



Reading Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2021-2022

Early Years Childcare
Sufficiency Assessment

The assessment is a statutory
duty of the Childcare Act 2006

OWNER

Corinne Dishington

VERSION

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Brighter Futures for Children
Civic Offices, Bridge Street,
Reading RG1 2LU

Company number 11293709

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Introduction

The Childcare Act 2006 places a legal duty on all local authorities to ensure that there is sufficient childcare in their area. In particular, the local authority has a duty to:

- Secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 – 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children)
- Secure early years provision free of charge for all three and four year -olds and eligible two-year-olds (570 hours a years)
- Secure 30 hours free childcare for working parents
- Provide information, advice and assistance to parents and prospective parents on the provision of childcare in their area

The duties in the Act (section 6) requires local authorities to shape and support the development of childcare in their area in order to make it flexible, sustainable and responsive to the needs of the community. This role is described as the “market management” function, supporting the sector to meet the needs of parents, children and young people, parents and stakeholders.

Under Section 6 of the Act there is a requirement on local authorities to produce an annual sufficiency report on the availability and sufficiency of childcare in their area. The responsibility to complete the annual sufficiency assessment is delegated by the local authority to Brighter Futures for Children.

Section 7 requires local authorities to secure prescribed early years provision free of charge. This provision is for eligible children aged two, three and four-year-old. All three and four-year-olds are eligible for some funded early years provision.

Nationally approximately 40% of two year olds are legally entitled to Funded Early Years provision, based on national criteria (see appendix 4):

The Childcare Act (2016) extended the Childcare Act (2006) and the duty to provide universal entitlement for three and four year olds; since September 2017 eligible families have been entitled to 30 hours funded childcare for three and four year olds, extending the previous provision of up to 15 hours a week (570 hours a year) universal early learning for this age range.

Section 12 places a duty on local authorities to provide information, advice and assistance to parents and prospective parents relating to the provision of childcare and services or facilities that may be of benefit to parents and prospective parents, children and young people. It is advised this Childcare Sufficiency Assessment is viewed alongside the information available on the Reading Family Information Service (FIS).

Purpose of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA)

This assessment provides a summary of childcare provision in Reading with the aim to support:

- Parents to gain an understanding of the types of childcare on offer in Reading and help to inform decisions about childcare options for their family
- Childcare providers to understand the local childcare market and to help them make informed choices to better meet the childcare needs of families in Reading

- Brighter Futures for Children staff by providing a structured picture of the current childcare offer in Reading that informs potential actions for market management to meet demand and the forward strategic planning for primary school places.

While complying with the duties above local authorities must have regard to statutory guidance provided by the Department for Education. This ensures that early years funding is offered consistently and fairly. The latest guidance on early years funding can be found at the following www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-education-and-childcare--2

The publishing of the annual Childcare Sufficiency Assessment is part of the local authority's legal duty in managing the childcare market to ensure there is sufficient childcare. It must be recognised that the statistics and data are fluid and constantly changing. This document only provides a snapshot of the position of the childcare market at any given time. It must be noted that this year has been particularly challenging to provide meaningful data and analysis of the childcare market in Reading. Nevertheless, this assessment still provides a good indication of trends or areas for further investigation and action, and the tools used in the production of the assessment enable ongoing analysis and monitoring of the childcare data for future planning.

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment will be of interest to parents, providing them with an overview of the childcare which is offered across the town and in their locality. It will be useful to existing and potential childcare providers when considering a change to delivery model, expanding provision or starting up in new areas. The childcare market is particularly dynamic, with many factors affecting demand and supply, especially parental choice. The findings of this report are indicative only and further detailed analysis of local areas should be undertaken by childcare providers to fully understand the local market. This report is to be shared with the public, local authority officers, elected members and the childcare market.

Covid-19

This assessment is for the year 2021-2022, some of the data included in this assessment is taken from January and March 2021, therefore it will reflect some of the impact on the sector resulting from Covid-19 restrictions.

The country experienced numerous lockdowns due to the Covid-19 pandemic between March 2020 to March 2021. Guidance issued to the sector during significant periods of 2020/21 has entailed periods of schools and childcare providers only being open for children of critical workers and vulnerable children.

Following the initial lockdown in March 2020, government signalled the wider opening of early years and childcare provision on 1 June 2020. A large majority of local providers re-opened on this date, albeit with restricted numbers and in some cases a reduced offer for parents. There was a steady increase in children attending from September 2020. However, the two-week lockdown in November followed by a further lockdown from January 2021 has seen numbers fall once more.

Data collections from summer 2019 to summer term 2021 reveals the following:

2 year old funded children – attending numbers in summer 2021 rose significantly and matched attendance figures recorded pre-pandemic.

3 & 4 year old Universal funding – although rising steadily since summer 2020 they are still yet to return to pre-pandemic attendance figures.

30 hours Extended Entitlement – take up of the funding has dropped slightly since the start of the pandemic but it does not appear to have been affected as significantly as universal funding.

The action plan responds to the impact and identifies measures the local authority will take to support childcare providers in future.

The main findings of this report are:

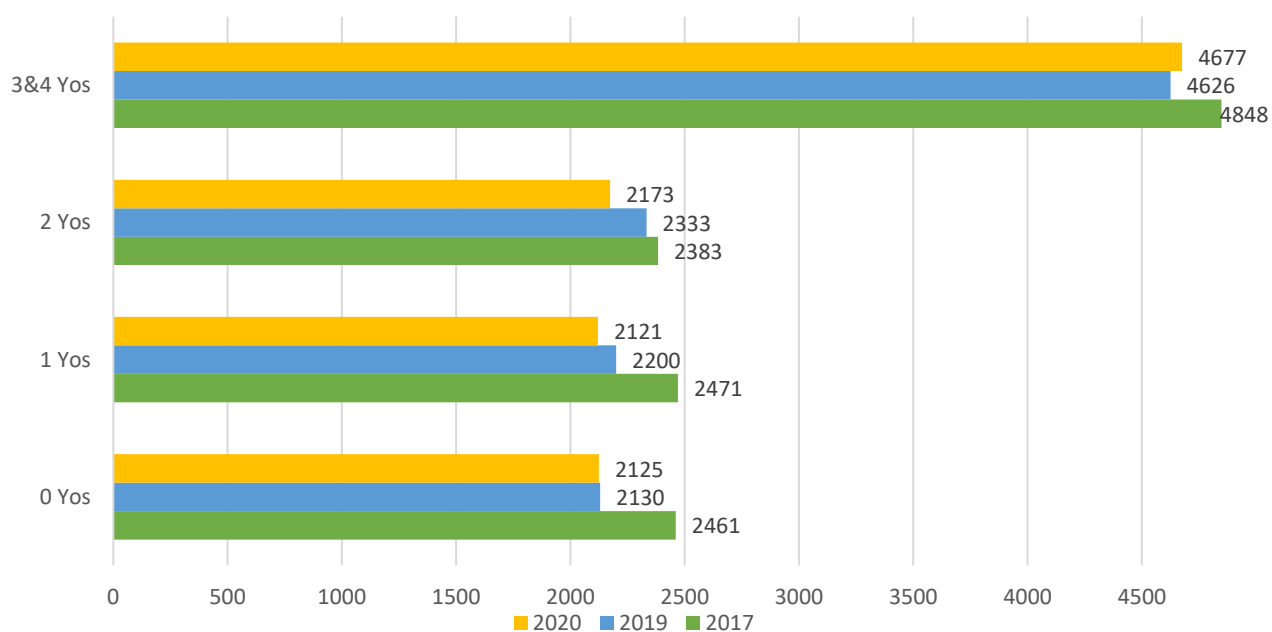
- There are no sufficiency issues related to quality of childcare provision, as 97% of providers in Reading were judged Good or Outstanding by Ofsted at their most recent inspection
- There are currently sufficient childcare places for 0-4 year olds, including funded early education entitlement places for two, three and four year olds, albeit some may not be in the area preferred
- The town centre and Whitley ward have been identified as areas to monitor regarding future growth where the number of families is anticipated to increase over the next few years in line with housing development.
- Providers completing the survey indicated that the hourly funding rate and change in childcare demand is the biggest factor currently impacting on sustainability.
- 31% of parents reported that their childcare requirements had changed due to a shift in working pattern.
- 54% of parents were satisfied with their childcare costs an increase from 10% last year.

Reading demographic information

| Estimated population of Early Years aged children living in Reading | | | |
|---|------|--------|-------|
| Under 5 Population Reading | Male | Female | Total |
| Total | 5716 | 5380 | 11096 |
| 0 | 1093 | 1032 | 2125 |
| 1 | 1094 | 1027 | 2121 |
| 2 | 1080 | 1093 | 2173 |
| 3 | 1216 | 1100 | 2316 |
| 4 | 1233 | 1128 | 2361 |

Data Source – ONS Mid year 2020

Estimated ONS child population in Reading 2017, 2019 and 2020



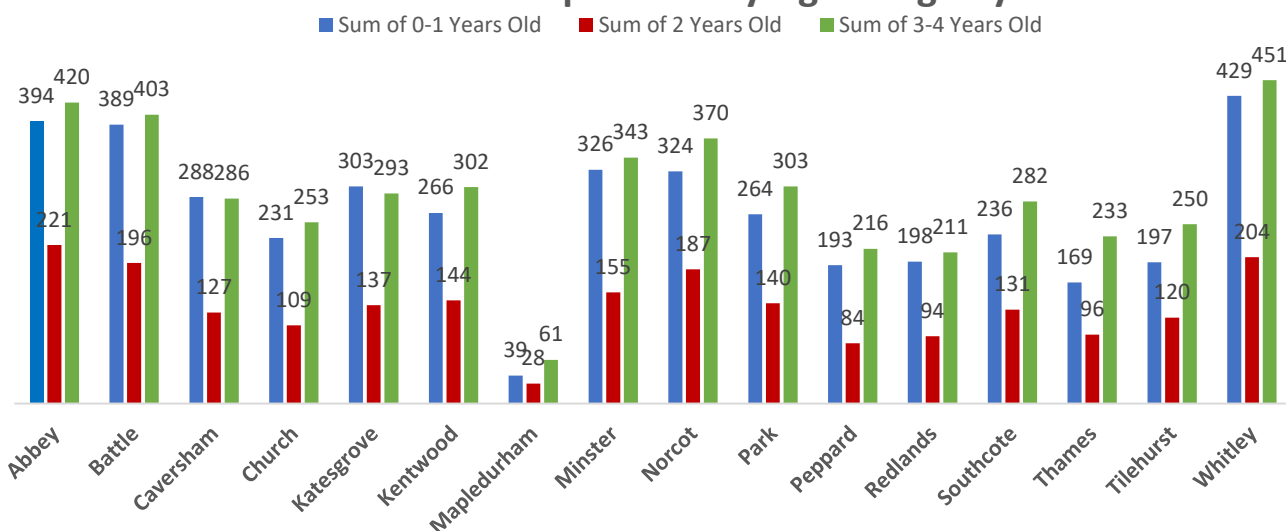
Nationally the number of births in mid 2020 was at its lowest in 18 years and is a continuation of the trend in fewer births seen over recent years. The office of national statistics also reported that 11% fewer internal moves took place than in the previous year, reflecting the impact the pandemic had on mobility. Reading's under 5's population data reflects the national change in the population and is 1.7% lower than last year.

Reading remains a vibrant town, hosting the headquarters of several multi-national companies. It also has good transport links across the South East and more favourable house prices than London. The development of housing in Reading (appendix 3) shows there are currently 5080 planning permissions currently outstanding. The easing of the pandemic restrictions on mobility could increase migration into Reading as a more economic place to live than its surrounding areas.

A high number of housing development could increase the challenges in maintaining sufficiency of childcare places in the future. Wards such as Abbey and Whitley are developing new housing at a much higher rate than other wards, especially in the form of flats. Traditionally families living in flats would migrate to the larger houses within the suburbs as their family grew. The current economic environment could see more families remaining in their properties and result in an increase in demand for childcare in areas where need did not previously exist. Large scale developments within Abbey ward (Huntley Wharf) have plans to incorporate designated space for childcare facilities, this could counteract the potential shortfall of day care places within the town centre.

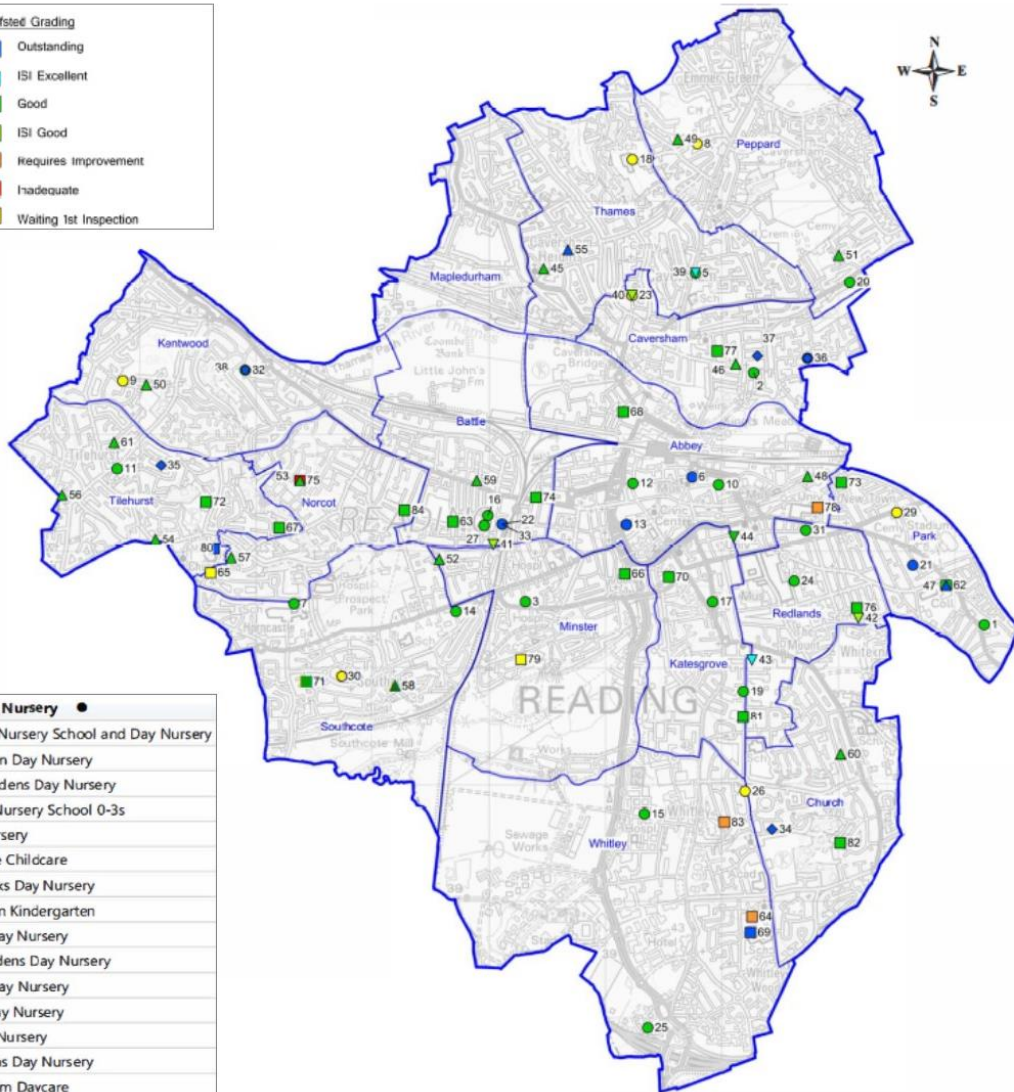
| Type of Provision | January 2018 | January 2019 | January 2020 | January 2021 |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Pre-School | 20 ↓ | 20 → | 19 ↓ | 18 ↓ |
| Full Day Care | 30 ↓ | 32 ↑ | 34 ↑ | 32 ↓ |
| Independent Nursery | 6 → | 6 → | 6 → | 6 → |
| Childminder (registered and claiming EY funding) | 33 ↑ | 32 ↓ | 34 ↑ | 32 ↓ |
| Childminder (Not claiming EY funding) | 78 ↑ | 87 ↑ | 77 ↓ | 65 ↓ |
| Maintained Nursery School | 5 → | 5 → | 5 → | 5 → |
| Maintained Nursery Class | 22 → | 22 → | 22 → | 22 → |
| Other (registered and claiming EY funding) | | | | 1 |
| Total Providers | 194 ↑ | 204 ↑ | 197 ↓ | 181 ↓ |

Estimated Child Population by Age Range by Ward



Childcare Providers in Reading

Reading maintains a consistent mix of childcare provision with delivery of places from all provider types including day nurseries, pre-schools, primary schools, maintained nursery schools and childminders. As of January 2021, there were a total of 181 early years childcare providers in Reading. This was a decrease of 16 providers from the previous year. Most of the closed providers were non funded childminders. This could be attributed to the lack of demand for school wrap around care experienced during the previous year’s Covid 19 restrictions. One day nursery consolidated into an existing provision and one pre-school owner retired. Despite the impact of Covid, in January 2021 the majority of provision remains open with a small number of childminders closing.



| ID | Private Day Nursery |
|----|--|
| 1 | Abbeymore Nursery School and Day Nursery |
| 2 | Banana Moon Day Nursery |
| 3 | Berkeley Gardens Day Nursery |
| 4 | Caversham Nursery School 0-3s |
| 5 | Chiltern Nursery |
| 6 | Co-operative Childcare |
| 7 | Dickory Docks Day Nursery |
| 8 | Emmer Green Kindergarten |
| 9 | Fledglings Day Nursery |
| 10 | Forbury Gardens Day Nursery |
| 11 | Goldilocks Day Nursery |
| 12 | Greyfriars Day Nursery |
| 13 | Kennet Day Nursery |
| 14 | Little Dragons Day Nursery |
| 15 | Little Kingdom Daycare |
| 16 | Littlelots Nursery |
| 17 | Mary Seacole Day Nursery |
| 18 | MonkeyMoos Highdown |
| 19 | Northumberland Day Nursery |
| 20 | Orchard Day Nursery |
| 21 | Park Day Nursery |
| 22 | Pine Rivers Kindergarten Day Nursery |
| 23 | Play Day Nursery |
| 24 | Rainbow Day Nursery |
| 25 | Reading International Busy Bees |
| 26 | Sure Start Whitley Children's Centre, |
| 27 | The Bee's Knees Nursery |
| 28 | The Coley Lodge |
| 29 | The Honey Bee Day Nursery |
| 30 | The Lodge Day Nursery |
| 31 | The Wigwam Day Nursery |
| 32 | Waterside Day Nursery |
| 33 | Western Elms Nursery School |

| ID | Nursery |
|----|---------------------------|
| 34 | Blagdon Nursery |
| 35 | Blagrove Nursery School |
| 36 | Caversham Nursery School |
| 37 | New Bridge Nursery |
| 38 | Norcot Early Years Centre |

| ID | Independent School |
|----|---|
| 39 | Caversham Preparatory School |
| 40 | Hemdean House School |
| 41 | St Edwards Prep |
| 42 | St. Joseph's College Preparatory School |
| 43 | The Abbey School |
| 44 | The Deerway Montessori School |

| ID | Pre-School |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 45 | Caversham Heights Pre-School |
| 46 | Crawshay Pre-School |
| 47 | Crescent Under Fives |
| 48 | Dingley's Promise |
| 49 | Emmer Green Pre-School |
| 50 | Little Badgers Pre-School |
| 51 | Micklands Pre-School |
| 52 | Parkside Pre-School YMCA Reading |
| 53 | Ranikhet Rainbows Pre-School |
| 54 | St Michaels Pre-school |
| 55 | St Andrew's Pre-School |
| 56 | St Joseph's Nursery |
| 57 | Stepping Stones Pre-School Group |
| 58 | The Grange Pre-School |
| 59 | The Honey Bee Pre-School |
| 60 | The Little Owl Pre-School |
| 61 | Victoria Road Pre-School |

| ID | Primary |
|----|--|
| 62 | Alfred Sutton Primary |
| 63 | Battle Primary Academy |
| 64 | Christ the King RC Primary |
| 65 | Churchend Academy |
| 66 | Coley Primary School |
| 67 | English Martyrs RC Primary School |
| 68 | EP Collier Primary School |
| 69 | Geoffrey Field Infant School |
| 70 | Katesgrove Primary School |
| 71 | Manor Primary School |
| 72 | Moorlands Primary School |
| 73 | New Town Primary Academy |
| 74 | Oxford Road Community School |
| 75 | Ranikhet Primary Academy |
| 76 | Redlands Primary School |
| 77 | St Annes RC Primary School |
| 78 | St Johns CE Primary School |
| 79 | St Mary & All Saints CE Primary School |
| 80 | The Avenue Special |
| 81 | The Palmer Primary Academy |
| 82 | The Ridgeway Primary School |
| 83 | Whitley Park Nursery & Primary School |
| 84 | Wilson Primary School |

Title: Childcare Providers in Reading
Nursery, PreSchool and Out of School
Childcare Providers as of 20th August 2020
Ref: Childcare_Providers_Oct 2020.wor
Dwg No.: GIS00297
Produced by GI & Business Systems
Date: 11/12/2020
Scale at A3: 1:35000

Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

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Map of Early Years Childcare providers in Reading (not including Childminders) and Ofsted grading

Childcare places available in Reading

The number of Reading childcare providers has remained constant over the last 3 years. As some businesses have closed others have opened to rebalance the market. Reading has seen a slight decrease in registered childminders not offering early year funding. Some of these are due to retirement but others could be a result of economic factors relating to the pandemic.

The largest number of Ofsted registered places are in the Full Day Care sector. These places are to secure sufficient childcare for working parents to access. Many day care settings have been adversely affected over the last twelve months by an overall decline in parental demand caused by the COVID pandemic and subsequent changes to working practices. Childminders offer places across the age ranges and make a significant contribution to the stock of available childcare in Reading.

The number of children accessing their 15 and 30 hours of early years entitlement has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. The sustainability of the sector will be dependent on parental demand in the short to medium term. There is a risk if demand reduces providers may close and then if demand rises in the future it will be challenging to revitalise the Early Years childcare market.

The Family Information Service (FIS) is contracted to deliver childcare information on behalf of Brighter Futures for Children. The team manages and collates childcare data in order to provide free individually tailored information, advice and guidance directly to parents and carers. The Family Information Service advises and supports childcare providers to update their Local Offer. The [Local Offer](#) covers the services they provide in Reading.

Childcare capacity, in particular for pre-school children, fluctuates throughout the year. Places come under increasing pressure in the summer term ahead of school intake to Reception in September. This results in a challenging environment to predict sufficiency on an annualised basis and especially in the last twelve months due to the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns.

Provision for children and young people aged 11-14 years old is more likely to be out of school (in the form of clubs, activities and groups) and delivered by schools, for their own pupils and for less than two hours. This provision is not required to be registered as childcare with Ofsted. Data shows there are significant gaps in certain wards for Out of School care and Holiday provision, however the supply does meet the demand with regards holiday club and out of school provision in relation to childcare. There are increased requests for activity clubs in the 12+ age groups rather than formal registered childcare, this can be fully supported by the Family Information Service for universal services. There is however an increase demand for clubs for short breaks and activities for children and young people with SEND, including formal childcare as a respite offer.

Number of Childcare Providers By Type & Ward – March 2021

| | EY Funded Childminder | Childminder | Day Nursery | EY Funded Independent School | Pre School | Maintained Nursery School | Maintained Nursery Class | Total |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| Abbey | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 13 |
| Battle | 5 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 19 |
| Caversham | 0 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 12 |
| Church | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Katesgrove | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 |
| Kentwood | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 10 |
| Mapledurham | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Minster | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 11 |
| Norcot | 4 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 14 |
| Park | 2 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 16 |
| Peppard | 3 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 22 |
| Redlands | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| Southcote | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 10 |
| Thames | 0 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 17 |
| Tilehurst | 5 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 19 |
| Whitley | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 13 |
| Total | 32 | 64 | 32 | 6 | 18 | 5 | 22 | 196 |

Reading has a good balance of childcare by type in each ward. Peppard has a high total number of providers, including 13 childminders and total number of childcare places responsive to the demands of the Ward. Mapledurham has low childcare places reflective of the low child population. Abbey and Battle ward have the highest number of day care providers. Data shows that Abbey ward is one of our most populated wards with increasing residential development. A further childcare setting is due to be added to this list as part of the development of Huntley Wharf.

The four Wards with the highest percentage of Reading's under 5s population are Abbey 9.6%, Battle 9.1%, Whitley 9.9% and Norcot 8%. The overall percentage of registered childcare places in Abbey 9.1% matches population estimates, however, the population estimates in Battle 6.9%, Whitley 8.9% and Norcot 4% fall short if childcare demand is high. The demand in Norcot ward which only has 4 % of registered childcare places in Reading could be met by childcare providers on the border with Tilehurst ward and provision based in West Berkshire. It should be noted that Abbey and Battle wards both include registered places available at independent schools.

Reading Borough Council's Residential commitments report states that the number of dwellings under construction is currently at the highest it's ever recorded. The highest number of current housing planning permissions continue to be in Abbey and Whitley wards. Increased child population within these two wards and the greater Reading area could put pressure on the current availability of childcare places. Analysis of attendance data for January 2019 showed that most children attended an early years provider in their home ward this is likely to continue especially if working from home becomes more mainstream.

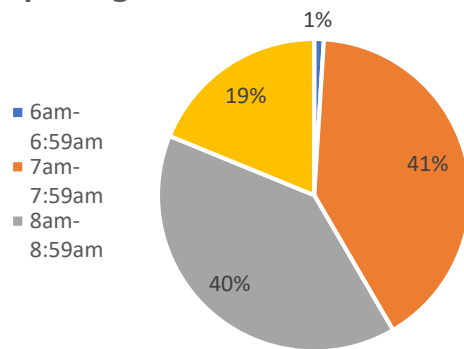
Parental choice and flexibility play a large part in determining childcare sufficiency making local demand difficult to predict. The largest percentage of registered places in Reading is in the full day care sector which generally offers more flexibility to meet the demands of working parents. The shifting childcare need of parents could impact some childcare providers as indicated in our Provider survey which found that shifting parental demand was their second biggest concern.

The assessment concludes that although there are local variations in places offered by different providers, on the whole Reading has a balanced childcare market.

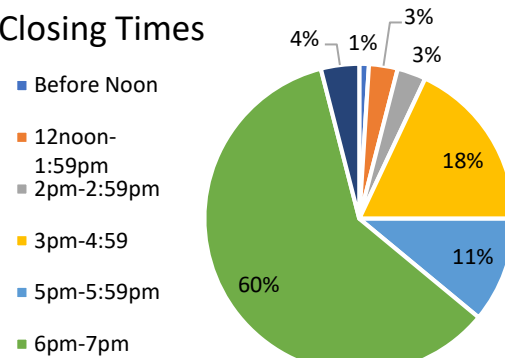
Early Years Childcare Providers Opening Times

Most childcare providers open between 7am to 9am and close between 6pm to 7pm. Less than 1% opened earlier than 7am and 3.8% closed later than 7pm. Childminders demonstrated the most flexibility in the hours they offered.

Opening Times



Closing Times



59% of childcare providers are open all year round. This includes a large number of childminders who may also offer wrap around school care as well as early years funded places. 70% of childcare providers offer all year-round care. Most of the term time only care is offered by pre-schools and maintained nursery schools and classes. 5% of the total number of childcare providers registered with Ofsted are holiday schemes. Only a couple of childcare providers offer weekend care.

Early Years Childcare Costs

| Average Costs of Childcare in Reading by Provider Costs (March 21 snapshot from Providers) | | | | | |
|--|----------|-------------|---------|----------|----------|
| | Per Hour | Per Session | Per Day | Per Week | Per Term |
| Childminder | £5.38 | £26.89 | £45.00 | - | - |
| Day Nursery | £7.38 | £32.86 | £56.01 | £223.84 | - |
| Pre-School | £5.99 | £16.81 | - | - | - |
| Holiday Scheme | £7.50 | £33.67 | £32.21 | £222.38 | - |

According to the Family and Childcare Trust childcare prices have increased above inflation again this year, with the average cost of a full week care for children under two years old at £275.38 a week. The

average price for families using an after-school club for five days is £62.13 per week. Information gathered from Reading childcare providers indicates that their hourly charge is around the national average and can vary both between types of settings and between individual providers.

Early years entitlement hours are currently funded at an hourly rate of £4.94 for 3 and 4 year olds which is below the average childcare hourly rate charged across all providers. The early years funding rate was increased by 6p per hour in April 2021 and is expected to see a small increase from April 2022.

Childcare Vouchers and Tax Free Childcare (TFC) are schemes designed to financially support working parents by providing tax savings or topping up contributions. The majority of childcare providers are now signed up to this scheme which can save parents up to £2000 a year per child on their childcare costs.

A large number of parents/carers who responded to the annual childcare survey stated the cost of childcare prevented them from accessing any more than they currently used. 54% of parents said they were satisfied with the costs of their current childcare arrangements.

65% of childcare providers who completed our provider survey stated they had not increased their fees in the last 6 months. 34% of the Providers who responded to our childcare survey stated they do not currently have a business plan. This is an area which needs to be addressed in order to safeguard the future of Reading's childcare market.

Childcare Quality

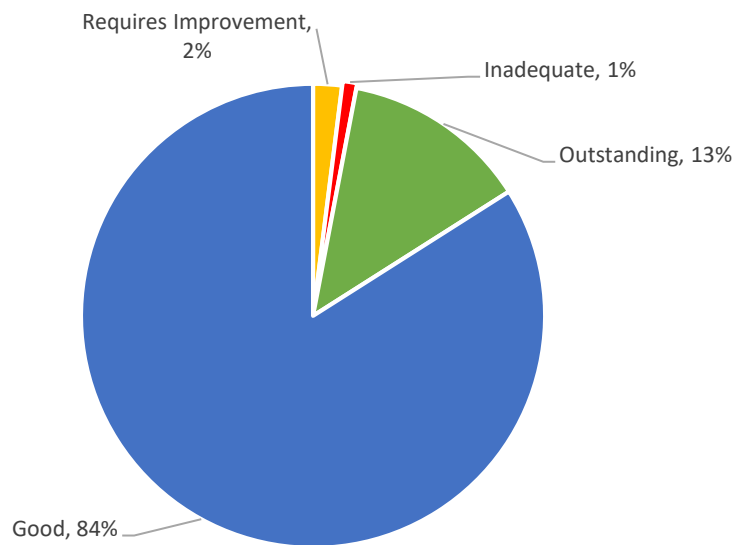
Childcare standards are regulated by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED). Ofsted registered providers are checked for safety and suitability for caring for children. All childcare settings, who care for children under eight years old, are legally required to be registered with Ofsted on their childcare register.

Ofsted Ratings of Childcare Providers in Reading

On 17 March 2020, all routine inspections of schools, further education, early years and social care providers were suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Urgent inspections where there were specific concerns continued. This allowed Ofsted to prioritise the immediate safety of children where necessary. Ofsted continued to carry out further on or off-site regulatory work if they received information that required action before the next inspection. Ofsted publish an outcome summary on their inspection report page relating to the provider if they need to take any action.

As of March 2021 most Reading childcare providers were rated Good (192/197). The 5 providers rated Requires Improvement and Inadequate were being supported by the Early Years team to make the required progress. Ofsted resumed on-site inspections of registered early years providers under the education inspection framework on 4 May 2021.

Overall Effectiveness of Registered Early Years Providers March 2021



Early Years Funding

Three and four-year-old funded early education entitlement

15 hours funded childcare

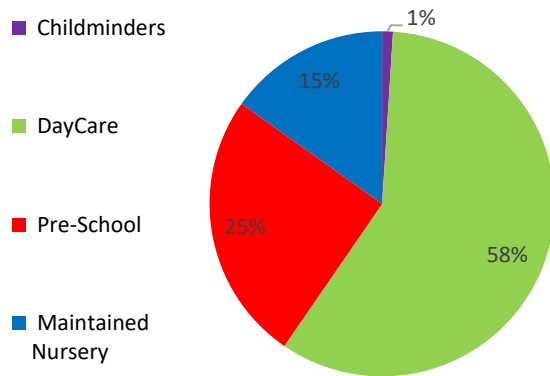
All three and four-year-old children in England are eligible for 570 hours of funded childcare per year from the term after their third birthday. This is usually taken as 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year known as “universal entitlement”. Providers can also offer this entitlement as a stretched offer across the whole year. This entitlement continues until the child is statutory school age.

30 hours funded childcare

The Government offers working parents of three and four-year-olds an extended early year of up to 30 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year (1,140 hours per year). This is known as the “extended entitlement”. National criteria for the extended entitlement can be found in the Appendix 4.

The 40% most disadvantaged two-year-old children (as defined in appendix 4) are eligible to claim a free early years place of 15 hours a week for 38 weeks (term time only) or the equivalent of 570 hours if they stretch it over a year.

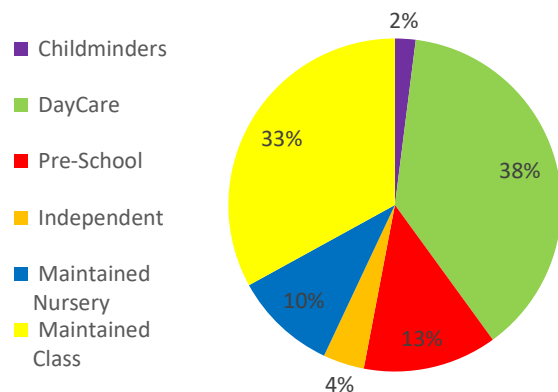
Two-Year-Old Funding – Spring 21



| 2 Year Olds Claiming Funding | | | |
|------------------------------|------|------|------|
| 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
| 396 | 410 | 371 | 311 |
| 58% | 65% | 63% | 55% |

The take-up percentage is calculated using estimated numbers supplied by the Government's Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The DWP numbers relate only to children that reside in Reading, however, families can choose to attend a setting in any local authority area. The majority of funded two-year-old children attend a Provider offering full day care, this benefits parents returning to work as the child can remain in the same setting at three years old. The 55% take-up in spring 2021 is a significant drop from the previous spring term. This could be attributed to a number of factors related to the 3rd National Covid 19 lockdown. A loss of parental confidence in sending their children to a setting combined with school closures may also have resulted in parents withholding their younger children. Parental confidence appears to be returning to the sector as 2 year old funding take-up jumped significantly to 68% in summer 2021.

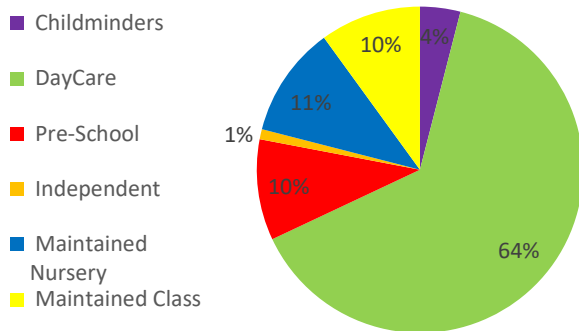
Universal Funding (three and four-year-old) – Spring 2021



| 3 & 4 Year Olds Claiming Universal Funding | | | |
|--|------|------|------|
| 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
| 3011 | 2888 | 3012 | 2525 |
| 62% | 60% | 65% | 55% |

There is an even balance of universal 15 hours funding being offered between the private and the maintained sector. Over all the numbers attending in spring 2021 are 10% lower than the previous year. This reflects the national position which shows a significant reduction in childcare use since the start of the pandemic.

30 Hours Extended Entitlement Funding – Spring 2021



| 3 & 4 Year Olds Claiming 30 Hours Extended Entitlement Funding | | | |
|--|------|------|------|
| 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
| 900 | 977 | 983 | 926 |
| 30% | 34% | 34% | 32% |

The number of families claiming 30 hours extended entitlement funding has decreased slightly from the previous year, again this could be attributed to a shift in childcare attendance during the pandemic. The percentage of children claiming 30 hours funding from a pre-school or daycare provider increased since last year in contrast to the maintained sector which saw a slight decrease. Traditionally, daycare and pre-schools have offered greater flexibility in when funded hours can be offered. Further analysis needs to be carried out to see if this trend continues, especially in light of shifting parental working patterns as a result of the pandemic. The majority of 30 hours claims are in the day care sector suggesting that parents are combining it with wrap around childcare.

Early Years Pupil Premium

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) is additional funding paid directly to early years settings to improve the education they provide for disadvantaged three and four-year-olds. Children from households on low incomes and receiving Universal Credit are entitled to EYPP. There were 325 three and four-year-olds funded for EYPP in January 2021 in Reading, 13% of the total cohort. The overall take-up is still considered to be a low however, additional information and marketing has increased the numbers of parents now being accessed for the entitlement. 75% of children in the PVI sector had a EYPP eligibility check run via the Education Checking System in March 2021.

Disability Access Fund

The Equalities Act 2010 requires local authorities and settings not to discriminate, harass or victimise disabled children, which may include making reasonable adjustments to accommodate children's needs. Local authorities must comply with the provisions of the Act in finding suitable provision for eligible disabled children.

In April 2017 the Government increased support for children with disabilities through the introduction of a Disability Access Fund (DAF). The fund allows early years settings to claim £615 per year for every eligible child. The funding supports eligible children access their early years entitlement. Claimants will need to provide evidence of the child's Disability Living Allowance certificate. Since 2017 Reading has funded 122 children.

Childcare for School Aged Children

| Estimated population of School aged children living in Reading By Ward | | | |
|--|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | 5 – 7 Year Olds | 8 – 10 Years Olds | 11 – 14 Year Olds |
| Abbey | 570 | 480 | 480 |
| Battle | 545 | 494 | 593 |
| Caversham | 388 | 375 | 438 |
| Church | 375 | 358 | 504 |
| Katesgrove | 422 | 358 | 438 |
| Kentwood | 419 | 402 | 517 |
| Mapledurham | 103 | 130 | 189 |
| Minster | 481 | 423 | 487 |
| Norcot | 590 | 483 | 600 |
| Park | 431 | 361 | 488 |
| Peppard | 357 | 402 | 512 |
| Redlands | 259 | 259 | 423 |
| Southcote | 373 | 421 | 462 |
| Thames | 410 | 481 | 630 |
| Tilehurst | 395 | 398 | 494 |
| Whitley | 611 | 597 | 762 |
| Total | 6729 | 6422 | 8017 |

Data Source – ONS Mid-year 2020

There are an estimated 1,503 Ofsted registered places for school-aged children (aged 5 years old and over) being offered in out of school and holiday provision as of March 2021. These are significantly lower than previous years and may be the result of closures or lack of current demand due to the pandemic. Childminders play an important role for older children although their registered places have not been included in the provision table. Places are estimated based on Ofsted registration data. The number of Ofsted registered places incorporates provision for different age groups, it is at the discretion of the childcare provider how they allocate their places. Out of school provision may also be available after school (in the form of clubs, activities and groups) that are run by the school, for pupils attending the school, and for less than 2 hours. It is not required to be registered as childcare and is not always advertised with the Reading Family Information Service. The registered places included in the table below are based on full time numbers. Some Holiday clubs offer half day sessions.

Demand for After School Club and Holiday Provision is difficult to predict due to the age range it covers and the wide variety of care available. After school activities provided by schools may be available for limited hours (e.g. 45 minutes to an hour and therefore be too short for formal registration) and subject to short term cancellation.

Place data based on Ofsted registered provision may over-estimate supply for younger children (aged 4-7 years old). Providers may choose to operate with a lower number of children than they are registered for. Understanding operating capacity is a challenge for future sufficiency assessments, both to provide an assessment of the (currently) usable supply of places, and to provide an assessment of where there may be additional capacity to develop to cater for any unmet need.

Number of Childcare Providers By Type & Ward – March 21

| | Number of After School Clubs or Breakfast Clubs | Registered Places in After School Clubs or Breakfast Clubs | Number of Holiday Clubs | Registered Places in Holiday Clubs |
|-------------|---|--|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Abbey | 3 | 102 | 1 | 24 |
| Battle | 5 | 65 | 2 | 65 |
| Caversham | 4 | 40 | 2 | 60 |
| Church | 2 | 45 | 2 | |
| Katesgrove | 4 | 106 | 3 | 120 |
| Kentwood | 1 | 28 | | |
| Mapledurham | | | | |
| Minster | 1 | | | |
| Norcot | 3 | 46 | 2 | 38 |
| Park | 4 | 85 | | |
| Peppard | 7 | 247 | 2 | 50 |
| Redlands | 1 | | 3 | 142 |
| Southcote | 1 | | 2 | 80 |
| Thames | 2 | | | |
| Tilehurst | 2 | 50 | | |
| Whitley | 3 | 60 | 2 | 50 |
| Total | 43 | 874 | 23 | 629 |

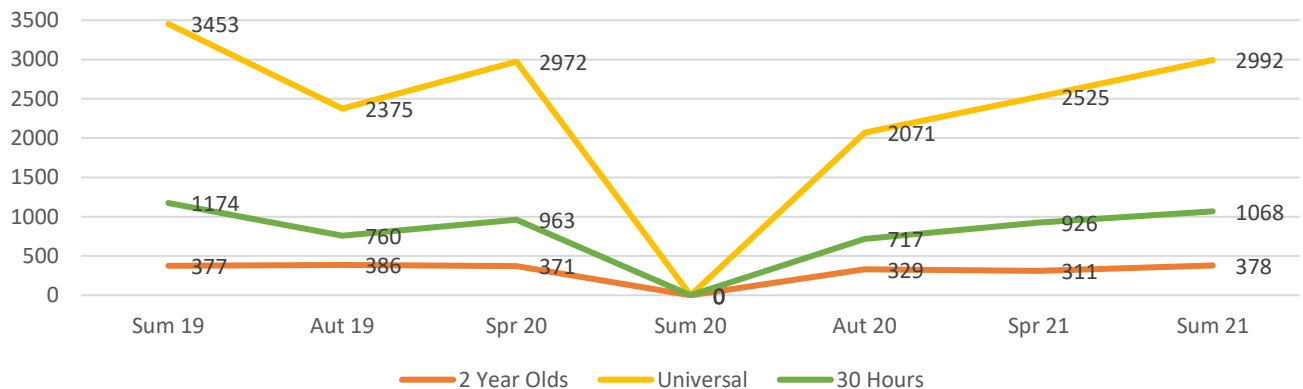
Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF)

The government launched the HAF programme early 2021 to support disadvantaged children access provision over the three main holiday periods-Easter, Summer and Christmas. This programme was available for all children 5-16 who were eligible for FSM.

The programme provides each child with 4 hours a day, 4 days a week for 6 weeks over a year. There were a number of providers who were commissioned to deliver this programme. Overall the programme has expanded the childcare market considerably and supporting sustainability of holiday club providers. The programme funding has been agreed for a further three years until 2025.

Impact of Covid-19 on Childcare Provision

Impact on Early Years Attendance By Scheme



The chart above shows the number of children claiming EY funding over time. In March 2020 childcare providers were advised to close to all children except children of keyworkers or children who were considered to be vulnerable. To support childcare during this initial period the Department for Education committed to providing funding for predicted attendance based on normal circumstances, therefore no actual attendance data has been recorded.

In March 2020 46% of private, voluntary or independent childcare providers remained open to offer care to keyworker or vulnerable children. The Government eased restrictions in June 2020 and allowed all pre-school age children to return to childcare settings. At this point 93% of PVI's were open for business.

Childcare provision started to recover with isolated closures of childcare bubbles due to outbreaks of Covid cases. Further national lockdowns in November 2020 and January 2021 do not appear to have stopped this recovery but numbers claiming are yet to return to pre-pandemic numbers particularly for the 15 hours of universal provision.

Nationally there has been a decrease in child population of 1.7%, therefore we would expect to see a fall in the number of children attending childcare. Comparison between summer 2019 and summer 2021 funding take-up shows a decrease of 13% for universal funding and 0.09% for 30 hours funding. 2 year old funding take-up shows no decrease however this may change due to national population predictions and number of families eligible for the free entitlement

To date, Reading's early years childcare market has remained resilient to the financial impact of the pandemic with no Providers closing as a direct result of the down turn in numbers. However, the result of the Provider childcare surveys indicates that the hourly funding rate followed by a change in childcare demand is the biggest factor currently effecting the sustainability of Reading's childcare market. It is considered the sector remains fragile and subject to the changes in work patterns and affordability of childcare for families with a rising cost of living.

Action plan progress 2020-2021

Progress on the 2020-2021 action plan:

- A balance between 30 hours and 2 year funding has been maintained with rising 2 year old funded uptake
- Promotion of funding entitlements to early years providers through networks, newsletters and updates
- Promotion of funding entitlements to parents through a comprehensive advertising campaign on Facebook, FIS, Reading Buses and banners
- Increased joined up working between Early Years and Children's Centres to increase awareness of the 2 year old offer to parents
- 2 year funded offer communications enhanced with social norms, quick links and food voucher opportunities
- Three parent champions promoting all funding entitlements in Reading with a particular focus on the 2 year old offer
- A strong introduction to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum reforms through networks, training, workshops, updates and newsletters provided for the sector
- Prioritising setting visits and providing a comprehensive package of support to Early Years providers to ensure good and outstanding Ofsted outcomes
- Providing a comprehensive mostly free training package to enhance professional standards in Reading's Early Years workforce
- Exploring the current changing childcare environment at managers, providers and committee networks and providing tools and resources to support sustainability
- Comprehensive SEND offer including training, support visits and access to inclusion and Disability Access funding to ensure that the childcare in Reading is inclusive and meets the needs of all children.
- Opening of a further two specialist resources bases to support the needs of Early Years children with SEND.
- Early Years pupil premium numbers continue to increase due to a focused piece of work which highlighted how to capture children's information in full on the headcount return and raising awareness of the value and impact of funding.
- Childminder briefings have continued and most recently have been offered as free and now include wider information to attract any persons interested in a career in childcare.
- The Reading Childminder Partnership has continued, and membership is growing with a greater focus on CPD and additional support visits for those awaiting inspection.

Action plan 2021-2022

Strategic approach to sufficiency:

- Increase the number of registered Early Years childminders in Reading with a focus on retention of existing and recruiting new to the workforce and returning practitioners.
- Work with parents and providers to understand the impact of the COVID pandemic on demand for childcare.
- Ensure routine updates inform school place planning
- Promotion of the 2 year old funded offer to ensure the recent recovery and acceleration is maintained.
- Increase the take up of the universal 3 and 4 year old funding offer in Reading and ensure access to 30 hour funding where eligible.
- Support provider's to operate a sustainable and profitable offer with a focus on business planning.
- Work collaboratively with the Early Years sector, childcare training providers and secondary schools to raise the profile of a career in childcare
- Support providers to enhance their approach to the recruitment and retention of staff.
- Ensure that strategic planning includes mapping housing growth against existing projected demands for childcare provision.
- Work with providers to develop systems for the ongoing monitoring of capacity and vacancies with regard to space requirements and staff availability.

Appendix 1

Provider Survey

Settings delivering early years funded places were asked to complete a questionnaire in order to explore in more detail how early years is delivered in Reading. This survey was sent out in September 2021. A total of 62 childcare settings responded, this represents an overall response rate of 37%. The breakdown of response represented each sector is as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Pre-school | 16% |
| Day nursery | 26% |
| Independent nursery/School | 10% |
| Childminder | 39% |
| Other | 10% |

Two-Year-Old targeted funded childcare

37 Providers reported offering two-year-old funded places.

25 settings stating they had current vacancies.

38% of Providers did not have a waiting list

55% of Providers offered funded only sessions.

Universal Funding (Three and Four-year-olds)

41 Providers (66%) responding to the survey offered care from birth to statutory school age.

42 Providers (68%) offered all year round care, 21 (32%) offered term time only.

32 Providers (52%) stated they had current vacancies.

34 Providers (55%) said they offered funded only sessions with only 8 Providers stating they restrict hours to certain times in the day.

29 Providers (47%) asked families to pay for wrap around care to access their funded hours.

17 Providers (27%) charged for additional consumables such as meals or nappies.

Extended 30 Hours Funding

45 Providers (%) offered 30 Hrs funded places

34 Providers (55%) did not ask families to pay for wrap around care.

Business

54 Providers (87%) accepted childcare vouchers or Tax-Free Childcare

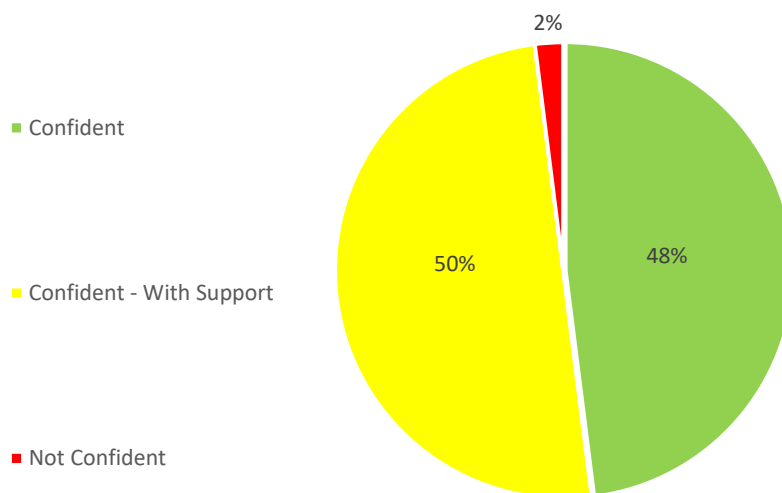
40 Providers (65%) had not increased their fees in the last 6 months

21 Providers (34%) do not currently have a business plan

The greatest concern for settings sustainability was the low government funding rate followed by a change in parental demand for childcare.

Access for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

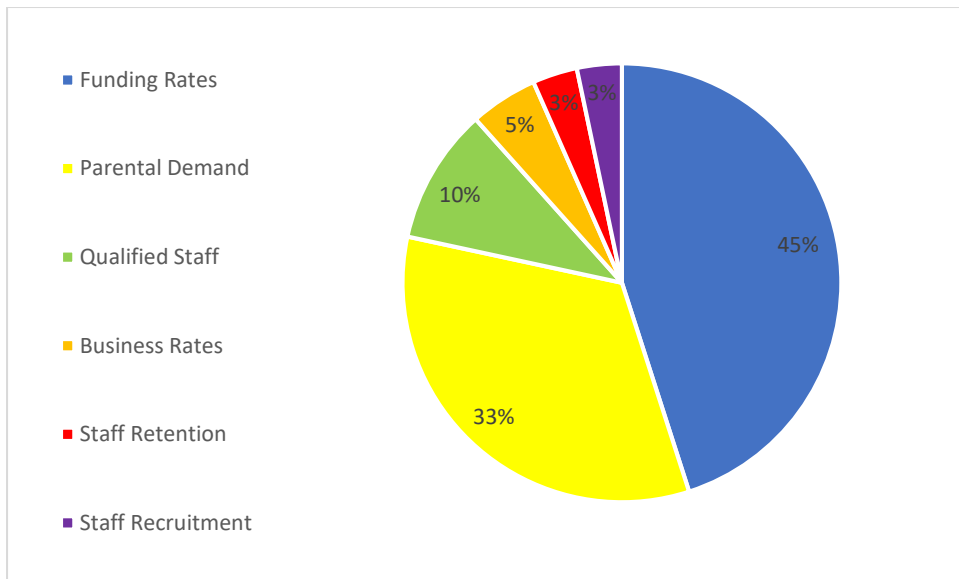
Providers were asked how confident they were offering care to SEND children, 98% felt confident. 73% of the Providers who responded to the Provider Survey felt they had adequate access to funding to support offering SEND children places.



Brighter Futures for Children launched a pilot called Brighter Beginnings Inclusion award in 2019. The scheme supports childcare providers to upskill staff and aids childcare providers to meet their statutory duty regarding SEND. The Inclusion Award helps to reassure parents that their children's needs will be considered and met, as well as assisting parents to make informed choices regarding their childcare. The inclusion award is currently being actively promoted by the Early Years Team.

Sustainability

We asked childcare providers what their biggest area of concern was to the sustainability of their business. The Government funding rate was the biggest concern followed by a shift in parental demand. 28% of providers reported that parents requiring less childcare was the biggest change in parental demand since the pandemic began. However, 28% of Providers reported they had not seen any obvious change in parent demand.



Appendix 2

Parent Survey

The opinions of parents and carers were sought regarding childcare provision in Reading between August and September 2021 via a survey Monkey questionnaire. The survey was completed by over 500 respondents, however due to a technical glitch a large number had to be discounted as the respondents resided in another country. After cleansing, 215 responses were relevant, this was slightly higher than the previous year's response rate of 162 respondents. The survey was publicised via childcare settings, Family Information Service contacts and Facebook media pages.

Analysis of the responses suggests there was a good level of representation from the population as a whole, covering geographical distribution, age range of children and social economic backgrounds.

158 (90%) of those surveyed in our parent questionnaire stated they were satisfied with the **quality** of their childcare provision.

Other responses are as follows;

Access to childcare

- 193 (82%) said they had used informal or formal childcare in the last 12 months. The majority of children aged 0 to 4 years old were cared for within a Day Nursery or Pre-School. Children aged 5 to 10 -year-olds were generally cared for within an Out of School Care provision, by a Family Member, after school activity. Children over 10 years old used after school activities or stayed with friends.

- 157 (75%) parents/carers said it was important to access childcare close to their home followed by close to school (37%) and close to work (27%). Close to work dropped from 2nd to 3rd position compared to last years responses.
- 65 (33%) parents said they used between 15 to 30 hours of childcare a week, 39% said they used less than 15 hours and 29% said they used more than 30 hours.
- 78 (43%) parents/carers stated they were able to find the type of childcare they wanted in their local area although 111 (72%) found it easy to get the type of childcare they wanted in their local area.
- 54% of parents were satisfied with their childcare costs this is a large shift from last year's results which showed only 10% of parents felt that childcare costs were reasonable.
- Of the respondents to the survey who did not access childcare 32% did not access childcare as their children were cared for by themselves or their partner matched by 32% who said it was too expensive to access.
- 145 (70%) parents/carers said they accessed childcare as it allowed them to work. 123 (60%) said it aided their child's development.
- 126 (62%) parents/carers stated they didn't require anymore childcare than they already accessed. The majority of those stating they required access to more childcare said they needed it from Day Care, After School Clubs or Holiday Clubs.

Two Year Old targeted funded childcare

- 45 parents questioned in our parent survey said they were accessing the Government offered targeted two-year-old funding.
- 16 parents (14%) reported not using the two-year-old funding as they looked after the children themselves.

Universal Funding (3 and 4 year olds)

- 104 (73%) parents questioned in our parent survey were accessing the Government offered 15 hours of free childcare regardless of income.
- Of the parents who reported using universal 15 hours funding, 65% claimed it during term-time only and 35% spread it across the year.
- Of those parents who used it term time 57% purchases additional weeks.
- 64% parents paid for extra hours in addition to their funded entitlement 39% of these parents purchased between 5 and 10 additional hours each week.
- 41% of parents reported they didn't purchase additional hours because they were too expensive.

Extended 30 Hours Funding

- 70% of the 88 parents claimed their 30 hours funding at the same provider as their universal funding.
- Parents were equally divided on whether the extra hours encouraged them to pay for more childcare.

Childcare costs

- The majority of the open comments received as part of our parent survey were regarding the high cost of childcare and the impact this had on family's finances.
- 27% of respondents stated that they had a combined household income of over £66,000.
- 37% of respondents said that costs stop them using childcare.
- The most popular method of paying for childcare is using direct payment such as bank transfer (43%). This was closely followed by Tax Free Childcare (30%) and Childcare Vouchers Schemes (11%).

Response to COVID 19

- When asked if the pandemic had impacted the childcare they use 101 (46%) said it had not made a difference. 69 (31%) said it had changed due to a shift in working pattern or because the childcare provider no longer suited them.

Appendix 3

Housing data

| Planning Permissions (Hard Commitments) outstanding as at March 2021 | |
|--|----------------------|
| WARD NAME | Planning Permissions |
| Abbey | 2836 |
| Battle | 207 |
| Caversham | 73 |
| Church | 11 |
| Katesgrove | 165 |
| Kentwood | 35 |
| Mapledurham | 1 |
| Minster | 83 |
| Norcot | 125 |
| Park | 79 |
| Peppard | 28 |
| Redlands | 52 |
| Southcote | 13 |
| Thames | 17 |
| Tilehurst | 8 |
| Whitley | 1347 |
| Total | 5080 |

Appendix 4

Eligibility Criteria for Funded Early Entitlement for two, three and four-year-old children

Two-Year-Old national criteria

Economic criteria:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credits or Working Tax Credits and they have a gross annual income (before tax) of no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run-on, which is paid for 4 weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you and your partner have a combined income from work of £15,400 or less per year after tax.

Non-economic criteria:

- Received a DWP postcard from the Local Authority with a unique reference number (URN) on
- the child has been in Local Authority care for 1 day or more
- the child has left Local Authority care under a special guardianship order, a child arrangement order or an adoption order
- the child has a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or an education, health and care plan (EHC)
- the child receives Disability Living Allowance

Non-EEA citizen who cannot claim benefits:

A 2-year-old may get funded childcare if the family is getting support under the Immigration and Asylum Act and have either:

- claimed asylum in the UK and are waiting for a decision (known as 'part 6')
- been refused asylum in the UK (known as 'section 4')

A 2-year-old may also get funded childcare if the household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, and the family have either:

- leave to remain with 'no recourse to public funds' on family or private life grounds
- support from your local council because you have 'a child in need', for example they have a disability or a child protection plan
- the right to live in the UK because they are the main carer of a British citizen (known as a 'Zambrano Carer')

In Reading all eligible two-year-olds can access a funded early education place from the term after their second birthday. Each eligible child is entitled to up to 570 hours per year of funded early education from the term after their second birthday for a maximum of three terms.

30 hours extended entitlement

The following national criteria determine which children are eligible:

Both parents are working (or sole parent in a lone parent family) and over the next 3 months each parent/carer expects to earn:

- At least a weekly minimum salary equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage (for under 25-year-olds) or national living wage (if over 25 years old), and
- No more than £100,000 per year

Or

Both parents are employed but one or both parents is temporarily away from the workplace on parental, maternity, paternity or adoption leave or statutory sick pay.

Or

One parent is employed, and one parent is in receipt of either Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance, Carer's Allowance or contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance disabled or incapacitated based on receipt of specific benefits.

Immigration status

A parent will not be eligible if they are from outside the EEA and their UK residence card states they cannot access public funds.

However, their partner can apply instead if they're from:

- the UK or EEA
- outside the EEA and their UK residence card says they can access public funds