



Reading Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022-2023

Early Years Childcare
Sufficiency Assessment

The assessment is a statutory
duty of the Childcare Act 2006

OWNER

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DATE

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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 year)
- 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) require 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](#)).

Reading is committed to ensuring that disabled children and those with special educational needs have access to a wide range of high quality childcare. In addition to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory requirements and the Equality Act 2010, all publicly funded Early Years providers in the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sectors, are required to have regard to the SEND Code of Practice:-25. The Code of Practice states that Early Years settings should adopt a graduated approach to identifying and meeting the needs of all children and young people. At each stage of assessment and planning, settings should engage with parents and carers, making reasonable adjustments, wherever is practicable, to support the needs of the child.

To support Early Years providers to meet the needs of children and young people Brighter Futures for Children provides:

- Access to special Education Needs coordinator (SENCo) training opportunities
- SEN inclusion funding to enable children to access Early Years provision
- The [Local Offer](#) which provides information on services and provision available to families, young people and children with special education needs and/or disabilities

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 [Early Years Education and Childcare](#), statutory guidance provided by the Department for Education. This ensures that early years funding is offered consistently and fairly.

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. This assessment 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 2022-2023, some of the data included is from January and March 2021, therefore it still resonates some of the impact that Covid-19 restrictions had on the childcare sector.

There has been a steady increase in children claiming funded childcare since Covid-19 restrictions were lifted.

ONS Data collections from summer 2021 to summer term 2022 reveals the following increase in attending numbers:

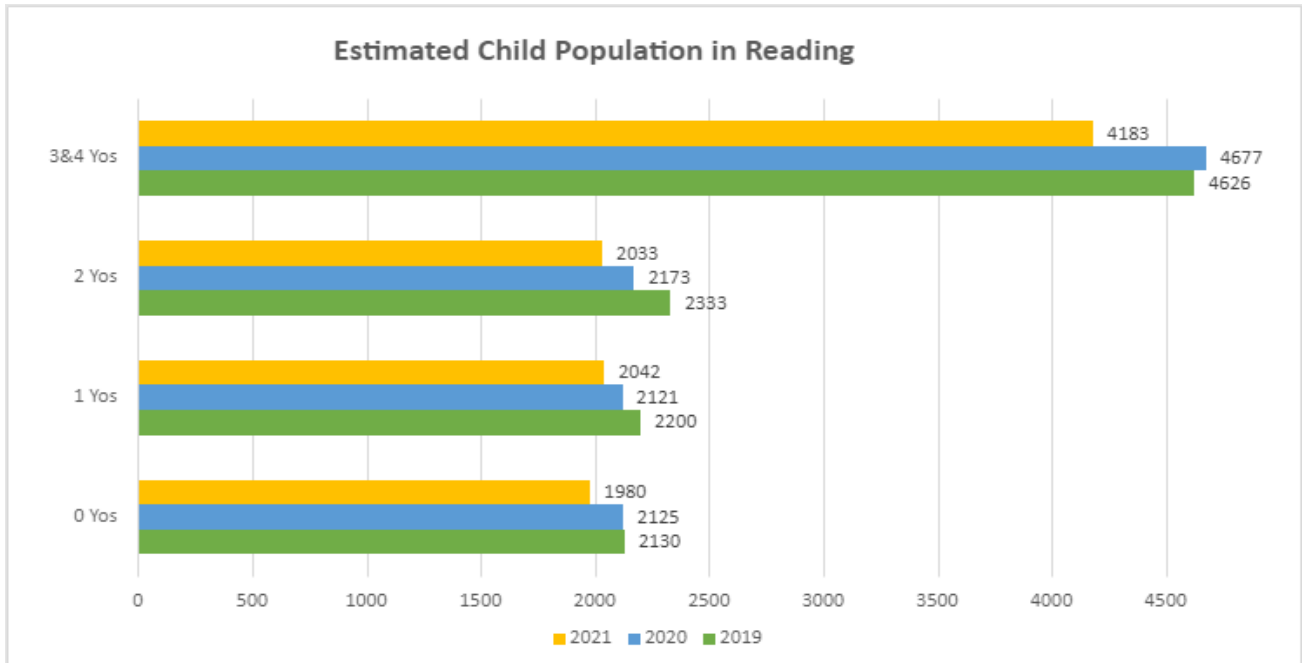
- 2-year-old funded children - 5.5%
- 3 & 4-year-old Universal funded children - 40 individuals
- 30 hours Extended Entitlement - 2%

Main Findings

- 96% of providers in Reading are judged as 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted or waiting for a first inspection.
- The annual parents survey 2022 showed, the majority (87%) of parents/carers surveyed were satisfied with their choice of childcare provision.
- There are currently sufficient childcare places for all 0–4-year-olds who want places, including funded early education entitlement places for two-, three- and four-year-olds, albeit some may not be in the area preferred.
- Providers report immediate vacancies and waiting lists for children aged 0 to 11 years in Reading an indicator that parents are waiting for preferred provision.
- The majority (93%) of parents/carers surveyed were able to find the type of childcare they wanted in their local area. Where they had not this was either due to the cost or the provision not meeting their child's needs.
- Early years providers report that places are most influenced by the physical space available, followed by qualified staff vacancies and meeting the needs of existing children.
- Funding rates were identified as the greatest threat to the sustainability of early years providers followed by rising energy costs.
- Rising food costs were identified as the greatest threat to the sustainability of out of school providers followed by a drop in parental demand.
- RBC's 5 year housing plan has identified the town centre and Whitley ward as areas to monitor regarding future growth. This could lead to an increase in the number of families over the next few years in line with housing development.
- Parent/carers who reported that their childcare requirements had changed as an impact of the Covid pandemic were in the minority this year at 20%, a reduction from 31% last year.
- 50% of parent/carer responses indicated that they were satisfied with current fees, the remaining 50% were not satisfied. In this financial year 57% of early years providers and 41% of out of school providers reported that they had set a fee increase.

Reading demographic information

Estimated ONS child population in Reading 2019 and 2020, 2021



As of 2021, Reading is the fourth most densely populated of the South East's 64 local authority areas, with around 31 people living on each football pitch-sized area of land. We can expect this density to increase if we factor in the significant high-rise flat developments planned in the town highlighted in appendix 3. In the last 10 years Reading's population has increased by 11.9%. This is significantly higher than the South East average of 7.5%.

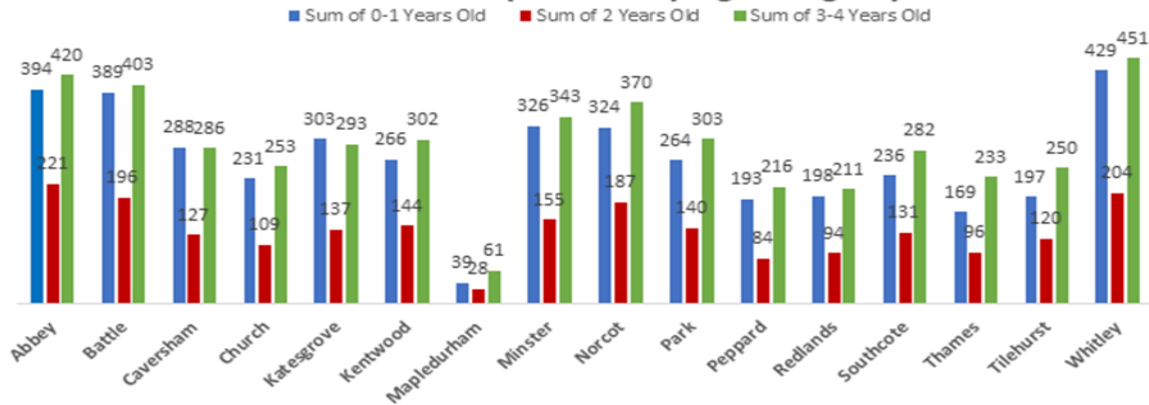
For the first time since 2015, the number of live births in England and Wales increased in 2021. It is important to monitor changes in cohort numbers to ensure that any increase in cohort is not impacted by providers decreasing their capacity as a reaction to the recent decline in birth rates reported in previous years. Live births in Reading increased by 1.2% between 2011 to 2021, however, ONS data shows that 0-4 year old population has decreased by 14% over the same period. The Office of National Statistics reports a long-term trend of decreasing live births. The largest increase in Reading's population is in non-childbearing age group.

Reading remains a vibrant town, hosting the headquarters of several multi-national companies. It also has good transport links across the South East and traditionally more favourable house prices than London. The development of housing in Reading (appendix 3) shows there are currently 6352 planning permissions currently outstanding. This number is an increase of 1272 planning permissions since the previous year. The easing of the pandemic restrictions on mobility could increase migration into Reading as a more economic place to live than its surrounding areas.

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 they did not previously exist. In part, this will be addressed by three new Early Years providers opening in 2023 that will increase sufficiency of places in areas of development. Large scale

developments within Abbey ward (Huntley Wharf) have plans to incorporate designated space for childcare facilities, this could counter act the potential shortfall of day care places within the town centre but not necessarily offer the flexibility to accommodate funded only childcare.

Estimated Child Population by Age Range by Ward



source ONS Mid 2020 (latest)

Childcare Providers in Reading

Reading maintains a consistent mix of childcare provision with delivery of places from all provider types including day nurseries, independent schools, pre-schools, primary schools, maintained nursery schools and childminders. As of January 2022, there were a total of 177 early years childcare providers in Reading. This was a decrease of 3 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 as a result of shifting parental working patterns following the pandemic and an increase in working from home. Respondents of the out of school survey reported a lack of parental demand and comments indicated that more parent/carers now have informal childcare arrangements in place.

Type of Provision	January 2018	January 2019	January 2020	January 2021	January 2022	5 yr movement
Pre-School	20 ↓	20 →	19 ↓	18 ↓	17 ↓	-3
Full Day Care	30 ↓	32 ↑	34 ↑	32 ↓	32 →	+2
Independent Nursery	6 →	6 →	6 →	6 →	6 →	0
Childminder (registered and claiming EY funding)	33 ↑	32 ↓	34 ↑	32 ↓	34 ↑	+1
Childminder (Not claiming EY funding)	78 ↑	87 ↑	77 ↓	65 ↓	61 ↓	-17
Maintained Nursery School	5 →	5 →	5 →	5 →	5 →	0
Maintained Nursery Class	22 →	22 →	22 →	22 →	22 →	0
Total Providers	194 ↑	204 ↑	197 ↓	180 ↓	177 ↓	-17

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



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 Deenway 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
57	Stepping Stones Pre-School Group
58	The Grange 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

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Childcare places available in Reading

The number of Reading childcare providers has remained steady over the last 3 years. As some businesses have closed others have opened to rebalance the market. This year there has been a slight decrease of childminders numbers overall, however an increase of childminders offering early years funding. In 2023 three new daycare providers are due to open near to or in the town centre.

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. Provider responses indicate that parental demand is high with 80% of daycare providers holding a waiting list. Childminders offer places across the age ranges and make a significant contribution to the stock of available childcare in Reading. The number of pre-schools has decreased and there are early signs that the 2-year funded demand may be impacted in West Reading and is being closely monitored.

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.

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. The out of school provider survey highlighted that the percentage of providers offering provision to children 11 years and over is the lowest of all age groups at 30%.

Number of Childcare Providers by Type & Ward – March 2022

	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		2	11
Battle	7	3	4	1	1		2	18
Caversham		5	2	1	1	2	1	12
Church	2	1			1	1	1	6
Katesgrove			2				2	4
Kentwood	2	2	2		1	1		8
Mapledurham	1	4						5
Minster	3	3	1		2		2	11
Norcot	2	5			2		3	12
Park	3	5	3		1		2	14
Peppard	4	11	2		2			19
Redlands			2	1	1		1	5
Southcote	1	3	3		1		1	9
Thames		9	2	1	2			14
Tilehurst	5	5	2	1	1	1	2	17
Whitley	3	3	3				3	12
Total	34	61	32	6	17	5	22	177

Reading has a good balance of childcare by type in each ward. Peppard has a high total number of providers, including 15 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.

The four Wards with the highest percentage of Reading's under 5s population remain as Abbey, Battle, Whitley and Norcot. Analysis indicates that registered childcare places in Abbey ward currently matches population estimates, however, in Battle, Whitley and Norcot there could be pressure on places if childcare demand increases. Three new childcare provisions are being planned for development within or close to Abbey and Whitley wards which will provide a further 250 childcare places. These may help meet the demand within these areas where housing development is increasing. Particular focus needs to be given to Minster, Norcot and Whitley wards which all have high numbers of two-year-olds but few sessional childcare providers. It should be noted that Abbey and Battle wards both include registered places available at independent schools.

Reading Borough Council's Residential commitments report (appendix 3) states that the number of dwellings under construction is currently at the highest 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 pre-pandemic showed that most children attended an early years provider in their home ward and it is anticipated this is likely to continue with working from home becoming increasingly mainstream in some sectors.

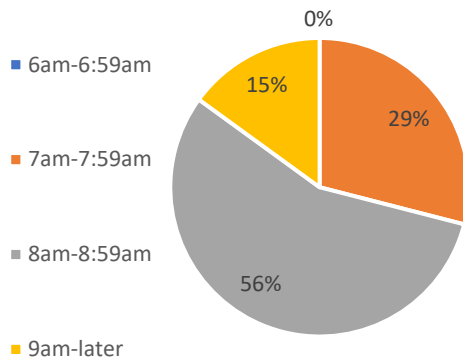
Parental choice and flexibility play a large part in determining childcare sufficiency making local demand difficult to predict. The largest percentage of registered places in Reading is in the full day care sector which generally offers more flexibility to meet the demands of working parents. For the last two years 25% of providers have noted shifting parental demand as a concern, however this year the number of parent/carers reporting a change had decreased to 20%.

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

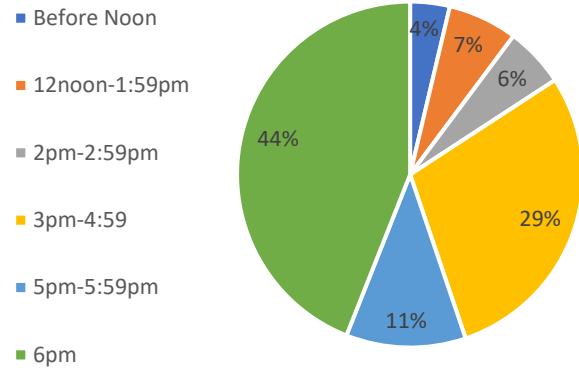
Early Years Childcare Providers Opening Times

Of the 102 survey responses, most childcare providers open between 7am to 9am and close at 6pm. No providers reported as opening earlier than 7am or closing later than 6pm.

Opening Times



Closing Times



56% of childcare providers are open all year round. Most of the term time only care is offered by pre-schools and maintained nursery schools and classes. Only one childcare provider offers weekend care.

Early Years Childcare Costs

Average Costs of Childcare in Reading by Provider Costs (March 22 snapshot from Providers)

	Per Hour	Per Session	Per Day	Per Week	Per Term
Childminder	£5.47	£26.13	£45.00	-	-
Day Nursery	£7.45	£35.89	£58.47	£235.66	-
Pre-School	£6.19	£16.61	-	-	-
Holiday Scheme	£7.50	£31.57	£32.38	£185.33	-

According to the Family and Childcare Trust childcare prices have increased since 2021 but at a lower rate than inflation. The average cost in the South East of England for a full week care for children under two years old is £289.06 a week. The average price for families using an after-school club for five days is £63.09 per week. Information gathered from Reading childcare providers indicates that their hourly charges are slightly higher than the national average. Charges can vary both between types of settings, between individual providers and the age of children care is offered to.

Early years free entitlement hours, funded by the government, are currently paid at an hourly rate of £5.06 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 12p per hour in 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. The survey highlights that 88% of early years providers and 87% of out of school providers are registered to accept Tax Free Childcare, however only 32% of the parent/carer respondents reported that they are using the scheme. This mirrors the national take-up of the entitlement. A national campaign is being conducted to increase take-up of this entitlement and this will be replicated locally over the next year.

Results of the parent/carer survey showed that 50% of parent/carers were satisfied with their childcare costs, whereas 50% were not. This year there was an increase in the number of providers reporting to have raised their fees to parent/carers, however 43% of early years and 59% of out of school providers report no change.

The number of providers reporting to have a business plan has declined this year with 54% of early years and 48% of out of school providers (breakfast/after school clubs, holiday activities) stating that they do. This is an area which needs to be addressed in order to safeguard the future of Reading's childcare market.

Childcare Quality

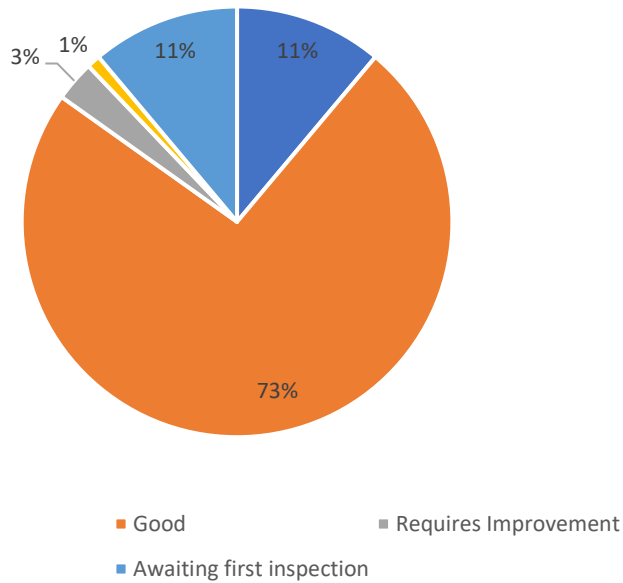
Childcare standards are regulated by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED). Ofsted registered providers are checked for safety and suitability for caring for children. All childcare settings, who care for children under eight years old, are legally required to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

Ofsted Ratings of Childcare Providers in Reading

Ofsted started a phased return to regular inspection activity spring 2021 following the suspension during the Covid pandemic. All early years providers are now inspected in a 6-year window from the date of their last inspection. Ofsted aims to inspect all new childcare providers within 30 months of registration where possible. Childcare providers judged to require improvement are reinspected within a year and inadequate childcare provision is reinspected within 6 months.

As of March 2022, the vast majority of Reading childcare providers were rated 'good' or 'outstanding'. The 7 providers rated Requires Improvement and Inadequate were being supported by the Early Years team to make the required progress.

Overall Effectiveness of Reading Early Years Providers March 2022



Early Years Funding

Three and four-year-old funded early education entitlement

15 hours funded childcare

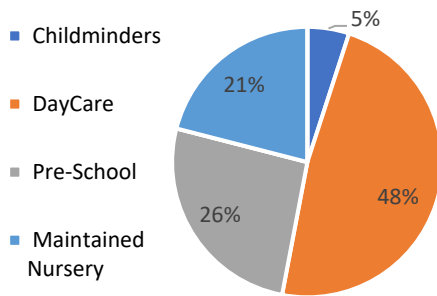
All three and four-year-old children in England are eligible for 570 hours of funded childcare per year from the term after their third birthday. This is usually taken as 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year known as “universal entitlement”. Providers can also offer this entitlement as a stretched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

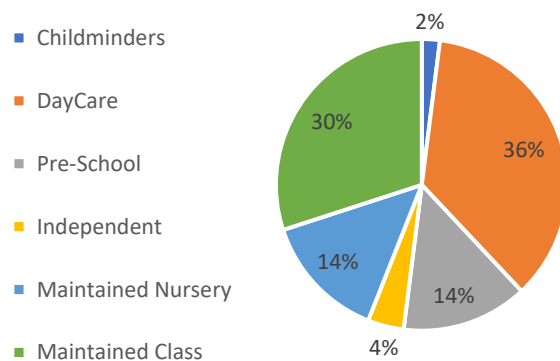
Two-Year-Old Funding – Spring 22



	2 Year Olds Claiming Funding				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number uptake	396	410	371	311	377
% of cohort	58%	65%	63%	55%	73%

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 73% take-up in spring 2022 is a significantly higher than the previous spring term and signals a return in parental confidence in the childcare sector since the third National Covid 19 lockdown. The acceleration in take up of the 2 year old offer can also be attributed to increased promotion of the scheme facilitated by the Early Years Service.

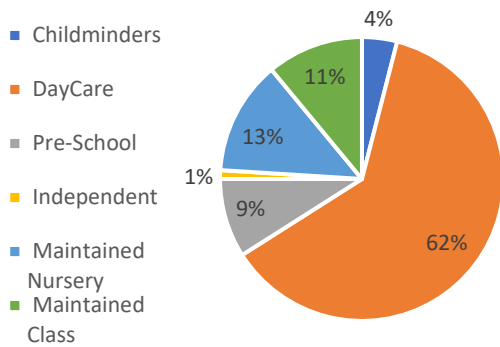
Universal Funding (three and four-year-old) – Spring 2022



	3 & 4 Year Olds Claiming Universal Funding				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number uptake	3011	2888	3012	2525	2545
% of total cohort	62%	60%	65%	55%	54%

There is an even balance of universal 15 hours funding being offered between the private and the maintained sector. Overall, the numbers attending in spring 2022 continues to be lower than the previous year. The lack of acceleration in universal take-up in spring 2022 could be indicative of the drop in 2-year-old funding take-up experienced in the previous year and also reflect the decreasing under 5s population.

30 Hours Extended Entitlement Funding – Spring 2022



	3 & 4 Year Olds Claiming 30 Hours Extended Entitlement Funding				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number uptake	900	977	983	926	902
% of total cohort	30%	34%	34%	32%	31%

The number of families claiming 30 hours extended entitlement funding has continued the pattern of decline from the previous 3 years. This could be attributed to a shift in parental working patterns as a consequence of the pandemic. The percentage of children claiming 30 hours funding remains fairly consistent across the sector with no obvious shifts to different childcare types. Traditionally, daycare providers have offered the greatest flexibility in when funded hours can be offered, therefore they remain the largest group offering 30 hours funding.

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 452 three and four-year-olds funded for EYPP in January 2022 in Reading, 18% of the total cohort. The introduction of additional information and marketing by the Early Years service has helped to increase take-up of EYPP by 5% over the last year. In March 2022, 77% of children in the PVI sector had a EYPP eligibility check run via the Education Checking System.

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.

The Disability Access Fund (DAF) was introduced by the Government in April 2017 to support 3- and 4-year-old children with disabilities to access their early years entitlement. In April 2022 the lump sum available for this was increased from £615 to £800. Claimants need to provide evidence of the child's Disability Living Allowance certificate and be claiming universal early years entitlement. Payments are made directly to the setting accommodating the child. Since 2017 Reading has funded 148 children.

Childcare for School Aged Children

Estimated population of School aged children living in Reading by Ward			
	5 – 7 Year Olds	8 – 10 Year 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 (latest available)

There are an estimated 1,561 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 2022. The number of providers offering care has remained consistent with data compared to the previous year. 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 part time numbers so reflects Holiday clubs offering 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

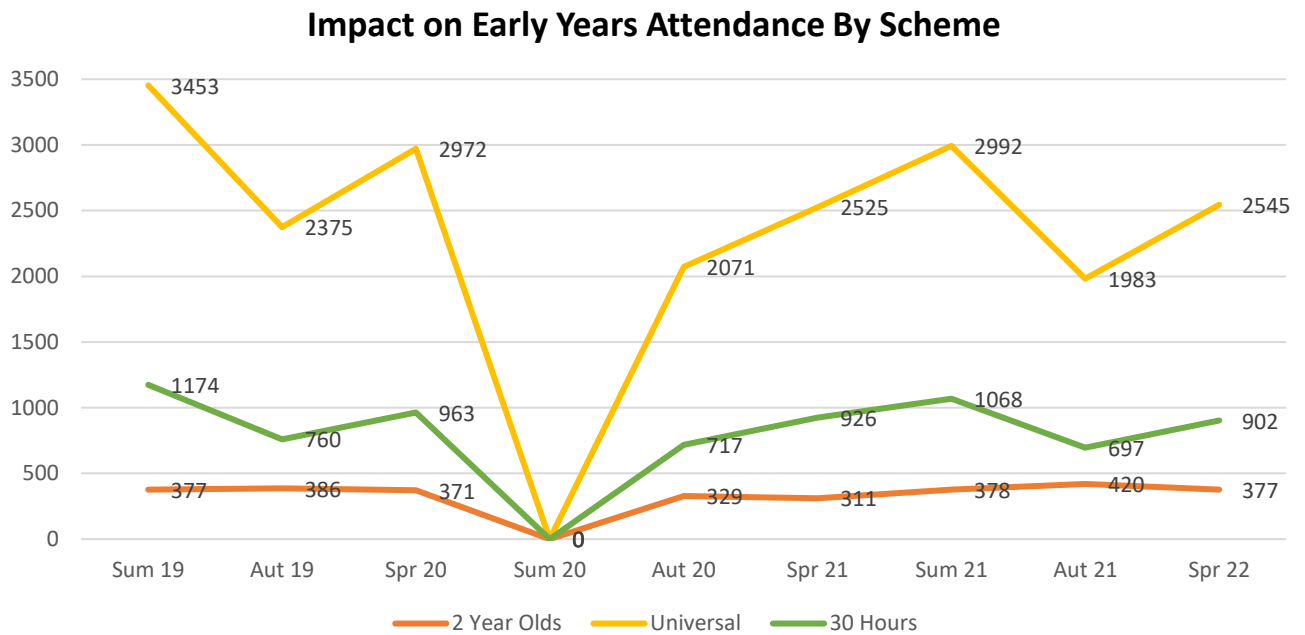
	Number of After School Clubs or Breakfast Clubs	Registered Places in After School Clubs or Breakfast Clubs	Number of Holiday Clubs	Registered Places in Holiday Clubs
Abbey	3	102	2	54
Battle	6	215	3	108
Caversham	4	110	1	20
Church	2	45	2	100
Katesgrove	4	150	3	120
Kentwood	1	20		
Mapledurham	1	40		
Minster	1	30		
Norcot	3	83	1	15
Park	4	115	1	
Peppard	7	316	2	104
Redlands	2	50	3	102
Southcote	1	30	2	80
Thames	2	60	1	30
Tilehurst	2	80		
Whitley	4	115	2	80
Total	46	1561	23	843

Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF)

The government launched the HAF programme early 2021 to support disadvantaged children to 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 or locally identified as vulnerable. The programme supports children and young people to engage with education through the holiday periods especially for those families experiencing economic hardship. The programme offers each child 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. The provider survey shows that not all holiday club providers are offering the HAF programme and further follow up is required to ensure they have all the information required. Overall, the programme has expanded the childcare market considerably and is supporting financial 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



The chart above shows the number of children claiming EY funding over time. In March 2020 childcare providers were advised to only remain open for children of keyworkers or children who were considered to be vulnerable. To support childcare during this initial period the Department for Education (DfE) committed to providing funding for predicted attendance based on normal circumstances, therefore no actual attendance data has been recorded. The Government eased restrictions in June 2020 and allowed all pre-school age children to return to childcare settings with further national lockdowns in November 2020 and January 2021.

The number of children claiming both the 3- and 4-year-old universal and 30-hour entitlement have yet to settle at pre-pandemic levels. However, the number of children accessing 2-year funded spaces (73% take-up) has exceeded pre-pandemic levels and this may have a positive impact on 3 and 4 year take up next year. 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, however, the increase in new Reading residential dwellings may counteract this prediction. Comparison between spring 2020 and spring 2022 funding take-up shows a decrease of 14% for universal funding and 6% for 30 hours funding.

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 downturn in numbers. However, the result of the early years Providers childcare surveys indicates that the majority of providers hold a waiting list because of limits to the physical space but also because of difficulties to recruit early years staff. Early years providers reported that funding rates and rising energy costs are the greatest concern to their future sustainability. Whereas, out of school providers reported that rising food costs and a reduction in parental demand as their greatest concern. It is considered that the sector remains fragile because of rising costs, changes in demand and a local and national childcare recruitment crisis fuelled by low pay and status.

Action plan progress 2021-2022

Progress on the 2021-2022 action plan:

-Early years advisors have ensured a sharp focus on recruitment and retention for managers networks, visits, communications and newsletters. Local partnerships have been formed with training providers and employee advisors to recruit apprentices into the sector. The training offer for practitioners has been enhanced to strengthen practitioner knowledge and skills at all levels, to grow confidence and highlight to possibilities of continued professional development within the sector. The Early Years Newsletter has been introduced to highlight the different roles and achievements of the sector to boost morale and raise the profile of early years careers. Contributions from the current childcare workforce in Reading account for more than 50% of the content and the newsletter is shared on social media. The early years provider survey shows that 35% remain concerned about the impact of recruitment and 22% retention, whilst this remains a high priority, this indicates a reduction from a local survey conducted in April 2022.

-Nationally [Ofsted report](#) the number of childminders is declining year on year, there are now 29,600 registered childminders with a reduction of 4,100 in the last year. The number of childminders active in Reading has reduced by 2 this year, with 4 resigning and 2 newly registered early years childminders, which indicates a level of stability in comparison to the national picture. A dedicated section for childminders has been developed on the BFFC website which includes details of essential skills and how to register as a childminder. The early years team provide free, monthly briefings for potential childminders to generate new interest. In addition, the Introduction to Childminding Practice course is provided at the cost of delivery and all new childminders receive at least termly support visits from an early years advisor to ensure Ofsted standards are met. Once registered Reading childminders benefit from free training, advice, communications and networking opportunities to ensure peer support and to raise standards.

-The Early Years Team and Family Information Service work together to identify areas where childcare sufficiency may be at risk. Local knowledge is shared with providers planning to extend current provision or open within the area. The Family Information Service have current vacancy knowledge and support families to find suitable childcare provision.

-The parent/carer survey and provider waiting lists indicate that parental demand remains stable, but with some fluctuation in demand across the town. The parent/carer survey highlights that any changes in requirements due to the Covid pandemic have started to lessen.

-The marketing campaign for 2-, 3- and 4-year funding has continued with the addition of two Parent Champions to help advise parents in community including local groups and libraries. The 2 year funding take up has increased significantly this year to 73% in the spring term 2022. However, the 3 and 4 year universal and 30 hour entitlement has seen a slight decrease in take up over the last year. Future data needs to be monitored to determine whether this is due to population decrease rather than shifting parental demand.

-The introduction of additional information and marketing by the early years service has helped to increase take-up of EYPP by 5%.

Action plan 2023

The strategic approach to sufficiency will focus on 3 main strands:

1. Childminders

- Increase the profile of a childminding career through targeted communications to Reading residents in order to grow and strengthen the workforce.
- Sustain the offer of extensive support, training and networking opportunities to new and existing childminders to ensure high quality and retention.

2. Recruitment

- Increase the profile of an early years career to those making early career choices in order to grow and strengthen the workforce.
- Sustain the extensive training and peer networking offer to all levels and experience of early years practitioner to ensure high quality and retention.

3. Business

- Increase opportunities for providers to access specialist training and workshops which presents a proactive and sound approach to business planning.
- Sustain and increase promotion of the bespoke business support available to local providers with a focus on individual position.

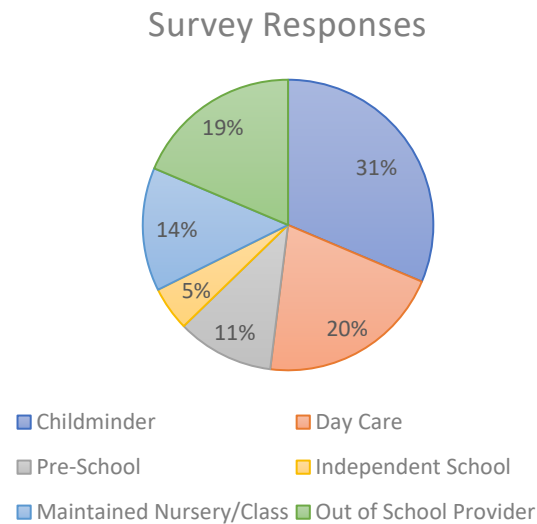
4. Childcare costs

- Local campaign to increase the take-up of tax-free entitlement for parents to reduce the cost of daycare.

Appendix 1

Provider Survey

The opinions of childcare providers in Reading were sought between December 2022 and January 2023 via a Microsoft form questionnaire. The survey was completed by 102 respondents with good representation across the sector as set out below:



Responses have been analysed and will be reported in two sections: early years childcare and out of school provision.

Early Years Childcare

The views of all early years providers were requested and 81 responses were received. This is a good representation of the sector which includes childminders, pre-schools, daycare, maintained nurseries, school nursery classes and independent schools.

Government Funded Schemes

Early years providers were asked to report on how they offer the 2-year funding and 3- 4-year-old universal and extended funding to understand any restrictions or additional charges to parents. Of this group ,74% provide a standalone funded offer with no additional cost to the family. Also 84% reported that there are no additional limitations in place as to when the funding can be taken.

[Tax Free Childcare](#) is an incentive for parents and 88% of the respondents confirmed that they are registered to accept the offer.

Vacancies

The group of early years providers reported details of immediately available vacant spaces:

Age Range	Vacancies
Under 2	18
2 Years	74
3 + 4 Years	281

Waiting List

Of this group, 62% reported that they do not hold a current waiting list for an immediate start, whereas 38% of other respondents provided details of the number of children waiting currently as collated below:

Age Range	Waiting List
Under 2	114
2 Years	116
3 + 4 Years	111

Reason(s) for holding a waiting list for an immediate start include:

Rank	Reason	Percentage
-	None applicable	41%
1	A limit for physical space	34%
2	Qualified Staff Vacancies	17%
3	Meeting the needs of existing children	16%
4	Childminder ratio restriction	5%
5	Unqualified Staff Vacancies	5%

The most common reason for a waiting list was due to lack of physical space, followed by qualified staff vacancies and meeting the needs of existing children.

Business

Respondents were asked if they have a current business plan to which 54% selected yes and 46% no, of those that answered, 5 requested further advice. In addition, 57% of providers reported to have increased their fees in the past financial year, however 43% have not.

Sustainability

Early years providers were asked to identify any concern(s) that relate to their sustainability as presented in the table below:

Rank	Reason	Percentage
-	None	18%
1	Funding rates	54%
2	Rising energy costs	50%
3	Rising food costs	41%
4	Recruitment of staff	35%
5	Parental demand	25%
6	Business Rates	24%
7	Retention of staff	22%

The most common concerns related to funding and increasing costs, followed by early years recruitment.

Additional Comments

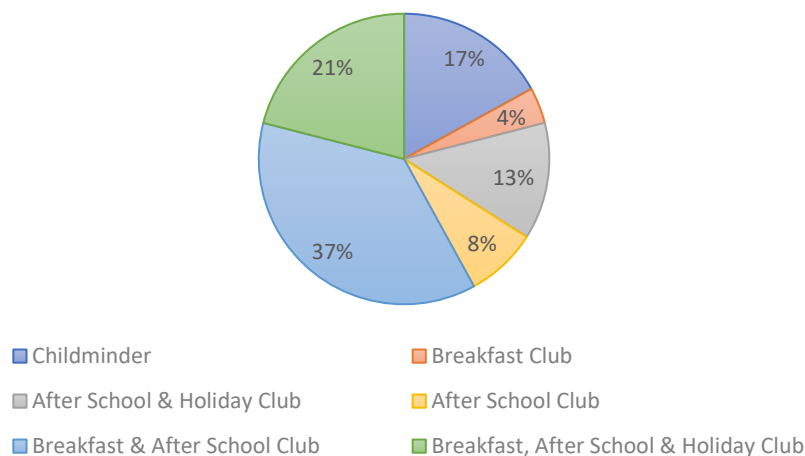
Early years providers were asked to share any other comments in relation to the childcare market in Reading with the following themed responses:

- Increase in government funding required to reflect cost of living rise and providers to be included in the decision
- Concern in relation to sustainability of pre-schools and impact on choice for families
- Impact of early years recruitment on sustainability of the sector
- Limited available childcare spaces for parents working fulltime
- Unpredictable rent increases
- Increase of childminders leaving the sector since the Covid pandemic
- Reduced demand for pre-school provision from families
- Families experiencing rising cost which impact on their ability to pay for childcare
- Increased pressure on practitioners to meet the needs of children attending
- Good choice of childcare options locally

Out of School Provider

The survey was completed by 23 respondents with good representation across the group as set out below:

Survey Responses



Age Range

Out of school providers were asked the age range of children included in their childcare offer with the following results:

Age Range	Percentage of providers
4-5 years	100%
6-7 years	100%
8-11 years	96%
11 years +	30%

Government Funded Schemes

Out of school providers were asked if they have registered for the [Holiday food and activities programme \(HAF\)](#). Of this group 7 are currently holiday club providers and 28% have registered for the scheme and 72% have not.

[Tax Free Childcare](#) is an incentive for parents and 87% of the respondents confirmed that they are registered to accept the offer.

Vacancies and demand

All out of school providers with an offer of wrap around care and holiday provision were asked for details of their immediately available vacant spaces and if they are meeting demand with the following results:

Provision Type	1-5 Vacancies	6-10 Vacancies	11-15 Vacancies	15+ Vacancies
Breakfast Club	46%	8%	8%	38%
After School Club	47%	13%	20%	20%
Holiday Club	33%	33%	17%	17%

- 93% of breakfast club providers reported that they are meeting current demand
- 94% of after school club providers reported that they are meeting current demand
- 86% of holiday club providers reported that they are meeting current demand

Business

Respondents were asked if they have a current business plan, to which 48% selected yes and 52% no, of those that answered 3 providers have requested further advice. In addition, 41% of providers reported to have increased their fees in the past financial year, however 59% have not.

Sustainability

Providers were asked to identify any concern(s) that relate to their sustainability as presented in the table below:

Rank	Reason	Percentage
-	None	26%
1	Rising food costs	43%
2	Parental demand	34%
3	Funding rates	30%
3	Recruitment of staff	30%
4	Rising energy costs	18%
4	Retention of staff	18%
5	Business Rates	9%

Additional Comments

Providers were asked to share any other comments in relation to the childcare market in Reading with the following themes:

- A reduced demand for out of school childcare as parents are working from home
- Increase of informal care arrangements for school age children
- Increase in families falling into arrears with childcare fee payments

Appendix 2

Parent Survey

The opinions of parents and carers were sought regarding childcare provision in Reading between September and November 2022 via a Microsoft form questionnaire. The survey was completed by 264 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 age range of children and social economic backgrounds. 66% of the respondents stated they had children under the age of 5 years old.

213 (87%) 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

- 204 (78%) 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 stayed with friends or used after school activities.

- 107 (44%) of parents said they used between 15 to 30 hours of childcare a week, 34% said they used less than 15 hours and 22% said they used more than 30 hours.
- 210 (93%) parents/carers stated they were able to find the type of childcare they wanted in their local area. Parents who couldn't find the care they needed stated it was due to the cost or lack of special educational needs or disability care.
- There was a 50-50 split between parents who were or weren't satisfied with their childcare costs.
- Of the respondents to the survey who did not access childcare 38% did not access childcare as their children were cared for by themselves or their partner. 21% of respondents stated cost was a barrier.
- 198 (48%) parents/carers said they accessed childcare as it allowed them to work. 143 (35%) said it aided their child's development.
- 98% of parents/carers said they were satisfied with the quality of their childcare arrangements with 77% saying they found it easy to find in the local area. 93% of respondents said they were able to access all the childcare they needed.
- 115 (64%) parents/carers stated they think there was enough Out of School care available. 55% of users were not satisfied with the cost of their Out of School care.

Early Years Funded Childcare

- 17 parents questioned in our parent survey said they were accessing the Government offered targeted two-year-old funding. 68 were accessing the universal funding and 44 accessed the extended entitlement.
- A large proportion of those questioned were aware of the Governments funding offers.
- 96 of the 216 parents answering our survey with children under 5 years olds were accessing the Government offered 15 hours of free childcare regardless of income.
- Of the parents who reported using any of the funding schemes, 50% claimed it during term-time only and 50% spread it across the year.
- Of those parents who used it term time 47% purchases additional weeks.
- 62% parents paid for extra hours in addition to their funded entitlement. 47% of these parents purchased over 10 additional hours each week.
- 60% of parents reported they didn't purchase additional hours because they were too expensive.
- With a 42% (yes) 50% (no) split there was no clear answer as to whether the free entitlement hours encouraged parents to purchase more childcare hours.

Extended 30 Hours Funding

- 67% of the 35 parents who claimed 30 hours funding did so at the same provider as their universal funding.
- There was no clear indicator as to whether the extra hours encouraged parents 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.
- 47% of respondents stated that they had a combined household income of over £66,000.
- 56% of respondents said they paid for additional hours or weeks on top of their free childcare. The vast majority of these parents paid for more than 10 additional hours per week.
- The most popular method of paying for childcare is using direct payment such as bank transfer (39%). Only 32% of parents stated they paid using Tax Free Childcare (32%).

Impact of limited childcare during the COVID 19 pandemic

- When asked if the pandemic had impacted the childcare they use 198 (80%) said it had not made a difference.
- 114 (51%) didn't think the limited access to childcare during the pandemic had affected their child. 20% of parents thought it had affected their child's communication skills. 19% felt it has affected their child's emotional well-being.

Appendix 3

Housing data

Planning Permissions (Hard Commitments) outstanding as at March 2022		
WARD NAME	2021	2022
Abbey	2836	4038
Battle	207	101
Caversham	73	74
Church	11	4
Katesgrove	165	137
Kentwood	35	37
Mapledurham	1	4
Minster	83	107
Norcot	125	120
Park	79	56
Peppard	28	249
Redlands	52	26
Southcote	13	10
Thames	17	19
Tilehurst	8	11
Whitley	1347	1359
Total	5080	6352

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:

- 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

Families eligible under the NRPF criteria, and meet the respective income thresholds:

- Zambrano primary carers
- families who have No Recourse to Public Funds with a right to remain in the UK on grounds of private and family life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights
- families receiving support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 who are also subject to a no recourse to public funds restriction
- those who have claimed asylum in the UK and are waiting for a decision (known as 'part 6')
- a subset of failed asylum seekers supported under Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Chen carers
- families holding a BN(O) passport
- spousal visa holders
- work visa holders
- student visa holders
- those with no immigration status
- those with a UK Ancestry Visa

- those with temporary protection status under Section 12 of the Immigration and Nationality Act
- those with pre-settled status who do not meet the qualifying right to reside test

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