



HILLINGDON
LONDON

**CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY
ASSESSMENT**

**London Borough of Hillingdon
October 2025**

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1. Introduction

1.1 Hillingdon Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure sufficiency of childcare places in Hillingdon. The Childcare Act 2006 (Section 6) informs that Local Authorities should 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 years (or up to 18 years for disabled children as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995).

1.2 In considering the sufficiency of funded childcare this includes the following funded hours for 38 weeks of the year:

Children aged 3 & 4-years-old
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15 hours a week for all families.• 30 hours a week for eligible working families.
Children aged 2-years-old
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15 hours a week for eligible families receiving some forms of government support.• 30 hours a week for eligible working families week from September 2025.
Children aged under 2-years-old
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15 hours a week for eligible working families with children aged over 9-months-old since September 2024, increasing to 30 hours a week from September 2025.

1.3 This Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2025 covers the period from 1st September 2024 to 31st August 2025. The data used is a snapshot of the childcare sufficiency situation in August 2025 which is used to provide projections into the new academic year, and the national data used is the most recent available.

1.4 The data contained within this report is theoretical and may not always represent the current occupancy of Early Years places. Due to the times at which data is published, the information available to us can be at times up to 12 months out of date.

1.5 Although the data is a starting point, it does not consider many other variables which may increase demand and reduce the capacity for Early Years providers to accommodate children arising from this development, such as parental choice, commuter routes and working patterns.

1.6 In order to increase the accuracy of the information we provide, we do also contact local Early Years providers to get an understanding of their current demand and occupancy levels. In terms of Early Years places, this can be difficult to quantify, with many children attending for a variety of different hours, sessions or days across providers. It is also fast changing, with demand increasing throughout the academic year.

2. Definitions

Childcare

2.1 Childcare is defined in section 18 of the Childcare Act 2006 as *any form of care for a child* including *education and any other supervised activity*. The following are specifically excluded from this definition:

- Education or activities provided by a school for a pupil during school hours, unless that pupil has not yet started key stage 1 (thereby including nursery and reception classes);
- Care provided for a child by a parent, stepparent or person with parental responsibility; or any relative; or foster parent (Local Authority or private); or
- Care provided by a children's home, a care home, a hospital or a residential family centre, a young offenders' institution, a secure training centre, or a secure care home within any of those establishments.

2.2 In the Childcare Act 2016 'early years provision' means childcare for a child aged from birth until the term after the child's fifth birthday and 'later years provision' means childcare for a child from 1st September following the child's fifth birthday until the age of 18 years. Local Authorities should regard childcare as any provision that is regular and reliable and provides children a safe place to be. It would not include, for example, before school or after-school activity that was unsupervised or that was provided as a one-off activity.

Funded Early Education Places for Three- and Four-Year-Old Children

2.3 All three- and four-year-old children are eligible for a Funded Early Education (FEE) place, comprising of up to 570 hours a year delivered over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year.

2.4 30 hours free childcare is available for families who meet the national eligibility criteria up to a maximum of 1,140 hours per year. (This is an additional 15 extended hours of childcare per week on top of the standard 15 universal hours entitlement). Children become eligible from the beginning of the term following their third birthday, until they reach compulsory school age.

Funded Early Education Places for Two-Year-Old Children

2.5 There are two different funding schemes through which two-year-olds can be eligible for free childcare:

- Funded childcare for children whose parents receive government support (provides up to 570 funded hours of childcare per year)
- Funded childcare for children whose parents are eligible for the Working Parent entitlement (provides up to 1,140 funded hours of childcare per year)

Funded childcare for two-year-olds whose parents receive government support

2.6 For families accessing benefits, a two-year-old can receive free childcare if the family is also in receipt of:

- Income Support;

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA);
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA);
- Universal Credit, and your household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, not including benefit payments;
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit;
- Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit (or both), and your household income is £16,190 a year or less before tax;
- The Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit).

2.7 Two-year-olds are also eligible if they:

- are looked after by a local authority;
- have an education, health and care plan (EHCP);
- get Disability Living Allowance;
- have left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order or a child arrangements order.

The Working Parent entitlement

2.8 For working families with two-year-olds who earn the national minimum wage for 16 hours a week on average will be eligible to access up to 15 hours of free early education if one parent (and partner, where appropriate) are:

- in work or starting a new job;
- on sick leave or annual leave;
- on shared parental, maternity, paternity or adoption leave.

2.9 If a parent is not currently working, they may still be eligible if their partner is working, and they are on carer's leave or get any of the following:

- Incapacity Benefit;
- Severe Disablement Allowance;
- Carer's Allowance;
- Limited Capability for Work Benefit;
- Contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance.

2.10 A small number of two-year-olds may be eligible for both of these funding schemes. If they are, they cannot receive more than 570 hours for each, making a total of 1,140 funded hours per year.

Tax Free Childcare

2.11 Tax free childcare is a UK wide government scheme to help working parents with the cost of childcare. For every £8 paid in, the government will add an extra £2, up to the total of £2000 per child. Parents and carers can also get tax free childcare at the same time as 30 hours free childcare.

Childminders

2.12 Ofsted-registered childminders providing early years childcare and operating in domestic settings. This type of provision is not covered in the DfE's annual Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers (SCEYP).

School-based childcare providers

2.13 These are two types of school-based provider:

- a. Maintained nursery schools: purpose-built maintained schools specifically for children in their early years and with a qualified teacher present;
- b. Nursery class childcare settings: these are other maintained schools, and non-maintained schools, offering nursery provision.

Group-based providers

2.14 These are other childcare providers (such as playgroups and day nurseries) operating on non-domestic premises. The two main types of group-based providers are:

- a. Private group-based providers: These are private companies and include employer-run childcare for employees.
- b. Voluntary group-based providers: These are voluntary organisations, including community groups, charities, churches, or religious groups.

Number of childcare places

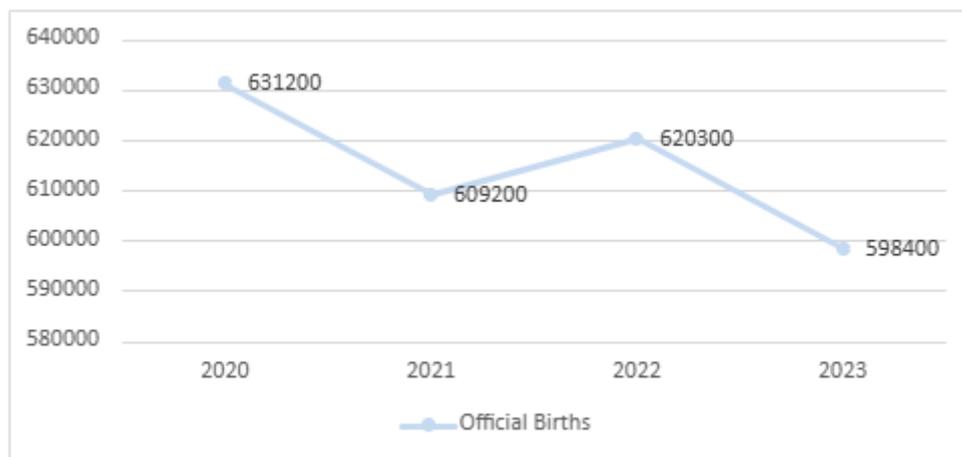
2.15

- a. Registered places: The maximum number of children that the provider is allowed to look after at any one time.
- b. Registered children: The number of children "on the provider's books".
- c. Booked places: The number of children booked to attend the provider on an average weekday.
- d. **Spare places**: A childcare provider has spare places if it is willing and able to take an additional child or children, over and above those children that are already booked.

3. National Context

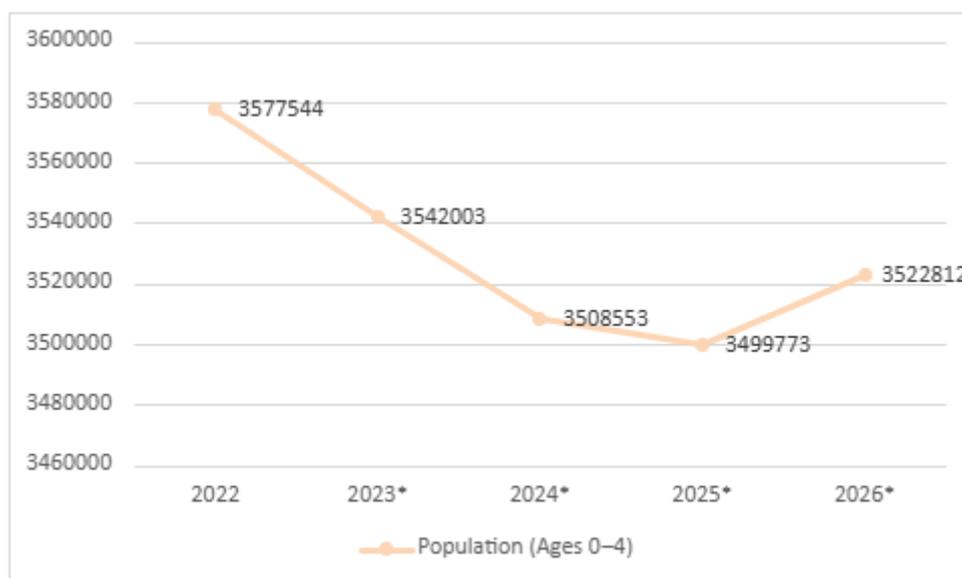
3.1 The population of England and Wales in 2023 was estimated to be 60.9 million. This is an increase of 1.0%, the largest annual numerical increase in at least 75 years. This is largely due to an overall aging population.

3.2 There was a decrease in the number of births for 2023 in England and Wales, compared with 2022. The number of births for 2023 (598,400) was the lowest since 2002.



Source: Office for National Statistics

3.3 This decline is also replicated in the 0 – 4-year-old population, however, projections do estimate that numbers will increase again from 2026.



Source: Office for National Statistics

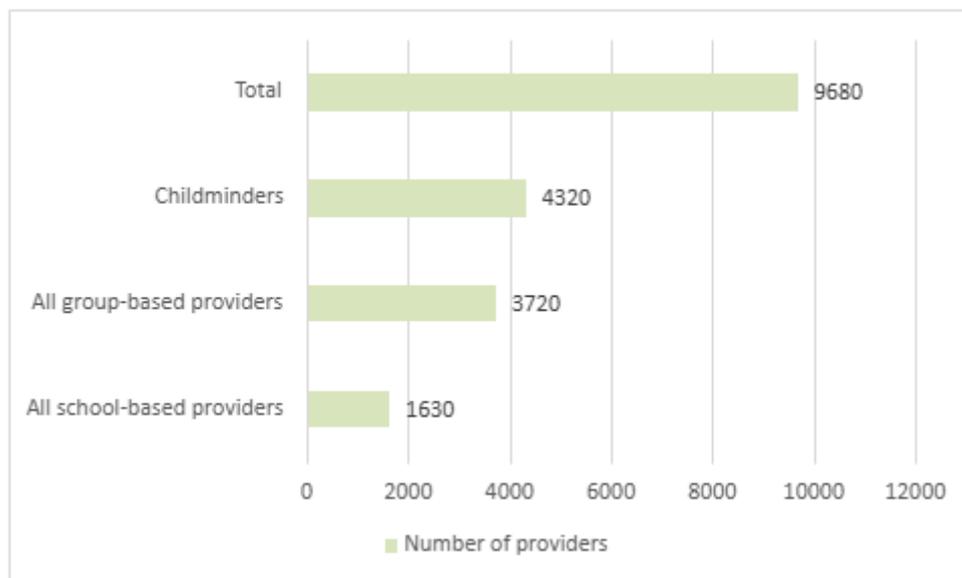
3.4 In 2024, the DfE commissioned IFF Research and London Economics to conduct the annual Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers (SCEYP). Three different types of childcare provider are covered by the survey: Childminders, School-based childcare providers and Group-based providers.

3.5 The survey estimated there to be 54,700 Early Years providers in total, made up of: 21,200 group-based providers, 9,700 school-based providers and 23,800 childminders. The total number of providers fell by 3 per cent between 2023 and 2024, reflecting a 7 per cent fall in the number of childminders. The number of school-based providers and group-based providers remained stable.

3.6 The survey estimated there to be 1,602,500 registered places, made up of: 1,100,100 group-based provider places, 359,200 school-based provider places and 143,200 childminder

places. The total number of registered places increased by 3 per cent between 2023 and 2024. A 3 per cent increase in registered school-based provider places and 5 per cent increase in registered group-based provider places, more than offsetting a 13 per cent fall in registered childminder places.

3.7 Despite continuing to fall each year, childminders make up the biggest share of provider numbers in all regions in 2024, with the exception of the West Midlands. However, there is a positive relationship between how deprived an area is and the proportion of providers that are school-based providers. In 2024, 28% of providers in the most deprived areas are school-based providers, double the 14% of providers that are school-based providers in the less and least deprived areas.



Source: DfE Childcare and early years provider survey 2024

3.8 Childminders (89%) and private group-based providers (81%) are much more likely to be open during both term-time and holidays than school-based providers (6%) and voluntary group-based providers (27%). As well as being open for more weeks in the year, on average, private group-based providers and childminders are open for more hours in the day. Both are open for an average of 10 hours per day compared with 8 hours per day for voluntary group-based providers and 7 hours per day for school-based providers. Most private group-based providers open between 7.30am and 8.30am and most close between 6.00pm and 7.00pm. Most school-based providers open later (between 8.30am and 9.00 am) and most close earlier (between 3.00pm and 4.00pm) than private group-based providers and childminders.

3.9 School-based providers have an average of 39 registered places. This number is much higher for maintained nursery schools (103 places) than it is for nursery class childcare settings (37 places). Maintained nursery schools, however, only make up a small proportion of the overall number of school-based childcare providers. Group-based providers have a mean average of 53 registered places. This number is higher for private group-based providers (60 places) than it is for voluntary group-based providers (37 places). Childminders have the fewest registered places, with a mean average of 7 registered places each.

3.10 School-based providers tend to look after older children than other types of childcare providers. The vast majority (88%) of children registered with school-based providers are aged 3 and 4, with only 1% aged under 2. A higher proportion of children registered with group-based providers (20%) are aged under 2. However, children aged 3 and 4 still make up over half (52%)

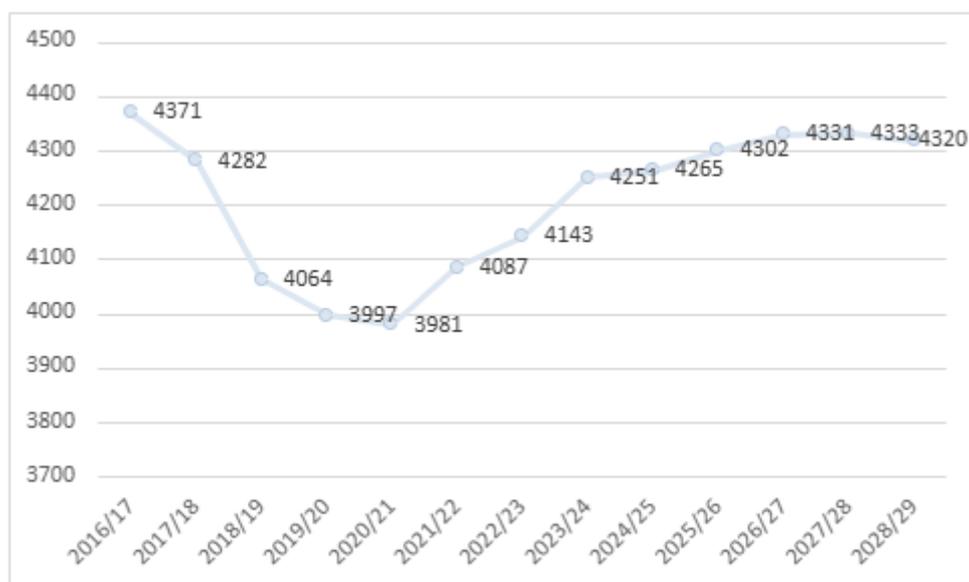
of registered children at group-based providers. There is a more even age split of children at childminders - 29% are aged under 2, 34% are aged 2 and 38% are aged 3 and 4.

3.11 The proportion of providers looking after at least one child with SEND has increased since 2018. Proportions were the same, however, in 2024 as in 2023 - 85% of school-based providers, 88% of group-based providers and 25% of childminders looked after at least one child with SEND. On average, many more children with SEND attend school-based and group-based providers than attend a childminder.

4. Hillingdon Context

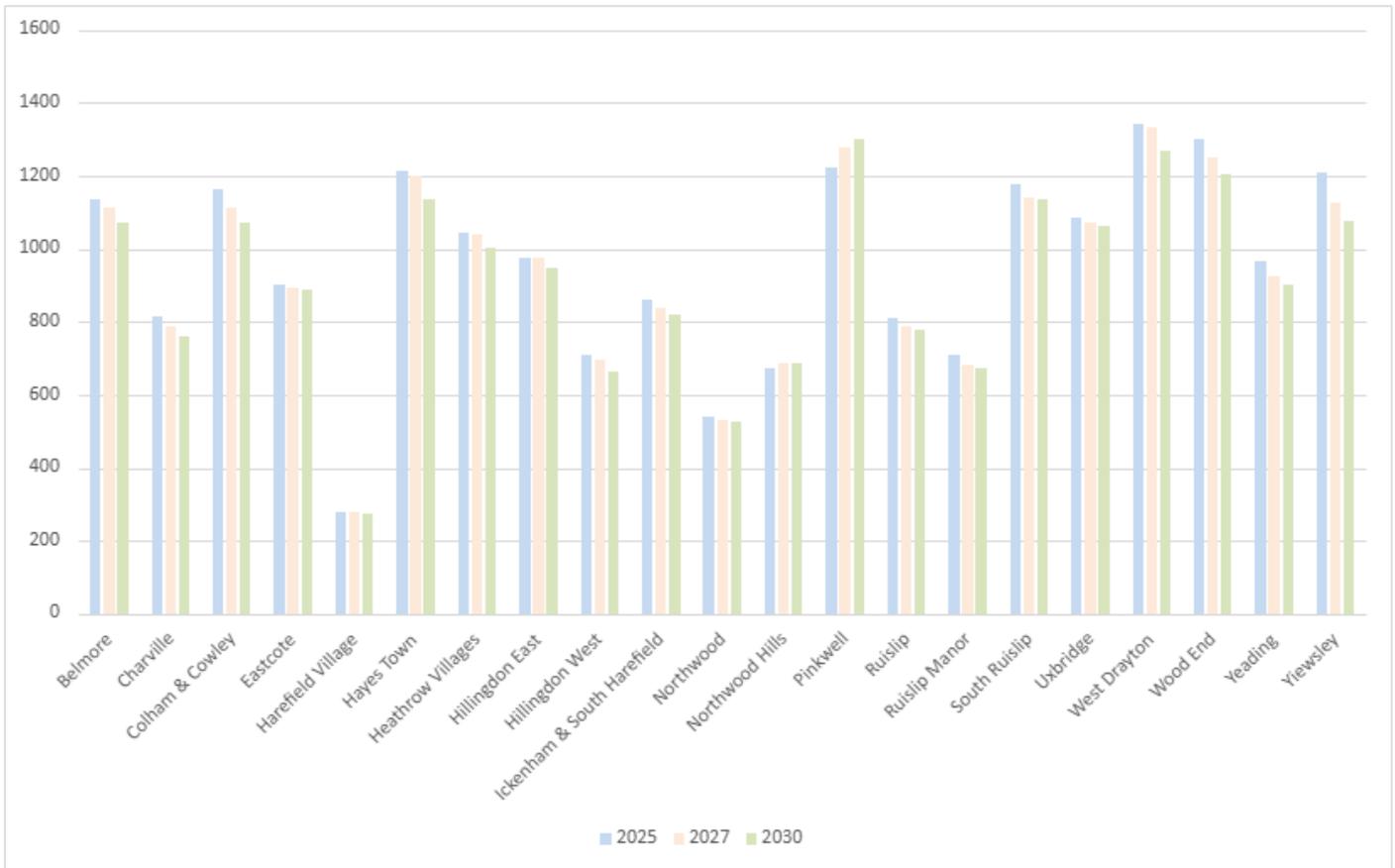
4.1 The London Borough of Hillingdon has a unique location, bordering three neighbouring London Local Authorities (Ealing, Harrow, and Hounslow) as well as three Authorities outside of London (Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, and Surrey). According to the Census 2021, the current population is 305,900 of which 19,882 (6.5%) are aged 0 to 4 years, 20,469 (6.7%) are aged 5-9 years, 23,681 (7.7%) are aged 10-15 years and 14,871 (4.9%) are aged 16-19; in total, 25.8% of the Borough population is aged 0-19.

4.2 Unlike much of London, Hillingdon has seen an increase in birth rates since a low around 2019. This could be attributable to the overall increase in Hillingdon's population in the last decade; however, this is projected to plateau from 2025 onwards. Please note, the figure for 2025 and beyond are projections.



Source: ONS & GLA Demographic Projections August 2025

4.3 This plateau is also reflected in the 0–4 population across Hillingdon's wards.



Source: GLA London's Population Projections August 2025

4.4 This data shows that the only ward projected to have an increase in cohort size by 2030 is Pinkwell, with all others either decreasing or maintaining in size. A decline in the Early Years population may impact on the demand for childcare across the borough. The level of impact is likely to vary depending on the area of Hillingdon.

5. Childcare Provision in Hillingdon

5.1 Delivery of early learning and childcare provision in Hillingdon is through a mixed market of private and voluntary providers, including childminders, day nurseries and pre-schools, and through schools, including academies. Hillingdon has:

- 181 registered childminders
- 58 school-based nurseries
- 97 group Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) settings e.g. day nurseries, nurseries in independent schools and playgroups
- 1 local authority-maintained nursery school

5.2 There are 6,594 places in group PVI settings and 1,044 childminder places.

5.3 Of the 181 registered childminders, most are registered to care for children from six weeks to eight years. 135 childminders have been approved to deliver funded hours for under twos, 134 childminders have been approved to provide funded hours for two-year-olds, and 140 childminders have been approved to provide funded hours for three- and four-year-olds.

5.4 There has been an increase over recent years in the number of school-based early years provision offering the extended entitlements for 3- and 4-year-olds. There are 59 schools registered to deliver early years places (100% of all primary and infant schools). 86% are delivering extended (up to 30 hours) of funded early education and childcare.

5.5 Below is a table showing the number of Early Years settings rated by Ofsted as Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement or Inadequate.

	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Not Yet Inspected	Total
Childminder	17	118	6	0	24	165
Childcare on non-domestic premises (including Day Nurseries, Independent Schools and Playgroups)	7	69	0	1	46	123
Total	24	187	6	1	70	288

Source: Ofsted 'Childcare providers and inspections management information, June 2025

97% of the inspected Early Years provision in Hillingdon is classed as Good or Outstanding. Under 3% of providers have an Ofsted judgement of 'Requires Improvement', with fewer than 1% providers judged as 'Inadequate'; 24% of provision is yet to be inspected.

5.6 Inspection judgements for schools who have early years provision:

	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	No recent overall Ofsted inspection outcome	Total
Academy School	2	16	0	0		

Maintained School	5	31	2	0		
Total						

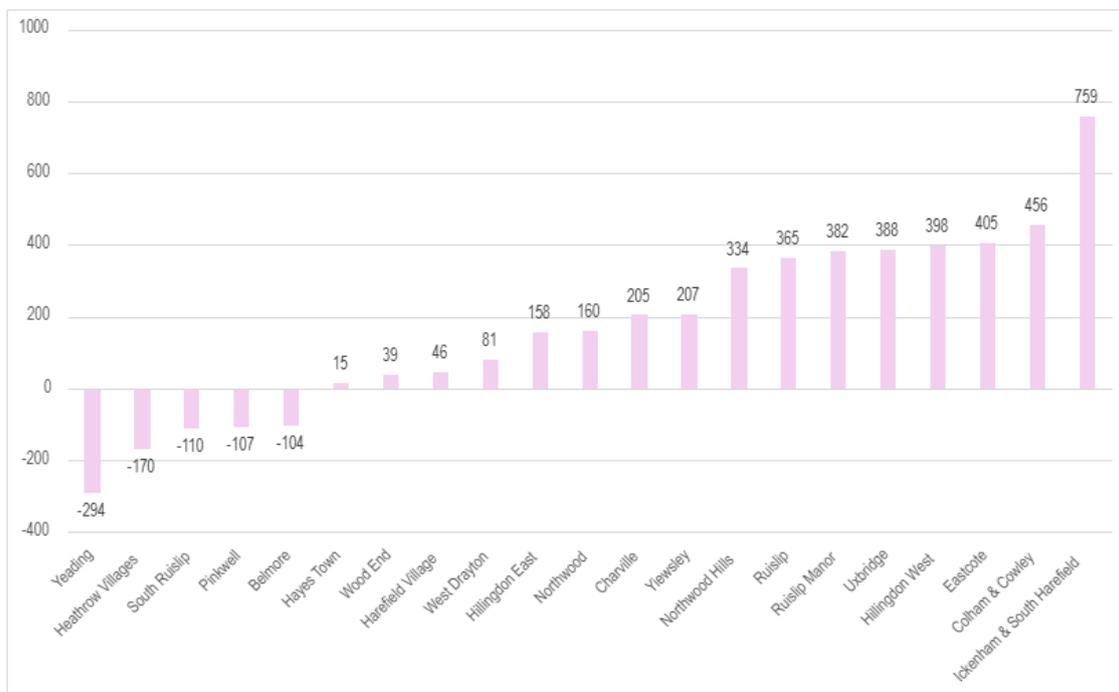
Source: Ofsted 'Childcare providers and inspections management information, June 2025

*Please note: these are overall inspection grades for schools but in the last few years, some schools have not received an overall inspection grade.

6. Sufficiency Assessments

Places for 3- and 4-year-olds

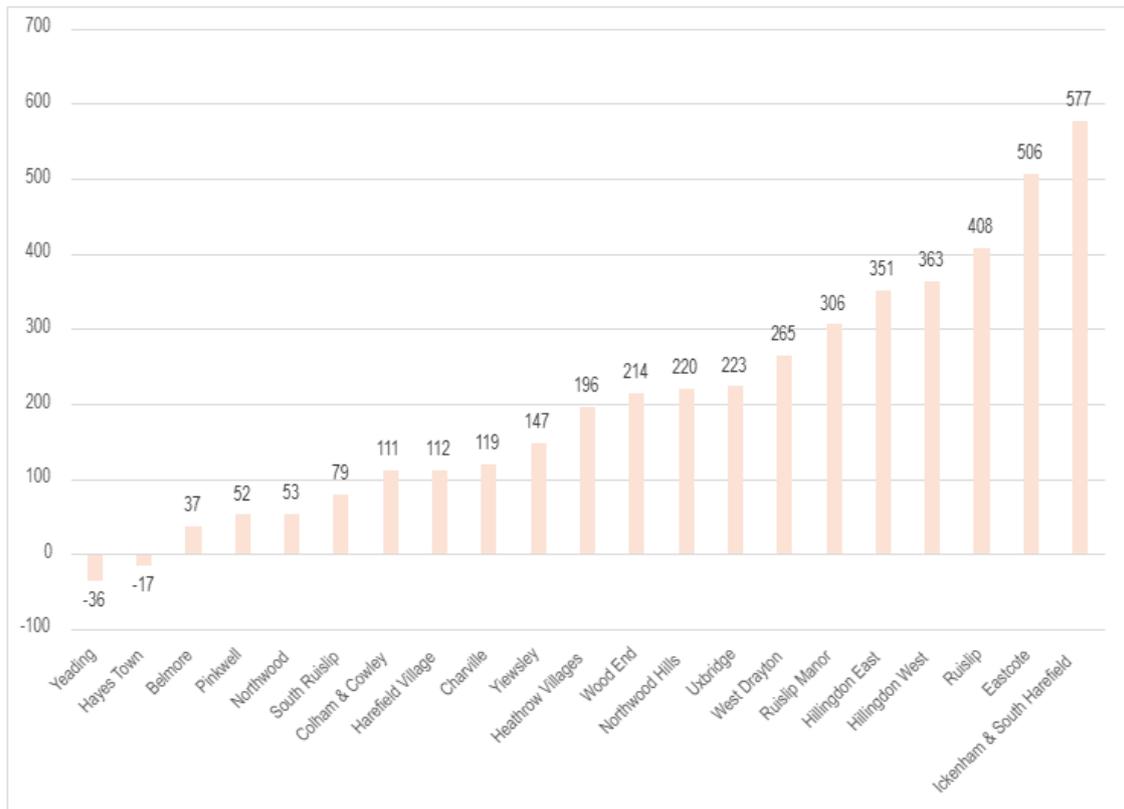
6.1 The data below shows the supply of funded childcare places for 3- and 4-year-olds by ward in Hillingdon. This demonstrates there will be five areas in the borough where the demand for childcare could outweigh supply.



6.3 Heathrow Villages, South Ruislip, Pinkwell, Belmore and Yeading wards are projected to have the largest potential deficits; the Early Years and Education Improvement teams will be working with settings in these areas to increase capacity as a priority. Hayes Town is also very close to capacity and will therefore be treated as an area for attention.

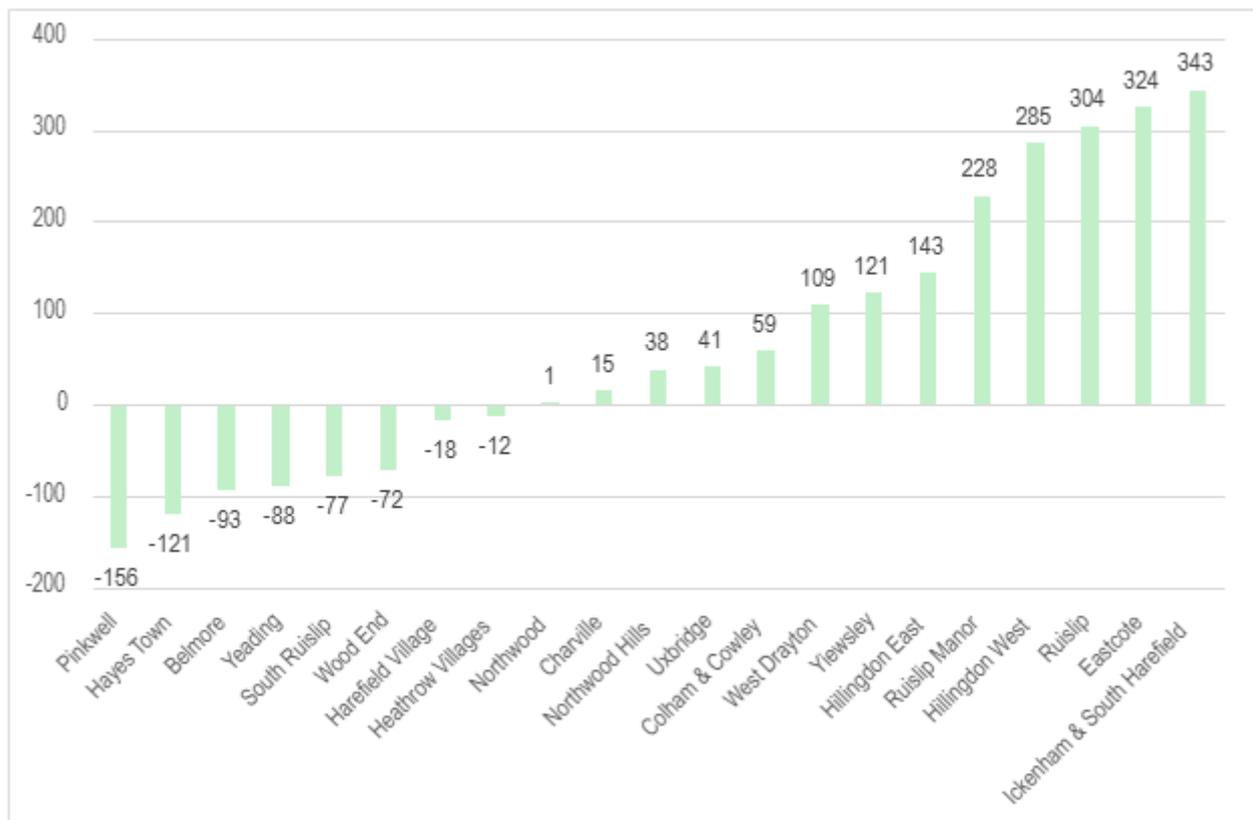
Places for 2-year-olds

6.4 The data below shows the supply of funded childcare places for 2-year-olds by ward in Hillingdon based on those who accessed a place in Summer term 2025. This demonstrates there will be two areas in the borough where the demand for childcare could outweigh supply.



Source: take up of funded childcare for two-year-olds compared to data from the DfE about validated eligibility codes for 30 hours funded childcare

6.5 However, in order to accurately assess potential demand, it is necessary to also consider those children who did not access a place in Summer term 2025 but may choose to in the next academic year. The data below therefore shows the potential demand for childcare places for 2-year-olds by ward.



Source: validated eligibility codes (from DfE data) compared to estimated capacity in childcare provision

6.6 Therefore, if all children who are eligible apply for a place, there would be eight wards with a deficit in capacity, and a further two who would be close to capacity. The Early Years and Education Improvement teams will be working with settings in these areas to increase capacity as a priority.

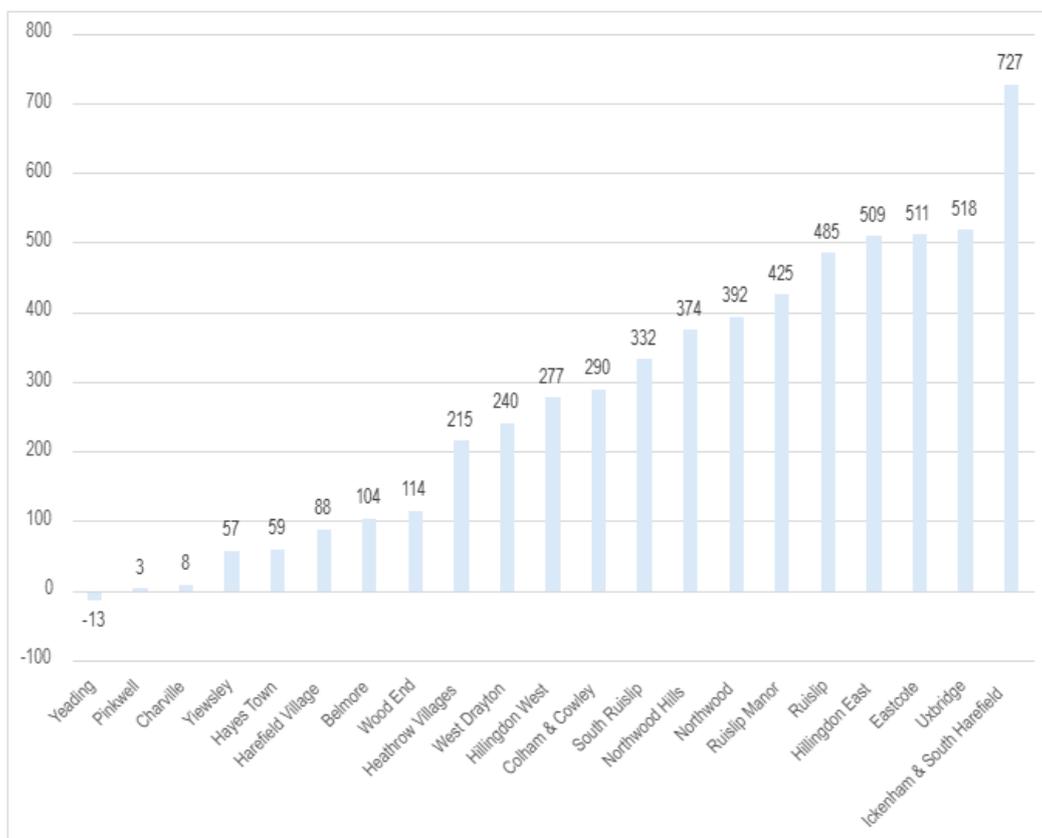
Places for under twos

6.7 Funded childcare for children under the age of two is available for parents who are eligible for the Working Parent entitlement. Many providers, particularly childminders and day nurseries, offer places for children from aged 6 weeks to five years in Hillingdon.

6.8 From April 2024, eligible parents/carers of two-year-olds were able to obtain codes from the DfE to allow them to access 15 hours of funded childcare and from September 2024, the age range for the entitlement was lowered to the term after an eligible child was nine months old.

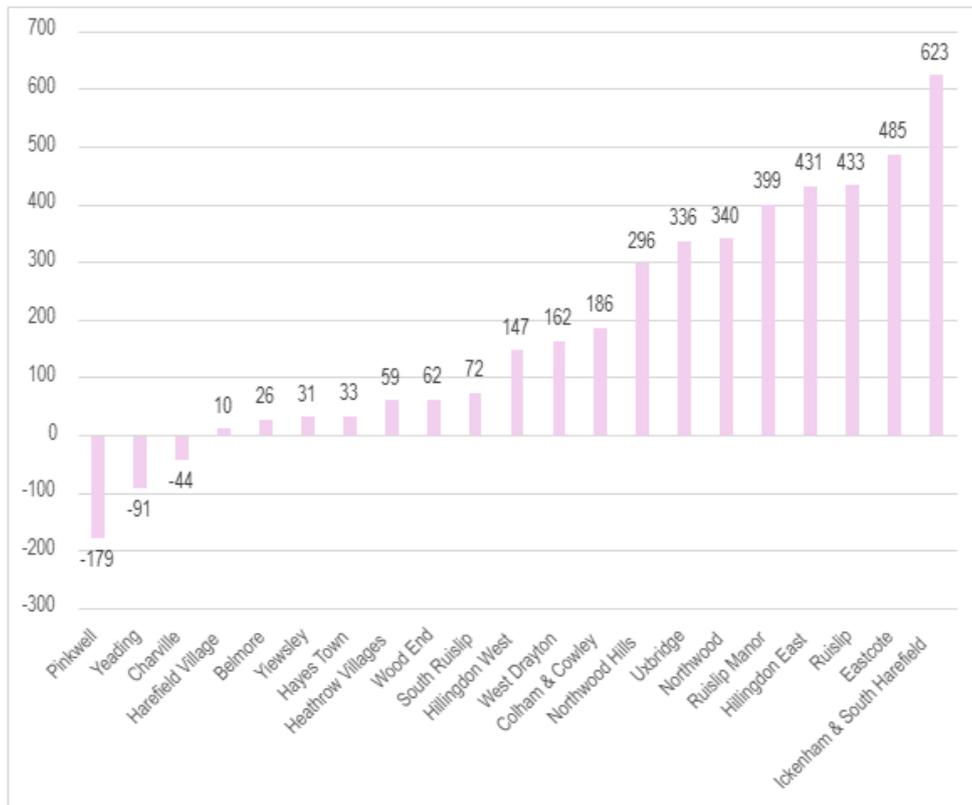
From September 2025, parents who are eligible for funded childcare through the Working Parent entitlement can receive up to 30 hours of funded childcare a week (if attending term time only).

6.9 The data below shows the supply of funded childcare places for under twos by ward in Hillingdon based on those who accessed a place in Summer term 2025. This demonstrates there will be one area in the borough where the demand for childcare could outweigh supply.



Source: take up of funded childcare for under twos compared to data from the DfE about validated eligibility codes for 30 hours funded childcare

6.10 However, in order to accurately assess potential demand, it is necessary to also consider those children who did not access a place in Summer term 2025 but may choose to in the next academic year. The data below therefore shows the potential demand for childcare places for under twos by ward.

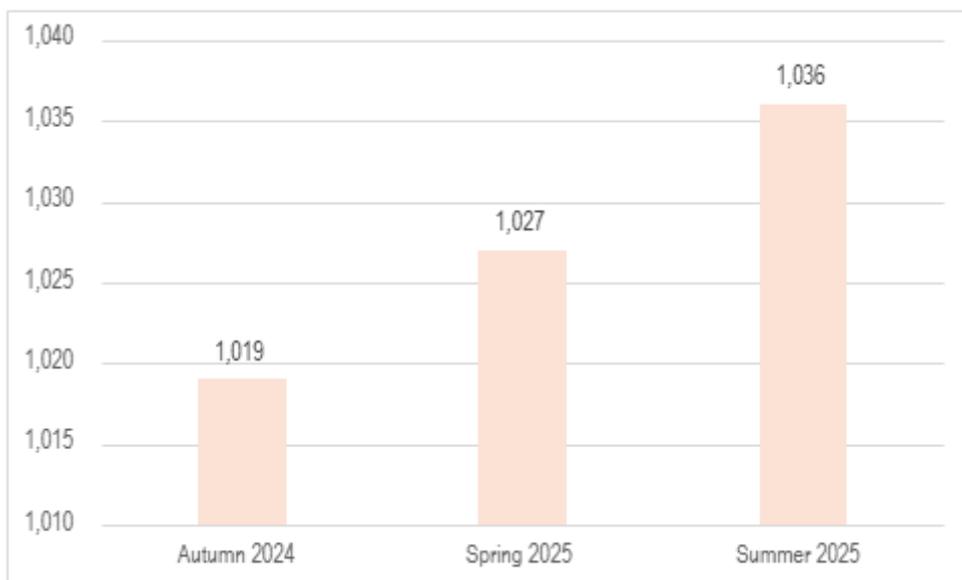


Source: validated eligibility codes (from DfE data) compared to estimated capacity in childcare provision

6.11 Therefore, if all children who are eligible apply for a place, there would be three wards with a deficit in capacity, and a further two who would be close to capacity. The Early Years and Education Improvement teams will be working with settings in these areas to increase capacity as a priority.

Take up of funded early education in 2024/25

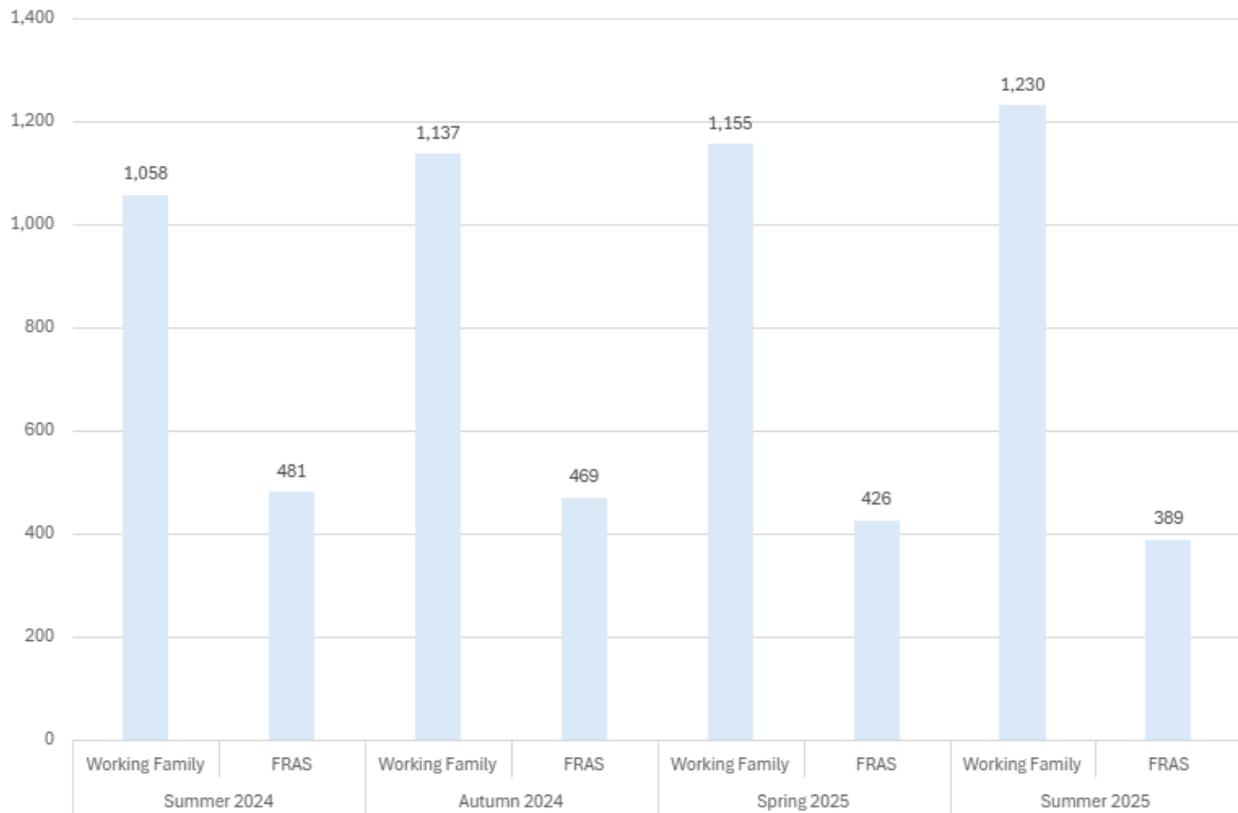
6.12 The chart below shows the number of children under two who took up funded places each term since Autumn 2024.



Source: approved funding claims from childcare providers

6.13 In Autumn 2024, children aged under two years old could receive up to 15 hours of funded childcare a week, if their parents qualified for the Working Parent entitlement. The chart above shows that the take up of these places has been quite consistent since then, with a slight increase across the terms. With the increase of the entitlement hours to 30 hours a week from September 2025, this may lead to a more significant increase in the take up of these funded childcare hours.

6.14 For funded two-year-olds, these places can be broken down by entitlement type, as shown below



Source: approved funding claims from childcare providers and schools

The chart above shows the take up of the Working Parent entitlement is increasing, as the take up of the entitlement for families receiving additional support from government (FRAS) is declining. Children through the FRAS scheme are more likely to be from families with a lower household income.

6.15 In terms of the early year's entitlement for two-year-olds, the following two charts show more detail regarding each of the two types of entitlement – funded childcare for children whose parents receive government support and children qualifying for the working parent entitlement.

Two-year-olds whose parents receive government support:



Source: approved funding claims from childcare providers and schools, compared to the list of potentially eligible families (DWP data from DfE)

6.16 The chart above shows that the number of children entitled to the FRAS entitlement, where most children are eligible because of low household income, has been falling for several years. However, the proportion of children taking up a place has only fallen consistently since the introduction of the entitlement of working parents to access first 15 hours a week (since April 2024).

Two-year-olds whose parents qualify for the working parent entitlement:



Source: approved funding claims from childcare providers and schools

6.17 The chart above shows that take up of the Working Parent entitlement has increased each term since its introduction for two-year-olds in April 2024.

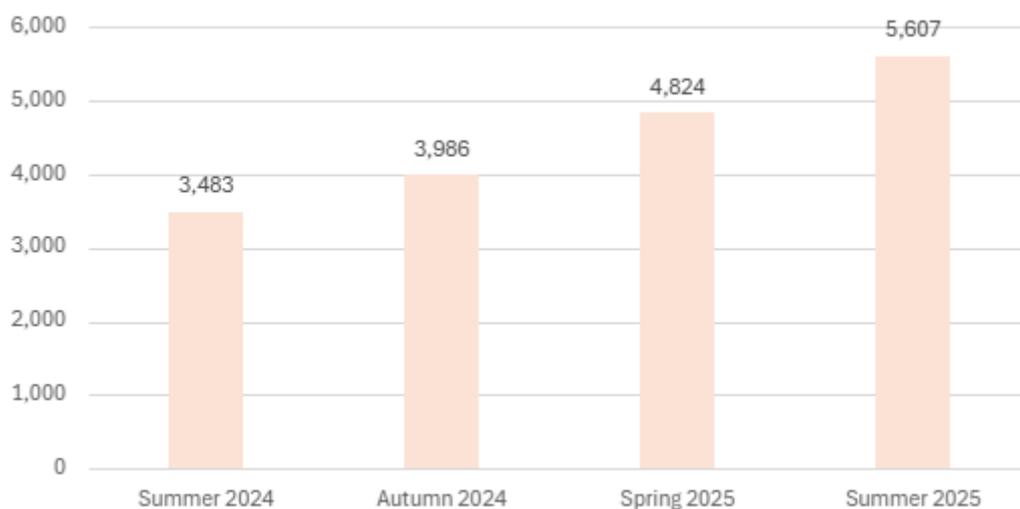
6.18 The chart below shows the number of three- and four-year-olds who took up the universal entitlement to 15 hours a week in the last year, compared to the London and England average.



Source: [Funded early education and childcare, Reporting year 2025 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

6.19 Historically, take up of the Universal entitlement to 15 hours of funded childcare by three and four-year-olds in Hillingdon has been above the average for London in most years. The proportion of three and four-year-olds taking up funded childcare in Hillingdon has decreased since 2018 and this is a pattern that has been repeated in London as a whole and England. This may change with the introduction of up to 30 hours funded childcare.

6.20 The chart below reflects the number of children taking both the 15-hour Universal entitlement to funded childcare and the 30 hour Working Parent entitlement. The number of funded children is increasing from one term to the next because of the expansion in the number of children eligible for the 30-hour entitlement.



Source: approved funding claims from childcare providers and schools

7. Vulnerable Children

7.1 Early years providers have reported to the local authority that they are seeing an increase in children presenting with additional needs.

7.2 Under Section 23 of the Children and Families Act 2014, health services have a duty to notify the appropriate local authority, where they anticipate that a child under school age has or is likely to have a SEND when they start school. This is called an Early Help notification.

7.3 From September 2024 to July 2025, the Early Years team received 180 (Section 23) Early Help notifications for under 5-year-olds.

7.4 All providers are offered additional funding to support the most vulnerable children in their provision. The table below shows how many providers access supplementary funding for children.

	No. of providers accessing in Summer 2025
Early Years Inclusion Funding	87
Disability Access Fund for Children on Disability Living Allowance	18
Early Years Pupil Premium	122
Families in Need funding (free childcare hours for vulnerable children)	14

Source: approved funding claims from childcare providers and schools

7.5 Early Years Inclusion Funding: This fund is available for children identified as having emerging, targeted and higher-level needs. An application can be submitted for a 2-, 3- or 4-year-old child who is accessing a funded place and is living in Hillingdon. The table below shows the cumulative numbers of children accessing this funding across the year.

	Autumn 2024	Spring 2025	Summer 2025
Number of children accessing EYI funding	212	123	48

7.6 Early Years Disability Access Fund (DAF): Early Years Providers in Hillingdon are eligible to receive the DAF which is £938 annually, per child, where a child is taking up a place and is in receipt of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA). DAF is allocated to local authorities based on the numbers of children claiming DLA, although not all of those children are accessing a childcare place. The table below shows the number of children accessing the DAF by ward in the last academic year.

	Autumn 2024	Spring 2025	Summer 2025	Total
Belmore	0	0	2	2
Charville	0	1	1	2
Colham and Cowley	1	4	4	9
Eastcote	1	1	0	2
Harefield Village	0	0	0	0
Hayes Town	1	1	2	4
Heathrow Villages	0	1	0	1
Hillingdon East	0	1	1	2
Hillingdon West	1	2	1	4
Ickenham and South Harefield	0	0	1	1
Northwood	0	0	0	0
Northwood Hills	0	0	0	0

Pinkwell	2	2	3	7
Ruislip	2	3	2	7
Ruislip Manor	0	0	1	1
South Ruislip	0	1	0	1
Uxbridge	0	1	1	2
West Drayton	2	2	1	5
Wood End	0	3	1	4
Yeading	0	3	1	4
Yiewsley	0	0	0	0

Source: approved funding claims from childcare providers and schools

7.8 Families in Need funding: children are referred for this discretionary non-statutory funding by a relevant professional, working with the family. They may or may not be known to Children’s Social Care. The table below shows the total number of children accessing Families in Need Funding in the last academic year. This data has not been captured on a ward basis in 2024/25 but will be done so moving forward.

	Children in Need (CIN)			Child Protection Plan (CP)		
	Autumn 2024	Spring 2025	Summer 2025	Autumn 2024	Spring 2025	Summer 2025
Number of children	3	4	1	3	2	2

Source: approved funding claims from childcare providers and schools for Families in Need Funding

7.9 Early Years Pupil Premium: 3- and 4-year-old children are eligible who meet the economic criteria for free school meals, and/or are Looked After by the local authority are eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP). From April 2025, eligible children from the term after they are nine months old could also qualify for EYPP. The table below shows the number of children accessing the EYPP by ward in the last academic year.

	Autumn 2024	Spring 2025	Summer 2025
Belmore	3	7	36
Charville	6	10	23
Colham and Cowley	13	14	49
Eastcote	4	5	20
Harefield Village	0	0	2
Hayes Town	6	10	31
Heathrow Villages	7	13	36
Hillingdon East	11	8	35
Hillingdon West	4	8	22
Ickenham and South Harefield	2	4	10
Northwood	0	0	4
Northwood Hills	2	2	24
Pinkwell	9	14	41
Ruislip	4	2	15
Ruislip Manor	1	4	9
South Ruislip	7	11	40
Uxbridge	5	12	38
West Drayton	14	14	54
Wood End	15	23	53
Yeading	8	15	56
Yiewsley	15	17	55

Total number of children who were eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium	199	302	653
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Source: approved funding claims from childcare providers and schools

7.10 The number of children receiving Early Years Pupil Premium has increased both because of the increase in the number of children who are entitled to the early years entitlement and the roll out of Early Years Pupil Premium to children from the term after they are nine months old from April 2025.

8. Funding

8.1 Funding for childcare places is provided from the Early Years block of the Dedicated Schools Grant which uses a national Early Years Funding Formula to allocate funds to top tier local authorities. From April 2025, all local authorities can retain up to 4% of the Early Years Block to pay for administration, quality assurance and to create an Inclusion Fund and Deprivation Fund (the retention limit in 2024/25 was 5%). In 2024/25, 5% of the Early Years block was retained. In 2025/26, the retention rate is 4%.

8.2 The hourly rates are based on the National Early Years Funding Formula and local consultation. The following hourly rates are in place:

	2024/25	2025/26
Early Years Base Rate		
Eligible 9 month + PVI settings	£12.12	£12.54
Eligible 2-year-olds School & PVI settings (working parents entitlement)	£8.15	£8.44
Eligible 2-year-olds School & PVI settings (families receiving additional support entitlement)	£8.15	£9.94
Eligible 3- and 4-year-olds in PVI settings	£5.65	£5.85
Funding Supplements		
Early Years Pupil Premium	68p per hour	£1 per hour
Early Years Deprivation Fund	Varies per provider – calculated using the relative deprivation of postcodes of funded children	Varies per provider – calculated using the relative deprivation of postcodes of funded children
Early Years Inclusion Funding	£671, 400	£757, 000
Disability Access Fund	£910	£938

8.3 Tax Free Childcare is for families with children under 12. A Tax-Free Childcare account can be worth up to £2,000 per year per child towards registered childcare, such as before and after school clubs, holiday clubs, childminders, nurseries, and pre-schools. This increases to £4,000 per year for children with SEND and goes up to the age of 17.

8.4 If parents are eligible, they set up an online childcare account for their child. For every £8 they pay into this account, the government will pay in £2 to use to pay the childcare provider. To be eligible both parents must be in employment, or one parent in a single-parent household, and be earning at least the National Minimum Wage for 16 hours per week on average and under £100,000 per year. This includes being self-employed, on maternity or parental leave, on sick leave or annual leave.

8.5 Take up of this offer has increased in Hillingdon has increased over the last few years.

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Annual number of children for whom a Tax-Free Childcare account is used	1,845	2,535	3,175	3,560	3,965

Source: Tax-Free Childcare Statistics, June 2025 - GOV.UK

9. Expansion of early years provision

9.1 The DfE has allocated £289 million to expand Early Years entitlements. Local authorities are expected to coordinate provision, distribute funding, and ensure sufficiency in their areas for this.

9.2 The expansion of early years entitlements in England is part of a phased rollout announced in the 2023 Spring Budget, aiming to support working families with younger children. In summary:

- From April 2024: Eligible working parents of 2-year-olds gained access to 15 hours of free childcare per week (over 38 weeks a year).
- From September 2024: This was extended to eligible working parents of children aged 9 months and older.
- From September 2025: The entitlement will increase to 30 hours of free early education and care per week (over 38 weeks a year) for eligible working parents of children aged 9 months and older.

9.3 The early years expansion enables parents, especially those on Universal Credit, to work more hours or return to employment. It helps reduce the employment gap for parents, by aligning childcare availability with standard working hours. Without sufficient early childcare places, parents may be forced to reduce hours or leave work, undermining national employment goals and increasing reliance on benefits.

9.5 The Department for Education (DfE) has provided two capital funding streams to support the implementation of this programme. These are as follows:

- **Childcare Capital Expansion Grant** – this funding is for local authorities to support new / extended early years provision, including distribution to childcare providers. This covers:
 - a. Building new early years childcare spaces
 - b. Expanding or refurbishing existing settings
 - c. Purchasing large-scale equipment or facilities improvement.
- **School-based nurseries funding** – this is funding that schools apply for directly to the DfE. There has been one round of funding so far. However, there will be a second round of funding from September to December 2025 and a third round of funding after that. In these funding rounds, it is expected that local authorities will have a bigger role.

9.6 For the Childcare Capital Expansion Grant, local authorities have a central role in delivering this programme, and the expectations placed on them are clearly outlined in the DfE's official guidance. A key strand of this is funding management; local authorities are expected to:

- Administer and monitor the use of DfE grant funding, ensuring it is used effectively and in line with programme objectives.
- Submit financial returns and impact reports to the DfE, including an end-of-year statement of grant usage.

9.7 Hillingdon has received £511,000 in Capital funding (£400,000 of which is to support the expansion of 30-hours early years entitlement places).

9.8 As outlined above, the national programme for early years expansion began in April 2024 to give working parents access to 15 hours of childcare for 2-year-olds, and 9-month-olds from

September 2024. Hillingdon had sufficient places to support this growth across existing providers and schools without the need for expansion.

9.9 As the hours will increase to 30 hours for working parents of two-year-olds and 9-month-olds from September 2025, the local authority has been working with providers who are willing and able to expand to meet this increase.

10. Wraparound childcare

10.1 Of the Childcare Capital Expansion Grant referred to as part of this process, providers were invited to make an Expression of Interest (EOI) if they wished to extend their provision as part of the National Wraparound Childcare Programme.

10.2 To date 26 EOIs have been received. Each EOI was considered against the guidance set out by the DfE; if the EOI met the DfE requirements and demonstrated sustainability, funding was allocated. The amount of funding awarded was based on the number of children who would be able to access each place in the expanded provision.

10.3 To date 13 EOIs have been approved. Those EOI which were unsuccessful, all received feedback regarding their submissions which could be considered should they wish to resubmit.

10.4 As further EOIs are received, these will be considered against the same criteria and funding allocated accordingly. The funding will be allocated via direct award as a one-off payment to the various organisations once their EOI has been approved. The local authority will also be working with providers in wards where data indicates there may be insufficient hours for those eligible for childcare to try to ensure any insufficiency can be adequately met. Unsuccessful EOIs will also be reviewed to see if there is further support available to meet the success criteria.

10.5 With the move of the Early Years service to Children's Services, sitting within the Education and SEND Directorate, this enables the team to work closely with the Education Improvement service to identify schools and settings that would be able to support this opportunity, through making use of existing space for example. Schools with lower school rolls could benefit from this opportunity with wrap around, as an extended offer is likely to attract more working families. It is hoped this will enable the Early Years service to promote the scheme more and ensure there is increased take up moving forwards.

11. Information and support for parents and families

11.1 The Families Information Service (FIS) fulfils the statutory duty laid out in Section 12 of the Childcare Act 2006 to offer a service providing information, advice and assistance about childcare and other activities to benefit parents, children and young people up to the age of 20, including activities to do at home and in the community, guidance on parenting challenges, child development, healthy lifestyles, volunteering, returning to work.

11.2 The FIS receives enquiries via a telephone helpline and email service, mainly from parents, childcare providers or schools. The majority of these enquiries are either about early years entitlements funding or from parents looking for childcare.

11.3 The FIS also carries out a programme of outreach work in the local community, to reach parents who may need assistance, particularly with childcare and are less likely to contact the council directly. In 2024-25, the FIS carried out 119 outreach visits, engaging with 1,446 families.

11.4 From April 2024 to March 2025, the FIS processed 17,901 funding claims – this comprised 2,048 claims for children under two years old, 4,740 claims for two-year-olds and 11,113 claims for three- and four-year-olds. In order to process claims, the FIS has to check and validate each claim, to ensure that it is eligible for funding.

11.5 The FIS also process claims for the Disability Access Fund, Early Years Pupil Premium and Families in Need Funding.

12. Priorities moving forward

12.1 Over the forthcoming 12 months, the Early Years Service will prioritise key areas for development and implementation. These initiatives aim to strengthen our understanding of sufficiency and enhance the management of the early years market, ensuring the continued availability of high-quality childcare provision for all families.

12.2 In response to the ongoing implementation of government childcare reforms, we will maintain regular reviews of local provision. This will include the development of additional funded childcare places, supported through Capital Grant programmes.

12.3 Funding from the Childcare Capital Expansion Grant and the School-Based Nurseries Grant will be strategically allocated to areas where existing provision is insufficient, thereby enabling the expansion of funded childcare places.

12.4 We will develop a comprehensive workforce strategy to support the recruitment of additional staff into the childcare sector. This will include promoting the national recruitment campaign and encouraging providers to utilise the 'Find a Job' website to advertise vacancies.

12.5 Efforts will continue to recruit new childminders and support the sustainability of the childminding market.

12.6 All early year's providers will be offered tailored business support, including a business health check, to promote long-term sustainability and resilience.

12.7 We will continue to work in partnership with schools to implement the Wraparound Childcare scheme, supporting them to offer childcare provision from 8am to 6pm either independently or in collaboration with other providers.

12.8 A comprehensive Early Years Strategy will be developed to guide future planning, delivery, and evaluation of early years services across the borough.

Sufficiency Focus

12.9 3- and 4-year-olds: Five wards (Heathrow Villages, South Ruislip, Pinkwell, Belmore, Yeading) are projected to have deficits in funded places.

12.10 2-year-olds: Two wards (Yeading and Hayes Town) currently have deficits; up to eight could face shortages if all eligible children apply.

12.11 Under 2s: One ward (Yeading) currently has a deficit; up to three could face shortages with full take-up.

12.12 Children in FRAS: The demand for funded childcare places among FRAS often exceeds available supply in certain wards. Additionally, children from FRAS backgrounds are more likely to face barriers such as lower household income, which can affect their ability to access places even when available. The sufficiency issue is most acute in wards where the number of eligible children is high, but provider capacity is limited, leading to projected deficits if all eligible families apply for places. Addressing this requires targeted expansion of provision and ongoing monitoring to ensure equitable access for vulnerable children.