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of Hounslow**

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Childcare Sufficiency Annual Report 2023/24

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Introduction

Sections 6 and 11 of the Childcare Act 2006 requires local authorities to assess the local childcare market and work in partnership with childcare providers to influence the marketplace, in as far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure that there is sufficient childcare to enable parents to work, study or seek employment.

Sufficient, high-quality childcare is a vital component of the local economy and can support regeneration and employment as well as contributing to the reduction of child poverty. However, any assessment of childcare sufficiency can only represent a snapshot in time, as the childcare market is extremely fluid. This retrospective report is an assessment of existing childcare provision in the borough, in the main at ward level.

Key findings 2023-24

Hounslow is deemed to have sufficient childcare for 0–4-year-olds, but the persistent burden of rising energy and food costs, recruitment and staffing costs, as well as minimum wage and business rate increases, is putting considerable pressure on the Early Years market and reducing sustainability.

In an Early Years & Childcare June 2024 survey, private day nursery and pre-school providers in Hounslow were asked what they saw as their main challenge to their business remaining sustainable moving forward. The responses varied, but of the eight providers who felt it was unlikely their setting could continue beyond June 2025, most cited staff recruitment as their main challenge to remaining sustainable. The Department of Education (DfE) has since confirmed that in 2024-25 all local authorities that fund Early Years entitlements for 3-and-4-year-olds are eligible to receive an Early Years Budget Grant (EYBG) to support providers with staffing costs.

The Council is dependent on private Early Years providers to meet its statutory duties to ensure that there is sufficient childcare to enable parents to work, study or seek employment.

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

In 2009 the number of childminders registered in Hounslow was over 300. By 2023 this had decreased to 148 childminders, and in July 2024 the number decreased again to 130, a 12% drop from 2023. This percentage is high compared to national figures, where childminder numbers decreased by 5% from March 2023 to March 2024. Hounslow exit surveys have shown no specific common theme was cited as to why childminders had chosen to close their provision.

Children in Hounslow have access to high quality inclusive Early Years provision. In June 2024, of Early Years provision with an Ofsted judgement, all Primary and Infant schools were judged to be good or outstanding, with 10 schools judged as outstanding; 91% of day nurseries and preschools were graded as good or outstanding, with 14% judged to be outstanding; 88% of registered childminders were graded as good or outstanding, with 7% judged to be outstanding (10% were 'no judgement', as awaiting their first inspection).

April 2024 was the first phase of the largest ever expansion in funded entitlements, when eligible working parents were able to access 15 hours of funded childcare places for 2-year-olds. Hounslow has strategies in place to monitor the impact of this new entitlement, to ensure it does not result in a reduction of available places for 2-year-olds from families receiving additional government support (previously known as disadvantaged 2-year-olds).

The DfE conducts termly surveys on the number of eligible 2-year-olds from families receiving additional support that have taken up a funded place. In January 2024, Hounslow ranked 1st out of its statistical neighbours, 4th out of the 19 outer London authorities, and 81st out of 152 local authorities nationally.

For 3- & 4-year-old 15-hour places, available to all families, Hounslow has had an average take up of 85% for many years. In Spring 2023, the take up increased to 89% and has remained stable through to Spring 2024.

The number of parents in Hounslow who have used online Tax-Free Childcare accounts to pay towards their childcare costs has increased to 2257 accounts being reported by HMRC in 2023, up from 305 when the scheme started in 2017. For every £8 a parent pays into their Childcare Account, the government adds an extra £2. Parents can get up to £2,000 per child per year towards their childcare costs, or up to £4,000 for a child with a disability.

The National Wraparound Childcare Programme has given the Local Authority an opportunity to gather data on supply and demand, which has not previously been available. The data reflects sufficiency of childcare places before and after school, concluding that in June 2024 there were insufficient places in six of the 22 Hounslow wards.

Types of Childcare Provider in London Borough of Hounslow

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

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

Day Nursery provides full day care or part-time care for children aged between six weeks and five years and is open for 10 hours a day for 50 weeks of the year.

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

Childminders provide care for children in the childminder's own home. Most childminders offer childcare for just over 10 hours a day, 5 days a week, and are open for business for 48 weeks of the year. Childminders can offer funded childcare places if a child is not accessing a funded place elsewhere, or their full entitlement elsewhere.

Childminders can provide care before and after school, including picking up and dropping children off. In the school holidays childminders can care for children whilst their parents are at work.

Wraparound Childcare is provision that operates around the conventional school day.

Before-school care, also known as breakfast clubs, provides care for school-aged children before the school day starts, providing a healthy breakfast and usually run for an hour to an hour-and-a-half, Monday to Friday term-time only.

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

Most of the Wraparound provision are based on school sites. Some offer a 'walking bus service to deliver and collect children from nearby schools. Some Day Nurseries and Childminders offer pick-up and drop-off services at schools and offer childcare before or after a school nursery class.

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

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

- Easter break – 4 hours of provision for 4 days
- Summer holidays that span 6 full calendar weeks – 4 weeks of face-to-face provision covering 16 days for 4 hours per day
- Winter break – a mixed offer of face-to-face provision, family events and food and activity resources

Maintained primary school nursery classes provide 15 hours a week free early education for 3- and 4-year-olds in their nursery classes, with most children taking up their funded entitlement as 5 mornings a week or 5 afternoons a week. Half of schools also offer the 30-hour funded early education entitlement, usually taken as 6 hours a day for 5 days a week.

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

Quality of childcare

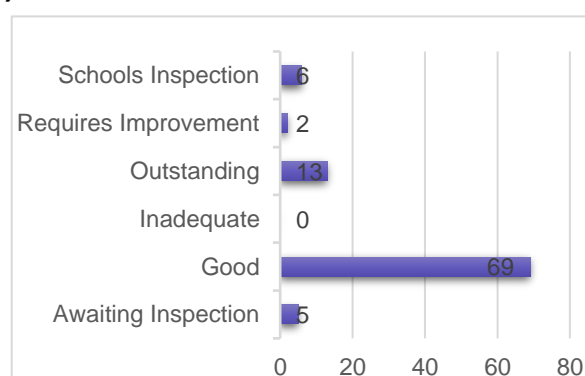
Children who experience high-quality provision are well placed to achieve higher outcomes at school and develop better social, emotional and cognitive abilities necessary for life-long learning. Poor quality provision does not support children's learning and development in the long term.

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

Private day nurseries and playgroups (0-4s)

In July 2024 there were 90 private registered day nurseries and pre-schools in the borough, five of which were waiting for their first Ofsted inspection. An inspection should take place within 30 months of a setting opening.

Of the remaining 85 registered day nurseries and pre-schools with an Ofsted judgement, 82 were graded by Ofsted as good or outstanding (91%) with 13 (14%) judged to be outstanding. Two were graded by Ofsted as requires improvement (2%).



Schools with Early Years provision

In July 2024 there were 51 schools with a nursery class in the borough, this includes two special schools.

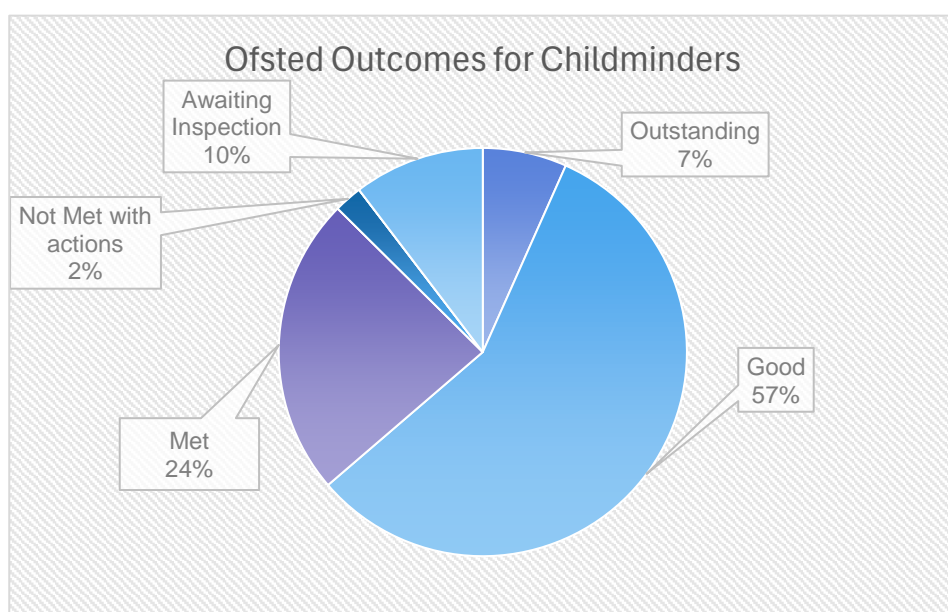
All **Primary and Infant schools** were judged to be good or outstanding, with 10 schools judged as outstanding.

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

Childminders

In July 2024 there were 135 registered childminders in the borough. 14 were waiting for their first Ofsted inspection, 32 had no early year's children on roll and 3 childminders were registered with a *childminder agency.

Of the 121 registered childminders with an Ofsted judgement, 86 were graded by Ofsted as good or outstanding (71%) with 9 (7%) judged to be outstanding.



* A childminder agency is an organisation that is able to register childminders in England and may provide a range of services to its members and parents.

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

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

Only one childminder agency currently has childminders on their register living and working in Hounslow. The current agency is graded as 'effective'.

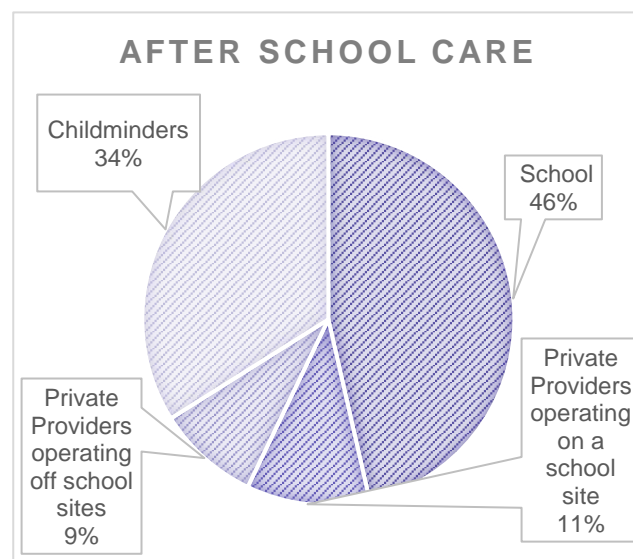
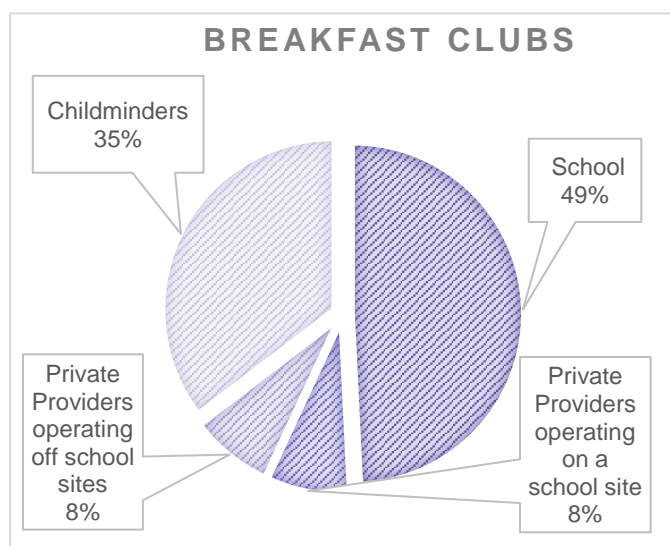
Wraparound providers (4-11s)

In July 2024 there were 65 providers of wraparound childcare:

- 32 operated and managed by schools on school sites
- 5 operated by a private provider on a school site*
- 5 operated by a private provider off school site*
- 23 childminders collecting or dropping at local schools

* Ofsted Grades available to Wraparound settings on the Childcare Register are either 'met' or 'not met' grades. As of July 2024, all 10 providers were judged 'met'.

NB. Out-of-school provision managed by a school on a school site has the same Ofsted grade as the school.



Holiday Care in July 2024

Holiday childcare (not including HAF) consisted of 26 Ofsted registered holiday childcare providers, with 4 provided by schools and 22 by private providers

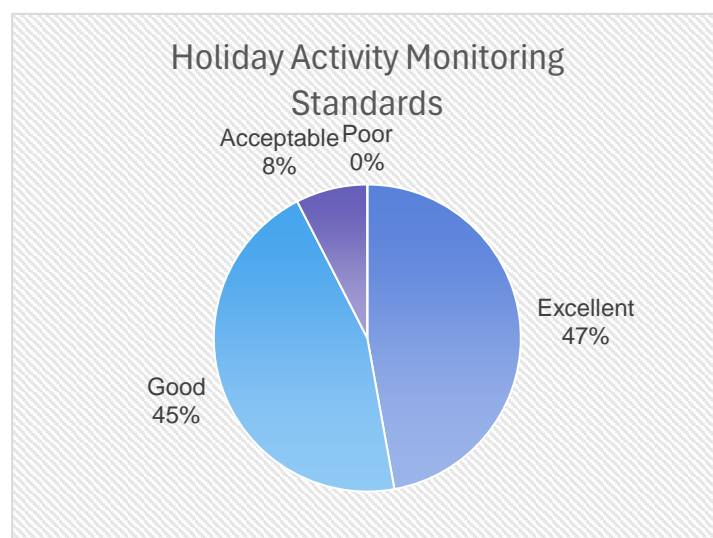
The Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)

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

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

Each provision in Hounslow is monitored by the Local Authority during their delivery period, rated against the Holiday Activities and Food Programme framework standards and reported back to the DfE after each delivery period. In July 24, of the 53 providers offering HAF provision, 24 were rated as being 'good overall' with 25 'excellent' 4, providers were rated as 'acceptable'.

NB. Ofsted grades have not been used to evidence the quality of HAF provision, as only 20 HAF providers are Ofsted registered, and the rest instead operate under an 'exemption to registration' criteria.



Demand for childcare

The greatest demand for childcare is for children under the age of 5. This is because many parents begin to return to work, training or study once statutory maternity pay ceases, or their child becomes eligible for funded early years childcare and education. Information relating to the different types of funded childcare and other support available for parents to help with their childcare costs can be found on page 34.

Demand in Hounslow varies enormously from ward to ward. A contributing factor to this variation is employment, as this is a key driver for families needing childcare. Population changes, including migration, also influence demand. However, it is important to be mindful that this doesn't necessarily give the whole picture, as some parents may not 'demand' childcare places for a range of reasons.

Population 0-4 years

Although the 0-4 population is projected to decrease by 290 children from 2023 to 2025, it is only the 3-4-year-olds group that indicates a decrease overall (by 447); whereas we see growth projected in 0-1s over the same period by 133 children, and 2-year-olds by 24.

Population data needs to be considered alongside the impact of the expansion to funded entitlements (starting in April 2024; with the final phase of 30 hours entitlement from September 2025 for under 5s of eligible working parents) which will no doubt result in an increased demand for places.

The table below shows current projection over a three-year period for Early Years age groups by ward.

Population Projections by Age Group									
Ward	2023			2024			2025		
	0-1	2	3-4	0-1	2	3-4	0-1	2	3-4
Bedfont	367	185	403	382	167	367	381	176	337
Brentford East	236	120	258	240	119	234	241	117	231
Brentford West	189	86	185	176	97	171	179	84	171
Chiswick Gunnersbury	248	121	274	257	118	246	264	121	245
Chiswick Homefields	299	138	270	286	151	255	291	135	273
Chiswick Riverside	229	99	221	227	111	212	228	107	214
Cranford	384	189	427	387	183	384	384	181	359
Feltham North	376	164	361	384	180	355	383	180	343
Feltham West	412	197	443	414	210	421	416	208	400
Hanworth Park	260	129	259	286	117	265	293	140	250
Hanworth Village	389	182	440	403	192	397	402	201	365
Heston Central	368	189	361	359	187	359	357	176	364
Heston East	272	132	262	299	125	263	303	144	258

Heston West	425	201	387	405	213	378	402	193	389
Hounslow Central	337	172	329	336	176	322	339	169	328
Hounslow East	238	129	237	272	105	248	278	129	234
Hounslow Heath	397	191	406	421	189	399	425	203	379
Hounslow South	258	149	287	265	129	291	269	132	275
Hounslow West	429	193	435	391	228	412	395	193	413
Isleworth	338	160	350	337	169	331	342	163	312
Osterley & Spring Grove	391	175	341	379	192	349	387	180	347
Syon & Brentford Lock	337	171	311	347	163	321	352	164	312
Hounslow totals	7,179	3,471	7,246	7,254	3,522	6,980	7,312	3,495	6,799

Ward population notable headlines:

0-1 year-olds 2023 to 2025

- Increase in Hanworth Park, Hounslow East, Hounslow Heath and Hounslow South
- Decline in Heston West and Hounslow West

2 year-olds 2023 to 2025

- Increase in Feltham North and Hanworth Village
- Decline in Hounslow South

3-4 year-olds 2023 to 2025

- Significant decline in Bedfont, Cranford and Hanworth Village
- Decline in Brentford East, Chiswick Gunnersbury, Feltham North, Feltham West, Hounslow Heath, Hounslow West and Isleworth

Population 5-14 years

The table below shows current projections over a three-year period for School Age groups.

Population Projections by Age Group						
Ward	2023		2024		2025	
	5-11	12-14	5-11	12-14	5-11	12-14
Bedfont	1422	659	1400	662	1374	662
Brentford East	786	371	793	376	782	382
Brentford West	687	293	675	288	670	282
Chiswick Gunnersbury	881	374	881	387	861	389
Chiswick Homefields	996	492	986	474	964	443
Chiswick Riverside	825	357	797	356	773	350
Cranford	1423	648	1393	657	1376	630
Feltham North	1241	580	1254	563	1244	575
Feltham West	1675	766	1620	746	1565	736
Hanworth Park	987	422	953	437	938	420

Hanworth Village	1609	773	1540	788	1525	759
Heston Central	1431	619	1412	621	1374	634
Heston East	989	406	959	423	927	440
Heston West	1511	661	1473	682	1443	681
Hounslow Central	1044	424	1039	426	1029	406
Hounslow East	834	340	823	357	832	338
Hounslow Heath	1617	692	1539	710	1505	726
Hounslow South	1159	544	1100	550	1082	533
Hounslow West	1431	606	1423	621	1441	614
Isleworth	1362	571	1329	583	1286	604
Osterley & Spring Grove	1195	537	1147	527	1143	541
Syon & Brentford Lock	1127	487	1133	462	1119	460
Hounslow totals	26232	11622	25669	11696	25253	11605

The 5-14 population is projected to decrease by 996 children from 2023 to 2025, with 979 of this decrease in the 5-11-year-olds age group. Any increases or decreases in the 5-14 age groups impact on current and future demand for out-of-school provision such as breakfast clubs, after school care and holiday playschemes.

Ward population notable headlines:

5-11 year-olds 2023 to 2025

- Decrease in Chiswick Riverside, Feltham West, Hanworth Village, Heston Central, Heston East, Heston West, Hounslow Heath, Hounslow South, Isleworth and Osterley & Spring Grove

12-14 year-olds 2023 to 2025

- Increase in Heston East, Hounslow Heath and Isleworth
- Decrease in Chiswick Homefields and Feltham West

Migration

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

Housing

As of July 2024, Hounslow's housing trajectory indicates that over the next 10 years the Council expects a total of over 18,000 new homes in the borough, with approximately 10,000 of these expected in the next five years.

Employment

Demand for childcare, especially paid-for childcare, is very much linked with parents' working patterns. Working parents can receive a range of childcare subsidies, such as tax-free childcare and additional funded hours. The number of parents in Hounslow who have used Tax Free Childcare accounts has increased year on year since 2017, with 2257 accounts being reported by HMRC in 2023/24.

Family Information Service

Hounslow's Family Information Service (FIS) provide a brokering service for parents who make contact seeking irregular hours of childcare. FIS manage the [Family Services Directory](#) (FSD) which includes childminder profiles and listings for services which accommodate irregular hours or shiftwork patterns and emergency care.

Families receiving additional support - take up of funded 2-year-old places

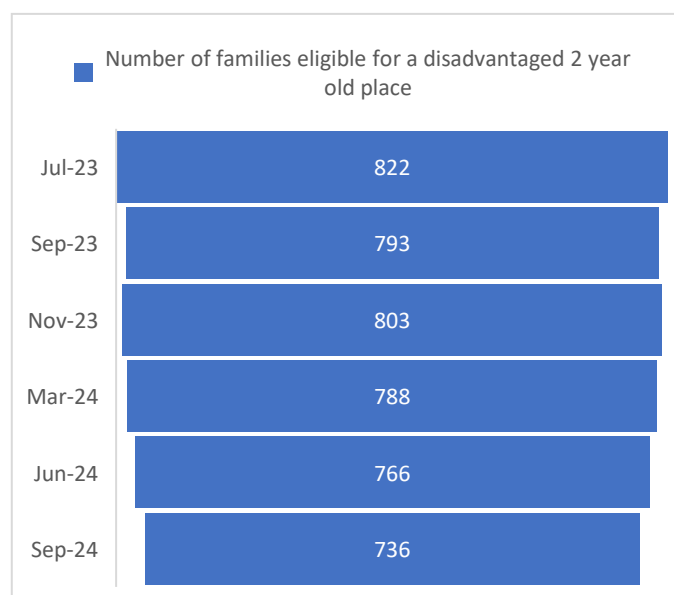
Some families on a low income, working or not working, and receiving certain benefits, can access funded childcare for their 2-year-old at an Ofsted registered private day nursery, pre-school or with a childminder. Some primary, nursery and infant schools also offer funded childcare for 2-year-olds on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

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

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

This chart shows you the number of eligible families in London Borough of Hounslow, as indicated by the DWP, from July 2023 to Sept 2024.

The number of families eligible for a 2-year-old funded place continues to decline. One reason for the decline is that the criteria on income has remained the same, whereas salaries have increased, therefore many families no longer meet the financial criteria.



Take up of 2-year-old places by families receiving additional support is measured on a termly basis. The highest take up of places is usually in the Autumn term. This is when the majority of childcare settings have fewer 3- and 4-year-olds, because many of them have left to take up a school nursery or reception class place in September. As the 2-year-olds turn 3 over the academic year, the overall borough percentage take-up of 2-year-olds drops – this is reflected in the table below.

2-year-old take up percentages from September 2023 – June 2024

Ward	Eligible families on DWP list September 2023	% Eligible Take up Autumn 2023	Eligible families on DWP list April 2024	% Eligible Take up Spring 2024	Eligible families on DWP list June 2024	% Eligible Take up Summer 2024
Bedfont	55	69%	61	61%	48	67%
Brentford East	37	78%	36	89%	41	63%
Brentford West	20	80%	19	84%	16	150%
Chiswick Gunnersbury	14	57%	7	71%	10	50%
Chiswick Homefields	8	138%	8	88%	7	171%
Chiswick Riverside	6	167%	6	83%	7	57%
Cranford	51	86%	49	90%	53	81%
Feltham North	42	102%	36	106%	46	80%
Feltham West	51	73%	47	87%	53	77%
Hanworth Park	29	86%	30	87%	27	89%
Hanworth Village	57	70%	52	73%	58	57%
Heston Central	38	76%	39	67%	38	68%
Heston East	36	97%	25	92%	30	80%
Heston West	67	72%	56	80%	60	57%
Hounslow Central	39	85%	39	64%	31	71%
Hounslow East	25	80%	28	57%	27	52%
Hounslow Heath	57	70%	46	67%	52	31%
Hounslow South	18	56%	22	27%	20	25%
Hounslow West	32	88%	39	72%	45	62%
Isleworth	41	68%	29	114%	36	83%
Osterley & Spring Grove	31	94%	27	89%	29	86%
Syon & Brentford Lock	39	72%	33	85%	32	78%
Borough average		85%		79%		74%

Percentages in **red** are identified as being below the 76% annual published DFE 2YO take up. Percentages in **blue** show where take up is over 100%.

12 wards were showing less than 76% take up in Summer 2024, as the overall borough take-up drops with 2-year-olds turning 3 over the academic year.

Where wards are showing over 100% take-up, reasons for this include some families not being identified on the DWP list, such as adopted children (LAC) and families with NRPF (no recourse to public funds), and also parental choice, where parents are choosing to access provision across borough and ward boundaries.

Children can take up a place at any time during the term after their 2nd birthday. Providers can change their provision to suit the number of children in each age range to meet the needs of families and help providers to remain sustainable.

14 of 96 Hounslow providers did not offer childcare for families accessing additional government support in 2023/24.

Number of 15-hour vacancies available for 2-year-olds from families receiving additional support – June 2024:

Wards	Vacancies for 2Yr olds from families receiving additional support
Bedfont	7
Brentford East	2
Brentford West	18
Chiswick Gunnersbury	11
Chiswick Homefield	7
Chiswick Riverside	0
Cranford	11
Feltham North	13
Feltham West	8
Hanworth Park	54
Hanworth Village	2
Heston Central	23
Heston East	1
Heston West	8
Hounslow Central	5
Hounslow East	0
Hounslow Heath	6
Hounslow South	5
Hounslow West	10
Isleworth	25
Osterley and Spring Grove	7
Syon and Brentford Lock	26
Total	249

There were vacancies in 9 of the 11 wards at the time, but Hounslow South only has childminder vacancies.

Comparisons to National, Outer London and statistical neighbour take up:

Each term the Department for Education (DfE) conducts a survey on the number of eligible 2-year-olds that have taken up a funded place. In Spring 2024, Hounslow ranked 1st out of its statistical neighbours, fourth out of the 19 outer London authorities and 81 out of 152 local authorities nationally. These take-up figures include eligible children living outside of the borough taking up a place in a Hounslow childcare provision.

LA Name	LA 2YO take up	National ranking	Statistical neighbour ranking	Survey LA region ranking	2YO take up numbers	DWP eligibility numbers
Hounslow	76%	81	1	4	614	803

With the introduction of working families' entitlement, this could have an impact on take up of 2YO places by families receiving additional support, as some families fall into both categories. Government advice is that these families should apply for the 2YO childcare support code, so in the event of a family falling out of employment, they would not lose their entitlement. Hounslow will be communicating this to families through our termly letters and will raise awareness with colleagues and stakeholders.

Increasing take-up for these 2-year-olds in all wards remains a focus for the Council.

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

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

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

The table below shows the total number of funded 3- & 4-year-olds accessing a 15-hour funded place in private childcare provision and school nursery classes. NB. Percentage take up data is only published once a year by the Department for Education (DfE) with data taken from the Spring Early Years Census.

The numbers in the table below include out of borough children attending a Hounslow early years provision. This is how take-up is published by the Department for Education (DfE). Hounslow has had an average take up of 85% for many years. In Spring 2023, the take up increased significantly to 89% and has remained stable through to Spring 2024.

Term / Year	Total no. of 3 & 4-year-old children in a 15-hour place	% Take up published by the DfE
Autumn 2021	3717	
Spring 2022	4457	85%
Summer 2022	4965	
Autumn 2022	3634	
Spring 2023	4373	89%
Summer 2023	4893	
Autumn 2023	3499	
Spring 2024	4207	89%
Summer 2024	4797	

	% take-up of 15-hour places by 3- & 4-year-olds
England	94% in 2023 up to 95% 2024
London	89% in 2023 down to 85% in 2024
Hounslow	89% (2023 and 2024)

The table below shows the take-up of 15 & 30 hour funded places by 3 & 4-year-olds in settings by ward in Summer 2024.

Ward	Take up 15-hour places	Take up 30-hour Places	Vacancies for 15-hour places	Vacancies for 30-hour places
Bedfont	216	74	36	29
Brentford East	741	55	0	3
Brentford West	104	36	24	8
Chiswick Gunnersbury	153	56	64	17
Chiswick Homefields	257	60	21	15
Chiswick Riverside	126	40	11	5
Cranford	254	55	30	7
Feltham North	216	50	0	2
Feltham West	238	64	41	13
Hanworth Park	142	57	76	49
Hanworth Village	185	58	14	8
Heston Central	240	72	70	26
Heston East	175	53	43	24
Heston West	188	56	22	2
Hounslow Central	233	45	34	45
Hounslow East	138	39	17	17
Hounslow Heath	233	95	5	4
Hounslow South	128	59	5	5
Hounslow West	267	58	9	5
Isleworth	165	69	37	48
Osterley & Spring Grove	212	110	7	8
Syon & Brentford Lock	186	87	66	52

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

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

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

Wraparound provision – Breakfast Clubs and After-school Clubs



All other wards have some provision, where not sufficient, there is capacity for these gaps to be picked up by Childminders. The National Wraparound programme will also be supporting the increase of these places in 2024/25 and 2025/26.

Isleworth, Chiswick Riverside and Feltham West have the largest amount of afterschool Wraparound provision, and Breakfast club places have good numbers in Isleworth, Feltham West, Hanworth Park and Bedfont.

Provision for Breakfast clubs and afterschool is not Sufficient in the following wards

- Hounslow West
- Hounslow heath
- Heston West
- Heston central
- Feltham North
- Brentford West

In March 2023, national Government data showed that 36% of parents of primary-aged children reported that they had used some kind of wraparound childcare for their children that Spring term (equating to around 1.6m children). For these families, it is an invaluable support, delivered by passionate, experienced professionals, who place children at the heart of what they offer.

However, not everyone who needs access to wraparound care is able to access it. Therefore, the government announced in the Spring Budget in March 2023 an investment of £289m for a national wraparound programme, to achieve their ambition of supporting all families who need to access wraparound childcare from 8am to 6pm. Therefore, parents would expect to see an expansion in the availability of wraparound care from September 2024.

As a result of Hounslow supply-and-demand mapping data exercise and data provided by the DfE, 16 Type A schools and 24 Type B schools were identified (see below). The data from this exercise was used to calculate the number of additional wraparound places needed by Sept 2026, totalling 560 places.

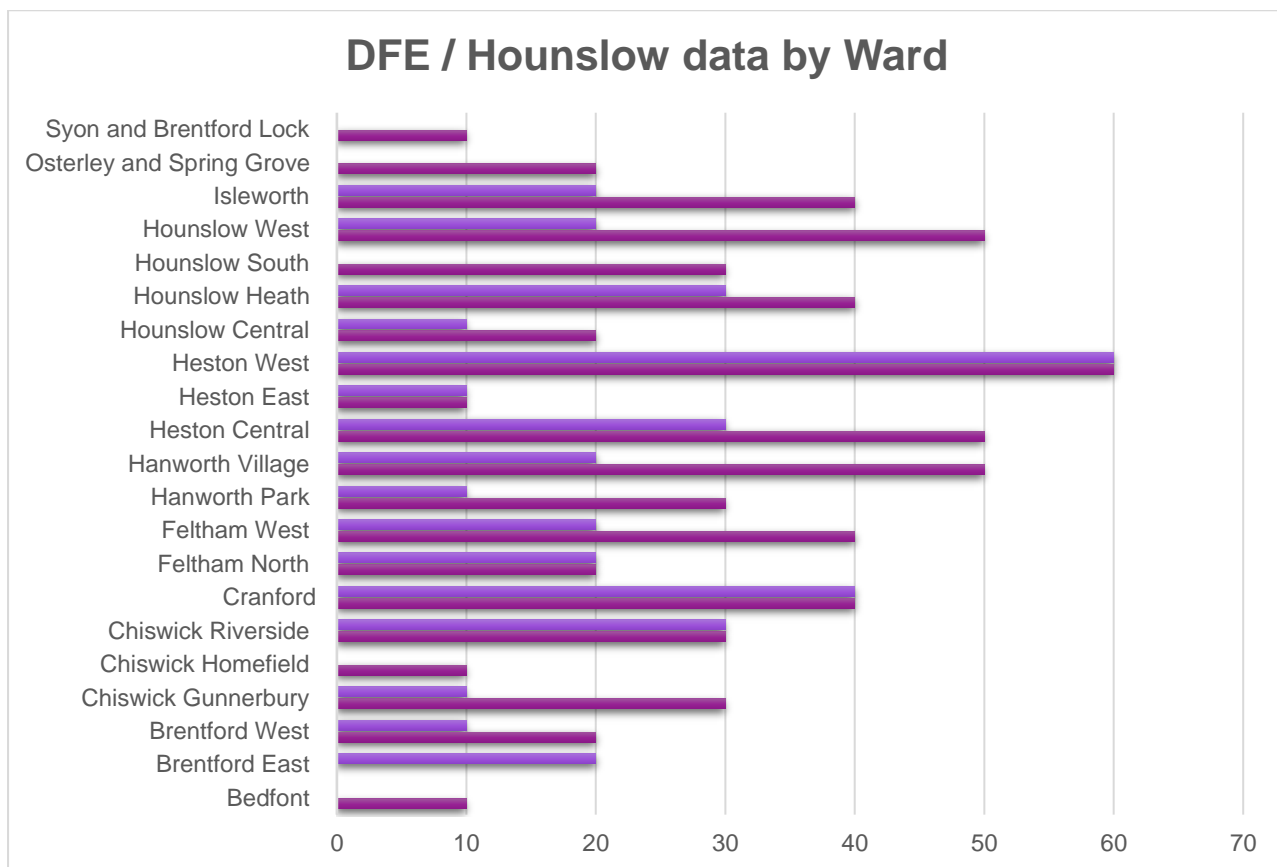
Type A schools

Any school that does not have a before and after-school childcare offering. DfE have assumed an average of 20 additional places needed.

Type B schools

Have both before and after school care, but not full 8am – 6pm wraparound. DfE assumed an average of 10 additional places needed

Below is a comparison of DfE and Hounslow data, which includes private providers and childminders. The DfE data only includes schools' information from census and therefore did not represent other types of provision.



Number of places needed according to Hounslow Data

Number of places needed according to DfE

Holiday provision

Many paid-for Holiday provisions run alongside the HAF programme, providing some paid places as well as the HAF programme. This has been a useful link that has greatly increased the number of paid places available to families.

Alternatively, families can secure the services of a childminder during school holidays.

The Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)

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

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

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

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

Take up of HAF places

Children eligible for a HAF place can take up to 24 days of funded holiday care in a year.

This table shows the number of HAF days that were available in each holiday period, the number of days taken up, the percentage take up, and percentage of children with SEND who took up a HAF place.

	Christmas 2023	Easter 2024	Summer 2024
No. of HAF days available	5464	8141	25820
No. of HAF days taken up	3530	5218	19201
Average % take up	65%	65%	75%
% Take up primary schools	83%	86%	82%
% Take up secondary schools	17%	14%	18%
% SEND of children attending	14%	16%	19%

Type of referral

Local authorities have discretion to use up to 15% of the funding to ensure places are aligned with local priorities. This table shows funded places in Hounslow during Summer 2024 that were based on professional referrals.

	No.
Looked after children	40
Eligible children (Registered after vouchers were released)	22
Refugees	7
Vulnerable young person (Domestic violence team, school referrals and family support worker referrals)	72
Potential anti-social behaviour	5
School - out of borough	28
SEND needs	9
Other	13
Total	196

HAF Demand issues

The main issue relating to the demand for HAF places was identified in 2023-24 as:

Parents of eligible children receive an E-voucher for the HAF programme from their child's school either by text message or email. Data has shown that parents opened their voucher but did not take the next step to book a place for their child/ren. Eligible children missed out on their free place and thereby the benefits.

Hounslow are currently getting on average 20% take up from the children that are eligible. The national average is currently 24%.

To address this issue, one of the strategies employed has been to provide schools with pre-written communications for parents, but the LA would like to explore options for improving school communications and support for HAF.

Supply of childcare

0–4 year-olds

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

The Council is dependent on private early years providers to meet its statutory duties to ensure that there is sufficient childcare to enable parents to work, study or seek employment, securing funded early years provision for all children from 9 months to 4-years-old.

The number of private early years Ofsted registered day nurseries and pre-schools, and the number of places they offer to 0-4 year-olds had been relatively stable for a number of years, and it was deemed there were sufficient places in the borough. However, the sufficiency of places has been put under threat due to childminder numbers declining, staff recruitment issues, and the funding rate paid to early years providers for entitlement places. Three of these issues continue to impact on the supply of places in Hounslow, as detailed below.

Decline in childminder numbers

In 2009 the number of childminders registered in Hounslow was over 300. By 2023 this had decreased to 148 childminders, and in July 2024 the number decreased again to 130, a 12% drop from 2023. This percentage is high compared to national figures, where childminder numbers decreased by 5% from March 2023 to March

2024. Hounslow exit surveys have shown no specific common theme was cited as to why childminders had chosen to close their provision.

This decline in numbers nationally prompted the Government to introduce the new childminder start-up grant scheme, which started in March 2023, operating for two financial years. The aim of the grants was to support the costs of set-up and ‘*grow the childcare market.*’ Hounslow saw 5 childminders register between March 2023 and July 2024.

Childminders working from domestic premises can operate with up to 3 childminders or assistants working together. From 1 November 2024, Ofsted are introducing registration for Childminders on non-domestic premises, where the number of people providing or assisting with care can exceed 4 childminders. This will provide childminders with more flexibility to work on non-domestic premises with a greater number of either registered childminders or assistants, which will support the need for more places due to childcare expansion.

Supply of places for 0-4 year olds

In Summer 2024, there were approximately 4862 places being offered to 0-4 year olds by private day nurseries, pre-schools and childminders, with an additional 2455 places for 3 and 4 year olds being offered in school nursery classes. This was a similar number to 2023 when Hounslow was deemed to have sufficient places for 0–4-year-olds. The decline in active childminders has resulted in over 100 childcare places being lost since 2022.

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

There is always a challenge in providing available places that will meet a parent’s first choice. Some parents and carers choose to delay accessing their place in order to use their preferred provision; others may use a setting from outside their local area for a variety of reasons, including work.

The table below shows the total number of vacancies for 0–4-year-olds in private childcare provision in June 2022, June 2023 and June 2024.

	Number of vacancies for under 2s	Number of vacancies for 2-year-olds	Number of vacancies for 2-year-olds (families accessing gov’t support)	Number of 15-hour vacancies for 3- & 4-year-olds	Number of 30-hour vacancies for 3- & 4-year-olds
June 2024	235	272	249	290	307
June 2023	270	323	204	309	218
June 2022	193	234	247	388	239

There was a significant number of vacant places available for 0–4-year-olds across the borough in June 2024. However, in 3 wards there were no reported vacancies for the following groups of children. (Note that not all childminder vacancies are reported through Hounslow surveys.)

Sufficiency of places in wards		
Ward	Vacancy information	Points to note
Chiswick Riverside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No vacancies for under 2s No vacancies for paying 2-year-olds No vacancies for 2-year-olds (families accessing government support) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacancies available in adjacent ward Ward population projections from 2023 to 2025 indicate under 3s stable; and slight increase for 3-4s
Feltham North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No vacancies for under 2s No vacancies for paying 2-year-olds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacancies available in adjacent wards Ward population projections from 2023 to 2025 indicate slight increase for under 3s, and slight decrease for 3-4s
Hounslow East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No vacancies for under 2s No vacancies for paying 2-year-olds No vacancies for 2-year-olds (families accessing government support) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacancies available in adjacent wards Ward population projections from 2023 to 2025 indicate significant increase for under 2s, but stable for 2, 3&4s

Sufficiency of places in all wards continues to be monitored.

Childcare expansion capital projects

With the increased entitlements from April 2024, demand for funded places is expected to increase dramatically, particularly for 9-month to 2-year-olds. The Local Authority Readiness Assessment June 2024 forecasted the need for 87 new places by September 2024 and 622 places by September 2025. [The figure of 622 has since been revised by DfE to 252]

Childcare Expansion capital grant funding of £383,924 was awarded to the Council by the Department for Education to increase the physical capacity of Early Years and Wraparound provision in local areas where demand is likely to exceed existing supply.

In June 2024 a survey was conducted with day nurseries and pre-schools to assess willingness and readiness to expand their provision. Of 88 responses, only 4 indicated that their main enquiries were from families with children under 2 years old.

Four capital projects were identified to take forward for expansion to create 24 places for under-twos and 50 places for 2-year-olds.

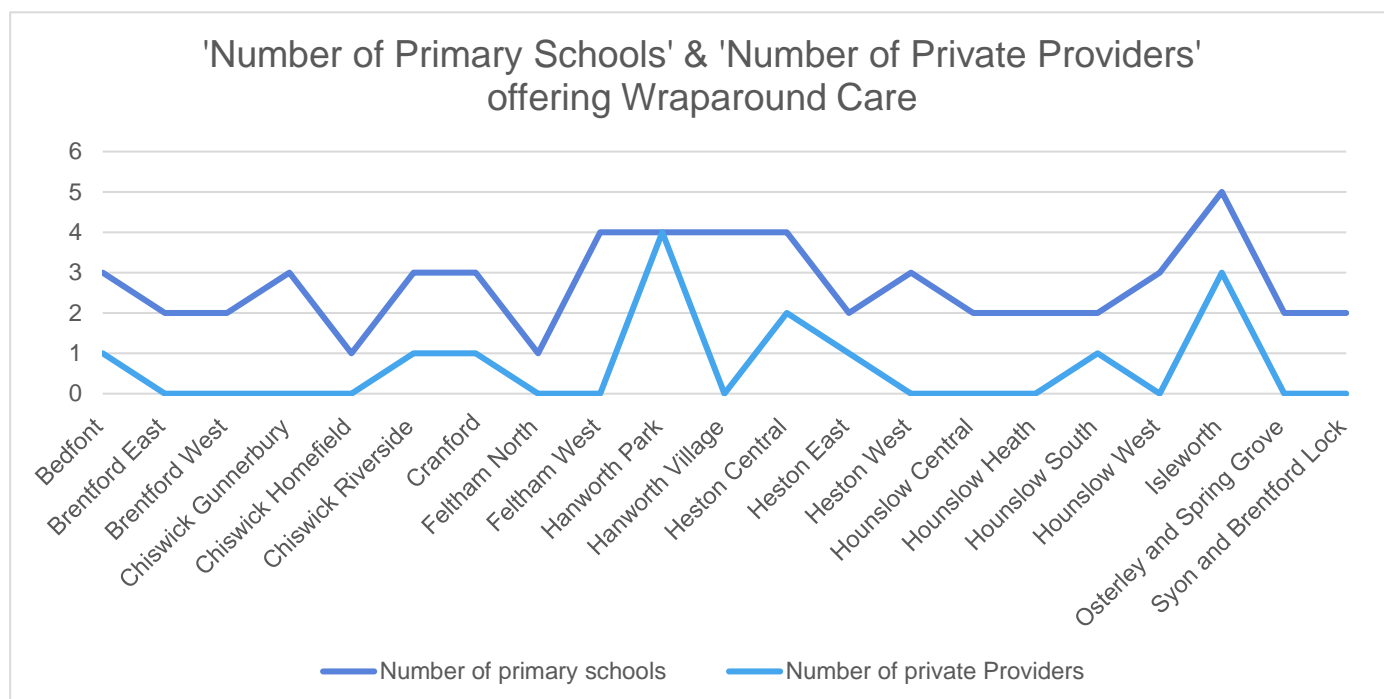
3- & 4-year-olds Vacancies in School Nursery Classes

In some wards, there were a significant number of vacancies in maintained school nursery class provision in Summer 2024. If occupancy does not increase in the schools most affected, it could lead to a smaller nursery class intake until demand increases.

Ward	Number of 15-hour vacancies in School Nursery classes Summer 2024	Number of 30-hour vacancies in School Nursery classes Summer 2024
Bedfont	7	1
Brentford East	0	0
Brentford West	11	0
Chiswick Gunnersbury	37	10
Chiswick Homefields	10	10
Chiswick Riverside	6	0
Cranford	15	4
Feltham North	0	0
Feltham West	32	3
Hanworth Park	10	4
Hanworth Village	8	0
Heston Central	36	10
Heston East	34	7
Heston West	5	0
Hounslow Central	7	0
Hounslow East	14	2
Hounslow Heath	1	0
Hounslow South	0	0
Hounslow West	7	0
Isleworth	13	24
Osterley & Spring Grove	30	10
Syon & Brentford Lock	7	1
Total	283	85

Supply of places for 4-14 year olds

Many working parents are dependent upon out of school provision such as breakfast clubs, after school care and holiday playschemes to provide childcare beyond the school day and during school holiday periods. A complex piece of work, collecting supply and demand mapping data for all Hounslow wraparound provision, took place in Spring 2024 to ensure a full dataset on both breakfast clubs and after school clubs.



There is considerably more take up in after-school places than in breakfast clubs.

More wraparound places could become available in forthcoming years following an announcement made at the 2023 Spring Budget. From September 2024 local authorities are to receive funding to work with schools and other providers to increase the supply of wraparound childcare for primary school age children.

Additional childminder places for children aged 5 - 8-years-old

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

Some advantages of using a childminder for school aged children include:

- supervised school pick-ups and drop-offs, as well as care before and after school and in the holidays
- a child can be cared for with younger siblings
- a child can easily take part in local and after-school activities.

Holiday playschemes

The information in the table below relates to the total number of fee-paying places in holiday playschemes by ward; these figures include fee-paying places in the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) schemes.

Wards	Fee Paying places available for School Holidays
Bedfont	30
Brentford East	35
Brentford West	25
Chiswick Gunnersbury	65
Chiswick Homefields	60
Chiswick Riverside	80
Cranford	49
Feltham North	56
Feltham West	52
Hanworth Park	37
Hanworth Village	22
Heston Central	10
Heston East	45
Heston West	35
Hounslow Central	10
Hounslow East	60
Hounslow Heath	20
Hounslow South	0
Hounslow West	36
Isleworth	58
Osterley & Spring Grove	97
Syon and Brentford Lock	45
Total	927

Families across the borough need access to good quality, affordable holiday childcare for school-age children. This provides the basis for parents to work or study and gives children the opportunity to socialise and have fun with other children. Most working parents do not have enough annual leave to cover the 13 weeks of school holidays across the year, so they need to make alternative childcare arrangements during these periods.

Family Services Directory – information, advice and guidance

Comprehensive and up-to-date information about childcare, including school-aged childcare, early education and funded places can be found on Hounslow's the [Family Services Directory](#)

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

Local Authority Support for 0-4 year olds

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

The Early Years SEN team works with 94 early years settings and provides a point of contact in the team for 130 childminders for support relating to SEND. A key overarching aim of the Early Years SEN Team is to work with providers to develop quality, inclusive environments and practice within their settings to support the inclusion of children with SEND.

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

Upskilling workforce

Speech and Language Training: Augmentative and Alternative Forms of Communication

The Early Years SEN Team has longstanding and established joint working arrangements with health and education professionals as part of workforce development training opportunities.

In 2023-2024 the Early Years SEN Team worked alongside colleagues from Speech and Language Therapy to co-ordinate an offer of training to early years practitioners on Using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) to support young children with complex communication needs. The intended aim was to promote the use of AAC within settings' Ordinarily Available Provision in order to meet the needs of rising numbers of children with communication and interaction needs within early years settings.

Practitioners from a total of 29 settings attended a series of training sessions delivered by the Specialist Speech and Language Therapist – AAC Lead.

A key priority for 2024 – 2025 will be to follow up on settings who accessed AAC training in 2023 – 2024 and provide a package of follow up support and resource allocation to embed AAC in their settings.

A further package of training will be provided to PVI settings in 2024 – 2025 by the Specialist Speech and Language Therapist – AAC Lead to expand the number of early years providers accessing this training.

Universal and Bitesize Training

SENCOs and early years practitioners in early years settings are provided with a comprehensive range of training opportunities to support them in meeting the needs of children with a range of SEND and developing quality, inclusive environments.

In 2023 -2024, a total of 278 practitioners including SENCOs accessed training via the Universal training offer.

Level 3 SENCO qualification

The DfE accredited Level 3 SENCO qualification for SENCOs in the early years continues to be an ongoing workforce development priority for the Early Years SEN Team.

SENCO Forum

In addition to training, a termly PVI focused SENCO Forum is run by the Early Years SEN Team. The purpose of the SENCO Forum is to disseminate good practice, updates and initiatives.

Family Hubs

An emerging area of work for the Early Years SEN Team includes working with Family Hubs colleagues to develop SEND related professional development opportunities for Family Hubs practitioners.

Early Years SEND Panel

The Early Years SEND Panel is a multiagency forum, the purpose of which is to plan appropriate support and provision for children under the age of five who live in the borough who may have special educational needs. The Early Years SEND Panel is attended by professionals from Education, Health and Social Care who are experienced in working with children under the age of five with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

In 2023-2024 a total of 191 referrals were accepted by the Early Years SEND Panel. Of these, 152 were health notifications providing statutory notification to the Local Authority of children where Special Educational Need may be present.

39 referrals were made to the Early Years SEND Panel to request Universal, Targeted or Specialist support. These include referrals to Children's Centre programmes to support children with social communication needs, or Portage for example.

Early Identification

All early years providers in Hounslow that offer government funded places are aware of their duties in relation to supporting children with SEND. This is set out in the [Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(2023\)](#), [Special educational needs code of practice: 0 – 25 years \(2015\)](#) and [Equality Act \(2010\)](#).

Every early years setting has a designated SENCO to oversee systems for SEND within the provision. A particular focus in recent years has been on early identification. Early years settings all have access to a range of screening tools.

SEN Support

Information on numbers of children with SEND in early years settings is obtained through SEND Support Register meetings facilitated by the Early Years SEN Team.

In 2023 – 2024, setting SENCOs identified in total, 541 children as having additional to and different from needs that required special educational provision to be made for them. This figure is broadly in line with numbers of children on SEN Support the previous year (2022-2023).

Additional Funding

SEN Inclusion Funding

The requirement to have SEN Inclusion Funding for lower level or emerging SEN is set out in the guidance document entitled; 'Government Funding Entitlements: Local Authority Funding Operational Guide 2024 to 2025'.

SEN Inclusion Funding is awarded as a top-up grant on a case-by-case basis with the maximum allocation in line with 15 hours government funding to a maximum of 570 hours per year. Where 30 hour entitlement is being accessed, funding beyond 15 hours is considered case by case.

The value of SEN Inclusion Fund in the London Borough of Hounslow for the financial year 2024/2025 is a maximum of £1.3 million.

SEN Inclusion Funding is allocated in the form of termly lump sum payments to the setting based on a level of need banding system. The funding is to support the inclusion of a child with SEND, promote early intervention and improve outcomes for the child.

Examples of how early years providers can use the SEN Inclusion Fund include:

- Building capacity within the setting with additional staffing to support specific interventions/strategies for the child with SEND
- Specialist or one-off training to upskill whole team or staff member(s) linked to individual child's needs
- Purchase of resources/equipment to support specific interventions/strategies

In 2023-2024, a total of 491 children accessed SEN Inclusion Funding. There is a clear trajectory of year-on-year increase in the numbers of children accessing SEN Inclusion Funding in PVI's and School Nursery Classes. The figures for Childminders remain relatively stable and at low levels.

Provider Type	SEN Inclusion Funding (numbers of children accessing) 2021/2022	SEN Inclusion Funding (numbers of children accessing) 2022/2023	SEN Inclusion Funding (numbers of children accessing) 2023/2024
PVIs	273	329	345
Schools (Nursery Class)	80	137	143
Childminders	1	3	3
Totals	354	469	491

Ward	SEN Inclusion Funding (numbers of children accessing) 2023/2024	Disability Access Fund (numbers of children accessing) 2023/2024
Bedfont	19	2
Brentford East	24	4
Brentford West	19	0
Chiswick Gunnersbury	12	4
Chiswick Homefields	3	0
Chiswick Riverside	2	0
Cranford	43	2
Feltham North	8	0
Feltham West	44	6
Hanworth Park	20	9
Hanworth Village	17	0
Heston Central	51	2
Heston East	18	2
Heston West	37	1
Hounslow Central	28	2
Hounslow East	19	0
Hounslow Heath	30	3
Hounslow South	1	0
Hounslow West	25	3
Isleworth	35	4
Osterley and Spring Grove	10	1
Syon and Brentford Lock	26	4
Totals	491	40

Data by wards comparing figures for SEN Inclusion Funding and Disability Access Fund indicates low uptake of DAF. Eligibility for Disability Access Fund has expanded in line with Government Funding Entitlements from September 2024. An increase in DAF uptake therefore could be expected following the expanded offer in line with government funding entitlements.

Early years providers that access SEN Inclusion Fund are required, as part of Terms & Conditions, to provide information on impact and progress via Review / Provision Map documentation for each period of funding accessed. The purpose of this being to demonstrate how funding has been used to support the child as well as impact of funding on child's progress.

From 2023 – 2024 SEN Inclusion Fund Review Document and Provision Map return data, 98% of children that accessed SEN Inclusion Funding made progress toward targeted plans, with 97% of children making progress against their starting points, as evidenced in Birth to 5 Matters judgements.

With the expanded Government funding entitlements to include eligible families of children from 9 months, it is anticipated that greater numbers of families with children with SEND may take up a place within early years settings. To ensure early years providers are well positioned to be able to meet the needs of children with SEND from 9 months and above and in line with government funding entitlements, SEN Inclusion Funding has been expanded to include all children eligible for government funding entitlements from 9 months to 4 years.

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

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

To support the Council in better understanding the future sustainability of private childcare providers, and in particular their financial position, day nurseries and pre-schools were asked in June 2024 how likely it was that they would still be operating in June 2025.

- 53% of providers (47/88) thought it very likely
- 43% of providers (33/88) thought it quite likely
- 9% of providers (8/88) thought it somewhat unlikely

Of the eight providers (9%) who thought it somewhat unlikely that they would still be operating in June 2025, six cited staff recruitment and two cited the funded entitlement rates as their main challenges to remaining sustainable.

It should be noted that in June 2023, 11 providers had responded to the same questions and indicated it was unlikely or very unlikely that they would still be operating in June 2024. None of those 11 settings have closed, although there was one playgroup provision that closed in July 2024 and reopened under a new registration.

The table below shows the breakdown of responses from the 88 private providers to a question asked about their expected income over the 6-month period from June 2024; as a comparison the table shows responses from the two previous years.

	June 2022	June 2023	June 2024	Change from June 2022 to June 2024
Operate at a profit	35/95 (37%)	28/92 (30%)	28/88 (32%)	+2%
Break even	42/95 (44%)	42/92 (46%)	43/88 (49%)	+3%
Operate at a loss	18/95 (19%)	22/92 (24%)	17/88 (19%)	-5%

Providers in areas of high deprivation who predict to operate at a loss, have less opportunity to increase their fees to cover costs than providers in less deprived areas.

The eight providers who thought it somewhat unlikely that they would still be operating in June 2025, all cited similar challenges to their businesses remaining sustainable – staff recruitment, rent increases, and current funding rates.

Staff recruitment issues

Day nursery and pre-school providers were asked in a June 2024 survey what they saw as their main challenge to their business remaining sustainable moving forward. The responses varied, but the issue listed far more than any others was recruitment of staff.

For many years now there has been a shortage of qualified and experienced staff within the Early Years sector. Some providers have reported that they received no candidates at all for their vacancies, and a lack of qualified candidates, and that staff are leaving the sector for jobs with better pay and less responsibility in other sectors.

A major new national recruitment campaign was launched by the Department for Education in February 2024. This followed data showing that in January 2024, 102,480 children had been registered on the Eligibility Checking System, reflecting the strength of demand across the country before the first phase of the largest ever expansion in free childcare started from April 2024.

The “Do Something Big” recruitment campaign is to encourage people to start a career working with small children, which is part of the government’s support to ensure providers are in the best position to deliver the places that parents need. Hounslow have promoted this campaign to career advisors in Secondary schools, Day Nurseries, Pre-schools, Childminders, and for Wraparound staff as part of the National Wraparound childcare programme.

Some of the barriers impacting long-term sustainability identified by Hounslow providers in the June 2024 survey were:

- increase in salaries due to inflation and increase coming up for the living wage
- increase in staffing costs due to rising SEND
- increase in cost of food and consumables
- increase in energy costs
- increase in rent/mortgage fees

Childcare funding rates 2023-24

Early years providers source of income is from the childcare places that they offer. This income is either from fees determined by the provider and sourced directly from parents or through Government funded childcare places. There is a fixed hourly rate payment for funded places. For the 2023-24 academic year, entitlements could be claimed for:

- Children aged 2 whose families are receiving some additional government support (15 hours)
- 2-year-olds from eligible working families (15 hours) from April 2024
- All 3- to 4-year-olds (Universal 15 hours)
- 3- to 4-year-olds from eligible working families (30 hours)

Hounslow hourly funding rates	2024/2025 financial year	2025/2026 financial year
3- & 4-Year Olds	£6.20	£6.40
2-Year Olds of Families Requiring Additional Support	£9.31	£9.74
2-Year Olds of Eligible Working Parents	£9.31	£9.74
9-23 Month Olds of Eligible Working Parents (from Sept 2024)	£12.72	£13.31

There is a correlation between the costs incurred by providers and the level of funding paid to providers for each entitlement. Providers are clear that hourly rates for funded places do not cover their costs of delivery. Early Years organisations and providers regularly lobby for the funding rates to be reviewed. Providers assert that any increase in the funding rate is not aligned with increases in costs, such as rises in the national living and minimum wages, business rates and utilities costs, which leads to a funding gap increasing year on year.

For the 2023 to 2024 financial year, additional supplementary funding was given to local authorities through an Early Years supplementary grant (EYSG). This was used to increase the hourly amounts paid to local authorities, so that they could increase the amount of funding their Early Years childcare providers received for delivering the entitlements for the period September 2023 to March 2024.

For the 2024 to 2025 financial year, an additional £288 million has been allocated to local authorities through the dedicated schools grant (DSG).

Cost of childcare

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

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

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

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

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

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

15 hours childcare support for eligible working families 570 hours a year

Eligible working families with **children aged 9-23 months** can access up to 15 hours of childcare support each week (from Sept 2024).

15 hours of childcare support for children aged 2 years 570 hours a year

Families receiving additional forms of government support can access up to 15 hours of childcare support each week.

15 hours of childcare support for all 3- & 4-year-olds 570 hours a year

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

30 hours childcare support for eligible working families 1140 hours a year

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

Other forms of financial support with childcare costs

Tax-Free Childcare

Tax-Free Childcare (TFC) is a government scheme to help working families with their childcare costs.

Parents and carers who are eligible can open an online childcare account to pay their registered childcare providers directly and the government will add to the account to help towards childcare costs and save money. For every £8 a parent or carer pays in, the government will pay in an extra £2. Families can receive up to £2,000 per child, per year, towards their childcare costs, or £4,000 for a child with a disability.

Universal Credit

The childcare cost element of Universal Credit is available to all lone parents and couples who are working, or are due to start work, and claiming Universal Credit. Regardless of the number of hours they work, parents can get up to 85% of childcare costs paid back to them for children under 17.

Specified Adult Childcare Credits

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

Specified Adult Childcare credits can be backdated to 6 April 2011.

Help to pay for childcare while studying

- Weekly payments through Care to Learn for parents under 20 years old
- Discretionary Learner Support for parents aged 19 and over
- Childcare Grant for those in full-time higher education and eligible for student finance.

Childcare Costs in Hounslow

The table below gives the average hourly rate charged by Hounslow childminders and day nurseries compared to London and national averages.

Costs for different types of provision in Hounslow

	London	National	Hounslow		
	Average Hourly Cost	Average Hourly Cost	Average Hourly Cost Under 2's	Average Hourly Cost 2 Yr olds	Average Hourly Cost 3-4 yr old places
Childminder	£8.10	£6.07	£7.53		
Day nursery	£8.34	£6.72	£8.26	£8.04	£7.46

Rates charged by childcare providers are quite complex. Many do not have a set hourly rate and will set fees for sessions, weeks or terms. Therefore, the information in this section best represents hourly rates as shared by providers.

Childcare providers can change their rates at any time.

The tables below show the average hourly cost charged by day nurseries, pre-schools and childminders by ward. The percentage of children living in poverty in each ward is represented by the IDACI 2019 rating; this enables an assessment of whether costs correlate with deprivation, although this can be misleading where there are pockets of deprivation amongst relative affluence.

Day nurseries and pre-schools for 0–4-year-olds average hourly rates by ward linked to deprivation

Wards	IDACI 2019 (%)	Under 2s average hourly rate (£)	2s average hourly rate (£)	3 & 4s average hourly rate (£)
Brentford East	30.8	£8.86	£8.28	£6.76
Hanworth Village	24.4	£7.06	£7.32	£6.52
Heston West	22.1	£6.50	£5.95	£5.30
Bedfont	20	£7.89	£7.86	£7.65
Isleworth	20	£8.56	£8.41	£8.20
Feltham West	19.4	£8.01	£8.50	£8.20
Cranford	19	£9.11	£7.20	£6.93
Syon & Brentford Lock	17.8	£8.49	£8.61	£7.71
Feltham North	17.4	No baby provision	£6.00	£6.00
Hanworth Park	16.7	£8.06	£7.63	£7.20
Heston East	16.4	£7.46	£8.01	£6.83
Hounslow Heath	16.2	£8.10	£8.48	£8.48
Brentford West	15.8	£9.08	£8.77	£8.04
Heston Central	15.8	£7.53	£7.61	£6.76
Hounslow West	14.6	£8.50	£8.00	£7.80
Chiswick Gunnersbury	14.1	£9.75	£9.83	£9.04
Hounslow East	13.1	£6.90	£6.90	£6.90
Hounslow Central	12.1	£8.95	£8.73	£8.62
Chiswick Riverside	12	£9.80	£11.46	£8.95
Hounslow South	11.4	No baby provision	£7.29	£7.29
Osterley & Spring Grove	11.4	£9.97	£9.26	£9.07
Chiswick Homefields	8.9	£9.00	£9.21	£8.80

Childminders

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

Ward	IDACI 2019 (%)	Average Hourly Rate £
Brentford East	30.8	£9.00
Hanworth Village	24.4	£6.67
Heston West	22.1	£4.50
Bedfont	20	£6.50
Isleworth	20	£7.22
Feltham West	19.4	£6.37
Cranford	19	£12.70
Syon & Brentford Lock	17.8	£5.25
Feltham North	17.4	£6.67
Hanworth Park	16.7	£6.70
Heston East	16.4	£5.46
Hounslow Heath	16.2	£7.67
Brentford West	15.8	£9.00
Heston Central	15.8	£9.00
Hounslow West	14.6	£6.90
Chiswick Gunnersbury	14.1	£10.00
Hounslow East	13.1	£5.46
Hounslow Central	12.1	£9.00
Chiswick Riverside	12	£7.05
Hounslow South	11.4	£7.15
Osterley & Spring Grove	11.4	£7.00
Chiswick Homefields	8.9	£10.90

Breakfast clubs and after school care

The average cost of breakfast club and after school clubs have been based on a one-hour breakfast club and a three-hour after school club model within hub localities:

Hub area	Breakfast club	After school club
East	£3.99	£19.25
West	£3.75	£7.50
Central	£4	£10.50

Holiday schemes

Assessing the cost of a holiday playscheme is complicated as there are several variants, including whether the scheme is school-run or run by a private provider. Schemes do not all open for the same number of hours each day; some open for less than 7 hours a day, others open between 7 and 9 hours a day and some are open longer than 9 hours.

In Hounslow, only three holiday playschemes were identified as being managed by a school. They all operated for more than 9 hours a day, with an average daily cost of £24.25.

Costs summary 0-4 year olds

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

For childcare to be sustainable, providers need to generate sufficient income to ensure they are meeting operating costs. At the same time, childcare needs to be affordable to parents and carers.

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

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

Costs summary – out of school provision

Out-of-school providers have the same issues as Early Years providers do – regardless of occupancy levels, the income received for places needs to cover costs for them to remain sustainable. If providers cannot remain sustainable and have to close, this will not only limit parental choice, it could also lead to a challenge to the Council in terms of sufficiency of places.

Key focus and future actions

New childcare offers from April 2024

Currently only **3- & 4-year-olds** from eligible working families can access **30** hours of funded childcare. From September 2025, the 30-hour offer will be extended for working families from when their child is **9 months old**.

The schedule for the rollout of the extended entitlements is as follows:

- from **April 2024**, all eligible working parents of **2-year-olds** will be able to access **15** funded hours per week
- from **September 2024**, all eligible working parents of children aged **9-23 months** will be able to access **15** funded hours per week
- from **September 2025**, all eligible working parents of children aged **9 months up to 5 years old** will be able to access **30** funded hours of childcare per week

The extended entitlements will have implications for the Local Authority's short- and long-term planning to meet the anticipated increase in demand, ensuring sufficient capacity and high-quality provision in Hounslow continues.

To ensure that all types of Hounslow childcare settings remain viable to provide capacity in future, there will need to be a strategic approach to manage the growth in places against the impact of the current population decline.

Sustainability

The Council is reliant on private childcare providers to fully meet its statutory duties. Having sufficiently qualified staff within those settings has a positive impact on the overall quality of Early Years provision. Data on levels of staff qualifications is collected annually and will continue to be monitored.

For all types of childcare to be sustainable, providers need to generate sufficient income to ensure they are meeting operating costs. At the same time, childcare needs to be affordable to parents and carers. If providers cannot remain sustainable, Hounslow's sufficiency duty will be impacted.

Decline in Ofsted registered childminder numbers

As demand for childcare is expected to grow, the "Do Something Big" campaign was launched by the DfE in February 2024, aimed to boost interest in the sector and support recruitment into Early Years and Childcare roles.

Plans are in place to develop a steering group to locally address the steep decline in Hounslow childminder numbers.

Sufficiency of Wraparound places

By 2026, the ambition of the National Wraparound Childcare Programme is that all parents and carers of primary school-aged children will be able to access term-time childcare in their local area from 8am-6pm.

There were 65 providers of wraparound childcare across the borough as of July 2024. Following a supply-and-demand mapping data exercise, together with data provided by the DfE, the number of additional wraparound places needed in Hounslow by Sept 2026 is estimated at 560 places.

With regards to holiday provision, since the introduction of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) in 2020, the number of schemes and places in the borough has remained stable. Hounslow currently sees on average 20% take up from the children that are eligible for a funded HAF place. The national average is currently 24%. Strategies are being employed to increase local take up.

Childcare expansion capital projects

As a result of the extended entitlements, the DfE had forecast the need for 87 new places by September 2024 and 622 places by September 2025, however the figure of 622 has since been revised by the DfE to 252.

Childcare Expansion capital grant funding of £383,924 was awarded to the Council by the DfE to increase the physical capacity of Early Years and Wraparound provision in local areas where demand is likely to exceed existing supply.

Four capital projects have been identified to take forward for physical expansion to create 24 places for under-twos and 50 places for 2-year-olds by September 2025.

Report end