow Heath	460	3	2	1	225	-1	1	0	431	0	-1	0
Heston Central	398	-2	-2	-2	193	0	-1	-1	377	0	0	0
Hounslow West	418	-3	-4	-4	201	-1	-2	-2	388	-1	-2	-2
Brentford	478	-4	-4	-4	240	-3	-3	-3	459	-4	-6	-7
Turnham Green	312	-1	-1	-1	160	0	0	0	309	-1	-1	-1
Hounslow South	331	-4	-3	-3	170	-2	-2	-1	361	-3	-3	-3
Cranford	428	-6	-6	-5	207	-2	-3	-3	397	-4	-4	-4
Hanworth	354	-4	-4	-3	179	0	-1	-1	358	-3	-1	0
Osterley & Spring	379	-5	-4	-3	188	-3	-3	-2	373	-5	-5	-4
Isleworth	372	-7	-6	-5	176	-2	-3	-3	344	-5	-4	-5
Chiswick H.fields	331	-5	-5	-4	169	-2	-3	-3	340	-6	-6	-6
Heston West	403	-7	-7	-6	201	-2	-4	-4	397	-6	-5	-5
Bedfont	377	-6	-5	-5	188	-3	-3	-3	383	-7	-6	-6

Feltham West	414	-3	-1	-1	216	0	0	1	442	-2	0	0
Chiswick Riverside	325	-6	-5	-4	160	-3	-3	-3	328	-7	-7	-6
Hounslow	7939	-14	-14	-17	3949	-8	-8	-8	7754	-14	-16	-18

It is important to note that the overall decrease year on year hides some increases in Feltham North, Heston East, Hounslow Central and Syon.

Population 5-14 years

The projected size of the population aged 5-14 years in 2022 was 38,035 children reducing to 37,891 in 2023. Any increases or decreases impact on current and future demand for out of school provision such as breakfast clubs, after school care and holiday playschemes. For further information please refer to page 38.

Ward	Age 5		Age 6		Age 7		Age 8		Age 9-14	
	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023
Bedfont	208	-6	226	-8	224	0	222	-5	1,371	-34
Brentford	266	-5	261	-7	245	8	251	1	1,242	25
Chiswick H. fields	148	-6	151	-7	156	-7	150	0	900	-27
Chiswick Riverside	142	-8	142	-9	147	-10	142	3	946	-38
Cranford	203	-3	201	-4	191	3	203	-16	1,083	-1
Feltham North	143	3	138	3	138	4	141	1	874	24
Feltham West	258	-3	252	-9	251	-13	230	1	1,601	-41
Hanworth	163	-4	156	-5	152	2	174	-14	1,114	-24
Hanworth Park	198	1	189	-1	186	3	192	-6	1,104	8
Heston Central	170	0	160	-2	166	4	173	-8	1,058	16
Heston East	195	7	188	3	189	3	164	12	1,013	13
Heston West	194	-5	212	-5	212	-2	212	-3	1,242	-3
Hounslow Central	308	16	308	11	289	16	269	5	1,505	68
Hounslow Heath	233	0	241	-1	216	6	218	-3	1,346	-5
Hounslow South	175	-4	187	-6	191	-2	204	-12	1,156	-6
Hounslow West	204	1	208	-1	207	4	200	-2	1,080	15
Isleworth	159	-4	160	-6	154	-1	158	-9	1,030	-29
Osterley & Spr. Gv.	177	-5	168	-5	166	-4	176	-6	1,065	-9
Syon	235	6	232	5	243	1	228	9	1,235	28
Turnham Green	107	0	104	-2	96	1	100	-1	674	-12
Total	3,886	-19	3,884	-56	3,819	16	3,807	-53	22,639	-32

Migration

The total population and the number of children in the borough requiring childcare is directly affected by internal and international migration and the movement of families into and out of the borough. However, migration can be difficult to measure, model and forecast.

Employment - the impact of the Covid pandemic on changing work patterns

Demand for childcare, especially paid for childcare, is very much linked with parents' working patterns. Not only is childcare a strong complement to work for many parents,

working parents also receive a range of childcare subsidies, such as tax-free childcare and additional funded hours. In two-parent households, if one parent loses their job, the family might choose to have that person look after the children rather than pay for childcare.

The demand for childcare places throughout the first two years of the pandemic was consistently lower than usual. The lack of demand was characterised by Covid related parental anxiety as well as changes to employment patterns, such as working at home, or employment changes such as furlough or redundancies.

In June 2021, childcare providers for 0-4 year olds were asked what they saw as their main challenge to their business remaining sustainable moving forward. The biggest response was 'the change in demand for places due to changing work circumstance and employment patterns.' It wasn't known at the time whether this would be a temporary or permanent change.

Twelve months later, an increase in occupancy levels, informed by a survey carried out in June 2022, showed an improving picture. The average occupancy had increased by 29% from June 2020 to June 2022 from 49% to 78%.

There was an increase in occupancy in 19 out of 20 Wards from June 2020 to June 2022, the exception being Feltham West as shown in the table below.

Ward	Average occupancy June 2020	Average occupancy June 2021	Average occupancy June 2022	Change from 2020-22
Bedfont	75%	79%	84%	9%
Brentford	54%	64%	70%	16%
Chiswick Homefields	70%	83%	83%	13%
Chiswick Riverside	35%	56%	78%	43%
Cranford	72%	74%	90%	18%
Feltham North	0%	90%	100%	100%
Feltham West	72%	85%	70%	-2%
Hanworth	42%	80%	73%	31%
Hanworth Park	62%	67%	64%	2%
Heston Central	40%	67%	74%	34%
Heston East	67%	79%	83%	16%
Heston West	50%	55%	75%	25%
Hounslow Central	39%	67%	64%	25%
Hounslow Heath	39%	82%	85%	46%
Hounslow South	0%	100%	85%	85%
Hounslow West	55%	75%	90%	35%
Isleworth	56%	72%	83%	27%
Osterley & Spring Grove	46%	90%	83%	37%

Syon	57%	67%	70%	13%
Turnham Green	57%	65%	87%	30%
Borough average	49%	75%	78%	29%

Although occupancy increased in the majority of Wards from June 2020 to June 2022, 2 Wards, Hanworth Park and Hounslow Central, remained at less than 70% occupancy. It is also important to note that being financially viable does not only relate to a high occupancy level. The income received for the childcare places also needs to be sufficient to cover costs.

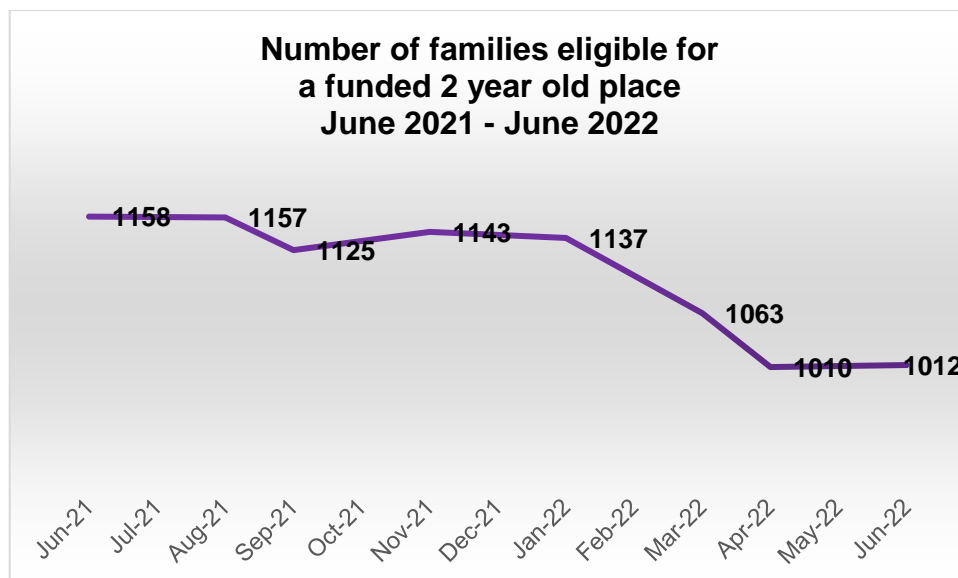
Take up of funded disadvantaged 2 year old places

Some families on a low income, working or not working and receiving certain benefits, can access funded childcare for their 2 year old at an Ofsted registered private day nursery, pre-school or with a childminder. All qualifying criteria and how to apply can be found via www.hounslow.gov.uk/freechildcare-2yrs

The offer can be taken as up to 15 hours a week for 38 weeks in term time only childcare provision or fewer funded hours over more weeks in all year round provision. (The latter is called 'stretching' the entitlement).

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) provide each local authority with a list of eligible families six times a year. The list is not exhaustive but gives an indication of the number of eligible families and where they are located in each local authority.

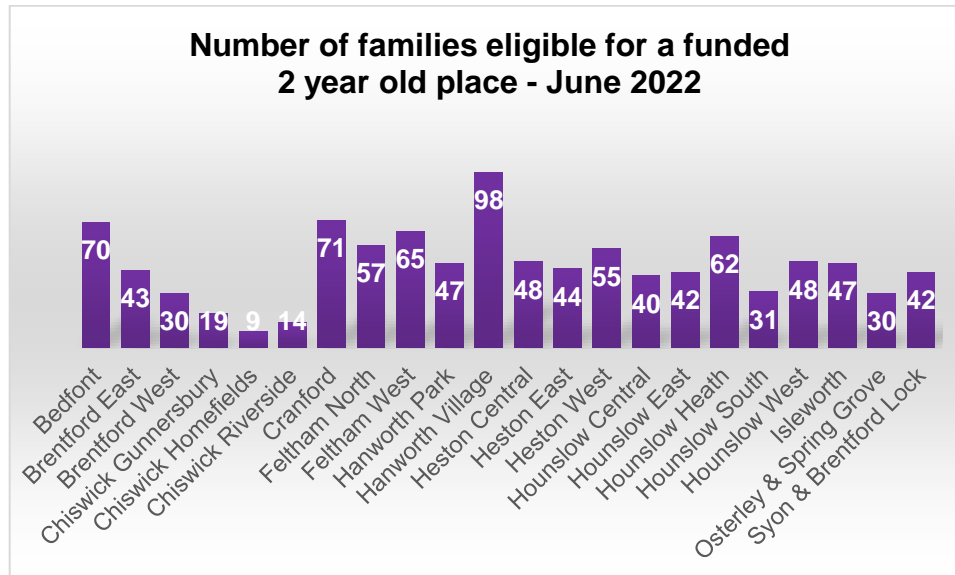
The chart below shows you the number of eligible families in London Borough of Hounslow, as indicated by the DWP, from June 2021 to June 2022.



There had been an expectation, during the initial stages of the pandemic, that the number of eligible families would increase due to an increase in the number of families becoming eligible for Universal Credit. However, the number of families eligible for a 2 year old funded place actually reduced from June 2021 to June 2022 from 1158 to 1012 eligible families.

However, this is expected to change as the cost of living continues to increase and more families on a low income become eligible for Universal Credit – one of the criterion for a 2 year old funded place.

The chart below shows you the number of families eligible for a funded 2 year old place in the 22 Wards in London Borough of Hounslow in June 2022.



Take up of disadvantaged 2 year old places is measured on a termly basis. The highest take up of places is usually in the Autumn term. This is when the majority of childcare settings have fewer 3 and 4 year olds because many of them have left to take up a school nursery or reception class place in September.

The table below shows the percentage take up by Ward from Autumn 2019 to Autumn 2021. The Autumn 2021 take up was the highest it had been for some years including pre-Covid.

Ward	% of those eligible taking up a place Autumn 2019	% of those eligible taking up a place Autumn 2020	% of those eligible taking up a place Autumn 2021	% change from Autumn 2020 to Autumn 2021
Bedfont	86%	70%	81%	11%
Brentford	77%	62%	81%	19%
Chiswick Homefields	67%	50%	58%	8%
Chiswick Riverside	55%	69%	73%	4%
Cranford	63%	60%	107%	47%
Feltham North	75%	65%	88%	23%
Feltham West	83%	69%	70%	1%

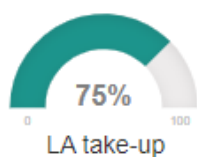
Hanworth	80%	50%	76%	26%
Hanworth Park	67%	81%	77%	-4%
Heston Central	63%	62%	90%	28%
Heston East	55%	60%	69%	9%
Heston West	84%	61%	70%	9%
Hounslow Central	76%	53%	83%	30%
Hounslow Heath	63%	65%	76%	11%
Hounslow South	63%	54%	57%	3%
Hounslow West	79%	62%	85%	23%
Isleworth	88%	65%	80%	15%
Osterley & Spr. Gr.	89%	67%	81%	14%
Syon	78%	75%	79%	4%
Turnham Green	82%	106%	83%	-23%
Totals	74%	65%	78%	13%

3 Wards were showing less than 70% take up in Autumn 2021: Chiswick Homefields, Heston East and Hounslow South. There were vacancies in all 3 Wards at the time but in Hounslow South the only vacancies were with childminders. Parents could of course, have chosen to take up their child's place out of borough and therefore not appear in Hounslow's take up data.

Comparisons to National, Outer London and statistical neighbour take up

Each term the Department for Education (DfE) conducts a survey on the number of eligible 2 year olds that have taken up a funded place. In January 2022, Hounslow ranked 1st out of its statistical neighbours, 5th out of the 19 outer London authorities and 89th out of 152 local authorities nationally.

Local Authority Survey



Out of 11 LAs:
1st

Statistical Neighbour Rank

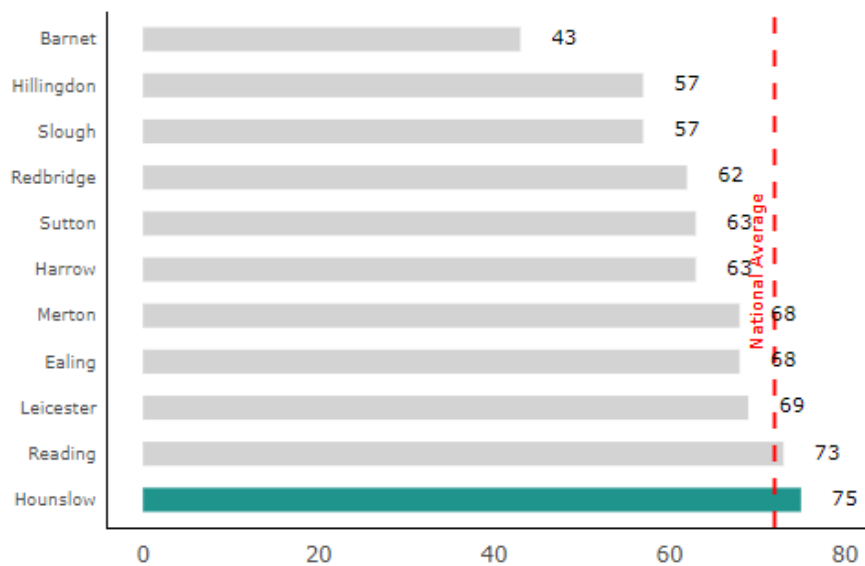
Out of 152 LAs:
89th

National Rank

Out of 19 LAs:
5th

Regional Rank

Statistical Neighbours



The chart below shows an improving picture of take up by disadvantaged 2 year olds each summer term since 2018.

Term / Year	No. of eligible 2 year olds	No of eligible 2 year olds taking up a place	% take up
Summer 2018	1364	765	56%
Summer 2019	1326	741	56%
Summer 2020	Data not collected		
Summer 2021	1150	756	66%
Summer 2022	1063	773	73%

Increasing the take up of disadvantaged 2 year old places in all Wards remains a focus for the Council.

Take up of funded 3 & 4 year old places (15 hours)

All 3 & 4 year olds can access up to 570 hours a year of funded early education, regardless of citizenship. This offer can be taken as up to 15 hours a week for 38 weeks in term time only childcare provision or fewer funded hours over more weeks in all year round provision. (The latter is called 'stretching' the entitlement.)

Take up of places is measured on a termly basis with the highest take up of 15 hour places by 3 & 4 year olds usually in the Summer term.

The table below shows the total number of funded 3 & 4 year olds accessing a 15 hour funded place in private childcare provision and school nursery classes. Hounslow has had an average take up of 85% over the last four years, with the Spring 2019 term take up being 86%. NB. Percentage take up data is only published once a year by the Department for Education (DfE) with data taken from the Spring Early Years Census.

The numbers in the table below include out of borough children attending a Hounslow early years provision. This is how take up is published by the Department for Education (DfE).

Term / Year	Total no. of 3 & 4 year old children in a 15 hour place	% take up published by the DfE
Autumn 2019	4253	
Spring 2020	4807	85%
Summer 2020	Data not collected	
Autumn 2020	3807	
Spring 2021	4318	84%
Summer 2021	4921	
Autumn 2021	3717	
Spring 2022	4457	85%
Summer 2022	4965	

The table below shows the number of 3 & 4 year olds living in Hounslow who took up a 15 hour place in Spring 2021 and Spring 2022 and also the increase or decrease from Spring to Spring.

Ward	Total no. of 3 & 4 year olds in a 15 hour place Spring 2021	Total no. of 3 & 4 year olds in a 15 hour place Spring 2022	Change from Spring 2021 to Spring 2022
Bedfont	220	212	-8
Brentford	208	220	12
Chiswick Homefields	114	104	-10
Chiswick Riverside	133	146	13
Cranford	210	217	7
Feltham North	161	201	40
Feltham West	256	259	3
Hanworth	122	141	19
Hanworth Park	161	173	12
Heston Central	185	199	14
Heston East	186	220	34
Heston West	216	189	-27
Hounslow Central	316	335	19
Hounslow Heath	250	246	-4
Hounslow South	87	95	8
Hounslow West	220	225	5
Isleworth	172	180	8
Osterley & Spr. Grove	197	165	-32
Syon	239	248	9
Turnham Green	140	134	-6
Total	3793	3909	116

The table below shows the percentage take up of 15 hour places by 3 & 4 year olds by Ward in Spring 2022.

Ward	% take up
Hounslow South	40%
Chiswick Homefields	41%
Hanworth	58%
Turnham Green	59%
Chiswick Riverside	62%
Brentford	67%
Hanworth Park	70%
Osterley and Spring Grove	72%
Heston West	76%
Isleworth	78%
Heston East	80%
Syon	81%
Heston Central	81%
Feltham North	84%
Cranford	84%
Hounslow Heath	88%
Bedfont	88%
Hounslow West	90%
Feltham West	93%
Hounslow Central	103%
Borough average	85%

15 Wards had below the borough average take up of 85% with 6 being below 70%, with the lowest being in Hounslow South. There were vacancies in the 6 Wards at the time in private and maintained provision. The least number of vacancies were in Chiswick Riverside and were only in private provision, not a maintained nursery class. All 6 Wards border with another local authority so parents may have chosen to take up their child's 15 hour place out of borough.

Comparisons to National, Outer London and statistical neighbour take up

The Department for Education (DfE) publishes the national, London and the local authority take up data each June using data taken from the Spring term Early Years Census. The table below shows that Hounslow's take up rate in Spring 2022 was above London but below National. Hounslow ranked 9th out of its 11 statistical neighbours.

	% take up of 15 hour places by 3 & 4 year olds
England	92%
London	82%
Hounslow	85%
Redbridge	95%

Ealing	90%
Slough	90%
Leicester	88%
Reading	87%
Hillingdon	87%
Harrow	86%
Sutton	86%
Hounslow	85%
Merton	85%
Barnet	81%

Increasing the take up of 15 hour places by 3 & 4 year olds remains a focus for the Council.

Take up of funded 3 & 4 year old places (30 hours)

Some 3 & 4 year olds from working families can access up to 1140 hours a year of funded early education and childcare. This offer can be taken as up to 30 hours a week for 38 weeks in term time only childcare provision or fewer funded hours over more weeks in all year round provision. (The latter is called 'stretching' the entitlement.)

To check their eligibility for the 30 hour entitlement, parents are required to apply [online](#), via HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). If eligible, they get an online childcare account and a code for 30 hours funded childcare. They are then required to take their code to their chosen childcare provider. Parents must confirm their details are up to date every 3 months or their code will expire.

The total number of families eligible for a 30 hour place is difficult to determine and is not provided by the Department for Education (DfE). Take up is therefore shown by the number of children accessing a place each term with the highest usually being in the Summer term.

You can see by the table below that take up of 30 hour places decreased in Autumn 2020 from the previous Autumn. Childcare provision had only started to re-open in Summer 2020 and many parents were still on furlough and / or had been made redundant. (The latter would make them no longer eligible to receive the 30 hours entitlement after a short 'grace period'). Take up dropped again the following Autumn 2021 when furlough came to an end.

NB. The numbers in the table below include out of borough children attending a Hounslow early years provision. This is how take up is published by the Department for Education (DfE).

Term / Year	Total no. of 3 & 4 year old children in a 30 hour place
Spring 2019	1218
Summer 2019	1427
Autumn 2019	1075

Spring 2020	1273
Summer 2020	Data not collected
Autumn 2020	980
Spring 2021	1042
Summer 2021	1260
Autumn 2021	948
Spring 2022	1139
Summer 2022	1310

Taking up a 30 hour place is dependent on both parents being employed (if a two parent family). Unemployment in Hounslow began to rise sharply in September 2020 and did so to beyond London and England averages at that time.

By September 2021, unemployment rates had started to recover and this pattern was reflected in the 30 hour take up numbers increasing term by term from Autumn 2021.

The table below shows the 3 & 4 year old 30 hour take up by Ward in Spring 2021 and Spring 2022 and the associated increase or decrease.

Ward	Total no. of children in a 3 & 4 year old 30 hour place Spring 2021	Total no. of children in a 3 & 4 year old 30 hour place Spring 2022	Increase/Decrease
Bedfont	52	49	-3
Brentford	62	65	3
Chiswick H.fields	14	23	9
Chiswick Riverside	24	36	12
Cranford	35	31	-4
Feltham North	48	49	1
Feltham West	65	67	2
Hanworth	24	20	-4
Hanworth Park	54	59	5
Heston Central	46	40	-6
Heston East	37	49	12
Heston West	34	31	-3
Hounslow Central	54	60	6
Hounslow Heath	49	40	-9
Hounslow South	31	36	5
Hounslow West	28	38	10
Isleworth	59	70	11
Osterley & Spr. Gr.	65	49	-16
Syon	68	88	20
Turnham Green	19	22	3
Total	868	922	54

The number of 3 & 4 year olds taking up a 30 hour place increased overall by 54 children from Spring 2021 to Spring 2022. However, in 7 Wards, take up had decreased, with the largest decrease being seen in Osterley and Spring Grove (-16).

No group early years provision had closed in this Ward to account for this change in number. The 3 & 4 year old population had decreased marginally but there are other factors that could have affected take up, if not related to employment, such as other childcare arrangements being put in place (extended family / childminders / nannies) or children accessing provision in a neighbouring Ward/borough. Osterley and Spring Grove is the only Ward without a maintained school Nursery class. Early education and childcare places in this Ward can only be met through the private sector which limits parental choice.

Increasing the take up of 30 hour places remains a focus for the Council.

Take up of 4-16 year old places in out of school provision

Out of school provision plays a key role in supporting the childcare needs of working parents outside of the school day i.e. :

- Breakfast clubs provide care for school-aged children before the school day starts. A healthy breakfast is served and the sessions usually run for about 60-90 minutes
- After school care schemes provide care for 4-11 year olds in full time education after the school day has ended and usually run for about 3 hours
- Holiday playschemes provide care for school-aged children during the school holidays, usually from 8am – 6pm
- The Holiday Activities and Food Programme (also known as HAF) is for school aged children from reception to year 11 (inclusive) who receive benefits-related free school meals. Free holiday activities and healthy meals are provided and each activity session lasts for at least four hours a day. Some HAF providers also offer fee paying places to non-eligible children and extended day places as part of a match funding opportunity

Parent and childcare provider ‘rights to request’ wraparound and holiday childcare

As part of their ongoing and regular engagement with parents, staff and the wider community, schools should make parents aware of their ‘right to request’ wraparound (before and after school) and holiday childcare and should not refuse a request without a reasonable justification. Wraparound childcare and holiday childcare can either be on a school’s site, run in-house by the school or in partnership with a provider, or at a nearby school or provider.

Breakfast clubs

The table below shows the number of children, from the data that was made available, who took up a place in a breakfast club. It is important to note that not all providers offering out of school provision responded to the annual data collection survey, despite every attempt taken in encouraging them to do so. Because of this, where there are noughts in the table below, it doesn’t necessarily equate to no places being available at the time or no children having taken up a place. The exception was in Heston West where there was no breakfast club provision.

Ward	Typical number of places offered	Number of children attending on busiest day	% take up	Potential number of vacancies
Bedfont	55	32	58%	23
Brentford	50	33	66%	17
Cranford	35	8	23%	23
Chiswick Homefields	70	70	100%	0
Chiswick Riverside	30	10	33%	20
Feltham North	0	0	0%	0
Feltham West	155	127	82%	28
Hanworth	38	24	63%	14
Hanworth park	145	80	55%	65
Heston Central	30	20	67%	10
Heston East	54	30	56%	24
Heston West	0	0	0%	0
Hounslow Central	40	28	70%	12
Hounslow Heath	8	8	100%	0
Hounslow South	0	0	0%	0
Hounslow West	20	20	100%	0
Isleworth	86	67	80%	19
Osterley & Spring Grove	45	45	100%	0
Syon	92	88	96%	4
Turnham Green	43	36	84%	7
Total	996	726	73%	266

3 Wards in particular appeared to have a high demand for places: Chiswick Homefields, Feltham West and Syon. This could relate to the number of working families in these Wards and the need for wrap around childcare. However, considering the total number of children who were able to access out of school provision, (see population on page 28) and the total number of places available, the number of children who actually accessed provision was low in some Wards. Demand for wrap around childcare could have reduced if more parents were working from home than in previous years or experiencing a period of unemployment. Other factors that could have affected take up are:

- other childcare arrangements (extended family / childminders / nannies)
- other types of afterschool and holiday activities such as sports camps
- children accessing out of school provision in a neighbouring Ward/borough

It was difficult to conduct a true analysis of the data without it being complete. Of the data that was available, 73% of breakfast club places were being taken up overall. 8 Wards had less than 70% take up which could lead to sustainability issues in the future if income doesn't cover costs. If breakfast clubs are forced to close, it will not only limit parental choice, it could also lead to a challenge to the Council in terms of sufficiency of places.

After school care

The table below shows the number of children, from the data that was made available, who took up a place in an after school care scheme. It is important to note that not all providers offering out of school provision responded to the annual data collection survey, despite every attempt taken in encouraging them to do so. Because of this, where there are noughts in the table below, it doesn't necessarily equate to no places being available at the time or no children having taken up a place. The two exceptions to this were in Heston West and Hounslow Heath where there was no after school care provision.

Ward	Typical number of places offered	Number of children attending on busiest day	% take up	Potential number of vacancies
Bedfont	41	34	83%	7
Brentford	50	50	100%	0
Cranford	37	26	70%	11
Chiswick Homefields	130	130	100%	0
Chiswick Riverside	0	0	0%	0
Feltham North	0	0	0%	0
Feltham West	185	139	75%	46
Hanworth	38	33	87%	5
Hanworth park	120	61	51%	59
Heston Central	30	20	67%	10
Heston East	50	22	44%	28
Heston West	0	0	0%	0
Hounslow Central	60	34	57%	26
Hounslow Heath	0	0	0%	0
Hounslow South	0	0	0%	0
Hounslow West	90	90	100%	0
Isleworth	65	65	100%	0
Osterley & Spring Grove	80	80	100%	0
Syon	138	125	91%	13
Turnham Green	46	46	100%	0
Total	1160	952	82%	205

3 Wards in particular appeared to have a high demand for places: Chiswick Homefields, Feltham West and Syon. This could relate to the number of working families in these Wards and the need for wrap around childcare. The borough percentage of children taking up a place was 9% higher than those taking up a place in a breakfast club which was at 82%.

It was difficult to conduct a true analysis of the data without it being complete. Of the data that was available 4 Wards have less than 70% take up which could lead to sustainability issues in the future if income doesn't cover costs. If after school care schemes are forced to close, it will not only limit parental choice, it could also lead to a challenge to the

Council in terms of sufficiency of places. It is important to note that could have reduced if more parents were working from home than in previous years, or experiencing a period of unemployment, as they would have been at home when children returned from schools and during school holidays. Other factors that could have affected take up are:

- parental choice
- other childcare arrangements (extended family / childminders / nannies)
- other types of afterschool and holiday activities such as sports camps
- children accessing out of school provision in a neighbouring Ward/borough

Holiday playschemes

It was not possible to collect data on the take up of places in holiday playschemes for this report. However, data is available regarding the Holidays Activities and Food Programme (HAF) take up. Please see below.

The Holidays Activities and Food Programme (HAF)

Research has shown that the school holidays can be pressure points for some families. For some children this can lead to a holiday experience gap, with children from low-income households being:

- less likely to access organised out-of-school activities
- more likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition and physical health
- more likely to experience social isolation

The Government's HAF programme is a response to this issue, with evidence showing that free holiday clubs can have a positive impact on children and young people, and that they work best when they:

- provide consistent and easily accessible enrichment activities
- cover more than just breakfast or lunch
- involve children (and parents) in food preparation
- use local partnerships and connections, particularly with the voluntary and community organisation sector

Take up of HAF places

The table below shows the number of HAF places available in each holiday period, the number of children who took up a place and the percentage take up.

	Christmas 2021	Easter 2022	Summer 2022
No. of places available	3999	2865	3563
No. of children who took up a place	2230	1985	2402
% take up	56%	69%	67%

The table below shows the number of children that accessed a HAF place by Ward. The most noticeable increase in take up was in Isleworth, with an increase of 308 children accessing a place in the Easter 2022 holidays compared to 455 in the Summer 2022

holidays. The biggest decrease in take up from Easter to Summer was in Chiswick Riverside where the number of children accessing a place reduced by 59 from 90 to 31.

Ward	Holiday period		
	Christmas 2021	Easter 2022	Summer 2022
Bedfont	81	79	85
Brentford	134	104	82
Cranford	67	134	102
Chiswick Homefields	78	70	109
Chiswick Riverside	72	90	31
Feltham North	48	28	33
Feltham West	92	71	82
Hanworth	82	68	41
Hanworth park	71	102	96
Heston Central	81	97	85
Heston East	70	90	92
Heston West	34	24	23
Hounslow Central	164	147	129
Hounslow Heath	146	136	140
Hounslow South	29	52	27
Hounslow West	34	62	40
Isleworth	189	147	455
Osterley & Spring Gr.	97	29	29
Syon	110	113	110
Turnham Green	65	56	34
15% discretionary*	200	100	250
Out of borough**	121	91	120
Unknown***	165	95	207
Total	2230	1985	2402

***15% discretionary** - local authorities have discretion to use up to 15% of the funding to provide free or subsidised holiday club places for children who are not in receipt of benefits-related free school meals. This includes for example:

- children assessed by the local authority as being in need, at risk or vulnerable
- young carers
- looked-after children or previously looked after children
- children with an EHC (education, health and care) plan
- children living in areas of high deprivation or from low-income households who are not in receipt of free school meals
- have become eligible after the Evoucher delivery

**** Out of borough** - these figures show places taken by children that either live out of borough but attend a school in Hounslow or live in Hounslow but attend a school out of borough.

*****Unknown** - This is a data area that has been problematic based upon the Evoucher system. This was a known complication and a resolution had not been found at the time of writing this report.

Supply of childcare

0-4 year olds

The local childcare market is not static. It is influenced by childcare settings opening (and some closing) and existing providers changing the number of children that they admit. Any assessment of childcare sufficiency can only represent a snap shot in time as the childcare market is extremely fluid. The measure of whether childcare is sufficient is a combination of both the supply of places and the demand for places. If supply matches demand a Ward area can be deemed as having sufficient childcare. Vacant places suggest that supply outweighs demand and is therefore an indication of childcare sufficiency. Population growth is another indicator.

The Council is dependent on private early years providers to meet its statutory duties to:

- ensure that there is sufficient childcare to enable parents to work, study or seek employment
- secure free early years provision for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds (570 hours a year over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year)
- secure the equivalent of 30 hours free childcare available for working parents (1140 hours a year over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year).

The number of private early years Ofsted registered day nurseries and pre-schools, and the number of places they offer to 0-4 year olds, had been relatively stable for a number of years and it was deemed there were sufficient places in the borough. However, in 2021, the sufficiency of places was put under threat for a number of reasons and are discussed below:

- setting closures, permanent and temporary
- staff recruitment issues
- 2, 3 & 4 year old entitlement funding rates.

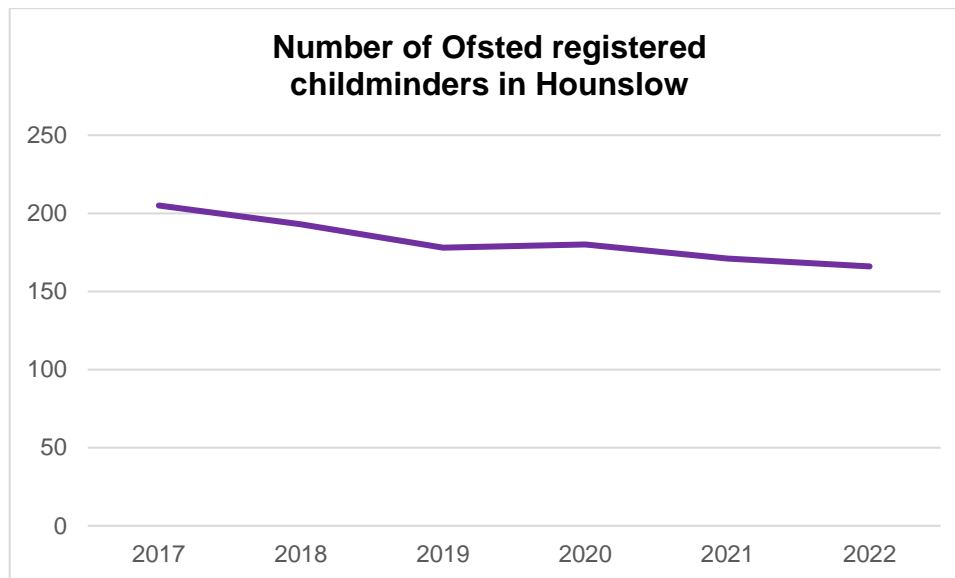
Setting closures

As there was in 2020 when the pandemic first started, there continued to be a number of periodic temporary closures of childcare provision due to Covid related incidents. Very unusually for Hounslow, but not totally unexpected because of the effect the pandemic was having on the financial sustainability of the early years sector, 3 private day nurseries and 2 pre-school closed. This resulted in a loss of 221 childcare places. Two of the main reasons cited for the closures were low occupancy and difficulties with staff recruitment.

Ward	No. of places lost
Chiswick Riverside	26 places
Isleworth	30 places
Heston East	68 places
Turnham Green	30 places
Syon	72 places
Bedfont	25 places

Further places were also lost by the closure of 14 Ofsted registered childminders since 2020. Childminders play an important role in meeting the Local Authority's statutory childcare duty. This is in terms of sufficiency and in providing homebased childcare, which is the preferred type of childcare environment for some families. Some parents not only favour a smaller group but also appreciate that childminders can be more flexible than other forms of childcare providers.

There was no common theme cited as to why childminders had chosen to close their provision but included: *"didn't enjoy lone working, lack of business and paperwork."*



You will see from the chart above that the number of childminders in Hounslow has gradually been declining over the years from 205 in 2017 to 166 in 2022. This reflects the national picture where childminder numbers have fallen by 27 per cent since August 2015. In June 2021, Liz Bayram, chief executive of the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY), said, *"This is no surprise to PACEY as this decline in England has been taking place over many years now. The pandemic has accelerated it with many registered childminders pushed to breaking point due to the pandemic, facing reduced income due to temporary closures and shifts in family working patterns that are changing childcare needs."*

A rather more positive change relating to childminding is that 6 childminders registered with a Childminder Agency (CMA) in 2021. This was the first time since CMAs came into force in 2014 that a Hounslow childminder chose to register with an agency. The aims of CMAs are to attract new childminders to the profession, make life easier for childminders by providing a range of services such as marketing, administrative support and training and development opportunities to help further raise the quality of their provision. CMAs also provide parents with matching services to help them find a childminder, access to holiday and sickness cover and regular updates about the quality of their childminder.

Staff recruitment issues

Staff recruitment issues have been a national problem for some years now and have been exacerbated by the pandemic. This was reported in 4 May 2021 edition of the *Nursery World* magazine when it said:

- *“Nurseries report Level 3 recruitment ‘critical’*
- *Pandemic has led to more staff leaving the sector*
- *Concern nurseries will need to turn children away to meet Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) staff : child ratios”*

Over a quarter of providers in day nurseries and pre-schools who responded to a survey carried out in June 2022 (25/95) reported that they had reduced the number of children they could accommodate temporarily as the required staff to child ratios could not be met. Two providers reduced their registered numbers on a permanent basis. In December 2021, the Early Years Alliance published its [Breaking Point](#) report, the impact of recruitment and retention challenges on the early years sector, which surveyed just under 1,400 people in the sector. The reasons most commonly cited were:

- a lack of applicants for roles (87%)
- applicants lacking full and relevant Early Years qualifications (70%)
- an inability to meet the salary demands of applicants (52%)

Having sufficiently qualified staff has a positive impact on the overall quality of early years provision. Children who experience high quality provision are well placed to achieve higher outcomes at school and develop better social, emotional and cognitive abilities necessary for life-long learning. Hounslow has therefore joined other local authorities in lobbying Central government to address this very real crisis in the sector. A response from the Department for Education (DfE) on this subject included:

- *“up to £153m in programmes to support workforce development have been announced”*
- *“new early years training routes are being developed”*
- they are *“working with the sector to build our understanding of the workforce” situation - including any issues related to recruitment and retention - and how providers and local authorities might be supported in this area.”*

This critical issue will continue to be monitored.

2, 3 & 4 year old childcare funding rates

Early years providers source of income is from the childcare places that they offer. This income is either from fees determined by the provider and sourced directly from parents or through Government funded childcare places. There is a fixed hourly rate payment for funded places for disadvantaged 2 year olds, all 3 and 4 year olds and additional funded hours for 3 and 4 year olds from working families.

There is undoubtedly a relationship between the cost of childcare and the level of funding paid to providers for 2, 3 & 4 year old places. Providers are clear that hourly rates for funded places do not cover their costs of delivery. Early years organisations and providers regularly lobby for the funding rates to be reviewed. Providers assert that any increase in the funding rate is not aligned with increases in costs such as rises in the national living and minimum wages, business rates and utilities costs alongside the ongoing financial impact of the pandemic. This leads to the funding gap increasing year on year.

At the Spending Review 2021, it was announced that additional funding for the early years entitlements worth £160m in 2022/23, £180m in 2023/24 and £170m in 2024/25, compared to the 2021/22 financial year was to be invested. It is not yet known whether this additional funding will be sufficient to keep the early years sector sustainable.

In the 2022/23 financial year, the hourly rate in Hounslow, determined through the Early Years National Funding Formula, increased by 3.5% (21p) per child per funded hour for disadvantaged 2 year olds and 2.8% (17p) per child per funded hour for 3 and 4 year olds. However, with the costs of delivery increasing, not least due to increases in the National Minimum Wage and Living Wage, there remains a financial burden on early years providers with a possible impact on costs in fees to parents.

In July 2022, the Department for Education (DfE) launched a government consultation seeking views on proposed updates to the early years funding formulae for the 2023/24 financial year and annually thereafter. The changes were proposed because the formulae underpinning funding allocations no longer utilised the most up-to-date data. If the proposed reforms are implemented, there will be notable changes to local authority funding levels.

Further information on the consultation findings and future funding levels was not available at the time of writing this report. However, the consequence of a low increase in future 2, 3 and 4 year old funding rates could result in the sufficiency of free childcare places decreasing and statutory duties not met in terms of securing sufficient affordable, flexible and high-quality childcare places. This will prevent people returning to or taking up work, which will have a direct impact on economy growth.

Supply of places for 0-4 year olds

In Summer 2022, there were approximately 5538 places being offered to 0-4 year olds by private day nurseries, pre-schools and childminders with an additional 2568 places for 3 and 4 year olds being offered in school nursery classes.

This was less than was being offered in 2019 (pre-Covid), when Hounslow was deemed to have sufficient places for 0-4 year olds. The decrease was due to a number of reasons:

- 3 private day nurseries and 2 pre-schools closed between July 2021 and April 2022 (see page 44)
- There were 12 less Ofsted registered childminders since 2019 (see page 45)
- Less early years places were being offered due to staff recruitment issues (see page 45)

Vacancies in the borough for 0-4 year olds in private childcare provision

There is always a challenge in ensuring that available places are with a provider of a parents' first choice. Some parents and carers choose to delay accessing their place in order to use their preferred provision, others may use a setting from outside the area in which they live for a variety of reasons, including work.

The table below shows the total number of vacancies for 0-4 year olds in private childcare provision in June 2019 (pre-pandemic), June 2021 and June 2022. (Additional vacancies for 3 & 4 year olds were also available in maintained school nursery classes. This information can be found on page 50.)

	Number of vacancies for under 2s	Number of vacancies for 2 year olds	Number of vacancies for disadvantaged 2 year olds	Number of 15 hour vacancies for 3 & 4 year olds	Number of 30 hour vacancies for 3 & 4 year olds
Jun-22	193	234	247	388	239
Jun-21	386	411	439	531	417
Jun-20	Data not collected				
Jun-19	198	216	171	202	127

Normally a marked reduction in vacancies, as there was from June 2021 to June 2022, might equate to a reduction in sufficiency of places. However, due to the impact of the pandemic, it more likely indicated that the take up of places had improved from the previous year.

There was a significant number of vacant places available for 0-4 year olds across the borough in June 2022. However, in 3 Wards there were no reported vacancies* for the following groups of children:

Ward	Vacancy information	Points to note
Chiswick Homefields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No vacancies for disadvantaged 2 year olds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacancies available in adjacent Wards Parents may have chosen to take up their child's place out of borough as this Ward borders with another local authority No projected population increase in 2023
Hanworth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No vacancies for disadvantaged 2 year olds No 15 or 30 hour vacancies for 3 and 4 year olds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacancies available in adjacent Wards Parents may have chosen to take up their child's place out of borough as this Ward borders with another local authority No projected population increase in 2023
Isleworth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No vacancies for under 2s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *8 childminders in this Ward did not provide vacancy information Vacancies available in adjacent Wards Parents may have chosen to take up their child's place out of borough as this Ward borders with another local authority No projected population increase in 2023

Another point to note is that the Summer term is when private childcare provision for 0-4 year olds is usually at its fullest. Many more vacancies become available the following term once older children leave to take up their school nursery or reception class place.

Due to the number of vacancies across the borough in a term where childcare settings are at their fullest, very low or a reduction in population growth and no reported instances to Hounslow's Family Information Service of parents and carers being unable to access a childcare place, it was deemed that there continued to be sufficient childcare for 0-4 year olds in Hounslow in 2022.

However, sufficiency of places in all Wards will continue to be monitored closely, not only due to the issues identified in Chiswick Homefields, Hanworth and Isleworth, but also because there are some Wards which had limited availability of surplus places. In Feltham North, Hounslow South and Hounslow West, for some age groups, the only vacancies were with childminders. In Wards with limited vacant places, childcare is more susceptible to becoming insufficient due to a range of market forces such as changes in employment, an increase in demand, population growth or closure of settings.

Population

Only one of the Wards named above, Feltham North, had a projected population increase for 2023. However, the increase was not over 10 children in each of the age groups. The other five Wards had a projected population decrease in 2023.

	Vacancies					
	Projected population increase 0-4s Y/N	Under 2s Y/N	2 year olds Y/N	Dis-advantaged 2 year old places Y/N	3 & 4 year old 15 hour places Y/N	3 & 4 year old 30 hour places Y/N
Bedfont	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Brentford	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Chiswick H. Fields	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Chiswick Riverside	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cranford	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Feltham North	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Feltham West	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Hanworth	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
Hanworth Park	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Heston Central	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Heston East	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Heston West	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Hounslow Central	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Hounslow Heath	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Hounslow South	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Hounslow West	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Isleworth	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Osterley & Spr. Gr.	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Syon	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Turnham Green	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Vacancies in maintained nursery class for 3 & 4 year olds

There were a significant number of vacancies in maintained school nursery class provision in Summer 2022. If occupancy does not increase in those most affected it could lead to a smaller nursery class intake in future academic years and in some cases, lead to closure until demand increases. This will not only limit parental choice but could also result in statutory duties not being met in terms of securing sufficient early education places for all 3 & 4 year olds.

Ward	Number of 15 hour vacancies in school nursery classes Summer 22	Number of 30 hour vacancies in school nursery classes Summer 22
Bedfont	23	10
Brentford	14	5
Chiswick Homefields	18	N/A
Chiswick Riverside	3	0
Cranford	12	6
Feltham North	0	0
Feltham West	31	10
Hanworth	13	1
Hanworth Park	0	0
Heston Central	69	6
Heston East	43	7
Heston West	1	N/A
Hounslow Central	5	0
Hounslow Heath	16	N/A
Hounslow South	10	3
Hounslow West	3	N/A
Isleworth	16	3
Syon	36	8
Turnham Green	6	1
Total	319	60

Supply of places for 4-14 year olds

Many working parents are dependent upon out of school provision such as breakfast clubs, after school care and holiday playschemes to provide childcare beyond the school day and during school holiday periods. The number of each type of scheme in the borough had increased since 2020 but there was not a scheme of each type in each Ward, as indicated on page 51. However, there was additional holiday playscheme provision provided through the Holidays Activities Fund Programme (HAF). See page 54.

The table below shows the number of schemes open in the borough in 2022 had increased from 2020.

	No. of Breakfast clubs	No. of After school care schemes	No. of Holiday play schemes
2020	38	34	18
2022	49	43	26
Change	+11	+9	+8

The table below shows in which Wards and what number of out of school providers closed their provision in the 12 months prior to September 2022 and the number in each Ward who were planning to open or expand their provision. This was not necessarily the same providers.

Ward	Closed in 12 months prior to September 2022			Planning to open post September 2022		
	Breakfast club	After school care	Holiday play-scheme	Breakfast club	After school care	Holiday play-scheme
Cranford	1	1			1	
Heston East				1	1	2
Heston Central	1	1		1	1	2
Feltham West						
Feltham North	1					
Chiswick H.fields			1			
Hanworth			1			

No providers were planning to open out of school provision in Wards without current provision.

The table below shows the number of each type of scheme by Ward, including where no provision was available.

Ward	No. of breakfast clubs	No. of after school care schemes	No. of holiday play schemes
Bedfont	2	2	0
Brentford	3	3	2
Cranford	2	1	2
Chiswick Homefields	2	2	0
Chiswick Riverside	2	2	3
Feltham North	1	1	1
Feltham West	4	4	2
Hanworth	3	3	1
Hanworth park	4	3	2
Heston Central	3	3	1
Heston East	3	2	2
Heston West	0	0	0

Hounslow Central	3	2	1
Hounslow Heath	1	0	0
Hounslow South	1	2	0
Hounslow West	2	1	0
Isleworth	5	4	1
Osterley & Spring Grove	1	1	1
Syon	4	4	3
Turnham Green	3	3	4
Total	49	43	26

Please note the following:

- for information on the total number of places that were available in breakfast clubs and after school care schemes please see page 39.
- it was not possible to collect data on the take up of places in holiday playschemes for this report but data is available regarding the Holidays Activities and Food Programme (HAF). Please see pages 41 and 56.

The table below shows the reported number of vacancies that were available in before and after school provision. However, it is important to note that not all providers offering out of school provision responded to the annual data collection survey, despite every attempt taken in encouraging them to do so. Because of this, where there are noughts in the table below, it doesn't necessarily equate to no vacancies being available at the time. The exception was in Heston West where there was no before or after school provision.

Ward	Reported number of vacancies (Breakfast clubs)	Reported number of vacancies (After school care)
Bedfont	23	7
Brentford	17	0
Cranford	23	11
Chiswick Homefields	0	0
Chiswick Riverside	20	0
Feltham North	0	0
Feltham West	28	46
Hanworth	14	5
Hanworth park	65	59
Heston Central	10	10
Heston East	24	28
Heston West	0	0
Hounslow Central	12	26
Hounslow Heath	0	0
Hounslow South	0	0
Hounslow West	0	0

Isleworth	19	0
Osterley & Spring Grove	0	0
Syon	4	13
Turnham Green	7	0
Total	271	205

Because the data was incomplete but there were still a significant number of vacancies, it would suggest sufficient before and after school care provision in the borough. However, families in Heston West (before and after school) and Hounslow Heath (after school) would need to seek provision in a neighbouring Ward or in a location near to their workplace. Alternatively, they could secure the services of a childminder. No schools in these Wards indicated they would be opening provision in the next 12 months which suggests there is not the demand for them to do so.

Additional places for 5 year olds to teens with childminders

Childminders can look after children from birth right through until secondary school, although their registration only regulates the care of children aged 8 and under.

The number of children aged 0-8 years a childminder (and other early years providers) may care for and the indoor space requirements are set out in the [Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage](#), Safeguarding and Welfare requirements.

A childminder may care for a maximum of six children under the age of 8. Of these six children, a maximum of three may be young children and there should only be one child under the age of one (a child is a young child until 1 September following their 5th birthday). However, there are exceptions to these ratios:

- If children aged 4 and 5 only attend the childminding setting before and/or after a normal school day and/or during school holidays, they may be cared for at the same time as three other young children
- If a childminder is providing wraparound care (before and/or after school) for a 3 or 4 year old child taking up their 30 hour place in a school, an exception to the usual ratios can be made
- If a childminder employs an assistant or works with another childminder, each childminder (or assistant) may care for the number of children permitted by the ratios specified in sections 3.44 of the EYFS Statutory Framework, subject to any restrictions imposed by Ofsted on registration. *Children may only be left in the sole care of assistants for no more than two hours in a single day. Childminders must obtain parental permission to leave children with an assistant*
- If a childminder can demonstrate to parents/carers and Ofsted that the individual needs of children are being met, then exceptions to the usual ratios can be made where childminders are caring for sibling babies or caring for their own baby. This is to allow continuity of care for families
- Exceptions may also apply in the event of short-term and unforeseeable emergencies, as long as care for all children is safeguarded and the one-to-six ratio is not exceeded.

Ward	No. of vacancies for 5-8 year olds with childminders in June 2022
Bedfont	6
Brentford	3
Chiswick Homefields	3
Chiswick Riverside	3
Cranford	4
Feltham North	2
Feltham West	5
Hanworth	0
Hanworth Park	6
Heston Central	7
Heston East	0
Heston West	1
Hounslow Central	3
Hounslow Heath	3
Hounslow South	7
Hounslow West	8
Isleworth	18
Osterley and Spring Grove	1
Syon	15
Turnham Green	1
Total	96

Holiday playschemes (not funded through the Holiday Activities and Food Programme)

There were 6 Wards that did not have a holiday playscheme: Bedfont, Chiswick Homefields, Heston West, Hounslow Heath, Hounslow South and Hounslow West. One school in Chiswick Homefields had closed down their holiday playscheme citing 'business choice' as their reason for doing so. This suggests there was insufficient demand.

No schools in the 6 Wards named above indicated they would be opening holiday provision in the next 12 months. However, in 2 of the Wards, Bedfont and Heston West, approximately 28 fee paying places were made available in HAF provision in the Summer 2022 holidays for children not eligible for the scheme.

Further fee paying places were made available in HAF provision in other Wards offering approximately 368 places in total: Brentford, Cranford, Feltham North, Feltham West, Heston East, Hounslow Central, Isleworth, Osterley & Spring Grove, Syon and Turnham Green.

Families in Wards with no holiday playschemes would need to seek provision in a neighbouring Ward or in a location near to their workplace. Alternatively, they could secure the services of a childminder.

It was not possible to collect the number of vacancies in holiday playschemes for this report in order to complete an assessment on the sufficiency of places. However, data is available regarding the Holidays Activities and Food Programme (HAF) take up below.

Supply of places in the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)

This holiday provision is for school aged children from reception to year 11 (inclusive) who receive benefits-related free school meals. Benefits-related free school meals (FSM) are available to pupils if their parents are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits, and have a claim verified by their school or local authority.

Parents of eligible children receive an Evoucher for the HAF programme from their child's school either by text message or email.

Local authorities are expected to offer provision over the following holiday periods.

Holiday period	Expected offer per child	Hounslow's offer per child
Christmas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All participating children should benefit from a week of support which covers a minimum of 4 days 	Christmas 2021 - four sessions of four hours over four days
Easter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All participating children should benefit from at least a week of face-to-face provision which should be for a minimum of 4 days For most children, each day at Easter should consist of at least 4 hours of provision, but the local authority should ensure that provision is tailored to need 	Easter 2022 - four sessions of four hours over four days
Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All participating children should be offered at least 4 weeks of face-to-face provision, which cover a minimum of 16 days For most children, each day during summer should consist of at least 4 hours of provision, but the local authority should ensure that provision is tailored to need 	Summer 2022 - sixteen sessions of four hours over four weeks

The offers above are per child e.g., a child could attend provision on 4 days a week for 4 hours over a holiday period. At Christmas and Easter there was the opportunity to offer a total of eight days provision. Therefore, double the number of eligible children could be reached within these holiday periods.

- **Supply of HAF places Christmas 2021 to Summer 2022** (No HAF provision was available in Feltham North or Hounslow West):

	Christmas 2021	Easter 2022	Summer 2022
Total amount of places created	3999	2865	3563
Total amount of funded places accessed	2230	1985	2402
Number of providers	23	22	31
Number of venues	31	30	39
Average take up with each provider	65%	65%	80%
Percentage take up from secondary schools	21%	25%	10%
% of children with SEND accessing a place	4%	10%	13%

A key action moving forward will be to explore how the HAF programme can continue its growth within the allocated budget. This would include ensuring:

- the amount of provision by Ward is determined upon demand and by areas of deprivation
- the best use of funding is made when agreeing on future premises and their associated rental costs. This would include in Feltham North and Hounslow West where no HAF provision is in place.

In Hounslow, all HAF activities including dates, times, locations and contact details are listed on the [Family Services Directory](#).

Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

Local authority Support for 0-4 year olds

The local authority has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity for children with SEND and ensure that all providers delivering early education places meet the needs of children with SEND. To help meet these duties, the local authority has in place an Early Years SEN Team that fulfil the remit of the Area Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) role as outlined in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice: 0 – 25 years (2015).

The team works with early years providers to develop quality, inclusive environments and practice within their settings to support the inclusion of children with SEND. They provide a comprehensive training package on a range of topics relating to inclusion and SEND through a universal training offer, bitesize sessions to support early identification and intervention, termly SENCO forums and targeted and bespoke training within the provision.

Each early years provider has an allocated member from the Early Years SEN team who is the main point of contact for the setting SENCO or childminder. They provide advice and practical approaches to identification, assessment and intervention as well as providing day-to-day support for setting-based SENCOs or childminder to ensure arrangements are in place to support children with SEND.

There are also a range of other services in the borough, including Children's Centres, SEN Specialist Support and the Portage Home Visiting Team that offer support to parents of children with additional needs to find placements and ensure access to provision.

In February 2022, a Joint Area SEND Inspection took place in Hounslow. In the outcome letter, published in May 2022, inspectors reported that *'Early years practitioners feel well supported by the early years specialist SEND team in identifying children's needs early. Procedures for managing initial concerns when these are raised by setting leaders and/or parents are consistent. Specialist early years practitioners based centrally offer a range of bespoke and central training. Some parents commented that there is a high quality and joined-up service in the early years.'*

Transitions to next placements are well planned to ensure a positive experience for both parents and child. In the 2021 Autumn term, the EY SEN Team provided targeted training and support to a number of early years practitioners in mainstream nursery classes to support effective transitions for children with SEND moving from an early years setting to schools.

Information on all of the above services can be found on the [Hounslow Local Offer](#) along with information on other resources and provision to support families to access childcare provision.

Early years providers

All early years providers in Hounslow that offer government funded places are aware of their duties in relation to supporting children with SEND. This is set out in the [Statutory](#)

[Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(2021\)](#), [Special educational needs code of practice: 0 – 25 years \(2015\)](#) and [Equality Act \(2010\)](#).

Each early years provider is asked to provide information on their provision for SEND and make this available through the Hounslow Local Offer. At the time of writing this report, 84% of day nurseries and pre-schools had provided this information on the [Hounslow Family Services Directory](#).

Every early years setting has a designated SENCO to oversee systems for SEND within the provision. Early years providers demonstrate a commitment to inclusion and are confident about supporting children with a range of additional needs, including those with increasingly complex needs. Examples of good inclusive practice can be found in many early years provider Ofsted Inspection reports.

In the outcome letter following the Joint area SEND inspection in February 2022, it also stated that, *'Parents are confident in the support offered to children by early years settings. This means that children with a range of needs can access support locally and when it is needed.'*

Additional Funding

It is a requirement for all local authorities to have a SEN Inclusion Fund within their local funding systems for 3 & 4 year olds with SEN who are taking up a funded place regardless of number of hours taken. Funding allocations in the form of top up grants are based on the child accessing a maximum of 570 hours per year (i.e., 15 hours per week) in line with government funding entitlements. Additional funding beyond the 15 hours for children eligible to access the 30 hour entitlement is considered on a case-by-case basis.

In consultation with relevant stakeholders, Hounslow extended the SEN Inclusion Fund eligibility criteria to include 2 year olds identified with a level of SEN to support early intervention and improve educational outcomes.

Many early years providers are now accessing and using funds effectively to support inclusion and remove barriers to access for children with SEND. In the academic year 2021/22 over 350 children with SEND accessed SEN Inclusion Funding.

Further information on the SEN Inclusion Fund can be found on the [Hounslow Local Offer](#).

Ensuring under 5s have access to high quality early years education is a key priority for London Borough of Hounslow. A key focus will therefore be to improve expertise in SEND by increasing the number of staff with an accredited SENCO qualification in early years settings. This will be done by promoting the Level 3 SENCO Qualification and supporting setting SENCOs to obtain this qualification which was a proposal within SEND Green Paper - SEND Review: Right support, Right place, Right time: March 2022.

Education, health and care (EHC) plans

An education, health and care (EHC) plan is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support. EHC plans identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs.

The number of children with an education, health and care (EHC) plan in Hounslow 2018 – 2021 can be found in the table below.

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Under 5	1	1	3	2
Age 5 to 10	37	45	43	61
Age 11 to 15	90	115	124	125
Age 16 to 19	57	47	54	54
Total	185	208	224	242

Future sustainability of day nurseries and pre-schools offering places to 0-4 year olds

To support the Council in better understanding the future sustainability of private childcare providers and in particular their financial position, day nurseries and pre-schools were asked about their expected income over a 6 month period. The change in their response from June 2020 to June 2022 was marked. 81% of providers expected to break even or operate at a profit, compared to 69% in June 2021 and 31% in June 2020.

	June 2020	June 2021	June 2022	Change from June 20 - June 22
Operate at a profit	1 / 67 (1%)	24 / 98 (24%)	35 / 95 (37%)	36%
Break even	20 / 67 (30%)	44 / 98 (45%)	42 / 95 (44%)	14%
Operate at a loss	46 / 67 (69%)	30 / 98 (31%)	18 / 95 (19%)	-50%

It was important to identify if the providers who predicted to operate at a loss are in areas of high deprivation. This is because they have limited ability to make changes than providers in less deprived areas as there is less opportunity to increase their fees to cover costs.

The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) was used to identify areas of deprivation in the borough. IDACI represents the percentage of children in an area living in low income households and therefore represents a scale of deprivation within an area.

The table below shows the percentage of children in each Ward living in low income households, the highest area of deprivation being at the top. The best data available was used at the time of writing the report.

Ward	Estimated IDACI 2021
Cranford	46%
Hounslow Central	43%
Hounslow West	43%
Heston Central	40%
Hounslow Heath	39%
Heston East	38%
Brentford	37%
Hanworth	36%
Bedfont	35%
Feltham North	35%

Hanworth Park	35%
Isleworth	34%
Syon	34%
Heston West	34%
Feltham West	30%
Osterley & Spring Grove	25%
Hounslow South	23%
Chiswick Riverside	16%
Turnham Green	14%
Chiswick Homefields	11%

18 day nursery and/or pre-school settings predicted that they would be 'operating at a loss' in the latter half of 2022. The number of these settings per Ward is shown in the table below along with the estimated percentage of deprivation. 11 of these settings had a reported occupancy of 70% or over, with 9 of them being over 80%. However, being financially viable does not only relate to a good occupancy level. The income received for the childcare places also needs to be sufficient to cover costs.

Ward	Estimated IDACI 2021	Number of settings predicting to operate at a loss June - Dec 2022
Heston Central	40%	2
Hounslow Heath	39%	2
Heston East	38%	2
Hanworth	36%	3
Bedfont	35%	1
Hanworth Park	35%	3
Isleworth	34%	1
Feltham West	30%	1
Osterley & Spring Grove	25%	2
Turnham Green	25%	1

In the same June survey, day nursery and pre-school providers were asked what they saw as their main challenge to their business remaining sustainable moving forward. The responses varied but the issue listed far more than any others was recruitment of staff, relating to both recruitment and retention. Further information about staff recruitment can be found on page 45.

Other key issues listed related to financial concerns including the funding rate paid for 2, 3 & 4 year old places and the increasing cost of living. These issues have been referred to on page 46 of this report but the situation was exacerbated in August 2022 by a further increase in the rate of inflation. The impact of this increase, on both providers and parents, was succinctly put in the following article published by the Nursery World magazine.

“With UK inflation reaching double figures for the first time in 40 years, NDNA chief executive Purnima Tanuku has called on the Government to place early years funding at ‘the heart of the political agenda’, warning that providers cannot pass on rising costs to families struggling to cover their own expenses.

‘As inflation soars into double figures pushing up costs, so too does the cost of delivering high quality early education and care,’ she said.

‘Obviously childcare providers cannot keep passing on that cost to parents who are already trying to cope with all their other rising bills. We know that nurseries are doing everything they can to keep costs down for parents but they need to remain sustainable as businesses too. Every nursery that has to close causes heartbreak for the local community and can be devastating for a young child.’

‘If providers could pay higher wages to their dedicated and qualified staff, it would help with recruiting and retaining staff too.’ ”

Support can be given to providers who need to change their operating models in order to remain viable and they can also be signposted to business support but, the future sustainability of early years settings throughout the Borough is fragile if they cannot increase their income. This may lead to a challenge for the Council in terms of ensuring sufficient places for 0-4 year olds in the coming year.

Cost of childcare

Childcare costs are a recognised national issue and every opportunity is taken to market all forms of financial support with childcare costs and to ensure key front line professionals in Hounslow are kept well informed to be able to support families accordingly.

There is undoubtedly a relationship between the cost of childcare and the level of funding paid to providers for the funded 2, 3 & 4 year old places they offer. Providers are clear that hourly rates for these places do not cover their costs of delivery. The national campaigns which lobby central government on this issue continue.

In the 2022/23 financial year, the hourly rate in Hounslow, determined through the Early Years National Funding Formula, increased by 3.5% (21p) per child per funded hour for disadvantaged 2 year olds and 2.8% (17p) per child per funded hour for 3 and 4 year olds.. However, with the costs of delivery increasing, not least due to increases in the National Minimum Wage and Living Wage, there remains a financial burden on early years providers with a possible impact on costs in fees to parents.

Childcare costs vary significantly across the borough. Childcare costs are generally driven by affordability and consequently there is some correlation between cost and economic welfare within Wards. Where economic welfare varies across the Ward, so do costs. The families most likely faced with the highest affordability challenge will be those whose income is lower than would be indicated by the deprivation level for the Ward.

The local authority has no right to dictate to early years providers how they operate their private businesses or the fees that they charge over and above a child's funded hours. However, strategies can be employed to assist families in accessing the support that is available to them through government schemes.

There are several different schemes through which families can get support with their childcare costs, each with different eligibility criteria. There is extensive local marketing and support to ensure that families are aware of these schemes and support is also offered to access places.

Parents can check what help they might be able to receive with childcare financial support schemes, such as funded childcare and early education for 2, 3 and 4 year olds and help with childcare costs if the child is under 16 (or under 17 and disabled) via the www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator.

In addition, the [Hounslow Family Services Directory](#) (FSD) provides families with easy to access information in relation to the schemes to assist with the cost of childcare.

[Funded childcare and early learning for some 2 year olds \(570 hours a year\)](#)

The funded childcare entitlement for disadvantaged 2 year olds provides up to 15 hours of free childcare and early learning a week to families who are eligible through socio economic factors. It seeks to enable disadvantaged children to access high quality early education.

[Funded early education for all 3 & 4 year olds](#) (570 hours a year)

This scheme is universal and there are no earnings or work requirements. All 3 & 4 year olds can access up to 15 hours a week of early education.

[Funded early education for some 3 & 4 year olds from working families \(30 hours\)](#) 1140 hours a year

Eligible working families with a 3 & 4 year old child can access an additional 15 hours of funded childcare and education a week – 30 hours in total.

Other forms of financial support with childcare costs

[Tax-Free Childcare](#)

Parents eligible for Tax-Free Childcare, are able to set up an online Tax-Free Childcare account to pay for their childcare. They cannot get this if they receive Tax Credits, Universal Credit, Childcare Vouchers, a childcare bursary or grant.

For every £8 a parent pays into their Childcare Account, the government adds an extra £2 (or £4 for a disabled child). Parents could get up to £2,000 per child per year towards their childcare costs, or up to £4,000 for a child with a disability.

Parents need to expect to earn at least the National Minimum Wage or Living wage for 16 hours a week on average. For example, a parent over 23 should earn £152* per week.

* This amount applies to the 2022/23 financial year. The rates change every year on 1 April.

[Tax Credits for childcare](#)

Tax Credit for Childcare is for working families, with children under 16 (or under 17 if disabled), is dependent on the income of both parents and the number of hours worked. The childcare element can cover up to 70 per cent of eligible childcare costs. Tax credits are closed to new applications for the majority of people from 1 February 2019.

[Universal Credit](#)

The childcare cost element of Universal Credit is available to all lone parents and couples who are working, or are due to start work, and claiming Universal Credit. Regardless of the number of hours they work, parents can get up to 85% of childcare costs paid back to them for children under 17. If parents are unable to pay upfront costs they can get help through the Flexible Support Fund (they do not need to pay this back) or an advance from Universal Credit (they do have to pay this back). Tax Credit and Universal Credit cannot be claimed at the same time.

[Childcare vouchers – closed to new applicants](#)

Parents who have joined the scheme to receive childcare vouchers can get up to £933 a year in tax and National Insurance savings. The amount parents can get in childcare vouchers depends on how much they earn and when they joined the scheme. Parents pay for their childcare before tax and National Insurance deductions are made.

[Help to pay for childcare while studying](#)

Weekly payments through [Care to Learn](#) for parents under 20 years old.

[Discretionary Learner Support](#) for parents aged 19 and over.

[Childcare Grant](#) for those in full-time higher education and eligible for student finance.

Specified Adult Childcare Credits

- Grandparents and relatives providing childcare can claim National Insurance credits. The relative needs to be over 16, and under state pension age. The credits are for anyone who is providing care for a young relative under the age of 12 to enable a parent to work
- Specified Adult Childcare credits can be backdated to 6 April 2011.

Childcare Costs in Hounslow

Comparative data with average costs in Outer London became available in March 2022 collected from local authorities in Autumn 2021. These were for childcare places for children aged under 2 and aged 2 years. They showed that the average childcare costs in Hounslow for these age groups were higher in 2021 than the average childcare costs in Outer London. However, it is important to note that in over half of all settings combined, Hounslow costs were lower than the Outer London average:

- 44 day nurseries offering places for children aged under 2 years, 19 of them were currently charging less than the average Outer London rate (43%)
- 61 day nurseries offering places for children aged 2 years, 30 of them were charging the same as the average Outer London rate or less (49%)
- 114 childminders offering places for children aged from 0-3 years, 84 were charging less than the average Outer London rate (74%)

Comparative data table – average costs

	Outer London		Hounslow	
	Average Hourly Cost (under 2)	Average Hourly Cost (2 year olds)	Average Hourly Cost (under 2)	Average Hourly Cost (2 year olds)
Childminder	5.89	5.84	7.13	7.13
Day nursery	6.06	6.18	7.08	7.13

Costs for different types of provision in Hounslow

When looking at the cost information below it must also be pointed out that rates charged by childcare providers are quite complex. Many do not have a set hourly rate and will set fees for sessions or weeks or terms. Therefore, the information in this section best represents hourly rates calculated from this starting point. Childcare providers can, and do, change their rates at any time. However, the information is sufficient to provide an indicator of costs and comparisons across Wards. It is important to note that as of July 2022:

- 43% of day nurseries and pre-schools (41/96) had not increased their fees since December 2020
- 48% of childminders who responded to the Hounslow fees survey (47/97) had not increased their fees since December 2020.

The tables on pages 66-69 show the average hourly cost charged by day nurseries, pre-schools, childminders and out of school provision for each age group by Ward. The

percentage of children living in poverty in each Ward is indicated as per the key on page 60. This enables an assessment of whether costs correlate with deprivation. It should be noted that this can be misleading when there are pockets of deprivation amongst relative affluence.

Table: Day nurseries for 0-4 year olds average hourly rates by Ward linked to deprivation. NB There are no day nurseries in Hounslow South and Feltham North.

Ward (% IDACI high to low)	Under 2s average hourly rate (£)	2s average hourly rate (£)	3 & 4s average hourly rate (£)
Cranford	6.54	6.23	6.12
Hounslow Central	7.29	7.20	6.97
Hounslow West	7.00	6.50	6.30
Heston Central	7.48	7.43	6.96
Hounslow Heath	5.25	5.25	5.25
Heston East	6.78	6.78	6.15
Brentford	7.22	7.03	6.68
Hanworth	5.89	5.47	5.47
Bedfont	6.56	6.57	6.03
Hanworth Park	6.78	6.39	6.16
Heston West	6.10	6.10	6.10
Isleworth	7.72	7.72	7.72
Syon	7.62	7.80	6.51
Feltham West	6.51	6.82	6.50
Osterley & Spring Grove	8.25	7.27	7.33
Turnham Green	8.24	8.43	8.22
Chiswick Riverside	7.79	9.79	7.74
Chiswick Homefields	8.33	8.50	7.33

Table: Private pre-schools/playgroups for 2-4 year olds average hourly rates by Ward linked to deprivation. NB There are no pre-schools in Hounslow West, Hanworth Park or Chiswick Riverside.

Ward (% IDACI high to low)	2s average hourly rate (£)	3 & 4s average hourly rate (£)
Cranford	6.00	6.00
Hounslow Central	6.65	6.38
Heston Central	6.75	6.75
Hounslow Heath	7.08	7.09
Heston East	6.11	6.11
Brentford	5.50	5.50
Hanworth	6.00	6.00
Bedfont	6.94	6.94
Feltham North	6.00	6.00
Heston West	6.75	5.00
Isleworth	7.99	7.63
Syon	8.17	8.17
Feltham West	7.17	7.17
Osterley & Spring Grove	8.00	8.00
Turnham Green	8.50	8.50
Hounslow South	6.67	6.67
Chiswick Homefields	6.27	4.97

Whilst the local authority cannot influence childcare costs there are government schemes to support families to access affordable childcare. More information can be found on page 63.

Childminders

Not all childminders differentiate between the different age groups with hourly rates as day nurseries and some pre-school playgroups do. Many childminders will pick children up from school but there is usually an additional charge for this service.

Ward (% IDACI high to low)	Average hourly rate (£)
Cranford	6.17
Hounslow Central	6.70
Hounslow West	6.00
Heston Central	7.33
Hounslow Heath	6.50
Heston East	7.88
Brentford	7.12

Hanworth	7.25
Bedfont	5.50
Feltham North	5.57
Hanworth Park	6.41
Heston West	7.00
Isleworth	7.14
Syon	6.33
Feltham West	5.83
Osterley & Spring Grove	7.00
Turnham Green	10.00
Hounslow South	7.14
Chiswick Riverside	10.25
Chiswick Homefields	9.50

Breakfast clubs and after school care

NB There are no breakfast clubs in Heston West and no after school care schemes in Heston West and Hounslow Heath.

Not every breakfast club or after school care provider gave a response when asked in a survey about the cost of their provision. Therefore, the table below can only provide an indication of the average hourly rates by Ward.

Ward (% IDACI high to low)	Breakfast club average hourly rate	Ward (% IDACI high to low)	After school care average hourly rate
Cranford	4.40	Cranford	3.64
Hounslow Central	4.12	Hounslow Central	3.76
Hounslow West	3.00	Hounslow West	6.00
Heston Central	4.00	Heston Central	6.00
Hounslow Heath	5.00	Hounslow Heath	No schemes
Heston East	5.00	Heston East	4.50
Brentford	3.50	Brentford	4.18
Hanworth	3.21	Hanworth	3.17
Bedfont	3.00	Bedfont	3.24
Feltham North	No data	Feltham North	No data
Hanworth Park	3.00	Hanworth Park	4.14
Heston West	No clubs	Heston West	No schemes
Isleworth	5.12	Isleworth	4.40
Syon	4.37	Syon	3.67
Feltham West	4.00	Feltham West	4.13

Osterley & Spring Grove	3.50	Osterley & Spring Grove	3.40
Turnham Green	4.73	Turnham Green	4.41
Hounslow South	No data	Hounslow South	No data
Chiswick Riverside	4.60	Chiswick Riverside	3.77
Chiswick Homefields	4.50	Chiswick Homefields	3.40

Holiday playschemes

Insufficient information was gathered in a survey to holiday playscheme providers when asking about the cost of provision. Therefore, using the data that was available, the table below provides an indication of the average cost of a scheme that was open for: less than 7 hours, open for 7-9 hours and open for over 9 hours.

Holiday playschemes	Open less than 7 hours	Open 7-9 hours	Open more than 9 hours
Average cost	20.65	27.00	22.80

Costs summary 0-4 year olds

Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure there is sufficient affordable childcare for families who need it and to identify any gaps in the market. However, legislation states that local authorities cannot intervene in how providers operate their private business. This includes charges for provision over and above a child's funded place.

For childcare to be sustainable, providers need to generate sufficient income to ensure they are meeting operating costs. At the same time, childcare needs to be affordable to parent and carers. If inflation increases, the cost of delivering high quality early education and care increases. Childcare providers obviously cannot keep increasing their fees to parents, who are already trying to cope with their own rising bills.

Providers are very clear that hourly rates for funded places for 2, 3 & 4 year olds do not cover their costs of delivery. Early years organisations and providers regularly lobby for the early years entitlement funding rates to be reviewed. In addition to this, local authorities, including Hounslow, also lobby Central government to address the very real crisis in the sector.

The early years sector is fragile, and this presents a challenge to the sufficiency of early education and childcare both locally and nationally. To support both providers (with take up and subsequent income) and parents (with accessing childcare and affordability), key actions will include continuing to:

- regularly market all forms of financial support with childcare costs
- ensure key front line professionals are kept well informed for them to be able to support families accordingly
- broker funded childcare arrangements
- provide support for providers who need to change their operating models in order to remain viable
- signpost providers to business support

- lobby Central government

Costs summary – out of school provision

Out of school providers have exactly the same issues as early years providers do – it's not just about high occupancy levels, the income received for places needs to cover costs for them to remain sustainable. Out of school providers know, just as Early Years providers do, that they cannot pass the increasing costs of delivering high quality provision to parents. There are many vacancies around the borough for out of school provision (see page 52) and if providers cannot remain sustainable they will be forced to close. This will not only limit parental choice; it could also lead to a challenge to the Council in terms of sufficiency of places.

A key focus will be to promote the different ways all childcare providers can make their fees more affordable to parents at all income levels. This will include providing information to parents and providers about Tax Free Childcare, the Childcare Element of Universal Credit and Tax Credit.

Report end