

Bradford District

Early Education and Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

2023

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Introduction

Purpose of the Early Education and Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

The Childcare Act 2006 requires local authorities in England to ensure sufficiency of childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, parents who are studying or training and for disabled children. To meet the needs of families' childcare, provision should be accessible, affordable and delivered flexibly in a range of high quality settings.

This report provides a summary of the availability of childcare in Bradford using information on the availability of childcare provision as of September 2023, and the Department for Education January 2023 Early Years Census to enable where possible for national and regional comparison to be made.

A robust early years and childcare sector is essential to enable parents to go out to work or participate in education and training. Early education and childcare provision offer paid for childcare services and government funded early years entitlements.

The constant changing level, nature, and quality of provision in the Bradford District means it is often a difficult market to predict in terms of gaps and over-provision as the picture can look very different within a few short months.

The early education and childcare market is fluid and the continuous changing picture means changes will have occurred since the writing of this report, therefore early education and childcare providers and prospective providers should always undertake their own market research to understand local childcare needs and use the information in this report as a guide only.

1. Child Population

In January 2023 there were 158412 children aged 0 -18 years. (Data source Bradford Health Authority data registered with the NHS within the Bradford District.)

This was an increase compared with January 2022; however, the overall 0-4 population continues to decline. In the same period 57% of Bradford parliamentary wards show a decline in births with the greatest decrease in Wharfedale, Bingley and Bingley Rural wards.

Age of children as of 1 st January	0-18 years
2020	158830
2021	157498
2022	158030
2023	158412

Children aged 0-4 years - Data source Bradford Health Authority data						
Age of children as of 1 st January	0	1	2	3	4	0 - 4
2020	7377	7537	7926	8303	838	39531
2021	6944	7425	7574	7875	8318	38136
2022	6658	6969	7496	7614	7995	37032
2023	6871	7137	7084	7591	7787	36470

Ward	Age 0 1st January 2023	Age 0 1st January 2022	Population change - child	Percentage Decrease
Wharfedale	82	110	-28	25%
Bingley	109	141	-32	23%
Bingley Rural	152	196	-44	22%
Tong	242	294	-52	18%
Baildon	114	137	-23	17%
Manningham	304	351	-47	13%
Idle and Thackley	176	197	-21	11%
Bowling and Barkerend	357	398	-41	10%
Queensbury	189	206	-17	8%
Wyke	161	175	-14	8%
Heaton	271	293	-22	8%
Wibsey	197	210	-13	6%
Ilkley	82	87	-5	6%
Thornton and Allerton	219	228	-9	4%
Great Horton	270	278	-8	3%
Craven	147	150	-3	2%
Shipley	152	155	-3	2%

2. Types of early years and childcare services in Bradford

Childminders are registered and inspected by Ofsted or a Childminding Agency. Childminders work in their own homes providing paid for childcare for children of all ages. Many childminders offer funded early education places for children aged two, three and four year old. Some Childminders offer a drop off and pick up services from schools and other childcare providers.

Childcare on Domestic Premises are registered and inspected by Ofsted or a Childminding Agency. This is where a childminder works with 3 or more other childminders or assistants and work in one of their homes. Some childcare on domestic premises providers offer a drop off and pick up services from other childcare providers and schools. Many offer funded early education places for children aged two, three and four year olds.

Day Nurseries are registered and inspected by Ofsted, they provide children from birth to five years with early education and paid for childcare. Usually, Day Nurseries provide part time or full time places. All Day Nurseries offer funded early education places for children aged two, three and four year old. Some Day Nurseries provide before/after school and holiday care for children of school age and may offer drop off and pick up services from schools and other childcare providers.

Independent School Nurseries are registered with either Ofsted or the Independent Schools Inspectorate, they provide children aged two to five years with early education and paid for childcare. Usually, Independent School Nurseries offer part time or full time places. All Independent School Nurseries offer funded early education places for three and four year olds. Some can provide early education places for two year olds.

Nursery Schools are registered and inspected by Ofsted, they provide children aged two to five years with early education and paid for childcare. Usually, Nursery Schools offer part time or full time places. Some Nursery Schools can provide paid for childcare for children under the age of twos.

Pre Schools are registered and inspected by Ofsted; they provide children aged two to five years with funded early education. Usually, Pre Schools offer mornings or afternoon sessions with some are able to provide full days and also additional paid for hours.

Primary School Nurseries are registered and inspected by Ofsted; they provide children aged three to four years old with funded early education. Some Primary School Nurseries offer funded early education places to eligible two year olds. Usually, Primary School Nurseries offer mornings or afternoon sessions with some able to provide full school days and some offering additional paid for hours.

Out of School Childcare providers caring for children under the age of 8 for more than 2 hours a day must be registered with Ofsted (except for schools that are registered under their school registration). Out of School Childcare providers offer childcare to school age children and provide one or more service types, before school, after school and during school holidays. Most providers offer a pick up and drop off service to local schools.

2. Supply

The supply of early education and childcare places required across the district is managed according to the age range of the children. Demand for early education and childcare places fluctuate according to employment trends as well as population trends. The Private, Voluntary, and Independent sector provision provides much of the flexibility needed to meet demand. Bradford Council seeks to influence market development within the Early Education and Childcare Sector by the provision of data and information which highlights areas of possible unmet demand or over supply across the district. The Early Education and Childcare Sufficiency Assessment uses current and historic information regarding the availability and take up of places by different age ranges, rather than a forecasting approach.

Number of Childcare Providers in Bradford

In September 2023 there were 699 early education and childcare providers across the Bradford District.

Since September 2022 there has been an overall decrease in the early education and market of 7%. The period has seen further closures in the day nursery and pre school sector, however children have been able to access places in alternative local provision. The continued decline in childminders remains of concern.

Closed providers cited reasons for closure as lack of parental demand, insufficiency early education government funding to cover their business costs and choose to gain employment outside the sector.

Early Education and Childcare is available to families through a range of provision types, the table below shows the breakdown by type and number of providers.

Type of early education and childcare provider	Number of Providers 01/09/2021	Number of Providers 01/09/2022	Number of Providers 01/09/2023	Percentage change from 2022 to 2023
Childcare on Domestic Premises	6	7	6	+14.3%
Childminder	337	298	263	-11.7%
Day Nursery	108	101	96	-5%
Independent School Nursery	8	7	7	0%
Primary School Nursery	124	126	126	0%
Nursery School	7	7	7	0%
Out of School Childcare/Tutoring	95	170	162	-4.7%
Pre School	38	37	32	-11.1%
TOTAL	722	752	699	-7%

The table below shows the number of providers that have open and closed within the period September 2022 and September 2023

Type of early education and childcare provider	Number of providers that opened between September 2022 and September 2023	Number of providers that closed between September 2022 and September 2023
Childcare on Domestic Premises	1	0
Childminder	12	47
Day Nursery	0	5
Independent School Nursery	0	0
Primary School Nursery	0	0
Nursery School	0	0
Out of School Childcare/Tutoring	23	15
Pre School Playgroup	0	4

4. Quality of Childcare Provision

There are no sufficiency issues related to quality of early education and childcare. Quality of Ofsted registered early education and childcare provision in the private, voluntary and independent sector across the Bradford District is high.

As of March 2023 97% of providers on the Ofsted Early Years Register receiving a good or outstanding Ofsted inspection outcome at their most recent inspection. This is higher than the national average of 96%.

Providers who are registered on the Ofsted Childcare Compulsory or Voluntary Register are not routinely inspected by Ofsted. Ofsted inspected a proportion of providers at random and as a result of a complaint raised by the public.

Data source - [Childcare providers and inspections as at 31 March 2023](#).

Independent Schools can choose to be registered with the Inspectorate School Inspectorate (ISI). ISI do not make a single overarching judgement on a school and the inspections result in a binary judgement of 'met' or 'not met' against each standard. Independent Schools providing early years' provision are inspected against the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage.

As of the 1st September 2023 100% of providers were graded met.

Data source: ISI website. Individual school reports September 2023

Childminders and Childcare on domestic providers can choose to register with a childminder agency. The childminding agency registers and inspects the provider. Childminding agencies are registered and inspected by Ofsted and can be graded either effective or ineffective.

As of 1st September 2023 56% of provider were registered with a childminder agency judged as effective.

Data source – Ofsted inspection reports 1st September 2023.

Schools providing out of school childcare are not separately inspected, all before after and holiday care services operated by the school are deemed part of the schools Ofsted school registration.

5. Providing information and advice parents

Local Authorities have a statutory duty under Schedule 1 to the Childcare Act 2006 to maintain a service that provides information for parents and prospective parents on the provision of early education and childcare.

Parents, carers and professionals can access up to date early education childcare information using the [Bradford Childcare Finder](#), a telephone helpline, and informative website pages, and bespoke brokerage by an Access and Take Up Officer. www.bradford.gov.uk/children-young-people-and-families/looking-for-childcare/childcare-and-early-education/

6. Providing information, advice and training to early education and childcare providers

Local authorities are required by legislation to secure information, advice and training for early years and childcare providers. Private, voluntary and independent early years and childcare sector Providers receive information, advice and guidance on a regular basis and are offered an annual formal contact. Priority support is offered to providers who are graded less than good and those who are due an Ofsted inspection. 84% of providers took up a formal contact during the period October 2022 and September 2023.

The table below show the number of providers and latest inspection outcome as of the 1st of September 2023. The overall percentage of Ofsted inspection resulting in a less than good judgement remains low at 3%.

Data Source: Bradford Capita One Early Years Module.

Ofsted Registered	Outstanding	Good	Met	Requires Improvement	Not Met	Inadequate	Not yet Inspected Ofsted presumed Good
Childcare on Domestic Premises	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Childminders	42	176	19	4	2	2	13
Day Nurseries	10	78	NA	1	NA	0	7
Independent School Nurseries	1	3	0	1	0	0	0
Pre Schools	8	17	NA	0	NA	2	5
TOTAL	62	276	19	6	2	4	25

7. Childcare Costs

The cost of childcare represents a substantial out-going for parents; support is available to parents towards the cost of childcare through a variety of government support schemes. Parents can access information on the ways to support their childcare costs through Childcare Choices www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

- Universal Credit Pays up to 85% of childcare costs.
- Tax Free Childcare covers 20% of childcare costs.
- Early education funded entitlement funding supports parents to reduce their childcare costs by the number of government funded hours per week.

Early Education and Childcare providers set their own fee structures. Providers are asked to share their childcare fees with Bradford Council, this is voluntary, and the information is solely used to estimate average childcare costs.

Childminder Costs

Childminders opening times vary widely.

The lowest cost per hour at £3.50 and the highest at £6.00, with the average being £4.48 per hour.

Costs have increased 4.4% since September 2022.

Pre School Costs

A pre school session is generally 3 hours in length, however many pre school opening for day session for 6 or more hours.

The average cost based on a 3 hour session is £15.44.

Costs have increased 7.5% since September 2022.

Day Nursery Costs

A day nursery full day session ranges from 9 hours to 12 hours in length, with the average being 10.5 hrs.

The average cost per day for children aged 0 - 2 years is £51.61 equivalent to 4.92 per hour.

Costs have increased 5.8% since September 2022.

The average cost per day for children aged 2 - 4 years is £50.46 equivalent to 4.81 per hour.

Costs have increased 8.7% since September 2022.

Out of School Childcare Costs

Out of School Childcare providers operate sessions of different lengths so the cost varies widely. Before school sessions range from 30 mins hour to 1 hour 45 minutes with a cost per session ranging from £1.00 to £9.00.

After school sessions range from 1 hour 30 minutes to 3 hours, with a cost per session ranging from £3.50 to £18.75.

Holiday childcare sessions range from 6 hours to 11 hours, with a cost per session ranging from £17.00 to £45.00.

Costs increased can not be calculated due to the increase in the number of low cost provision operated by schools.

8. Early Education Funded Entitlements

Local authorities must secure availability of government funded early education entitlement hours for all eligible children.

- Disadvantaged Two Year Olds - 570 hours of funded provision over at least 38 weeks for each qualifying 2 year olds. Two-year-old children are eligible the term following their 2nd birthday if their parent/s access out of work benefits, meet government prescribed low income criteria, or if the child has a Health and Care Plan, or is/has been looked after by the Local Authority, or have No Recourse to Public Funds;
- Universal entitlement Three and Four Year Olds - 570 hours of funded provision over at least 38 weeks for each qualifying three and four-year-old in each 12-month period from the date at which the child's entitlement starts until the child reaches compulsory school age. This works out at 15 hours per week if spread over 38 weeks (fewer hours per week if stretched over more than 38 weeks). This is known as 'universal entitlement';
- Working families entitlement Three and Four Year Olds - 1140 hours of funded provision over at least 38 weeks for each qualifying three and four years olds of eligible working parents who have a HMRC eligibility code.
- From April 2024 Working families entitlement Two Year Olds - 570 hours over at least 38 weeks for each qualifying working parents of eligible two year old children who have a HMRC 30 hours' childcare code.
- From September 2024 Working families entitlement 9 Months- 570 hours over at least 38 weeks for each qualifying working parents of eligible 9 month who have a HMRC 30 hours' childcare code.
- From September 2025 Working families entitlement 1140 hours over at least 38 weeks for each qualifying working parents of eligible 9 month to age 5 who have a HMRC 30 hours' childcare code
- From 2026 all primary schools will offer wraparound childcare for working families [before and after school childcare] on their own or in partnership with provider/s.

It should be noted that while Bradford Council have a duty to ensure sufficiency of early education places and promote take up, there is no legal obligation for parents to take up their child's pre-statutory school age early years provision.

In September 2023 there were 467 early education funded providers with 19017 funded entitlement places available. Places are available in all types of childcare provision; the majority of places are available in day nurseries and primary school nurseries. The overall number of available places reduced by 773 from 19790 in September 2022, these were places primarily within pre schools, childminders and day nurseries.

The table below shows the number of providers who provide the different types of early education entitlement places. September 2023.

Provider Type	Number of providers offering funded places	Number offering 2 year old places	Number offering 3 & 4 year old places	Number offering 30 hour places
Childcare on Domestic Premises	6	6	6	6
Childminder	193	193	193	193
Day Nursery	96	96	96	96
Independent School Nursery	7	3	7	6
Primary School Nursery	126	22	126	106
Nursery School	7	7	7	7
Pre School Playgroup	32	29	32	31
TOTAL	467	356	467	445

The table below shows the number of available early education entitlement places. September 2023.

Provider Type	Number of 2 year old places	Number of 3 & 4 year old places
Childcare on Domestic Premises	71	109
Childminder	353	488
Day Nursery	2505	4114
Independent School Nursery	30	266
Primary School Nursery	858	7522
Nursery School	333	880
Pre School Playgroup	536	952
TOTAL	4686	14331

Number of children assessing their early education entitlement place

The number of children assessing their early education place is assessed using the total number of eligible children against the number of children on roll at the termly census in January, May and October of each year. This allows a national comparison to be made.

The estimated number of eligible two year olds children is derived from data supplied by the Department for Work and Pensions each November. It represents the best data available on the number of children meeting the benefit and tax credit eligibility criteria.

The number of eligible two year old children in Bradford continues to decline, with 389 (11.9%) less eligible children compared with the January 2022. This decrease is greater than the national figure of 8%.

	Estimated population of eligible two year children
January 2021	3539
January 2022	3262
January 2023	2873

The estimated number of eligible three and four year olds children is derived from birth data using the dates of birth as parameters. It represents the best data available on the number of children of eligibility age.

	Estimated population of eligible three and four children
January 2021	15878
January 2022	15178
January 2023	15378

Number of eligible Disadvantaged two year olds children accessing an early education entitlement place

In January 2023 the percentage of children taking up a place was 69.9%, which was a minor decrease since January 2022 (70%). This was below the England rate of 74% (January 2023)

Date	Bradford	England
January 2021	58%	62%
January 2022	70%	72%
January 2023	69.9%	74%

Number of eligible three and four year olds children accessing an early education

In January 2023 the percentage of children taking up a place was 91%. This was below the England rate of 94% (January 2022)

Date	Bradford	England
January 2021	88%	90%
January 2022	91%	92%
January 2023	91%	94%

Number of children accessing the working families 30 hours entitlement.

In Autumn 2023 3798 families access the additional working families entitlement hours.

9. Key Findings

The main findings of this Early Education and Childcare Sufficiency Assessment are:

- There has been a decrease in the overall number of early education and childcare providers. Many closures were related to financial viability.
- There has been a decrease in the number of 2 year olds eligible for an early education funded place.
- There has been a slight increase the percentage of children accessing their early education entitlement.
- There are sufficient early education and childcare places for 0-4 year olds across the Bradford District.
- There are sufficient quality early education and childcare provision in the Private Voluntary and Independent Sector.
- The average cost of childcare continues to increased.

Key areas for action

- Monitor the under 5s population using the monthly Health Authority data.
- Monitor the closures at ward and provider type to ascertain the impact on the sufficiency of places.
- Monitor changes in parental demand for childcare due to expansion of the working families funded entitlements.
- Improve the intelligence of occupancy of childcare places across the Bradford District.
- Continue to support providers with advice and guidance relating to sufficient quality early years and childcare provision and places.
- Monitor the reduction in eligible disadvantaged two year olds.
- Improve the online communication for parents and professionals.