Nottingham City Council

Full Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Report

2026

Introduction

Childcare Sufficiency: A Statutory Duty for Local Authorities

Sufficient, accessible and high-quality childcare is an essential factor in promoting school readiness; widening access to employment and study for parents; as well as maximising opportunities for families to benefit from the economic, social and health benefits of employment. The Childcare Act 2006 (updated 2016) places a duty on all Local Authorities to secure sufficient childcare for free early years provision for qualifying children of working parents aged from 9 months, free early years provision for parents with children eligible for Early Learning for 2 years olds and free early years provision for all 3- and 4-year-olds (universal provision), to enable parents to work or undertake education or training which could assist them to obtain work, including wraparound childcare. Whilst the Local Authority is not responsible for providing childcare itself, it is responsible for managing the market to ensure that these duties are met.

Purpose

The purpose of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) is to evaluate the current childcare market in Nottingham City, considering the availability of, and vacancies within, childcare provision, across the age groups and measuring this against reported parental demand for childcare to enable parents to work or undertake education or training. This is particularly pertinent for this full CSA, given the full implementation in the expansion of the early years entitlements and the increase in wraparound provision for school age childcare since the last full CSA was undertaken in 2023. Triangulating data from childcare providers, schools, parents and local employers allows us to identify where they may be current, or anticipated, pressure points with childcare sufficiency, across areas, or age groups, and enables us to pro-actively mitigate against these concerns to ensure the LA's statutory duty for childcare sufficiency continues to be met.

Monitoring Childcare Sufficiency

Given how significantly the childcare market can change, and the impact even one provider opening or closing can have on sufficiency, Nottingham City Council publishes a full CSA report on a three yearly cycle, followed by bi-annual data refreshes to monitor any significant change.

Methodology

For this full CSA, childcare providers, schools, parents and local employers were consulted via an online survey during the Summer Term 2026. Surveys were distributed across a variety of platforms, and with wider partner engagement, to ensure a robust and representative level of response was achieved.

Childcare Sufficiency Report

The following report is the full CSA 2026 which covers: the supply of childcare places, vacancy levels and current parental demand; participation in the government's funded early years entitlements and provision for school age children. Additionally, the report reviews the quality and accessibility of provision, further detail from the parents and local employers survey and local demographic data.

All queries should be directed to Catherine Smith, Early Years Programmes Manager, at catherine.smith@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Childcare Sufficiency: Current Context

Children and Education Services share a clear and ambitious vision for the future of support for children, young people and families across Nottingham. We are building a future where every child and young person is seen, heard and supported to thrive. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) plays an important role in delivering this vision and aligns with Nottingham's Best Start in Life, Best Start Strategy 2025-2035, Best Start in Life Strategic Plan 2026-2028, School Age Childcare Strategy and the Council Plan 2025-29. In particular, it contributes to the Council's core missions of delivering for local people by supporting healthier and safer communities, improving education and skills outcomes, and leading Nottingham forward through economic growth and regeneration.

Nottingham City benefits from a diverse childcare sector comprising of more than 250 Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) early years providers and schools. This CSA examines the sufficiency, accessibility and availability of childcare across the early years entitlement programmes for children aged 0 to 5 years, while also considering provision for primary-aged children through the School Age Childcare Strategy. These providers play a vital role in supporting local families and underpinning the city's economy by enabling parents and carers to access employment, education and training. Together, they deliver a broad and diverse childcare offer that supports positive outcomes for children and helps ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive.

Access to sufficient, affordable and high-quality childcare is fundamental to improving outcomes for children and families. High-quality early years provision promotes school readiness, supports children's learning and development, and lays the foundations for future success. At the same time, accessible childcare enables parents and carers to participate in employment, education and training, helping families to benefit from the economic, social and wellbeing advantages that work can provide. A strong and sustainable childcare market therefore contributes not only to better outcomes for children but also to wider economic growth, supporting employers, strengthening workforce participation and helping to build a prosperous and inclusive city.

Previous actions

Both the 2024 and 2025 CSA Action Plans were primarily focused on increasing childcare capacity to support the delivery of the expanded early years entitlements and wraparound childcare programmes. Identified sufficiency gaps, informed by projected demand and the anticipated trajectory of place growth, were used to shape the demographic targeting and prioritisation criteria underpinning the Local Authority's capital and revenue funding programmes. Wards identified for priority action were Aspley, Bestwood, Meadows, Clifton West and Dales (Sneinton). Following the targeting of capital funding and expansion support, no sufficiency gaps remain in these wards however, Clifton West, Bestwood and Meadows remain a concern due to high take-up of places. These wards will be monitored closely as part of the LA CSA Action Plan 2026.

What are the Childcare Sufficiency Assessments telling us?

The quality of childcare provision in Nottingham remains strong, with 100% of day nurseries and pre-schools, and 99% of childminders within the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector, rated as meeting or exceeding the expected standard by Ofsted, or newly registered.

Based on the latest sufficiency assessment, there are currently sufficient childcare places available across all age groups. This conclusion is informed by the ratio of available places to eligible children, together with existing vacancy levels. The number of childcare places has increased across all age groups, while demand has also risen in most age categories.

Although there has been a small reduction in the overall number of childcare providers operating within the city, levels remain broadly in line with the national average.

Take-up rates are particularly high, and continuing to increase, in some wards and age groups. These areas will be closely monitored to ensure sufficient capacity is maintained, with targeted intervention implemented where necessary to address emerging pressures.

SECTION 1: The Supply of Childcare Services in Nottingham City

To assess childcare sufficiency, we need to identify the number of childcare places (supply) and compare this with current and future parental demand.

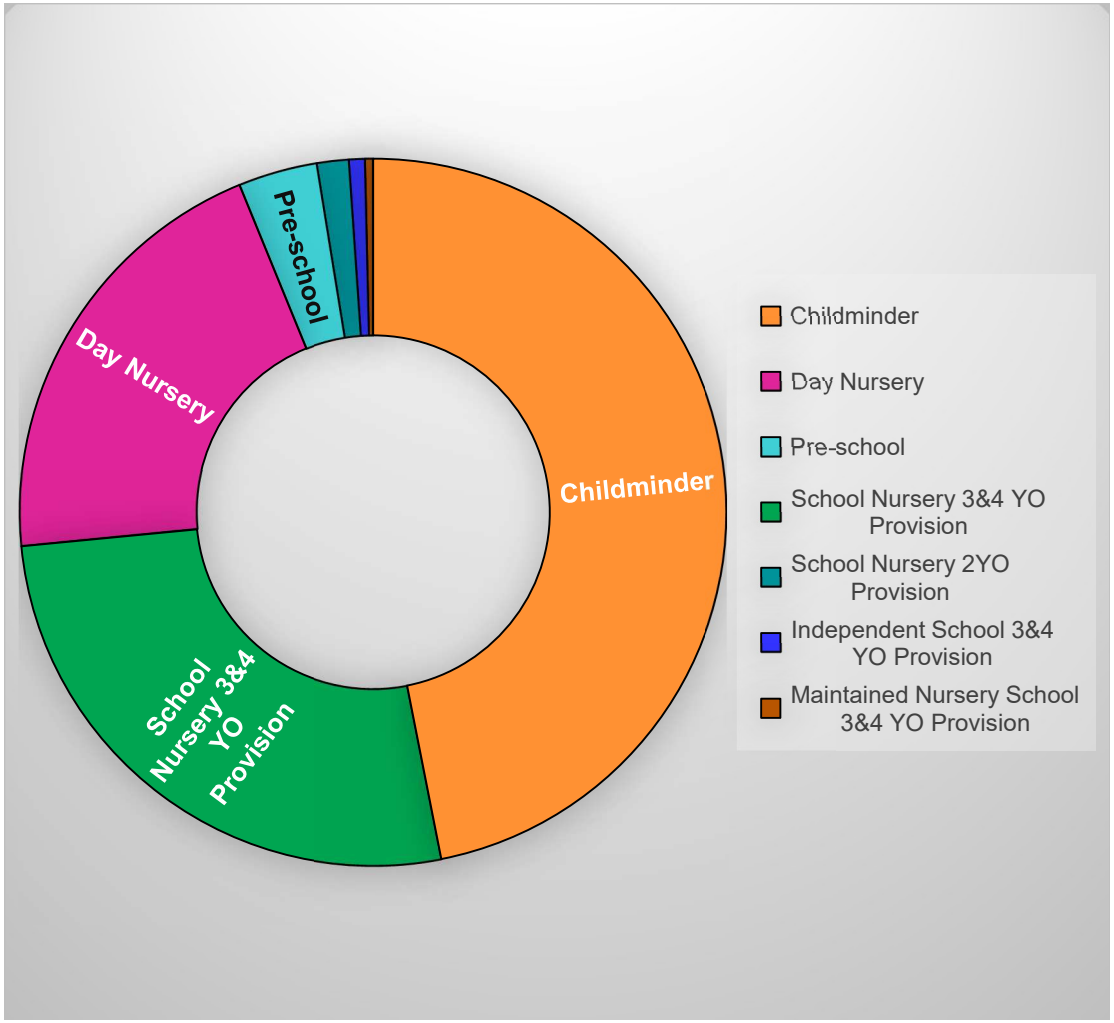
The CSA tracks the number of childcare places which have closed since the last CSA data refresh in 2025 and the number of new childcare places that have opened, both on a ward and City-wide level. This helps us to understand the childcare offer and highlights any sufficiency concerns on a community level to enable targeted intervention.

The assessment includes provision for pre-school and school age children and explores availability during term time, during the holidays and all year round. We look at Ofsted inspection data and provision for children with SEND to ensure the assessment encompasses accessible, inclusive and quality childcare services.

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SECTION 1a: Overview of Childcare Services in Nottingham

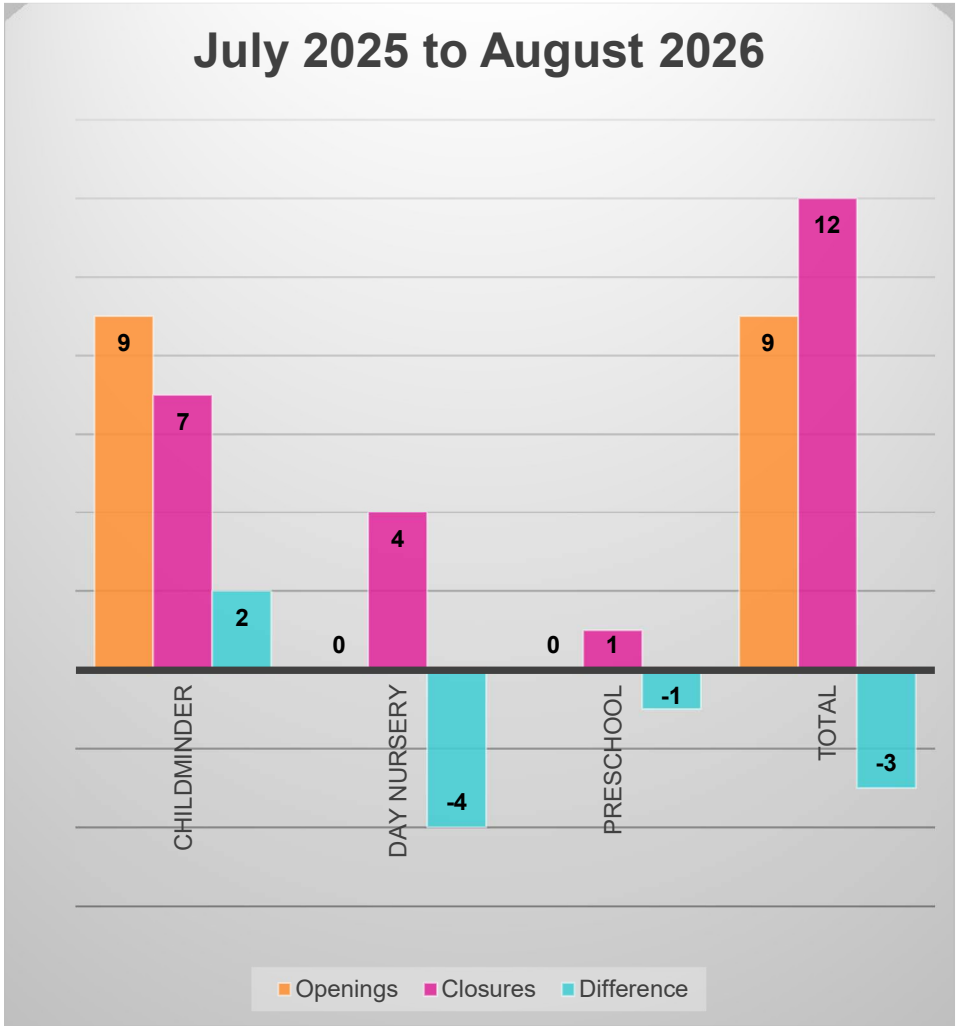


In Nottingham, there are a total of 275 registered early years and childcare providers. This includes childminders, day nurseries, pre-schools and school nurseries. This data is based on information held on the Your Notts Directory, supported by the FIS Team (Families Information Service)

As the School Age Childcare Strategy evolves (incorporating before and after school wraparound childcare, free breakfast clubs, holiday provision and the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme), sufficiency data concerning this will be reported separately and can be found on page 6.

Childminders	**129**
Day Nurseries	**56**
Pre-Schools	**10**
School Nurseries 3&4 YO Provision	**73**
School Nurseries 2 YO Provision	**4**
Independent Schools 3&4 YO Provision	**2**
Maintained Nursery School 2,3&4 YO Provision	**1**

SECTION 1b: Registered Childcare Provision: Openings and Closures *(sourced from Ofsted data and Childminder Agency data)*



What is the data telling us?

Overall, Nottingham has seen a 2% decrease in the number of registered childcare providers since spring term 2025. The most recent comparative national data reports a 1% drop in the number of childcare providers. Unlike nationally, the decline in childcare providers in Nottingham is due to day nursery closures and not a decrease in childminders which have increased by 2% during the same period.

Main findings: childcare providers and inspections as of 31 March 2026 - GOV.UK

Both the daycare and pre-school closures were because of falling occupancy resulting from the business no longer being sustainable. One business has reopened under new ownership, and another is in process to reopen, again, under new ownership.

Risks:

The childcare sector in Nottingham is facing several challenges, including rising household and business costs, alongside changes in parental childcare preferences. Although current provision remains sufficient to meet demand across the city, the expansion of early years entitlements is increasing demand for places. This presents a potential risk to future sufficiency and highlights the need for continued monitoring, with these pressures to be reflected in the Local Authority Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) Action Plan 2026.

SECTION 1c: School Age Childcare *(sourced Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Provider Surveys Summer 2026, National Wraparound Childcare Data and DfE Free Breakfast Club Data)*

The DfE's School Age Childcare Sufficiency Guidance refers to School Age Childcare (SAC) as paid for and free childcare provision, delivered outside of normal school hours, including care provided by schools and the PVI, both on and off the school site, and also other government programmes that may not have childcare as their primary focus but provide care for children outside of the school day, such as free breakfast clubs and the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme. LAs are expected to facilitate the delivery of sufficient childcare in response to local need.

Wraparound Childcare Provision

- 61% of schools have before and after school provision available for children at their school (24% delivered directly by school, 21% delivered by a PVI provider & 16% delivered between the school and a PVI provider)
- 31% of schools have a partial wraparound offer
- 8% of schools have no wraparound offer

National Free Breakfast Club Programme

- 36% of schools are taking part in the National Free Breakfast Club Programme.

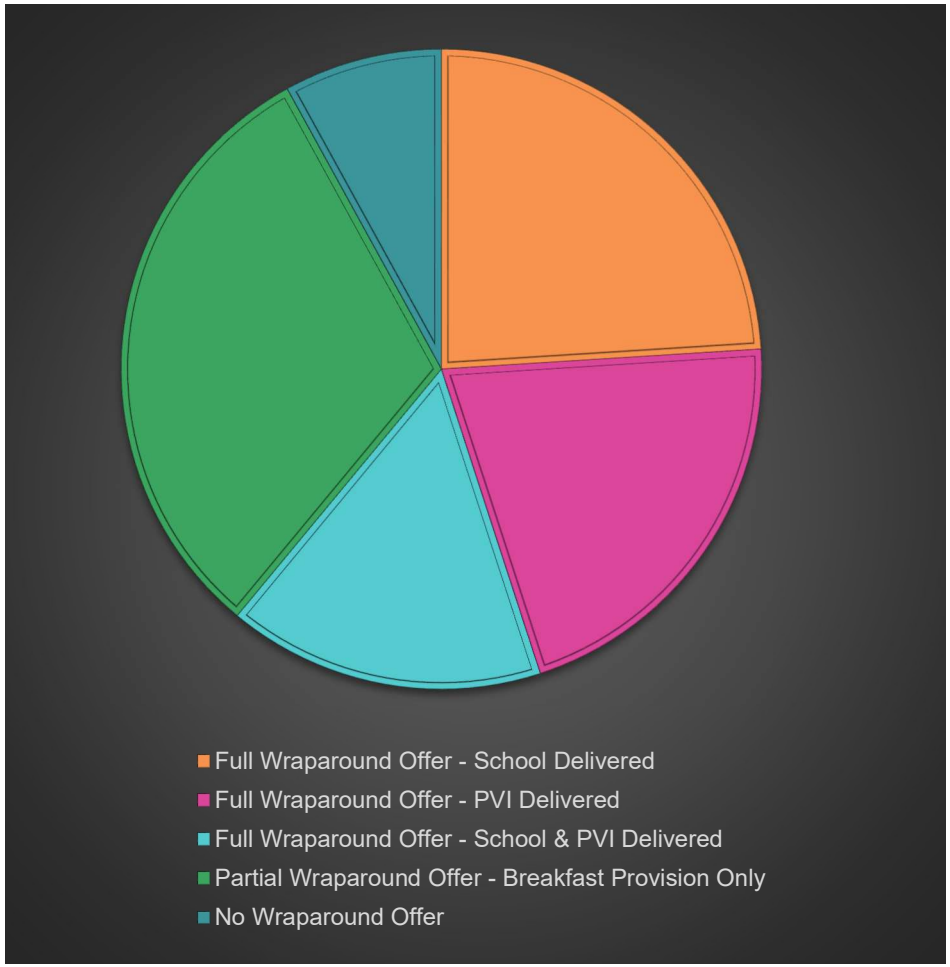
HAF Programme

- 47 HAF Programmes running across Nottingham City over October Half Term.

Delivery of the local SAC strategy will focus on prioritising schools without wraparound provision and ensure that existing provision is sustainable and of high quality, encouraging and supporting schools to participate in further rounds of the Free Breakfast Club Programme as this is rolled out and sharing information via the Early Years Website and promoting the HAF Programme to encourage take up.

Current Wraparound Offer in Nottingham City

September 2026



SECTION 1d: Ofsted Inspection and Quality of Childcare *(sourced from local Ofsted data and Childminder Agency data)*

In Nottingham City, we currently have 99% of all early years providers graded at the expected standard or above by Ofsted or are newly registered.

Ofsted inspection grades as of 30/07/2026	Expected standard or above	Below Expected standard	Newly Registered	Total	Proportion Expected standard or above
Childminder	**106**	**1**	**22**	**129**	**99%**
Day Nursery/ Pre-School	**63**	**0**	**3**	**66**	**100%**
School	**70**	**1**	**2**	**73**	**99%**

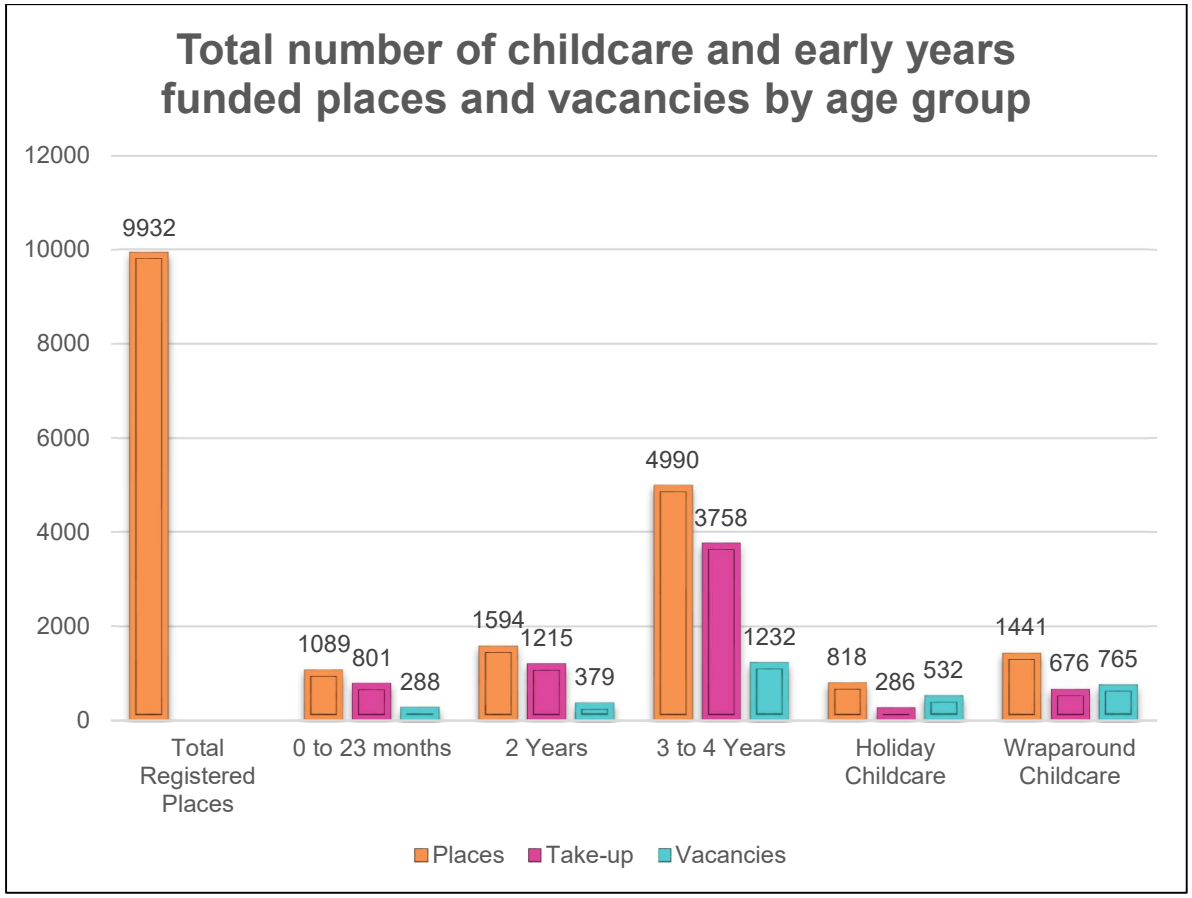
Classification (Ofsted inspection grading pre and post November 2025)

- **Expected standard or above**: Pre November 2025 - *outstanding, good, met*. Post November 2025 - *safeguarding met and expected, strong or exceptional standard in Leadership and Management*
- **Below expected standard**: Pre November 2025 – *requires improvement, inadequate, not met*. Post November 2025 – *safeguarding not met and needs attention or urgent improvement in Leadership and Management*

Since the completion of the last full CSA in 2023, **Ofsted** has implemented significant reforms to its inspection framework, fundamentally changing both the inspection process and the way provider performance is assessed and reported. The revised **Education Inspection Framework (EIF)** was introduced in November 2025 for early years providers, state-funded schools and further education providers. Further updates, including revised inspection toolkits, operating guides and a new DfE-Ofsted statistical model for contextualising pupil achievement, were implemented in September 2026. Under the new framework, providers receive a detailed report card rather than a single overall judgement, such as *Good* or *Outstanding*. Performance is assessed across five categories: **Exceptional**, **Strong Standard**, **Expected Standard**, **Needs Attention**, and **Urgent Improvement**. In addition, **Inclusion** is now evaluated as a standalone judgement, alongside explicit consideration of staff and leader wellbeing.

As a result of these substantive changes to the inspection framework and grading methodology, data collected under the current system is not directly comparable with the data presented in the Full CSA 2023 report.

SECTION 1e: Total Number of Childcare Places *(taken from the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Provider Survey Summer Term 2026)*



Summary

The number of childcare places has increased across all age groups. Due to a change in reporting arrangements this year, before and after-school places are now recorded as a combined wraparound provision, therefore the actual increase in all childcare places is likely to be higher.

On average, there is one childcare place available for every 35 children across the city. Currently, 29% of childcare places are vacant.

Since Spring Term 2025:

- Childcare places for children aged **0 to 23 months** have increased by **32%**, with take-up increasing by 2**3%**
- Childcare places for **2-year-olds** have increased by **25%**, with take-up increasing by **33%**
- Childcare places for **3 and 4-year-olds** have increased by **20%**, while take-up has increased by 2**4%**
- Holiday childcare places have increased by **25%**

Key Messages

- Overall childcare capacity continues to grow across all age groups, most significantly in provision for children aged 0 to 23 months.
- Providers report an increase in demand for 0 to 23 months places and subsequent waiting lists. This will be explored further through the LA CSA Action Plan 2026.
- Demand has increased for places across all age groups, reflecting growing uptake of early years entitlements.
- Nearly a third of childcare places remain vacant, indicating there is sufficient capacity across the city to meet current demand.

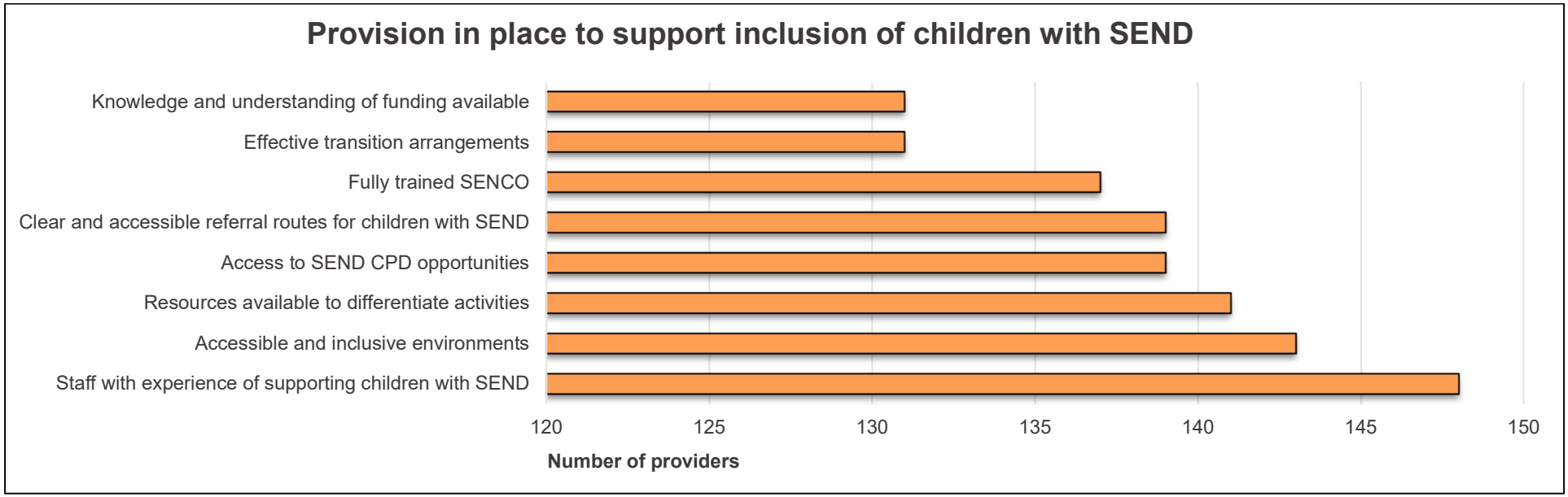
SECTION 1f: Provision for Children who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

(sourced from the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Provider Survey Summer Term 2026)

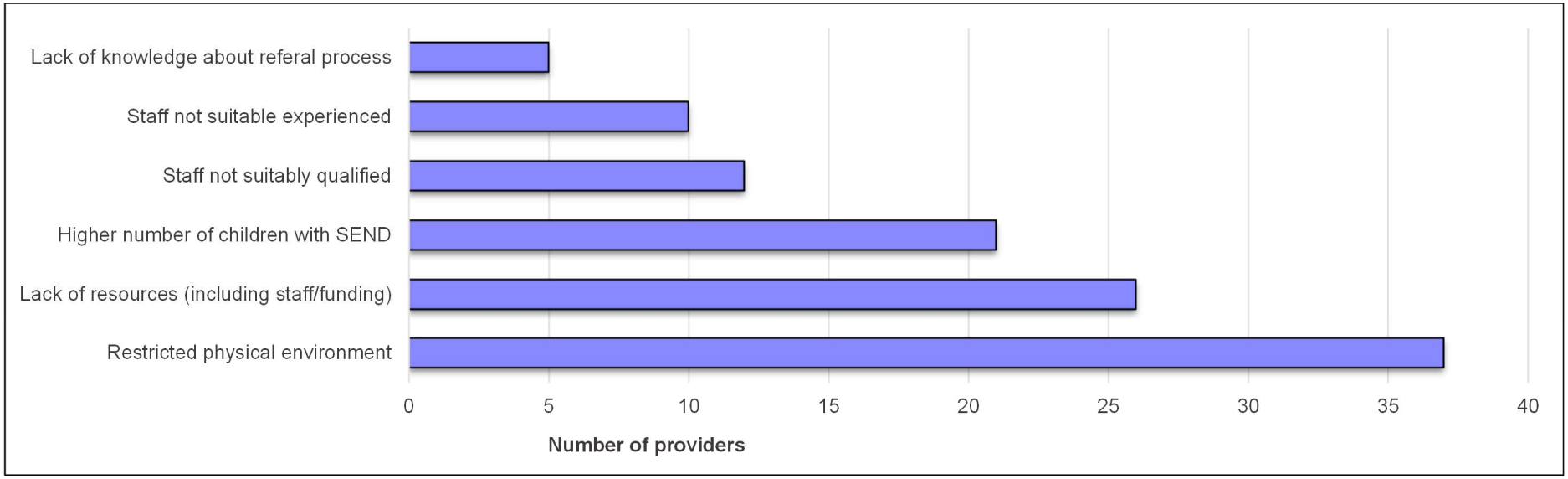
Local Provision of SEND (Schools and PVI)

Data from the Summer Term 2026 CSA Provider Survey (Schools and PVI) highlights the significant role that early years providers continue to play in supporting children with SEND across Nottingham.

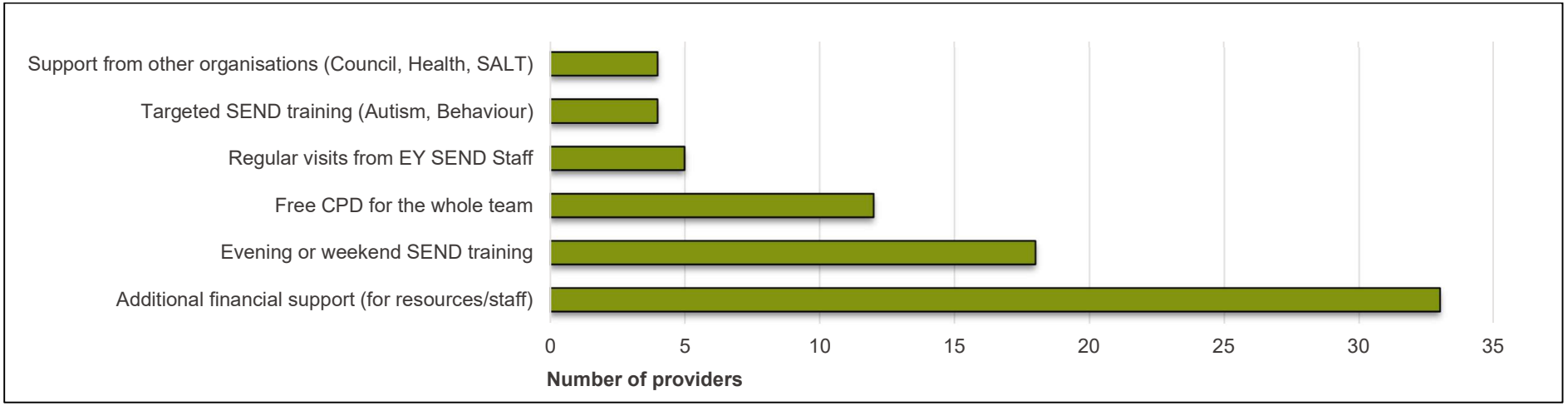
- 63% of providers reported supporting one or more children with SEND, representing a slight increase of 1% compared with Spring 2025.
- Providers reported supporting a total of 2,348 children with SEND. The majority of these children (74%, 1,743) were attending school-based provision, while 26% (605) were supported within the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector.
- Of the 2,348 children identified with SEND, 385 either had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or were undergoing the EHCP assessment process. A further 693 children were reported to be receiving High-Level Needs (HLN) funding or Special Educational Needs Inclusion Funding (SENIF).
- **Encouragingly, 76% of providers reported that their provision was fully equipped and accessible for all children**. This represents a substantial increase of 25% since Spring 2025, suggesting growing confidence among providers in their ability to meet the needs of children with SEND. The factors contributing to this response are outlined in the table below.



For the 24% of providers who did not feel fully equipped and accessible to all children. Their reasons are stated below:



Providers reported the following to enable them to feel supported with SEND:



SECTION 2: Current Uptake of Childcare Places

To develop a comprehensive understanding of childcare sufficiency, it is important not only to assess the number of available childcare places against the population of children within each age group and ward, but also to consider levels of occupancy and vacancy across the city's childcare provision.

Examining occupancy and vacancy rates provides a clearer picture of where pressures exist within the childcare market and helps identify areas where additional capacity may be required. It also highlights where targeted parental engagement activity may be needed to increase participation in childcare, particularly in relation to the uptake of funded early years entitlements

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SECTION 2a: Birth to Two Year Old Places and Uptake *(sourced from the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Provider Survey Summer 2026)*

Places and uptake for children aged two years (funded and non-funded provision)

		A	B	B /A x 100	Spring 2025 comparison	
	Number of children in ward (0 to 2 yrs.)	Number of available childcare places	**Uptake** of childcare places	**Uptake** Rate		
Aspley	425	39	31	79%	72%	↑
Basford	407	58	37	64%	71%	↓
Berridge	510	42	32	76%	17%	↑
Bestwood	435	27	19	70%	75%	↓
Bilborough	432	38	33	87%	58%	↑
Bulwell	428	39	29	74%	72%	↑
Bulwell Forest	290	52	46	88%	45%	↑
Castle	82	53	38	72%	83%	↓
Clifton East	339	32	27	84%	71%	↑
Clifton West	160	4	2	50%	64%	↓
Dales	464	59	44	75%	100%	↓
Hyson Green & Arboretum	445	63	58	92%	57%	↑
Leen Valley	219	43	36	84%	90%	↓
Lenton & Wollaton East	225	187	117	63%	83%	↓
Mapperley	336	46	33	72%	51%	↑
Meadows	267	18	14	78%	86%	↓
Radford	264	39	30	77%	46%	↑
Sherwood	305	115	83	72%	67%	↑
St Ann's	440	28	21	75%	100%	↓
Wollaton West	330	103	72	70%	80%	↓
Nottingham	**6803**	**1085**	**802**	**74%**	**71%**	↑

SECTIONS 2b: Two Year Old Places and Uptake *(sourced from the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Provider Survey Summer 2026)*

Places and uptake for children aged two years (funded and non-funded provision)

		A	B	B /A x 100	Spring 2025 comparison	
	Number of children in ward (2 yrs.)	Number of available childcare places	**Uptake** of childcare places	**Uptake** Rate		
Aspley	242	106	83	78%	64%	↑
Basford	209	60	43	72%	79%	↓
Berridge	265	65	44	68%	49%	↑
Bestwood	221	37	25	68%	70%	↓
Bilborough	218	73	62	85%	60%	↑
Bulwell	199	72	49	68%	66%	↑
Bulwell Forest	183	109	67	61%	48%	↑
Castle	45	52	37	71%	56%	↑
Clifton East	192	58	49	84%	77%	↑
Clifton West	100	22	20	91%	79%	↑
Dales	229	61	47	77%	36%	↑
Hyson Green & Arboretum	233	80	69	86%	69%	↑
Leen Valley	107	61	50	81%	59%	↑
Lenton & Wollaton East	150	225	169	75%	76%	↓
Mapperley	211	77	57	74%	68%	↑
Meadows	156	26	23	88%	93%	↓
Radford	158	86	71	83%	79%	↑
Sherwood	189	135	105	78%	78%	→
St Ann's	274	75	59	79%	70%	↑
Wollaton West	201	113	86	76%	75%	↑
Nottingham	**3782**	**1593**	**1215**	**76%**	**68%**	↑

SECTION 2c: Three and Four Year Old Places and Uptake *(sourced from the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Provider Survey Summer 2026)*

Places and uptake for children aged three and four years old (funded and non-funded provision)

		A	B	B /A x 100	Spring 2025 comparison	
	Number of children in ward (3 and 4 yrs.)	Number of available childcare places	**Uptake** of childcare places	**Uptake** Rate		
Aspley	430	253	191	75%	63%	↑
Basford	309	324	225	69%	71%	↓
Berridge	483	248	177	71%	56%	↑
Bestwood	425	336	294	88%	72%	↑
Bilborough	357	271	156	58%	56%	↑
Bulwell	365	252	219	87%	66%	↑
Bulwell Forest	264	283	172	61%	67%	↓
Castle	71	94	70	74%	75%	↓
Clifton East	293	295	216	73%	63%	↑
Clifton West	157	73	58	79%	76%	↑
Dales	352	262	167	64%	57%	↑
Hyson Green & Arboretum	385	354	338	95%	88%	↑
Leen Valley	181	151	123	81%	68%	↑
Lenton & Wollaton East	246	334	200	60%	79%	↓
Mapperley	317	176	157	89%	79%	↑
Meadows	239	134	123	92%	97%	↓
Radford	236	228	174	76%	76%	→
Sherwood	234	336	269	80%	69%	↑
St Ann's	449	270	192	78%	91%	↓
Wollaton West	292	316	237	75%	79%	↓
Nottingham	**6084**	**4990**	**3758**	**75%**	**71%**	↑

SECTION 2d: Out of School Places and Uptake *(sourced from the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Provider Survey Summer 2026)*

	Number of children in ward (4-11)	Holiday Scheme Places	Wraparound Provision: Breakfast and After School 8am to 6pm	Wraparound Provision: % Uptake
Aspley	3,171	82	85	42%
Basford	1,934	75	88	60%
Berridge	1,815	54	72	26%
Bestwood	2,049	69	116	47%
Bilborough	2,059	50	112	39%
Bulwell	2,035	30	97	66%`
Bulwell Forest	1,328	29	53	55%
Castle	211	35	19	0
Clifton East	1,788	194	363	22%
Clifton West	959	46	48	77%
Dales	2,037	30	87	38%
Hyson Green & Arboretum	2,014	12	43	42%
Leen Valley	791	11	54	89%
Lenton & Wollaton East	1,072	13	40	63%
Mapperley	1,415	47	64	64%
Meadows	1,010	13	28	75%
Radford	853	26	5	0
Sherwood	1,508	2	64	95%
St Ann's	1,757	82	83	25%
Wollaton West	1,718	26	107	90%
Nottingham	**31,524**	**926**	**1628**	**51%**

SECTION 2e: Early Years FUNDED Provision – 9 months to 23 months (working parent) *(sourced from the Summer Term 2026 Early Years Headcount, measured against the associated DWP data of potentially eligible children)*

	Number of potentially eligible children in ward	Take-up PVI	Take-up schools	Take-up %	Spring Term 2025 comparison	
Aspley	78	44	0	56%	45%	↑
Basford	112	57	0	51%	35%	↑
Berridge	67	42	0	63%	48%	↑
Bestwood	64	41	0	64%	56%	↑
Bilborough	103	59	0	57%	41%	↑
Bulwell	91	39	0	43%	44%	↓
Bulwell Forest	100	38	0	38%	40%	↓
Castle	26	18	0	69%	27%	↑
Clifton East	97	38	0	39%	42%	↓
Clifton West	25	11	0	44%	56%	↓
Dales	90	33	0	37%	24%	↑
Hyson Green & Arboretum	121	25	0	21%	10%	↑
Leen Valley	42	22	0	52%	71%	↓
Lenton & Wollaton East	82	23	0	28%	16%	↑
Mapperley	53	32	0	60%	42%	↑
Meadows	42	18	0	43%	26%	↑
Radford	95	5	0	5%	8%	↓
Sherwood	104	55	0	53%	55%	↓
St Ann's	84	22	0	26%	32%	↓
Wollaton West	100	81	0	81%	74%	↑
Other		289	0			
Nottingham	**1576**	**992**	**0**	**63%**	**74%**	↓

SECTION 2f: Early Years FUNDED Provision - Two-Year-Old Uptake (parents accessing additional support)

(sourced from the Summer Term 2026 Early Years Headcount, measured against the associated DWP data of potentially eligible children)

	Number of potentially eligible children in ward	Take-up PVI	Take-up schools	Take-up %	Spring Term 2025 comparison	
Aspley	84	60	5	77%	63%	↑
Basford	58	28	0	48%	46%	↑
Berridge	45	35	6	91%	81%	↑
Bestwood	94	64	3	71%	45%	↑
Bilborough	72	43	13	78%	49%	↑
Bulwell	44	54	2	127%	70%	↑
Bulwell Forest	91	16	2	20%	35%	↓
Castle	7	7	0	100%	113%	↓
Clifton East	55	24	0	44%	52%	↓
Clifton West	12	4	0	33%	56%	↓
Dales	46	31	2	72%	49%	↑
Hyson Green & Arboretum	47	33	9	89%	79%	↑
Leen Valley	16	12	3	94%	46%	↑
Lenton & Wollaton East	25	19	2	84%	64%	↑
Mapperley	35	23	12	100%	45%	↑
Meadows	31	17	4	68%	54%	↑
Radford	39	28	17	115%	102%	↑
Sherwood	28	13	1	50%	43%	↑
St Ann's	59	41	19	102%	76%	↑
Wollaton West	19	10	0	53%	88%	↓
Other		27	3			
Nottingham	**907**	**589**	**100**	**76%**	**64%**	↑

SECTION 2f: Early Years FUNDED Provision - Two-Year-Old Uptake (working parent) *(sourced from the Summer Term 2026 Early Years Headcount, measured against the associated DWP data of potentially eligible children)*

	Number of potentially eligible children in ward	Take-up PVI	Take-up schools	Combined	Take-up %	Spring Term 2025 comparison	
Aspley	90	47	0	47	52%	55%	↓
Basford	78	38	1	39	50%	34%	↑
Berridge	100	42	0	42	42%	60%	↓
Bestwood	86	54	0	54	63%	95%	↓
Bilborough	79	62	0	62	78%	50%	↑
Bulwell	81	39	0	39	48%	36%	↑
Bulwell Forest	65	57	0	57	88%	46%	↑
Castle	17	7	0	7	41%	25%	↑
Clifton East	67	52	1	53	79%	63%	↑
Clifton West	36	13	0	13	36%	183%	↓
Dales	86	31	0	31	36%	45%	↓
Hyson Green & Arboretum	90	19	0	19	21%	10%	↑
Leen Valley	42	48	2	50	119%	61%	↑
Lenton & Wollaton East	55	21	0	21	38%	19%	↑
Mapperley	76	26	0	26	34%	78%	↓
Meadows	58	17	0	17	29%	50%	↓
Radford	58	10	1	11	19%	6%	↑
Sherwood	60	51	0	51	85%	70%	↑
St Ann's	103	34	0	34	33%	26%	↑
Wollaton West	70	85	0	85	121%	66%	↑
Other		216	2	218			
Nottingham	**1397**	**969**	**7**	**976**	**69%**	**58%**	↑

SECTION 2g: Early Years UNIVERSAL FUNDED Provision - Three- and Four-Year-Old Uptake *(sourced from the Summer Term 2026 Early Years Headcount)*

	Number of children in ward (3 and 4 yrs.)	Take-up PVI	Take-up schools	Take-up %	**Spring 2025 comparison**	
Aspley	430	339	167	118%	55%	↑
Basford	309	261	159	136%	75%	↑
Berridge	483	182	206	80%	68%	↑
Bestwood	425	348	241	139%	69%	↑
Bilborough	357	287	160	125%	67%	↑
Bulwell	365	261	186	122%	70%	↑
Bulwell Forest	264	195	142	128%	71%	↑
Castle	71	251	15	375%	56%	↑
Clifton East	293	90	188	95%	65%	↑
Clifton West	157	215	39	162%	50%	↑
Dales	352	1	129	37%	55%	↓
Hyson Green & Arboretum	385	288	184	123%	72%	↑
Leen Valley	181	163	94	142%	59%	↑
Lenton & Wollaton East	246	143	91	95%	60%	↑
Mapperley	317	164	89	80%	55%	↑
Meadows	239	148	109	108%	82%	↑
Radford	236	158	112	114%	92%	↑
Sherwood	234	192	96	123%	47%	↑
St Ann's	449	274	197	105%	77%	↑
Wollaton West	292	252	83	115%	67%	↑
Other		499	134			
Nottingham	**6084**	**4711**	**2821**	**123%**	**72%**	↑

SECTION 2h: Early Years EXTENDED FUNDED Provision (30 hours) - Three- and Four-Year-Old Uptake

(sourced from the Summer Term 2026 Early Years Headcount)

	Number of potentially eligible children in ward	Take-up PVI	Take-up schools	**Uptake** Rate
Aspley	99	104	32	137%
Basford	71	90	38	180%
Berridge	111	90	37	114%
Bestwood	97	128	85	220%
Bilborough	82	101	32	162%
Bulwell	84	94	61	185%
Bulwell Forest	61	73	35	177%
Castle	16	14	1	94%
Clifton East	67	84	48	197%
Clifton West	36	48	14	172%
Dales	81	42	14	69%
Hyson Green & Arboretum	88	42	11	60%
Leen Valley	41	67	15	200%
Lenton Abbey & Wollaton East	56	31	7	68%
Mapperley	73	62	23	116%
Meadows	55	37	15	95%
Radford	54	28	12	74%
Sherwood	54	113	27	259%
St Ann's	103	53	21	71%
Wollaton West	67	137	17	230%
Other		311	32	
Nottingham	**1395**	**1,749**	**577**	**167%**

SECTION 3: Demand for Childcare

This section contains the results from the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Parent Survey 2026. The survey was completed using Microsoft Forms and was accessible via laptop/computer or mobile phone and the immersive reader function was enabled. The form was also translatable on request.

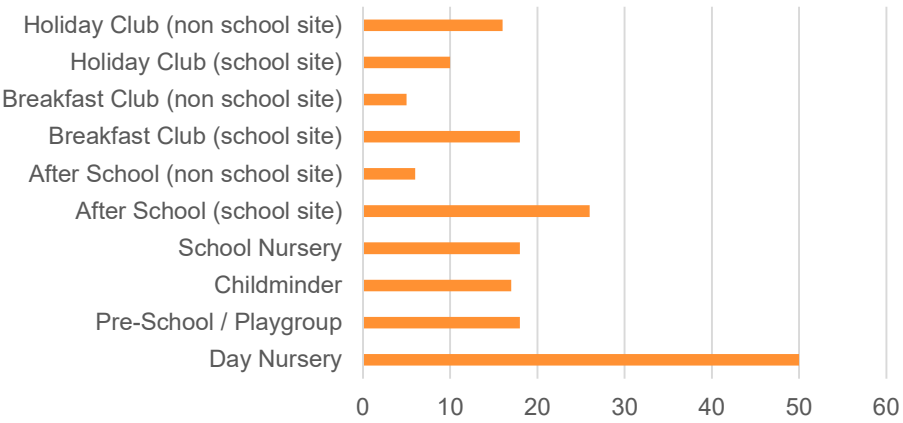
Survey distribution and parental engagement (face to face and via local and social networks): via Your Notts Directory website, CityCare, NCC Social Care, NCC Early Help, Best Start Family Hubs, childcare providers and schools, SEND support services, Literacy Trust volunteers, Family Mentors, Community Groups Families Information Service and others.

A total of 193 parents responded to the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Parent Survey this year, 245% increase compared to the last parental survey taken in 2023. We are really pleased with this engagement and response which helps provide a fuller picture of parental demand for childcare in the city.

Page 22	**Parents Currently Accessing Formal Childcare**
Page 23	**Parents Not Accessing Formal Childcare**
Page 24	**Demand for Childcare Provision for Children with SEND**
Page 25	**Childcare Information Services**
Page 26	**Future Childcare Needs**



SECTION 3a: Parents Currently Accessing Formal Childcare *(sourced from the Childcare Sufficiency Parent Survey 2026)*

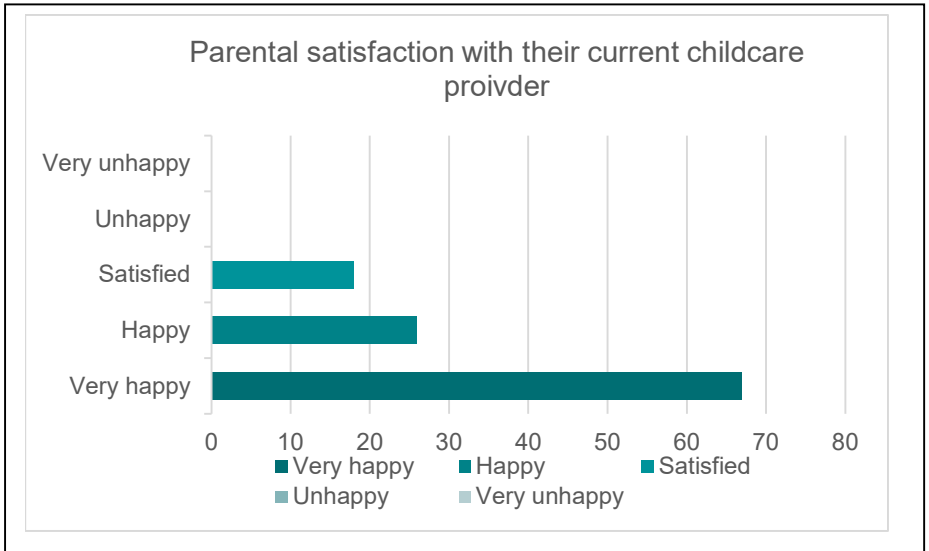


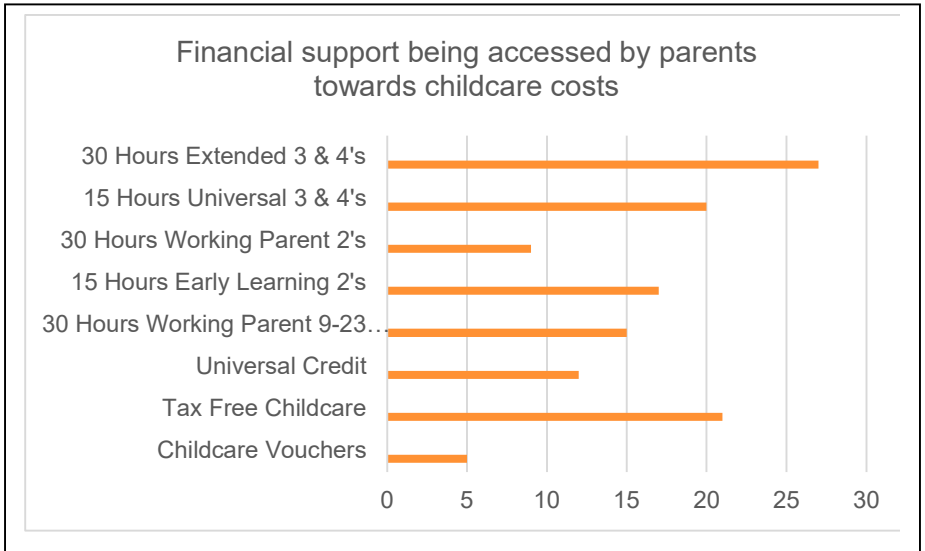
Summary

58% of parents who responded to the survey reported using formal childcare provision.

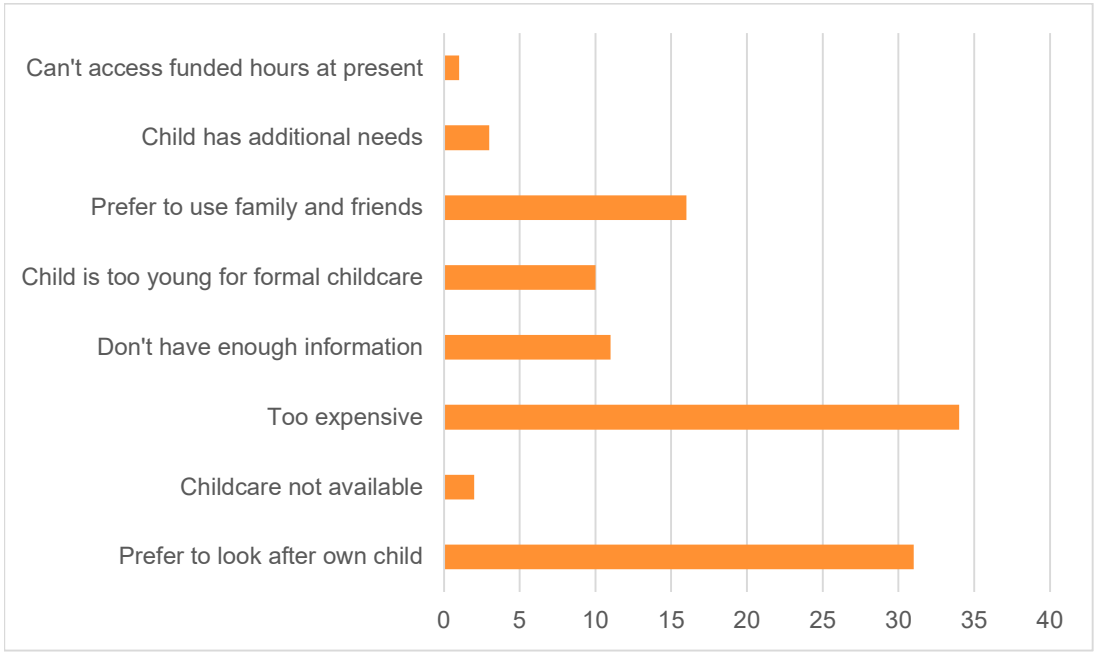
Overall, 84% of parents stated that they were either happy or very happy with their childcare provider. However, among those satisfied with their current childcare arrangements, 62% identified the cost of childcare as a challenge. In addition, more than half of respondents were accessing school-age childcare provision. These findings will be explored further through the CSA action planning process.

Day nurseries were most commonly used form of childcare among survey respondents. For families accessing wraparound childcare, provision delivered on school sites was the most popular option.





SECTION 3b: Parents Not Accessing Formal Childcare *(sourced from the Childcare Sufficiency Parent Survey 2026)*



What is the data telling us?

- Of the 193 parent survey respondents, 42% did not use formal childcare (for example, day nursery, childminder or school provision).
- It is important to note, 22% of all respondents prefer to look after their own children or, prefer to use family and friends to support with their childcare arrangements.
- Of those parents seeking but not currently accessing childcare, 76% state cost as a barrier to securing childcare services.

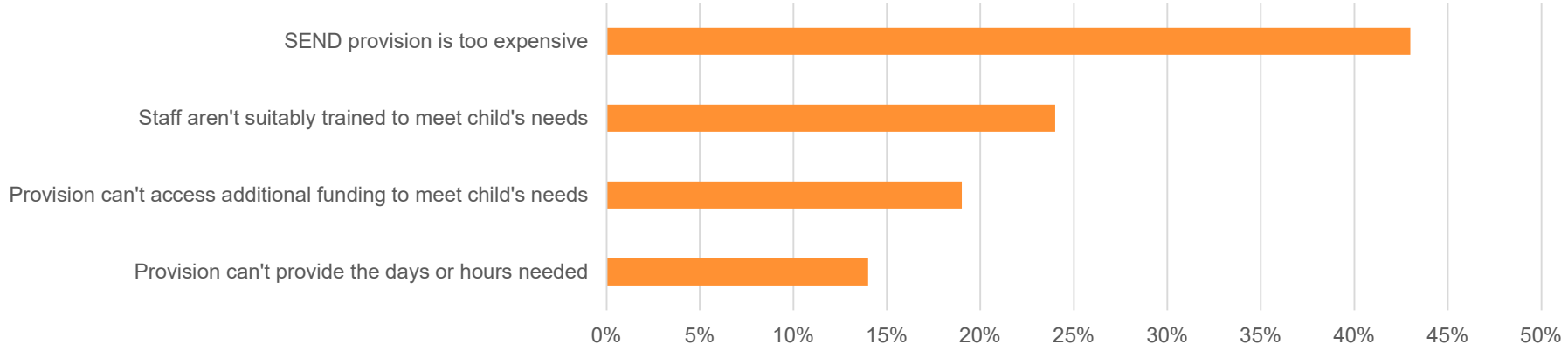
Despite significant government investment in funded early years entitlement support for working parents of 9+ months, 42% of parents cited the cost of childcare as the most significant factor in preventing them from using formal childcare, as a result of which, 54% were unable to increase their hours at work, train to work or take up employment opportunities.

Promotion of financial support to help with childcare costs, ensuring parents know where they can find information about help with childcare costs and finding childcare provision needs to be a focus of our strategic market management action plan as a result of these CSA findings to ensure all families wishing to use formal childcare are able to do so.

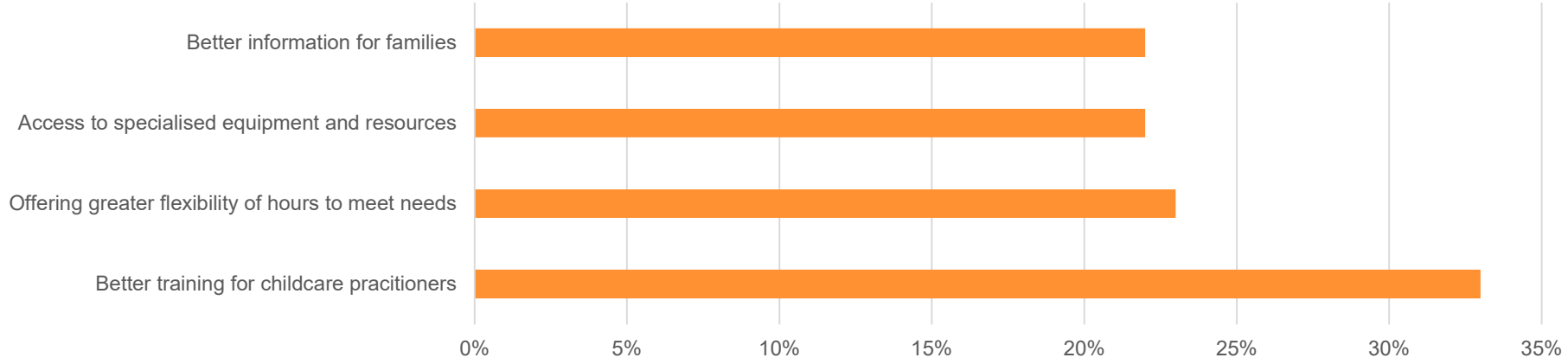
SECTION 3c: Demand for Childcare Provision for Children with SEND *(sourced from the Childcare Sufficiency Parent Survey 2026)*

28% of parents responding to the Childcare Sufficiency Parent Survey reported as having children with SEND. Of these parents, 46% had children aged 4 years and under, 40% had primary school aged children, 5-11 years and 14% had children over 12 years of age.

24% of these parents reported not being able to find suitable childcare arrangements for their children with SEND for the following reasons:

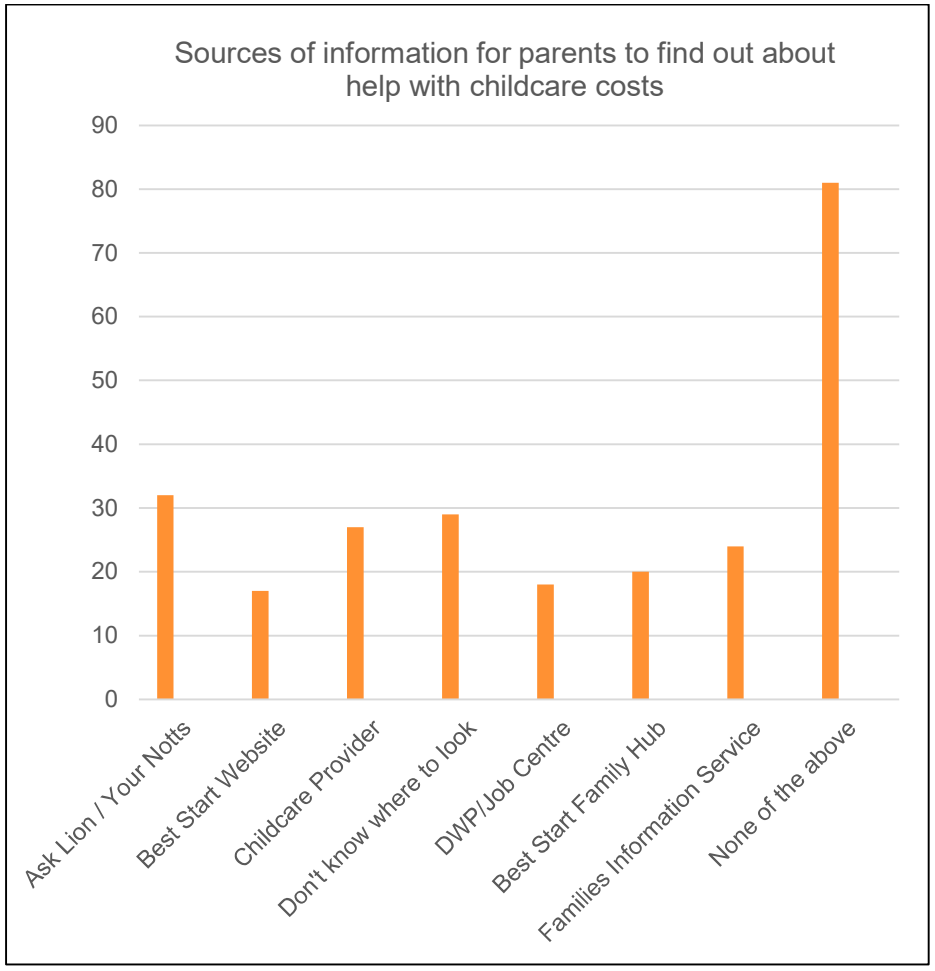


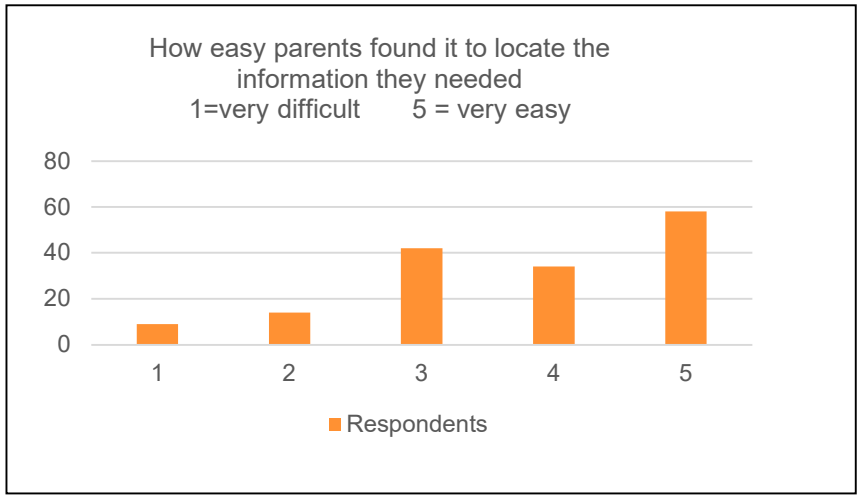
When asked what would improve local childcare for children with SEND, parents of children with SEND reported the following:



SECTION 3d: Childcare Information Services *(sourced from the Childcare Sufficiency Parent Survey 2026)*

Finding childcare can be challenging. In Nottingham City we are fortunate to have a rich, mixed economy of childcare places in the private, voluntary and independent childcare sector (day nurseries, pre-schools and childminders) and in schools. For parents, knowing what to look for in quality childcare provision and where to find this information can be confusing and may deter parents from returning to work, training or accessing services for themselves and their families. It is essential therefore that the information services offered locally and nationally for families are visible.



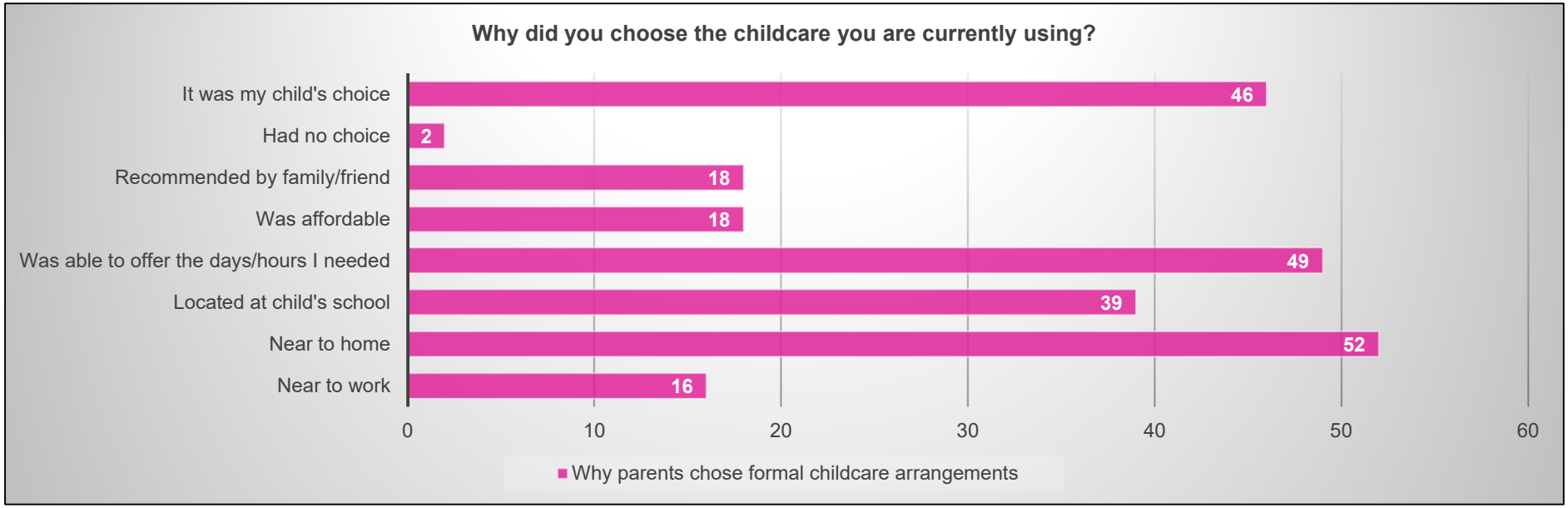


The parent survey has provided an insight into where parents go to access information to help them find out about financial support with childcare costs. Most respondents used the Your Notts Directory (formerly ASKLiON), with the next largest response group stating that they didn't know where to look. With some parents accessing Your Notts Directory, the Best Start website (formerly Childcare Choices), Family Hubs and the Families Information Service, there is a need to extend and accelerate promotion and participation with all partners agencies to ensure those working directly with families are equipped to support and signpost parents and that parents can easily source the information they are seeking.

SECTION 3e: Future Childcare Needs *(sourced from the Childcare Sufficiency Parent Survey 2026)*

To understand future childcare needs, the parent survey explored demand by - type of provision, frequency in days of the week, frequency across the week and frequency across the year. The results demonstrated a greater demand for part-time provision (35% compared to 29% requiring full-time provision) that is available all year round (37% compared to 16% requiring term time only provision). 21% of respondents required provision 8am – 6pm, Monday to Friday, with less than 10% of respondents seeking before, after school, evening or weekend care. Respondents stated a preference for childcare provision within day nurseries open all year round (21%), with provision in school nurseries being favoured over separate pre-school care during term time only (20% compared to 8%). With sufficient provision and vacancies across the City, this provision is available, so the subsequent actions will be around marketing and communications to increase participation. There also remains a high demand for out of school provision with 18% of respondents seeking before and after school provision and 20% seeking provision during the holidays for school age childcare, which will be addressed through the implementation of the local School Age Childcare Strategy.

Respondents currently accessing childcare described the determining factors for their current choice of childcare provision. Being close to home, being able to offer the days/hours needed and being of good quality were the top three determining factors. These factors are key when marketing existing provision or developing new provision, to increase occupancy levels and aid overall sustainability of the provision, especially in priority wards where additional places are needed or participation levels are low.



SECTION 4: Additional, Influential Factors

There are many influential factors connected to childcare supply and demand.

These include – current economic climate affecting families and businesses, access to employment and working patterns, birth rates, housing development (particularly those developing family homes), training and supply of early years practitioners, availability and access to government funding (childcare costs) and any additional costs of childcare to the family.

Page 28	**Current Climate of Childcare Services**
Page 29	**Current Climate of Childcare Services (continued)**
Page 30	**Current Economic Climate on Families**
Page 31	**Demographic Information**
Page 32	**Demographic Information (continued)**
Page 33	**Employers and Employment**

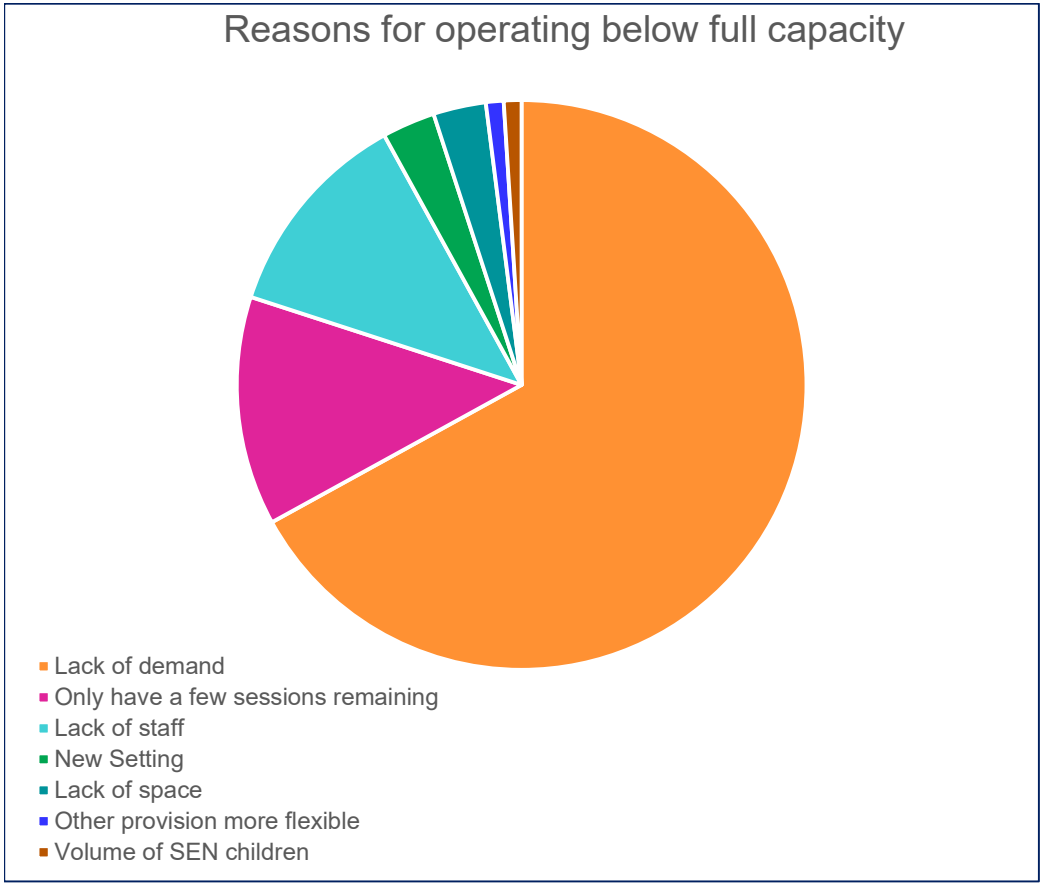


SECTION 4a: Current Climate of Childcare Services *(sourced from the Childcare Sufficiency Provider Survey 2026)*

Sustainability headlines

Operational Capacity

- 43% of Providers, across Schools and PVI Settings, including childminders were operating at full capacity.
- For the 57% not operating at full capacity, 67% reporting this based on lack of demand.



Provider's Plans for Expansion

15% of providers reported plans to expand their childcare provision. The provision to be expanded was reported as being planned across the following age groups:

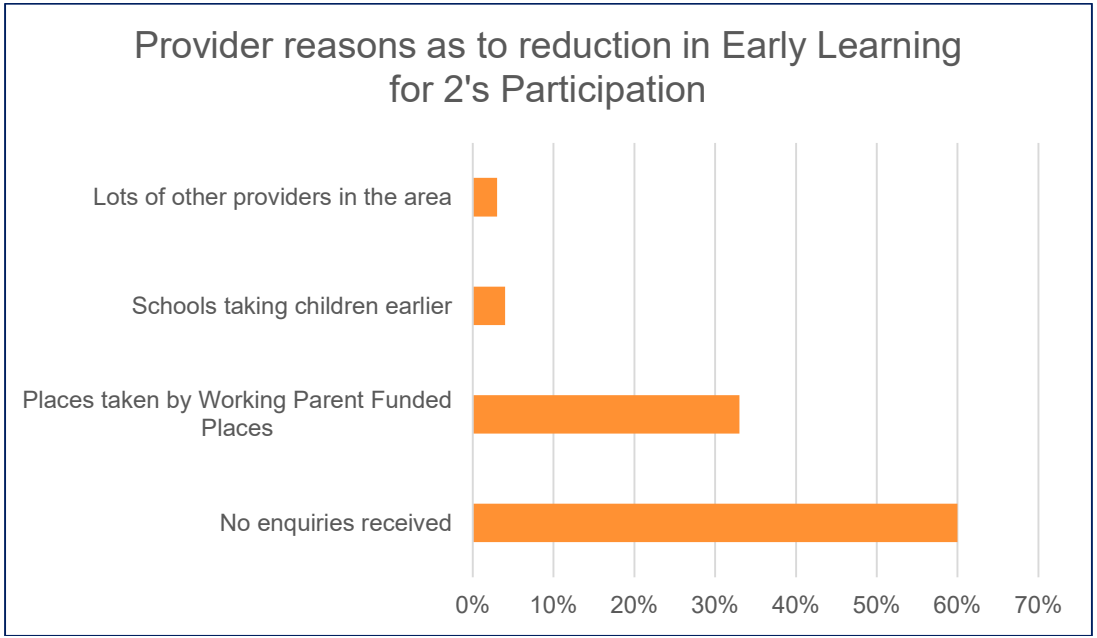
0 – 23 Months	22%
2 Year Olds	23%
3 & 4 Year Olds	22%
Wraparound Care	19%
Holiday Care	14%

The plans for expansion have been noted as follows:

Expanding/altering space	23%
Recruiting more staff	23%
Offering more flexibility	17%
Operating more sessions	10%
Opening for longer hours	10%

Early Learning for 2 Year Olds – Declining Participation

19% of providers reported a notable decrease in participation for Early Learning for 2-year-olds places (formerly Disadvantaged 2's or Families Receiving Additional Support)



The drop in take-up of 2-year-old Early Learning has been experienced nationally. There are a few reported reasons for this:

- Falling birth rates
- Fewer families qualifying due to eligibility thresholds
- Confusion over expanded entitlements

Priority should be given to the Early Learning element particularly where families may be eligible for both this and the Working Parent element. Work is underway to refresh our parental engagement to ensure families are being supported correctly, and our data reflects actual participation.

Increase in Early Years Entitlements Participation

49% of providers reported a notable increase in participation of the early years entitlements.

The table below illustrates the percentage of providers that report a notable increase across the following age groups:

0 – 23 Months	60%
2 Year Olds	18%
3 & 4 Year Olds	22%

Waiting Lists

25% of Providers reported operating a waiting list.

The table below illustrates the percentage of providers with waiting lists across the following age groups:

0 – 23 Months	40%
2 Year Olds	32%
3 & 4 Year Olds	28%

SECTION 4b: Current Economic Climate on Families

Cost of Living Crisis

Families and childcare providers alike are struggling amid rising energy bills, fuel costs and general costs of living increases. For families, rising costs are forcing parents to reconsider household budgets and re-prioritise essential and non-essential costs. Childcare may be a cost which is no longer affordable. For childcare businesses, they are experiencing the same pressures, with the addition of business rates increases and increased staffing costs.

According to the Office for National Statistics findings (Opinions and Lifestyle Survey 2025):

- Around 2 in 3 (66%) adults reported that their cost of living had increased, compared with a month ago. Whilst this represented a decrease from the 76% reported in April 2023, it has been steadily increasing since 2024 back towards the 2023 figures, with 87% of adults reporting it as one of the most important issues facing the UK today.
- Of adults living alone with at least one dependent child:
    - 20% reported they had run out of food in the last 2 weeks.
    - 64% reported they would be unable to pay a necessary but unexpected expense of £850
    - 49% reported they had borrowed more money than usual in the last month
    - Reported the following because of increases in their cost of living – spending less on food shopping and essentials (58%), using less fuel in their home (47%), using more credit than usual (35%) and using support from charities (17%).

The Coram Family and Childcare Survey 2026 reported:

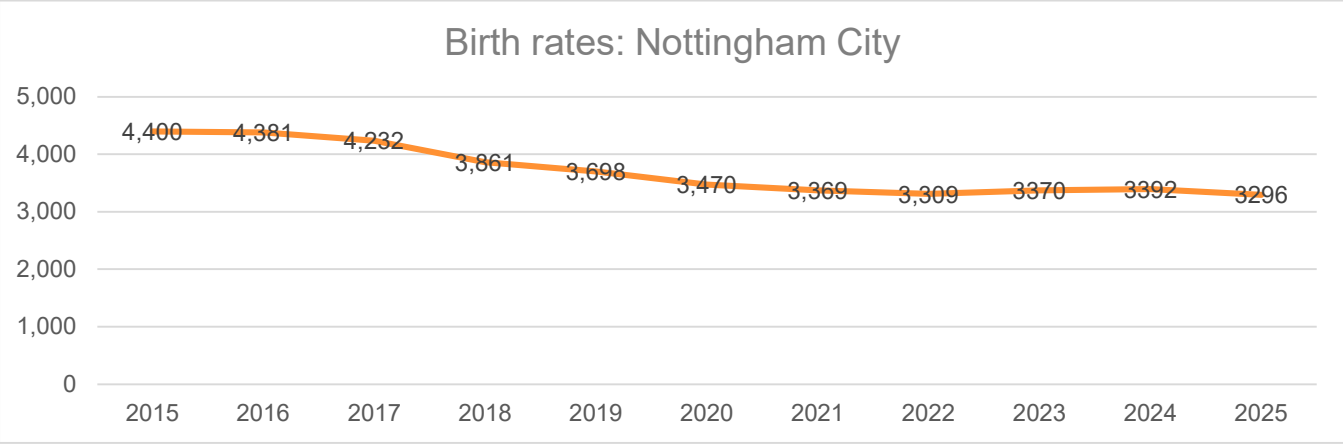
- With the expansion of the funded early years entitlements since 2024, eligible working families have experienced a significant reduction in the percentage of their household income spent on childcare for children under the age of 2. However, for a full time, 50 hour per week place, these families still need to pay for an additional 20 hours (after the 30-hour entitlement) at an average cost of £149 per week during term time and £372 per week, without any entitlements, outside of term time, representing a 22% increase from 2024 costs.
- For families not in receipt of funded entitlements, the proportion of household income needed to pay for childcare has increased. Many of these ineligible families are likely to have lower incomes, potentially resulting in an even higher proportion of their household income being needed to pay for part time childcare.

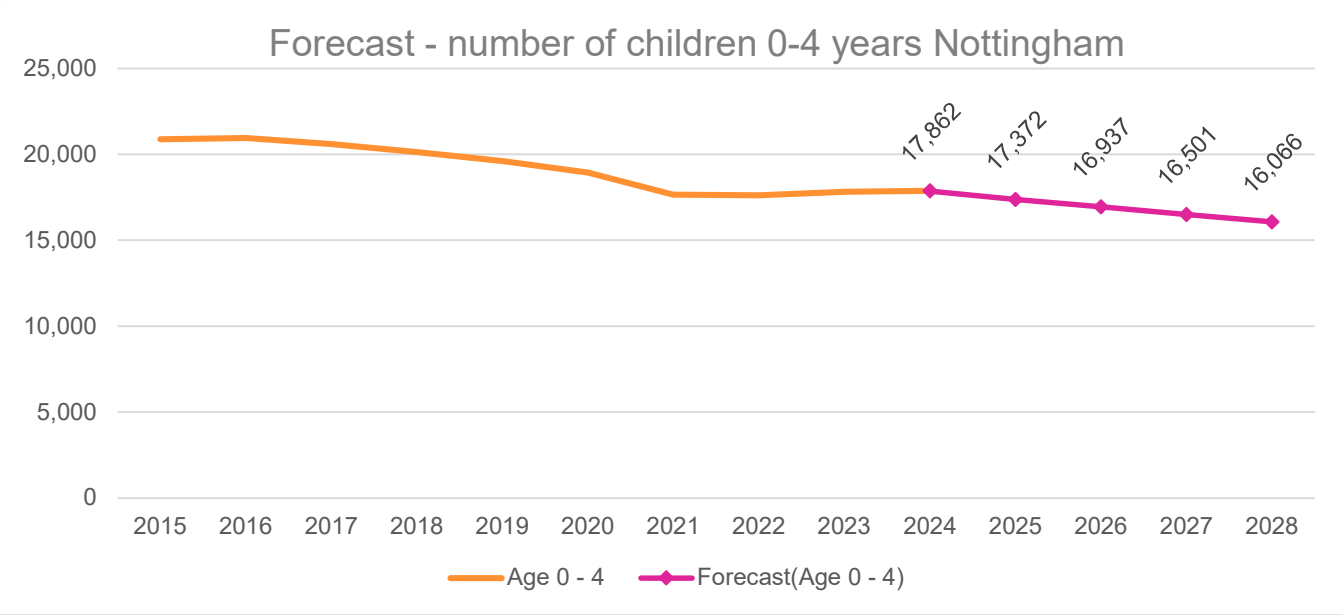
Changes to Family Working Patterns

Following the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, more parents continue to be able to access flexible working arrangements including working from home. This has enabled parents to adapt their working hours to enable them to manage their own childcare arrangements, which may have a sustained detrimental impact on all childcare provision, particularly that of the out of school sector, where the children are a little older and no longer needed to be in provision before and after school daily when they have a parent working from home.

SECTION 4c: Demographic Information

Birth Rate (ONS: Births in England and Wales)





In Summary

Despite a modest increase in 2023 and 2024, the population of children aged 0-4 has generally declined since 2015, largely reflecting falling birth rates.

Population forecasts for Nottingham indicate that this downward trend is expected to continue until at least 2028. As a result, childcare sufficiency planning will take account of the anticipated reduction in the number of young children over the next two years.

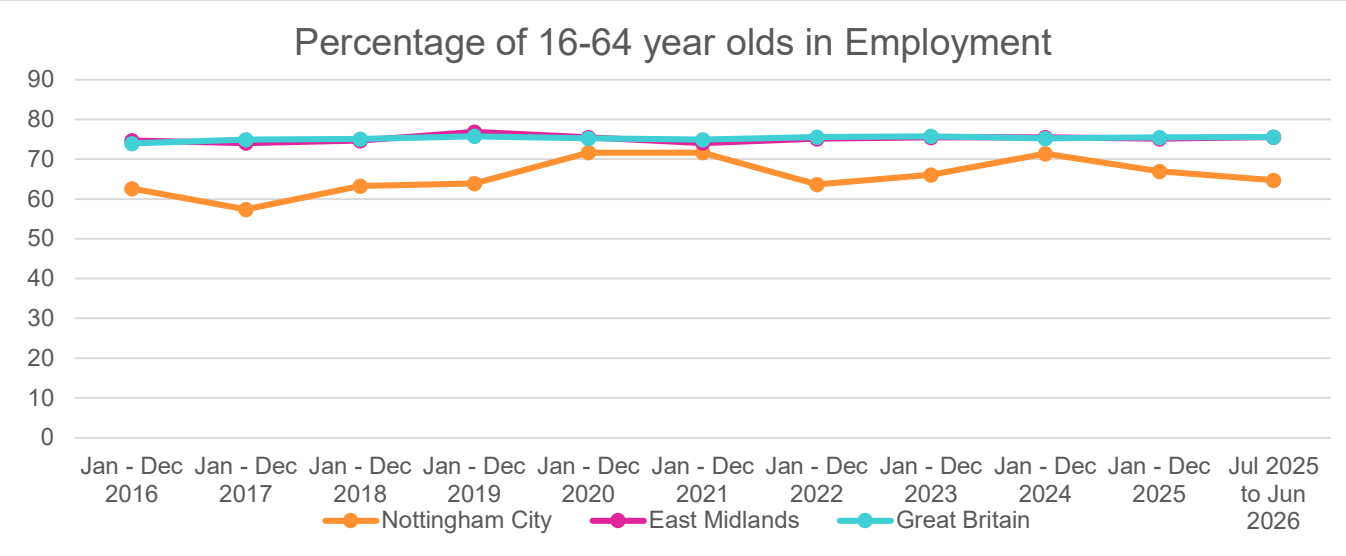
However, these projections should be treated with caution. Forecasts are subject to change, and factors such as an increase in birth rates or a reduction in outward migration could lead to higher-than-expected demand for childcare places.

Local Housing Development

(*Sourced from: https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/information-for-business/planning-and-building-control/building-a-better-nottingham/housing-developments/*)

AREA	LOCATION	DETAIL
Bestwood	Bestwood Road	48 two, three and four-bed family homes
Meadows	Former Meadows Police Station	21 new build apartments
Meadows	Former Clifton Miners' Welfare Club	20 homes
Basford	Tunstall Drive	17 new homes (five two-bed houses and 12 one-bed apartments)
Top Valley	Knights Close	20 family homes
Bulwell	Aldgate Close	13 two, three and four-bed family homes

Employment Rates (*ONS Nomis*)



Nottingham City's employment rates are consistently below regional and national averages for the 16–64-year-old population.

With the recent expansion of the funded hours for the early years entitlements and increase in wraparound provision, the childcare market can support those wanting to return to work and the additional funding for our youngest children may assist with this, which is why monitoring employment rates and childcare supply is critical.

SECTION 4d: Employers and Employment *(sourced from the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Employers Survey Summer 2026)*

Intelligence from local employers and businesses is pertinent to the full Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) to enable the triangulation of demand from parents, supply from providers and the business need of employers, which can influence both. Productive, engaged employees, who know that their family commitments are understood and supported by their employer, contribute to the thriving businesses our economy needs. However, employers can face the difficult task of balancing the needs of their staff with the requirements of the business and this is where the local childcare infrastructure has a significant part to play.

The CSA Employers Survey formed part of this full Assessment and aimed to ascertain key information around how employers support the childcare needs of their employees. Results from the survey can be found below.

Difficulties Noted

- Balancing work and family
- Having no time to take care of their children
- Having to deal with childcare issues at work
- Lack of affordable, reliable childcare provision for both unders 5's and school age children
- Child illness and attending school meetings and events

Impact

- Staff being distracted, work quality, delivery and progress adversely affected
- Inability to attend evening or weeked training or events, work overtime, attend business trips
- Opportunities for promotion limited
- Increase in staff turnover and loss of talent in the workplace
- Impact of staff wellbeing and mental health

Measures taken to support workforce

- Offering flexible working packages
- Parental leave beyond the statutory minimum requirement
- Allowing staff to work from home to manage childcare emergencies
- Time off to attend meetings and events at school/nursery
- Avoiding weekend and evening training and meetings

- 96% of employers believe the expansion in childcare provision has had a positive impact on parents, enabling them to be more available for work.
- 42% of employers shared that the workforce struggled to find childcare, specifically for children under the age of 5, and care for school aged children before and after school and during the school holidays.
- 80% of employers were aware of the Families Information Service and their role in supporting parents to source local childcare provision.
- 76% of employers were aware that their workforce was facing difficulties in being able to work due to lack of suitable childcare. These difficulties were increased where the family was a single parent, the child had SEND, there was no local family support, or the children were at multiple settings with different schedules and routines.

The recent expansion in the early years entitlements make childcare for working families more affordable and the government's newly introduced School Age Childcare Strategy will see further investment in free breakfast clubs in all primary schools, after school provision delivered on or off the school site, in addition to the Holiday and Activities Fund schemes that run across the city. This diverse childcare offer should further the availability, reliability and accessibility of childcare provision, where it is needed most, to meet the needs of all families.

SECTION 5: Childcare Sufficiency and Next Steps

What is the data telling us?

Having collected, collated and analysed data from parents, providers, participation and demographics; we now have an indication of, and can report on, whether Nottingham City has sufficient childcare provision.

The data within this report will enable us to look at sufficiency:

- On a city-wide basis
- On a ward basis
- By age of child
- By type of childcare service
- By childcare provider type

Page 35	**National Context**
Page 36	**Local Context - Childcare Sufficiency in Nottingham City**
Page 37	**Next Steps**



SECTION 5a: National Context *(sourced from Coram Family and Childcare, Childcare Survey 2026)*

The Childcare Survey 2026 marks 25 years since the first survey was published.

General Points

- When the entitlements expanded, costs for eligible working parents fell, but the picture is often more complicated with the entitlements being for 38 weeks, meaning larger bills outside of term time, higher weekly costs for families stretching hours or not eligible for the entitlements.
- Over 50% of LAs reported their most common queries from parents were around the funded entitlements being “free”, the eligible start date of the child and confusion between the entitlements.
- Over half of all 3- and 4-year-olds attend school based or maintained nurseries for their universal hours, compared to only 36% attending a private provider, with the opposite being true for children receiving the 30-hour working parent entitlement, where only 36% are in maintained provision, compared to 53% in private provision.
- For children under the age of 4, the average cost of childcare, after the working parent entitlements have been taken into consideration, are lower in the East Midlands compared to the national average. Childcare costs are lower at childminders than at group-based nurseries. The highest costs being for children aged 2 and under.
- The weekly costs of a group-based after-school club for children aged 5 – 11 years are higher in the East Midlands than the national average, but lower than the national average for childminder provision. After school costs with a childminder are higher than with a group-based provider, both nationally and regionally.

Sufficiency

- LAs in the East Midlands all reported a lower than national average figure in having sufficient childcare across all funded and non-funded entitlements for children aged 4 and under, including for children with SEND, except for provision for children under the age of 2 who are not entitled to any funded entitlements, where 63% of East Midlands LAs reported having sufficient childcare, compared to 58% nationally.
- Nationally, sufficiency is lowest for 12–14-year-olds before and after school, school age childcare for children with SEND and care for children with parents working atypical hours, but LAs in the East Midlands all reported a higher than national averages in these areas.
- In at least 75% of their wards, 75% of East Midlands LAs report having sufficient childcare for early years children and 63% report having sufficient childcare for school age children, both above the national average.
- East Midlands LAs reported the highest levels of provision for children with SEND, with 38% reporting at least 75% sufficiency or above.

SECTION 5b: Local Context - Childcare Sufficiency in Nottingham City

There should be an element of caution when interpreting the data presented in this report. Assessing childcare sufficiency is inherently complex and cannot be determined through a single measure alone. It is therefore important to consider the findings presented in Sections 1 and 2 alongside parental feedback outlined in Section 3, as well as the wider contextual and influencing factors discussed in Section 4. Taken together, these sources provide a more comprehensive understanding of local childcare sufficiency and the factors that may affect current and future demand.

Once again there has been a drop in the number of childcare providers however, this remains broadly in line with national average. Despite current business pressures, new childcare provision continues to open including childminders. It is essential that we continue to support and monitor the sustainability of our existing childcare provision and encourage and support new ventures where they are needed the most. The LA Early Years Team continue to monitor the childcare market through the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA), subsequent CSA action planning and regular termly contact with providers. A tailored package of support, determined by the Provider Support Framework, is offered by a team of EYFS Support Workers. Information and guidance are also offered through the Early Years website.

Despite significant government investment in expanding funded early years entitlements for working parents of children aged 9 months and over, findings from the 2026 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) Parent Survey indicate that affordability remains a significant barrier to accessing formal childcare. 42% of respondents identified the cost of childcare as the primary factor preventing them from using formal childcare provision. Consequently, 54% reported that they were unable to increase their working hours, undertake training, or take up employment opportunities.

These findings highlight the continued importance of ensuring that families are aware of the financial support available to help with childcare costs and know how to access information on childcare options within their local area. Promoting awareness of childcare funding, financial assistance schemes and childcare availability should therefore remain a key priority within a strategic market management action plan. This will help to ensure that all families who wish to access formal childcare are able to do so, supporting both child development outcomes and parental participation in education, training and employment.

Data within this report is captured and scrutinised on a citywide and ward level. Based on the latest sufficiency assessment, there are currently sufficient childcare places available across all age groups. This conclusion is informed by the ratio of available places to eligible children, together with existing vacancy levels. The number of childcare places has increased across all age groups, while demand has also risen in most age categories. The exception is provision for children aged 0-23 months, where demand has decreased slightly.

Take-up rates are particularly high, and continuing to increase, in some wards and age groups. These areas will be closely monitored to ensure sufficient capacity is maintained, with targeted intervention implemented where necessary to address emerging pressures

SECTION 5c: Next Steps

Following the key findings of this latest CSA, a full and detailed Action Plan will be developed to address areas requiring action to ensure the LA continues to meet its statutory duty for securing sufficient childcare within Nottingham City.

A summary of these actions can be found below:

Report Section	Section Heading	Summary Actions

1	Supply of Childcare Services	• Monitor identified pressure points
		• In relation to School Age Childcare, the LA will:
		  ○ Support the sustainability of existing wraparound provision
		  ○ Ensure 100% of schools address wraparound parental needs
		  ○ Promote the National Free Breakfast Club Programme
		  ○ Work in collaboration with HAF to offer a range of provision to parents, all year round
		• Support quality: PSF, Locality Working, CPD offer to support quality provision
		• Address barriers to quality SEND provision

2	Uptake of Childcare Places	• Priority wards for increasing participation – by ward/age/provision, aiding sustainability • Plans for increasing participation and engagement – with FIS, Early Help, Best Start Family Hubs • Embed within Nottingham City BSiL strategy
3	Demand for Childcare	• Promote eligibility of the early years entitlements • Promote financial assistance available • Ensure information reaches all parents • Address access barriers for parents of children with SEND seeking provision
4	Additional Influential Factors	• Establish links with NCC Planning • Continued work to promote provision for working parents and as a career choice with JCP • Supporting providers plans for expansion • Develop resource packs for employers to share with employees around finding provision and financial assistance available

For further information please contact:

Catherine Smith

Early Years Programmes Manager

☎ 0115 876 4548

✉ catherine.smith@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Nottingham City Council, Loxley House,
Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG