

Early Years Education Sufficiency Report 2025

Assessment of Sufficiency of Childcare Provision in Worcestershire

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Introduction

The Childcare Acts 2006 and 2016 place a specific duty on local authorities to secure sufficient childcare provision within their area. In order to do this, local authorities are required by legislation to:

- Secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 or up to 18 for disabled children.
- Secure sufficient free early years provision for eligible young children.

In order to evidence the sufficiency of childcare provision within their area, local authorities should report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare. Local authorities are responsible for determining the appropriate level of detail in their report, geographical division and date of publication, but should include:

- A specific reference on how the local authority is ensuring there is sufficient childcare available to meet the needs of:
 - Children with special educational needs and disabilities.
 - Children from families in receipt of the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit.
 - Children with parents who work irregular hours.
 - Children taking up funded early education and childcare places.
 - School age children.
 - Children needing holiday care.
- Information about the current and projected supply and demand of childcare for particular age ranges of children and the affordability, accessibility and quality of provision.
- Details of how any gaps in childcare provision will be addressed.

The Worcestershire Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2025 is a summary of the Worcestershire childcare market during the Summer Term 2025; it reports on the information available at a specific point in time and should be used for guidance purposes only.

National Context

In March 2023 the Government announced the 'Childcare Expansion', a series of initiatives to support working families:

- Increased household income threshold for child benefit payments.
- Increase in the amount of financial support available via Universal Credit.
- Increase in the Early Years Entitlements phased over 2 years.
 - April 2024: 15 funded hours per week for two-year-old children of working parents
 - September 2024: 15 funded hours per week for children aged 9 months of working parents
 - September 2025: 30 funded hours per week for children aged 9 months – 3 years of age of eligible working families; and
- Increased availability of wraparound childcare for primary aged children by September 2026.

To support the increased supply of childcare places needed to deliver the increased Early Years Entitlements, a series of funding supplements were paid between September 2023 – Summer 2025:

- the hourly funding rates paid to providers were increased, as a one-off grant for September 2023 – March 2024.
- the Early Years element of the Designated Schools Grant was increased from April 2024 to increase the hourly rate by £1.55 per hour for two-year-old funded children and £0.49 per hour for 3 & 4-year-old funded children; and
- a one-off expansion grant was paid in Summer 2025 to support providers to prepare for the increased demand for places for 0–3-year-olds. These supplementary payments have now ceased.

Childminder Grants were also announced to support the start-up costs of becoming a childminder for those registering between March 2023 – March 2025; childminders registering with Ofsted were eligible for £600, those registering with a Childminder Agency were eligible for £1200.

In addition, financial support has been made available to support local authorities to increase the sufficiency of both Wraparound and Early Entitlements (Nursery Education Funding) provision. Worcestershire is using the assessed sufficiency of provision as the key criteria to allocate the available funding.

Worcestershire Context

Worcestershire County sits within the West Midlands to the southwest of the Birmingham. The county is surrounded by five other counties, Shropshire, Herefordshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Gloucestershire, and to the northeast is the West Midlands Unitary Authority.

Worcestershire is a two-tier authority with mix of rural and urban areas, divided into six District Council areas: Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, Worcester, Wychavon and Wyre Forest. Each district is divided into wards, 112 in total across Worcestershire.

Figure 1: Map of Worcestershire, including districts

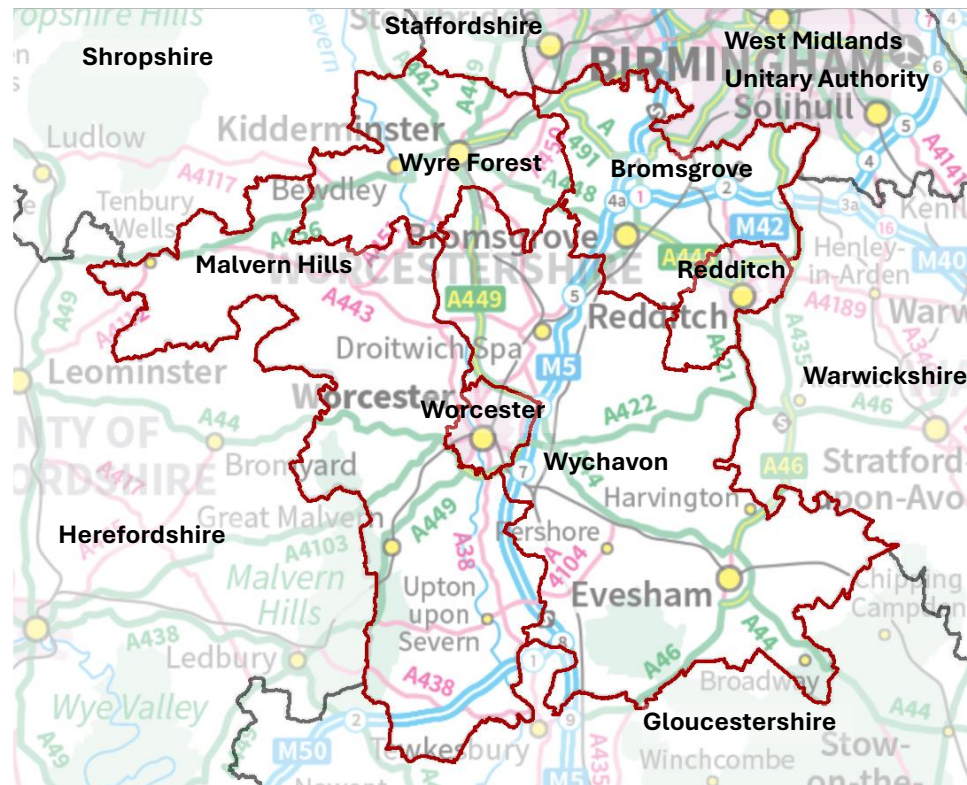


Table 1: Worcestershire children by age-cohort in each district 2025

District	0-4 Year Olds	5-9 Year Olds	10-14 Year Olds	Total 0 – 14 yr Olds
Bromsgrove	5,203	6,028	6,696	17,927
Malvern Hills	3,275	4,013	4,879	12,167
Redditch	4,675	5,147	5,561	15,383
Worcester	5,292	5,192	5,866	16,350
Wychavon	6,587	7,488	8,198	22,273
Wyre Forest	5,049	5,549	6,045	16,643
Total	30,081	33,417	37,245	100,743

Worcestershire has a population of 621,301¹ (2025), with 16% (100,743) aged 0-14 years old.

Table 2: Live birth rates in Worcestershire, October 2025²

Location	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Worcestershire	6,070	5,892	6,019	6,070	5,897	5,705	5,623	5,388	5,473	5,334	5,203	5,134
Bromsgrove	871	906	898	940	931	956	920	913	858	896	784	794
Malvern Hills	598	598	563	566	626	562	541	524	565	554	595	581
Redditch	1,068	1,108	1,080	1,065	986	972	1,014	937	984	912	915	828
Worcester	1,349	1,184	1,279	1,200	1,175	1,121	1,135	1,011	987	991	989	991
Wychavon	1,092	1,052	1,110	1,188	1,186	1,106	1,121	1,135	1,219	1,154	1,085	1,080
Wyre Forest	1,092	1,044	1,089	1,111	993	988	892	868	860	827	835	860
England	664,517	661,499	664,399	663,157	646,794	625,651	610,505	585,195	595,948	577,046	563,561	567,708

Live birth rates in Worcestershire have been decreasing over the past 10 years. Whilst the district of Wychavon has seen an increase across the 10-year period, most other districts have seen a reduction in live births, in line with England as a whole.

¹ [Population statistics and projections | Worcestershire County Council](#), October 2025

² <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>, October 2025

Table 3: Predicted numbers of 0-4-year-olds in Worcestershire by District³

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	Predicted Change 2021- 2031
Bromsgrove	5,122	5,139	5,029	5,167	5,203	5,234	5,267	5,294	5,317	5,337	5,351	+4.5%
Malvern	3,095	3,144	3,132	3,264	3,275	3,285	3,296	3,310	3,318	3,325	3,334	+7.7%
Redditch	4,918	4,947	4,947	4,716	4,675	4,653	4,645	4,640	4,640	4,646	4,658	-5.3%
Worcester	5,226	5,228	5,276	5,314	5,292	5,286	5,289	5,295	5,303	5,315	5,333	+2%
Wychavon	6,246	6,263	6,270	6,524	6,587	6,640	6,693	6,744	6,789	6,830	6,869	+9.9%
Wyre Forest	4,784	4,661	4,554	5,051	5,049	5,050	5,060	5,073	5,086	5,104	5,123	+7.1%
Total	29,381	29,382	29,181	30,036	30,081	30,148	30,250	30,356	30,453	30,557	30,668	+4.4%

With live births decreasing by just over 15% in Worcestershire between 2013 and 2024, the number of 0- to 4-year-olds across the county are now projected to increase slightly over the next 6 years up to 2031.

³ <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>, October 2025

Early Years Provision

Types of Early Years Provision

Childminders

Registered childminders are self-employed childcare professionals who work in a home setting; they may be registered with either Ofsted or with an Ofsted registered Childminder Agency. They are registered for small numbers of children and will often care for a range of ages. Childminders may work in partnership with other childminders or employ up to 2 assistants to increase the number of children they can care for at any one time.

Following the introduction of the Childminder Grant in 2023, Worcestershire has seen a significant increase in the number of childminders registered with a Childminder Agency; between Summer Term 2023 and Summer Term 2025, the number of Agency registered childminders has increased from 2 to 17 childminders.

In November 2024, Ofsted introduced a new category of childminder, 'Childminder without domestic premises' which is a UK childcare professional who cares for children exclusively in non-home settings, like community halls, schools, or business premises to provide additional flexibility for childminder based provision; Worcestershire does not yet have any of these registrations.

Group-based Settings

Group-based settings are Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) settings that include:

- **Pre-schools** which tend to offer term-time only provision on a sessional basis for children aged 2-5 years of age.
- **Day nurseries** which normally open at least 8am – 6pm daily, all year round for children aged from 6 weeks to 5 years of age.
- **Early Years registered Out of School care** which includes before and/or after school provision wrapping around the school day as well as holiday care that operates during the school holidays.

School-run settings

School-run settings include academy, maintained and free school nursery classes, Governor Led provision (which are operated by a maintained school Governing Body but are outside of the school's age-range), maintained nursery schools, independent school nursery classes and before and/or after school settings. The provision tends to operate on a term-time only basis for children aged between 2 – 5 years.

Supply of Early Years Provision

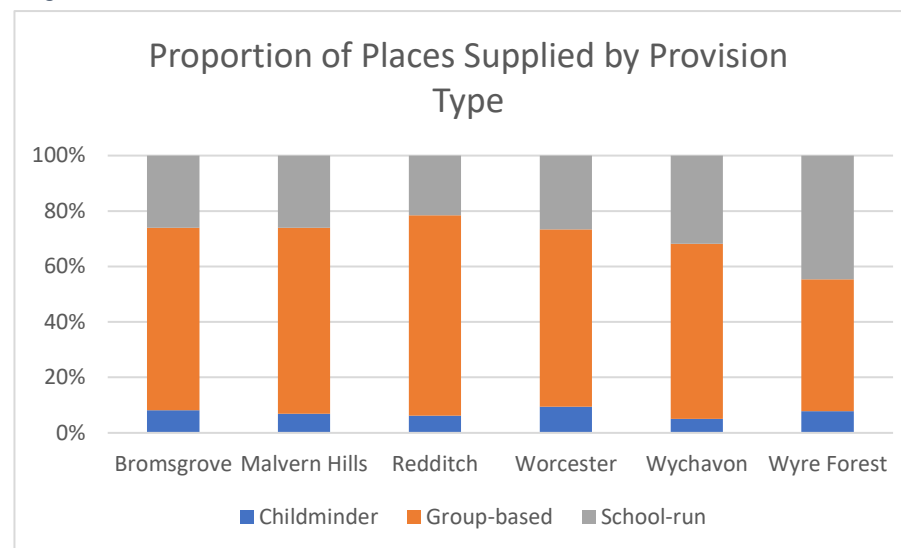
In the Summer Term 2025, there are 702 Ofsted registrations operating within Worcestershire with a further 27 organisations registered with either a Childminder Agency or the Independent Schools Inspectorate. 490 of these registrations operate early years provision, the remaining registrations are mainly out of school providers.

Table 4: Breakdown of early years provision by provider type

Provider Type	Number of Settings
Childminder	168
Group-based	141
School-run	181
Total	490

There is a spread of all provision types across each Worcestershire district with proportionately more early years places provided by school-run provision within Wyre Forest. Historically, nursery classes in Worcestershire were placed in areas of deprivation; as the Wyre Forest is the most deprived district in the county with 23.7% of children living in Relative low-income families⁴ and 17.3% of children living in Absolute low-income families, this is to be expected.

Figure 2: Provision across Worcestershire districts - Summer Term 2025



49% of early years provision operates on an all-year-round basis, this has dropped slightly from the 56% in 2024, the remaining 51% offering term-time only provision. Of the all-year-round settings, 47% are childminders (112/239) and 52% are group-based settings (124/239).

The average weekly opening hours across Worcestershire early years provision is 42.5 hours per week. 44% (218/490) of provision is open for at least 50 hours per week, 18% (45/490) is open for less than 30 hours per week, this has doubled from the 9% in 2024.

⁴ JSNA (worcestershire.gov.uk)

Early Years Provision Changes

Following a significant number of closures (137 Early Years registrations) between 2020-2021 after the Covid-19 pandemic, the market in Worcestershire has stabilised. This is in contrast to the national picture, where Ofsted continue to report decreasing numbers of childminder registrations⁵.

Table 5: Breakdown of opening/closing registrations during 2024/25

Provider Type	Closed	Opened	Net Change
Childminders	31	29	-2
Group-based	16	11	-5
School-run	1*	4*	+3
Total	48	44	-4

*Maintained to Academy converters excluded if there were no changes to early years offer.

Quality of Early Years Provision

Ofsted inspects all providers who are on the Early Years register at least once every 6 years, with new providers normally inspected within 30 months of registration. The inspection evaluates the overall quality and standards of the early years provision, in line with the principles and requirements of the statutory framework, the [Early Years Foundation Stage](#).

The quality of early years registered provision in Worcestershire is high, with 89% of inspections achieving a Good or above outcome. This is slightly below the most recent Ofsted data

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childcare-providers-and-inspections-as-at-31-march-2025/main-findings-childcare-providers-and-inspections-as-at-31-march-2025>

publication, which reports that nationally, 91% of childcare providers that have had a full inspection were judged to be Good or above between 1st September 2024 and 31st March 2025. Since March 2021, the proportion of childcare providers judged as outstanding has fallen from 18% to 14% nationally, which is significantly lower than the percentage of providers within Worcestershire who are currently judged as Outstanding (18%).

However, between September 2024 to March 2025, 9% of inspections that took place in Worcestershire (4 of 44) resulted in a judgement of Inadequate/Not Met, which is higher than the national average of 4%. Inspections that had an outcome of Requires Improvement in Worcestershire was 6.8%, slightly higher than the national figures (5%).

63 registrations are awaiting their first inspection; they receive support from the Early Years Improvement Advisors until their first inspection, after which support is targeted towards those who are judged as Requires Improvement, Inadequate or Not Met as well as those that are due to be inspected within the next 6 – 18 months. Support is also provided for settings that are identified as a ‘Setting Causing Concern’; this is primarily following a safeguarding concern/issue but also allocated for reasons of SEND concerns, sustainability issues or via referral from other professionals and/or the setting themselves.

Table 6: Breakdown of Ofsted Inspection judgements by provider type at Summer Term 2025

Ofsted Judgement	Childminder	Group-based	Overall Percentage
Outstanding	26	28	15.13%
Good	105	131	66.11%
Met	3	1	1.12%
Requires Improvement	2	3	1.4%
Inadequate	0	0	-
Not Met	0	0	-
Not Yet Inspected	37	20	15.97%

Early Years Provision Key Messages

- There are 490 organisations operating early years provision within Worcestershire.
- Slightly more provision closed than opened during 2024/25.
- The current proportion of early years settings judged as Outstanding in Worcestershire is 4% above the national average.
- 89 % of Ofsted inspections of Early Years provision in Worcestershire have achieved a judgment of good or above.
- The proportion of recent Early Years inspections resulting in a judgement of Inadequate was above the national average between September 2024 – March 2025.

Sufficiency of Nursery Education Funded provision

The sufficiency of funded childcare places is assessed in hours, comparing the total number of hours available at a childcare setting to the number of hours each child is eligible to access funding for, assuming each child accesses their full Nursery Education Funding entitlement on a term-time basis.

The demand for funded childcare places is assessed using the known children data supplied annually by the NHS, the estimated proportion of children eligible for each type of Nursery Education Funding entitlement and the take-up trends and patterns. Anecdotal information is also collated and analysed via parent/carer surveys and direct feedback to the Local Authority.

Each term the number of childcare places available and the estimated demand for places is analysed at both individual ward level and across neighbouring wards (locality area), to ascertain whether there are sufficient places available in each locality to enable the Local Authority to meet their statutory sufficiency duty for funded early education hours.

Types of Nursery Education Funding / Early Entitlements

There are a range of Early Entitlements available, depending on a child's age and their family circumstances:

Table 7: Types of Nursery Education Funding / Early Entitlements

Funding Offer (15 hours)	9 months – 2 years	2 – 3 years	3 - 4 years
Universal offer			✓
Targeted offer for two-year-old children: - families in receipt of Government support - child specific criteria - families with No Recourse to Public Funds		✓ ✓ ✓	
Targeted offer for working families	✓	✓	✓
Targeted offer for fostered children	✓	✓	✓

Universal Offer

New government funding in England is expanding free childcare for working parents, increasing the hours from 15 to 30 per week for eligible children from 9 months up to school age. This expansion has been rolled out in phases, with 15 hours available for 2-year-olds since April 2024, 15 hours for 9 month to 2-year-olds since September 2024. The full 30 hours for eligible families with children aged 9 months up to school age from September 2025.

Targeted offer for two-year-old children

Two year old children from families in receipt of specific economic benefits, as well as children in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, that have a current Education, Health and Care Plan, that are looked after or have left care through a Special Guardianship Order, Child Arrangements or Adoption Order, are eligible for 15 hours of funded childcare per week for 38 weeks of the year, from the term after their 2nd birthday.

Children of non-EEA citizens without recourse to public funds and with a household income of less than £26,500 are also eligible for the targeted offer for two-year old children.

The application process is managed by Worcestershire County Council.

Targeted offer for fostered children

Children in foster care, where the foster parents are in paid work outside of fostering and the child's care plan supports access to childcare, are eligible for 15 funded hours per week for 38 weeks of the year, from the term after their 2nd birthday.

From September 2024, the required age was lowered to include children from the term after they turn 9 months. As of September 2025, the entitlement has been increased to 30 hours per week.

Supply of Nursery Education Funded Provision

The Department for Education provides statutory guidance for local authorities outlining the expectations on both local authorities and childcare providers with regards to early years

funding: [Early education and childcare, February 2025](#). To be eligible to offer funded places, a provider must be one of the following:

- An early years provider, other than a childminder, registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register.
- A childminder registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register.
- A childminder or childcare provider registered with a childminder agency which is itself registered with Ofsted.
- School taking children aged 2 and over which are exempt from registration with Ofsted as an early years provider.

In addition to being registered as above, providers must meet quality requirements, outlined within the statutory guidance:

Table 8: Quality requirements for each funding stream

Inspection Judgement	Funding for Working Families	Funding for Two Year Olds in receipt of additional Government support	Universal 3 & 4-year-old Funding
Not yet inspected	✓	✓	✓
Good/Outstanding/Met	✓	✓	✓
Requires Improvement	✓	X	✓
Inadequate/Not Met	X	X	X

Providers who meet these quality requirements can choose to sign-up to offer funded provision within Worcestershire. When choosing to offer funded early years provision, Worcestershire

providers are expected to offer seamless transition for children as they age, until the child starts school.

The majority (97%) of early years registered provision within Worcestershire choose to offer Nursery Education Funding (NEF). This is a 7% increase since Summer 2024 due to the increased proportion of childminders who are now registered to offer early years funding in line with the next phase of the Childcare Expansion.

Table 9: Breakdown of NEF Registered Provision by type

Provider Type	Number of Providers 2024*	Number of Providers 2025*	Proportion of Overall NEF Providers
Childminder	162	167	35%
Group-based	182	183	39%
School-run	119	123	26%
Total	463	473	N/A

*Open and registered for NEF during the Summer Term 2025

Whilst the overall number of childminders has decreased since 2020, proportionately more offer funded places; 99.4% (167/168) are currently registered as compared to 65% (198/304) in July 2020.

Group-based NEF registered provision has also seen a decrease in the overall number of providers. Whilst the total number of day nurseries has remained relatively stable over the past 5 years, the number of pre-school playgroups has almost halved since Summer 2020, with many rural provisions struggling to remain sustainable with low numbers of children within their local area and a number of others being replaced with school-run provision.

Table 10: Breakdown of NEF Registered Group-Based Providers

Types of Group-based Provision	Number of Providers July 2020	Number of Providers July 2024	Number of Providers July 2025	Change between 2024 & 2025 +/-
Day Nursery	128	130	137	+5.38%
Pre-School Playgroup	90	52	46	-11.54%
Out of School	7	0	2	+200%
Total	225	182	185	+1.65%

Although the overall number of school-run providers has remained relatively stable, there has been a decrease in the number of specialist provisions with a corresponding increase in the number of mainstream school-run settings

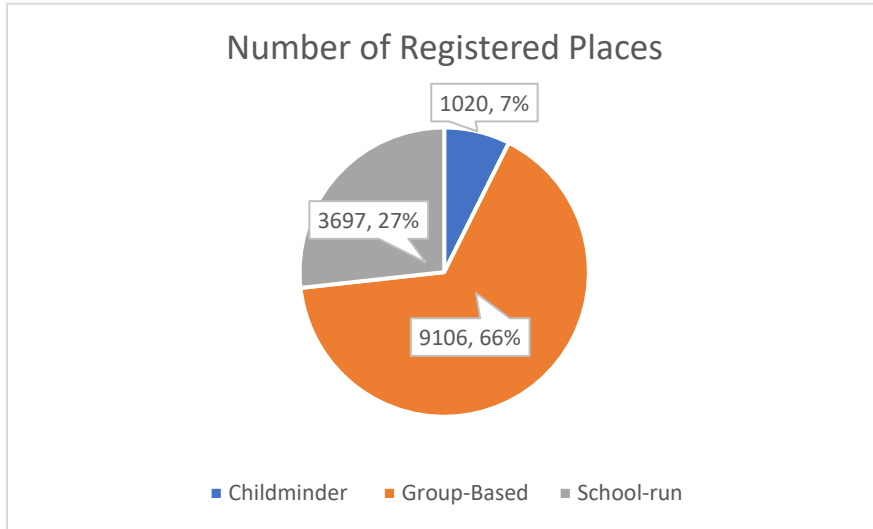
Table 11: Breakdown of NEF Registered Mainstream School-Run Providers

Types of School-run Provision	Number of Providers July 2020	Number of Providers July 2024	Number of Providers July 2025	Change between 2024 & 2025 +/-
Academy Nursery Class	23	49	59	+20%
Academy Language Class	1	1	1	-
Maintained Nursery Class	28	24	24	-
Maintained Language Class	3	4	4	-
Maintained Nursery School	1	1	1	-
Governor Led	46	32	25	-21.9%
Free School Nursery Class	1	1	1	-
Maintained Special School Nursery Class (including Nursery Plus)	7	3	1	-66%
Academy Special School Nursery Class	2	0	1	+100%
Independent School Nursery*	3	4	5	+25%
Total	115	119	124	+4.2%

*Without an Early Years Ofsted registration

Although group-based provision makes-up only 39% of the registered settings, they supply 66% of places within Worcestershire and 72% of the available hours of early years provision, evidencing the importance of the PVI sector within Worcestershire.

Figure 3: Breakdown of total places by NEF registered provider types - Summer Term 2025



Since 2020, there has been a steady year-on-year increase in the number of NEF registered providers offering funded places for two year olds; this has continued to increase further with the implementation of the Childcare Expansion with eligibility for two year olds of working families that came into place at the start of the Summer Term 2024.

Figure 4: Breakdown of total hours offered by NEF registered provider types - Summer term 2025

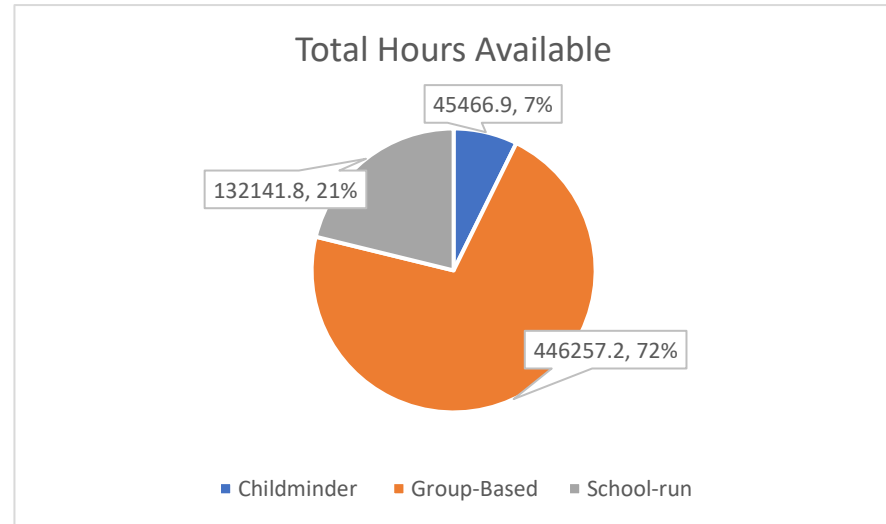


Table 12: Percentage of NEF registered providers offering Under 2's funded provision

Provider Type	Percentage of Providers July 2025
Childminder	93.4%
Group-based	69.9%
School-run	1.6%
Total	60.5%

Using the summer term 2025 data the majority of childminders 93.4% are registered to provide funded provision for under 2's (156/167).

Table 13: Percentage of NEF registered providers offering 2-year-old funded provision

Provider Type	Percentage of Providers July 2020	Percentage of Providers July 2025
Childminder	82%	100%
Group-based	91%	98.4%
School-run	47%	65.9%
Total	78%	90.5%

Early indications suggest that the majority of providers who are registered with Ofsted to offer places for children under the age of 2 will choose to offer funded places for this age group when the next phase of the Childcare Expansion launches in September 2025.

Demand for Nursery Education Funding

In the Summer Term 2025, there were an estimated⁶ 21,433 9 month – 4-year-old children living within Worcestershire.

Take-up of the early years entitlements in Worcestershire is higher than the national and regional averages but continue to follow the trend on national and regional figures. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, take-up of funded provision decreased both nationally and locally; take-up of 3 & 4-year-old funding has now recovered and is only just below pre-pandemic levels. Take-up of two-year-old funding has also recovered to pre-pandemic levels.

⁶ NHS Known Children Data September 2024

Table 14: Working Families Eligibility Codes issued for 9 month - 4-year-olds*

Working Families	Estimated No. of children Issued Eligibility codes by HMRC*	No. of children accessing funded hours within Worcestershire	Take-Up**	National Average Take Up
9month – 2-year-olds of Working Families	2290	2931	96%	93%
Two Year Olds of Working Families	3084	3053	97%	95%
3- & 4-Year Olds of Working Families	6047	5632	98%	95%

*Number of children eligible under the Working Families criteria is based on the number of Eligibility Codes issued by HMRC to families living in Worcestershire by 31st March 2025.

**Take-Up reflects places that are accessed up within Worcestershire childcare settings.

Table 15: Take-up of funded provision by 3- & 4-year-olds during Summer Term 2025 in Worcestershire

No. Of Children 9360	Estimated No. of children eligible for funded hours	No. accessing funded hours	Annual County Take-Up	National Average Take Up
3- & 4-Year Olds eligible for Universal hours	9360	8870	95%	93%

Figure 5: Published⁷ percentage take-up of 3 & 4-Year-Old Funding Nationally and in Worcestershire 2019- 2025

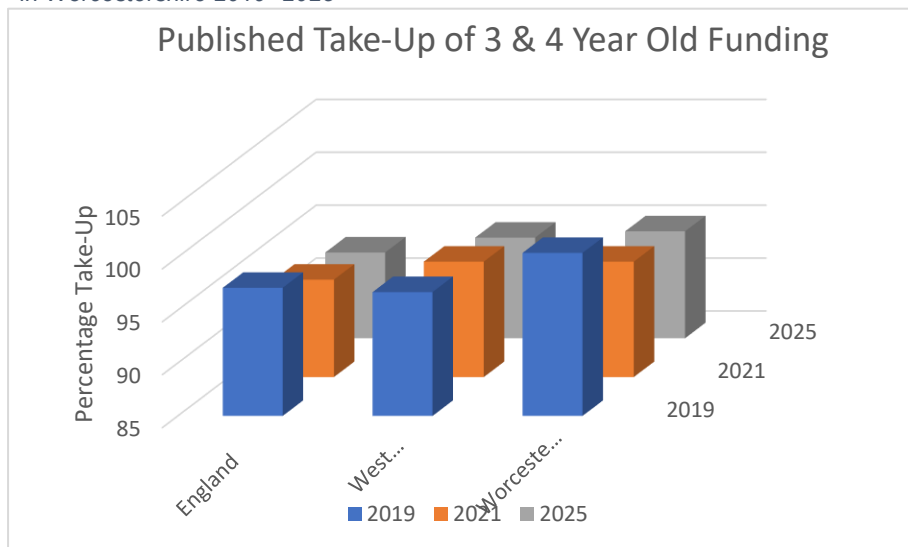


Table 16: Take up of funded provision by 2-year-olds during Summer 2025 in Worcestershire

No. of Children 5567	Estimated No. of children eligible for funded hours*	No. of children accessing funded hours within Worcestershire	Take-Up**	National Average Take Up
	1223	701	57%	65%
Two-Year Olds identified by DWP				
Total Eligible Two-Year Olds	4471*	3715	67%	N/A
All Two-Year Olds	5567	3715	N/A	N/A

* Some children are eligible for both funding types and are therefore counted twice in the number of eligible children.

**Take-Up reflects places that are accessed up within Worcestershire childcare settings.

Table 17: Summary of Take up of all children in Worcestershire Eligible and accessing

Age Range	Take Up %
Under Twos	45.1%
Two Year Olds	66.7%
Three-four-Year Olds	95.3%

Whilst 80% (4471 of 5567) of two-year-olds are estimated to be eligible for some type of early years funding, demand for places

⁷ [Education provision: children under 5 years of age, reporting year 2025 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/explore-education-statistics)

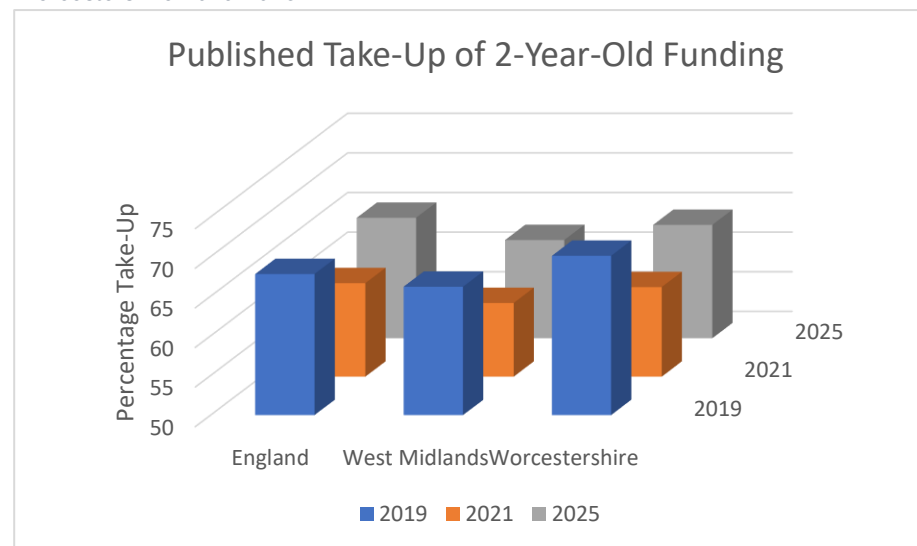
for two-year-olds of Working Families was below the levels seen for 3 & 4-year-old children that meet the same criteria. After only one term of take-up, it is too early to determine if this pattern will continue but should be monitored and used to refine the local authority demand data, if the pattern continues.

It is worth noting that whilst the take-up rates of funding for two-year-olds from families in receipt of additional Government support are lower than in previous years, there is an early pattern developing of families who are eligible for both types of funding choosing to access via the Working Families criteria. 19 children who had applied via the DWP criteria went on to access Working Family hours and an estimated 47 children whose families could have applied via the DWP criteria did not apply but instead accessed the Working Family hours.

Including these children within the take-up rates for two-year-olds from families in receipt of additional Government support would increase the take-up rate. From September 2025, a system update will enable more accurate recording of children eligible for both funding types and the take-up will be reviewed to determine whether additional action needs to be undertaken to encourage take-up. Early take-up data from the Autumn Term 2025 evidence that the system update has improved the recording of the funding type and take-up levels have returned to over 70%, above the national average.

⁸ [Education provision: children under 5 years of age, reporting year 2025 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/explore-education-statistics)

Figure 6: Published⁸ take-up of 2-Year-Old Funding Nationally and in Worcestershire 2019-2025



Of the additional hours accessed by 3- & 4-year-olds of Working Families during Summer Term 2025, 63.1% were accessed within a group-based setting, 33.8% within a school-run setting and only 3.1% with a childminder. In contrast, 54.2% of Universal hours were taken within a group-based setting, 44.1% within a school-run setting and 1.7% with a childminder.

Comparatively, the hours accessed by two-year-old children of Working Families during Summer Term 2025, 85.6% of funded hours were accessed within a group-based setting, 5.6% within a school-run setting and 8.9% with a childminder. In contrast, of

the hours accessed by two-year-olds in receipt of additional Government support, 86.6% were taken within a group-based setting, 13.3% within a school-run setting.

Sufficiency of Nursery Education Funded Provision

At Local Authority level, there is sufficient childcare available for all 2, 3 and 4-year-olds to access their statutory entitlements, with surplus available to support the increased entitlement from September 2025. Whilst there is not sufficient surplus to enable all eligible children to access an additional 15 hours per week, 68% of all hours accessed in the Summer Term 2025 under the Working Family criteria, were accessed on a 'stretched' basis; settings open for more than 38 weeks can choose to offer the funded hours over the whole year, with children accessing less funded hours per week but over more weeks of the year. This is a 20% increase from the summer term 2024.

Table 18: Extract of the Early Years Sufficiency Tool Summer 2025 summarising the total maximum demand for funded hours per week

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 9month+, 2, 3- and 4-year-old children (Summer Term 2025)	23,063
Number of NEF Providers	471
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	355,245
Weekly hours of childcare available	510,928
Shortfall / surplus	+155,683 hours
Assessment of County Sufficiency	Sufficient

Nursery Education Funding – Key Messages

- There has been a decrease in the number of NEF registered providers since July 2020.
- Over two thirds of NEF provision is supplied by group-based providers.
- There has been an increase in the number of providers offering NEF for eligible two-year-old children.
- Reported take-up of 2, 3 and 4-year-old funding entitlements in Worcestershire is above national and regional take-up.
- There is sufficient funded provision within Worcestershire to enable all eligible children to access their statutory funded entitlement, however it may not be in the settings/locality that parents/carers would ideally choose.

Vulnerable Children

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

All Early Years settings within Worcestershire are expected to offer inclusive provision. Additional funding (Inclusion Supplement) is available to support settings to meet the needs of children who have an identified need, with higher rates paid for children with more complex needs. The Inclusion Supplement is paid as an hourly increase to each funded hour accessed. 17% of funded 3 & 4-year-olds (1475 of 8870) and 10.8% of funded

two-year-olds (403 of 3715) received an Inclusion Supplement during the Summer Term 2025.

Table 19: Breakdown of Graduated Response claims for funded under 2's, 2, 3 & 4-year-olds

Inclusion Supplement	Under 2's	Two Year Olds	3&4 Year Olds
GR2	34	163	729
GR3	7	64	306
GR4	4	92	218
GR4+ and Exceptional	8	49	335
Total	53	403	1588

Two-year-old Graduated Response claims have increased by 95% since 2024 (from a total of 216) and a slight increase for 3 & 4-year-olds at 14.5% (from a total of 1386).

Within Worcestershire, there are a number of specialist and/or enhanced early years settings available for children with complex additional needs to attend; there are currently:

- 4 Early Years Language Classes - Resourced Provision that offer speech and language support for children who have an identified communication need requiring targeted intervention by a Speech and Language Therapist.
- 2 enhanced nursery classes, one within a Special school, Chadsgrove School, that supports children with a physical disability, and one within a mainstream school (Batchley First School) that assess the education provision for pre-school age children who are due to start school; and 2 new Enhanced early year provisions (Dingley's Promise)

that opened in 2025 for children who are unable to access their full NEF entitlement due to complex SEND needs.

The majority of funded children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) access early years provision within a mainstream setting or combine attendance across both a specialist and mainstream provider; of 116 children (3- & 4-year-olds) accessing specialist provision during Summer 2025, 82% (97) children split their NEF entitlement with a mainstream provider.

In 2025 there were 12 early years children within Worcestershire who were unable to access their Nursery Education Funding due to their complex SEND and 49 3 – 4-year-old children who were unable to access their full NEF entitlement for the same reason. This has reduced since Dingley's Promise opened in Summer 2025 from 56 children in Summer Term 2024.

Of the 49 children identified:

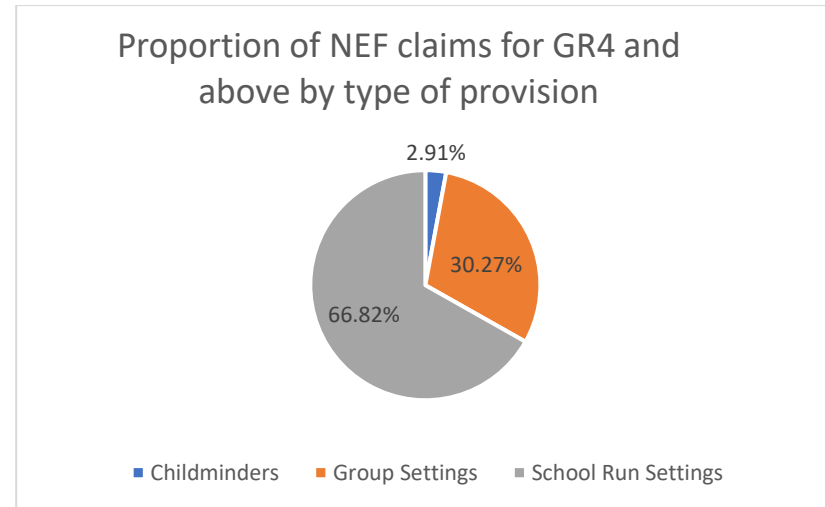
- 8 have an SSP (SEND Support Provision Plan)
- 10 have an EHCNA (Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment) request underway
- 31 have an EHC Plan (Education Health Care Plan) in place

It is recognised that there is limited availability for children with complex additional needs. A commissioning process is currently taking place to increase the number of Enhanced Early Years provisions available across the county to ensure that pre-school age children who are unable to have their needs met in a

mainstream provision are still able to access their early education entitlement.

Of 473 providers claiming NEF between September 2024 – August 2025, 315 claimed NEF for a child they identified as having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (GR1 or above). Childminders make proportionately fewer claims for children with SEND, with 11% of NEF claims in the Summer Term 2025 including an Inclusion Supplement for children identified as GR4 or above, this has increased from 1% in the Summer Term 2024. School-run settings however are providing 66% of funded hours for children identified as GR4 or above, despite providing only 27% of all NEF hours.

Figure 7: Proportion of overall NEF Claims for children receiving GR4+ during Summer Term 2025, by type of provision



In addition to the Inclusion Supplement, support is also available for settings and practitioners to identify and support children with SEND. The Early Years Inclusion Process (EYIP) was introduced in November 2023 to both improve the way in which support is allocated and to improve the quality of records held by the Local Authority to support resource management and forward planning. The EYIP should enable settings to make referrals when a need is first identified and enable support to be provided earlier. Prior to the introduction of the EYIP, the majority of referrals were made during the child’s pre-Reception year, when they were 3 or 4 years of age; whilst this is still the case, the number of referrals made prior to the child turning 3 is now significant and likely to increase as the process is embedded.

Table 20: Number of requests for early years SEND support by District

District of child when referral submitted	Number of referrals made April 2024 – May 2025
Bromsgrove	66
Malvern	32
Redditch	11
Worcester	152
Wychavon	24
Wyre Forest	42
Total	327

Deprivation

Almost 19% of children aged under 16 in Worcestershire are living in Relative low-income families⁹, whilst almost 14% of children are living in Absolute low-income families, both of these percentages are below the national averages of 20% and 16% respectively.

In addition to the targeted NEF offer for two-year-olds from families in receipt of additional Government support, additional funding supplements are available to support settings to meet the needs of children who are identified as being from economically vulnerable families.

Deprivation funding is in place to support children who live in a postcode classified by the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) as 'deprived' (classifications A to D out of A to G),

⁹ [JSNA \(Worcestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.jsna.worcestershire.gov.uk)

to support settings to meet any needs the child may present with and in particular, to enable the setting to support the child's cultural capital¹⁰, the essential knowledge that children need to be educated citizens. The Deprivation supplement is paid as an hourly supplement for every funded hour that a child accesses.

Alongside Deprivation funding, there is also Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) for children from families in receipt of income-related benefits or if the child is looked after by Worcestershire, or has left care through adoption, a special guardianship or a child arrangements order. EYPP is paid as an hourly supplement for up to 15 funded hours per week, up to a maximum of 570 hours per year and is in place to support settings to provide any additional support a child may need.

In the Summer Term 2025, 8% (1258 of 16249) of children accessing Nursery Education Funding were allocated the Deprivation Supplement and 12% (1923 of 16249) were allocated EYPP. Overall, 15% (2506 of 16249) of children accessing Nursery Education Funding received a supplement to support deprivation, which is in line with the 19% of children reported to be living in Relative low-income families.

In contrast children in receipt of the Inclusion supplement, children in receipt of EYPP and deprivation funding are more likely to attend a group-based setting. This is a change from 2024 where children in receipt EYPP were more likely to attend a school-run settings this is likely due to under 3's being eligible for EYPP, which commenced from Summer 2024.

¹⁰ [Early years inspection handbook - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspection-handbook) (paragraphs 187 and 189)

Figure 8: Proportion of Deprivation funding in Summer Term 2025 by provision type

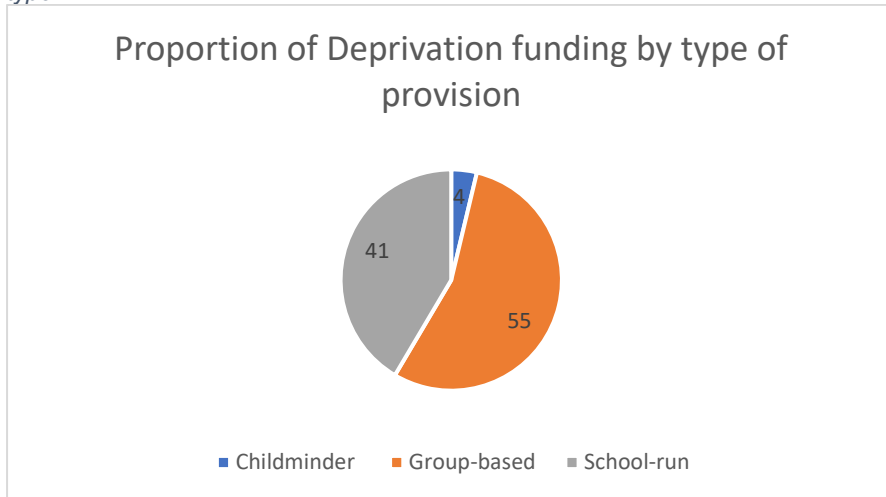
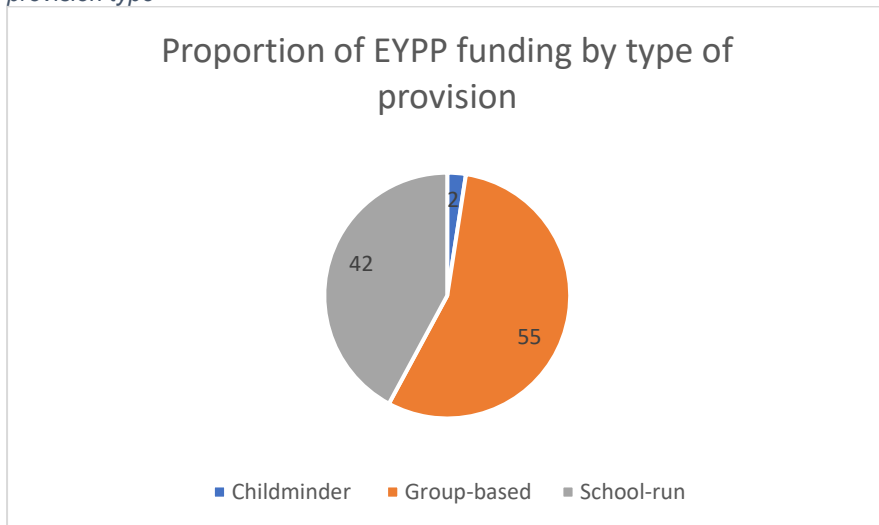


Figure 9: Proportion of Early Years Pupil Premium funding in Summer 2024 by provision type



Children who are Looked After

Early years children who are looked after by Worcestershire County Council are monitored by their Social Worker; once the child accesses a childcare setting, the setting also monitors and safeguards the child. Once the child is two years of age, Worcestershire Virtual School provides support to the family and childcare setting and completes an Early Years Personal Education Plan, which forms part of the child's Care Plan.

Two-year-old children who are looked after by Worcestershire County Council are eligible for funded provision via the 'Targeted offer for two-year-old children'; this eligibility is awarded automatically with foster carers provided with an EY Voucher Code confirming the child's eligibility to the childcare setting. In the Summer Term 2025, 39 two-year-olds were looked after by the Local Authority, of which 67% (26 of 36) accessed funded hours during the term.

In addition, fostered children are eligible to access the funded hours for Working Families, if their foster carer works outside of fostering and it is considered in the best interests of the child. Worcestershire issued 33 Eligibility Codes confirming eligibility for the Summer Term 2025 for 9 months - 4-year-olds, 9 of which were used to access funded hours.

Vulnerable Children – Key Messages

1. **The majority of children accessing specialist/enhanced early years provision also access a mainstream setting.**
2. **Children with more complex needs are more likely to attend a school-run setting.**
3. **Following the introduction of the Early Years Inclusion Process, referrals for support for children with SEND are being received for younger children.**
4. **Following changes to the EYPP eligibility, children in receipt of EYPP are more likely to attend a group-based setting, with 2% attending a childminding setting.**

Working Families

Working families need access to childcare that is accessible and available at the times they need it. Due to the diverse nature of family need, it is important to have a range of childcare options available for families to choose from. In 2024, 73% (79) of respondents to the parent/carer survey indicated that they needed childcare all year round or in the school holidays. 67% (33) of respondents with school aged children also indicated they would ideally use before and/or after school provision, with 64% actually accessing before and/or after school provision.

All Year-Round Childcare

For early years children, working families will often need provision that operates all year round. 49.7% (238) of funded early years providers operate on an all-year-round basis. Whilst NEF entitlement is based on 38 weeks of the year, providers can choose to offer fewer hours over more weeks of the year, to stretch the entitlement. This enables families who need all year-round provision to spread their childcare costs evenly over the year. Over 45% (216) of NEF registered providers have a stretched funding offer, this has increased by 9% since Summer Term 2024.

For school aged children, working families continue to need to use holiday provision. 73 providers in Worcestershire operate a holiday club during the school holidays, this has decreased slightly since 2024 when 81 clubs were in operation. 104 early years providers who operate provision all year round for school-aged children.

Wraparound Provision

In recent years, the out-of-school sector has self-managed their market. Schools without private provision operating for their school community have opened their own provision to meet parental demand. Following the announcement of the Wraparound Programme, the Local Authority has become more instrumental in the market management, as we work towards meeting the Government agenda of wraparound provision being in place from 8am – 6pm for all primary aged pupils who need it.

Across Worcestershire, 97% of schools now have some before and after school provision in place. With 82% offering at least 8am – 6pm, or the equivalent hours, this is an increase of 11% since September 2024. A further 15% of schools have before and after school provision in place, but for less than 10 hours per day. The use of the Wraparound Programme funding has supported the expansion of wraparound provision, increasing availability across more schools and improving accessibility as more provision extends their opening hours to meet the national agenda. 1.5% of schools (3) have no wraparound available at all, a decrease from 5% in Summer 2024.

Affordability

As the Early Years Funding Expansion continues, childcare should become more affordable as families will be paying for fewer hours per week. However, the average cost per hour of childcare in Worcestershire is £6.02, which is 65p per hour above the rate providers receive for 3 & 4-year-old funded hours. As the funding rates paid to providers do not include the costs of meals, consumables or additional services, and there is often a gap between the normal charge and the funding rate, providers are passing on the cost of the meals, consumables and additional services to families.

To support affordability, all childcare providers are encouraged to register for Tax Free Childcare, to support families to pay for childcare; over 82% (392) of funded settings are advertised as

offering Tax Free Childcare and only 17 settings have indicated they are not registered, the remaining have yet to update their details.

Working Families – Key Messages

- 1. 45% of NEF registered providers have a stretched funding offer in place to support working families.**
- 2. There has been a decrease in standalone holiday provision since 2024.**
- 3. 53% of primary-phased schools in Worcestershire have wraparound provision available between at least 8am – 6pm for their pupils.**
- 4. The gap between typical charges for childcare and the funding rate for 3- & 4-year-olds is 65p per hour.**

Information about Childcare

Worcestershire County Council Public Health commission community services for children and families via Action for Children, Barnardo's and Redditch and Bromsgrove District Council. As part of the delivery of early childhood services, there is access to information relating to childcare, support for parents, community activities and volunteering opportunities¹¹.

Information is also available on the Worcestershire County Council website including a search facility of all local Ofsted

¹¹ [Local Family Hubs | Worcestershire County Council](#)

registered childcare providers¹² that have provided consent to be advertised, as well as links to www.childcarechoices.gov.uk, the national information gateway for parents/carers.

Sufficiency by District

NEF Provision – Summer 2025

Using the available supply and demand data, as outlined above, we have assessed the sufficiency of NEF provision based on all potentially eligible children taking up their full early years funding entitlement, on a term-time only basis. The forecast does not yet take into account any additional hours purchased by families or when funding is accessed on an all-year-round basis. We would therefore expect to see more hours available than are required, to enable access to additional childcare as required.

NEF Provision – Autumn 2025

The next phase of the Early Entitlements Expansion, funding for children from 9 months to 4 years of age, started from September 2025, therefore, we have forecast for the Autumn Term 2025.

District-based maps highlighting any identified sufficiency concern are available at [Childcare sufficiency | Worcestershire County Council](#)

¹² [Ofsted | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Bromsgrove

Bromsgrove is a district of Worcestershire located in the northeast of the county. The district borders the counties of West Midlands Unitary Authority to the north, Warwickshire to the east, Redditch District to the southeast, Wyre Forest District to the west, and Wychavon District to the Southwest.

The district has four main towns, Bromsgrove, Hagley, Rubery and Wythall and is made up of thirty wards, with the largest wards covering the rural areas of the district and the smaller wards covering the town centres of Bromsgrove, Rubery, and Wythall.

Bromsgrove had a population of 101,685 mid-2023¹³. In Summer 2025 there were 3,514 known 0- to 4-year-old children living in the Bromsgrove district registered with a Worcestershire GP.

NEF Provision – Summer 2025

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 9 months- 4-year-old children	3,748
Number of NEF Providers	100
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	69,150
Weekly hours of childcare available	133,062
Difference	+63,912 hours
Assessment of District Sufficiency	Sufficient

¹³ <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>, (Nomis, 2024)

Whilst there is sufficient provision available within the Bromsgrove district for all eligible two to four-year-old children, 9 out of 30 wards have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area. There is a significant surplus of provision available across the district as a whole.

NEF Provision – Autumn 2025

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 9months - 4-year-old children	2,686
Number of NEF Providers	100
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	64,020
Weekly hours of childcare available	133,062
Difference	+69,042 hours
Assessment of District Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst there is sufficient provision available within the Bromsgrove district for all eligible 9 month to four-year-old children, 9 out of 30 wards have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area. There is a significant surplus of provision available across the district as a whole.

Wraparound Provision

District	8am – 6pm provision available	Before and after school provision available but not 8am – 6pm	Before and/or after school provision not available
Bromsgrove	96.6% (29)	3.3% (1)	0%

All schools in Bromsgrove have before and after school provision in place, with only 1 school that is not yet offering 8am – 6pm provision.

Malvern Hills

Malvern Hills is a district of Worcestershire located in the west of the county. The district borders the counties of Shropshire to the north, Herefordshire to the west, and Gloucestershire to the south, with Wychavon and Worcester Districts bordering to the East, and Wyre Forest sharing the northern most border.

The district is largely rural and has three main towns, Malvern, Tenbury and Upton-upon-Severn. Malvern Hills is made up of eighteen wards, with the smallest five wards covering the town centre of Malvern and the remaining twelve wards cover the large rural areas of the district.

Malvern Hills had a population of 83,227 mid-2023¹⁴. In Summer 2025 there were 2,362 known 0- to 4-year-old children living in the Malvern Hills district registered with a Worcestershire GP.

¹⁴ <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>, Nomis 2024

NEF Provision – Summer 2025

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 9months - 4-year-old children	2,492
Number of NEF Providers	64
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	45,510
Weekly hours of childcare available	83,027
Difference	+37,517 hours
Assessment of District Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst there is sufficient provision available within the Malvern district for all eligible two to four-year-old children, 4 out of 18 wards have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area.

NEF Provision – Autumn 2025

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 9months - 4-year-old children	1,800
Number of NEF Providers	64
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	43,005
Weekly hours of childcare available	83,027
Difference	+40,022 hours
Assessment of District Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst there is likely to be sufficient provision available within the Malvern district for all eligible 9 month to four-year-old children, 3 out of 18 wards have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area.

Wraparound Provision

District	8am – 6pm provision available	Before and after school provision available but not 8am – 6pm	Before and/or after school provision not available
Malvern Hills	65.7% (23)	31.4% (11)	2.8% (1)

Malvern has a large number of small, rural schools with low Pupil Admission Numbers; it is therefore challenging to open sustainable wraparound provision and explains the lower percentage of schools with 8am – 6pm provision in place compared to other districts.

Redditch

Redditch is a district of Worcestershire located in the east of the county. The district borders the county of Warwickshire to the east, Bromsgrove District to the north, and Wychavon District to the south and west.

The district has one main town, Redditch, which covers the northern half of the district, with the southern half comprising mainly rural areas. Redditch is made up of nine wards, with the eight wards breaking up the built-up areas of Redditch town, and one large ward covering the southern half of the district.

Redditch had a population of 87,847 mid-2023¹⁵. In Summer 2025 there were 3,636 known 0- to 4- year-old children living in the Redditch district registered with a Worcestershire GP.

NEF Provision – Summer 2025

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 9 months - 4-year-old children	3,929
Number of NEF Providers	59
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	72,390
Weekly hours of childcare available	76,586
Difference	+4,196 hours
Assessment of District Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst there is sufficient provision available within the Redditch district for all two to four-year-old eligible children, 4 out of 9 wards have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area.

NEF Provision – Autumn 2025

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 9months - 4-year-old children	2,834
Number of NEF Providers	59
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	67,545
Weekly hours of childcare available	76,586
Difference	+9,041 hours
Assessment of District Sufficiency	Sufficient

¹⁵ <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>, Nomis 2024

There is likely to be sufficient provision available within the Redditch district for all eligible 9 month to four-year-old children, 4 out of 9 wards have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area.

Wraparound Provision

District	8am – 6pm provision available	Before and after school provision available but not 8am – 6pm	Before and/or after school provision not available
Redditch	84% (21)	12% (3)	4% (1)

Redditch has a high proportion of schools with 8am – 6pm wraparound provision in place.

Worcester

Worcester is the smallest district of Worcestershire located in the centre of the county. The district is enveloped by Malvern Hills district to the west and Wychavon district to the east.

The district comprises sixteen wards which cover the built-up areas of Worcester City and its suburbs.

Worcester had a population of 106,671 mid-2023¹⁶. In Summer 2025 there were 3,868 known 0 to 4-year-old children living in the Worcester district registered with a Worcestershire GP.

¹⁶ <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>, Nomis 2024

NEF Provision – Summer 2025

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 9 months - 4-year-old children	4,064
Number of NEF Providers	70
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	74,565
Weekly hours of childcare available	100,244
Difference	+25,679 hours
Assessment of District Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst there is sufficient provision available within the Worcester district for all two to four-year-old eligible children, 6 out of 16 wards have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area.

NEF Provision – Autumn 2025

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 9month - 4-year-old children	2,990
Number of NEF Providers	70
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	71,835
Weekly hours of childcare available	100,244
Difference	+28,409 hours
Assessment of District Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst there is likely to be sufficient provision available within the Worcester district for all 9 month to four-year-old eligible

children, 6 out of 16 wards have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area.

Wraparound Provision

District	8am – 6pm provision available	Before and after school provision available but not 8am – 6pm	Before and/or after school provision not available
Worcester	95.6% (21)	4.5% (1)	0%

All schools in Worcester have wraparound provision in place, with the majority already offering 8am – 6pm provision.

Wychavon

Wychavon is a district of Worcestershire and covers the larger rural areas to the east of the county. The district borders the counties of Warwickshire to the east, and Gloucestershire to the south, Wyre Forest district to the north, Bromsgrove and Redditch to the northeast, and Malvern Hills and Worcester Districts to the west.

The district has three main towns, Droitwich, Pershore and Evesham. Wychavon is made up of twenty-seven wards, with ten smaller wards covering Droitwich (four wards) and Evesham (six wards) town centres, and the remaining seventeen wards covering larger rural areas across the district. Wychavon had a population of 138,017 mid-2023¹⁷. In Summer 2025 there were

¹⁷ <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>, Nomis 2024

4,637 known 0- to 4- year-old children living in the Wychavon district registered with a Worcestershire GP.

NEF Provision – Summer 2025

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 9 months - 4-year-old children	5,045
Number of NEF Providers	103
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	93,270
Weekly hours of childcare available	137,409
Difference	+44,139 hours
Assessment of District Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst there is sufficient provision available within the Wychavon district for all two to four-year-old eligible children, 14 out of 27 wards have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area. There are also 2 wards, Badsey & Aldington and Bengeworth, that are not mitigated by local provision.

NEF Provision – Autumn 2025

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 9months - 4-year-old children	3,637
Number of NEF Providers	103
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	86,385
Weekly hours of childcare available	137,409
Difference	+51,024 hours
Assessment of District Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst there is likely to be sufficient provision available within the Wychavon district for all 9 month to four-year-old eligible children, 11 out of 27 wards have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area. There are also 2 wards, Badsey & Aldington and Evesham North that are not mitigated by local provision.

Wraparound Provision

District	8am – 6pm provision available	Before and after school provision available but not 8am – 6pm	Before and/or after school provision not available
Wychavon	77.3% (41)	20.8% (11)	1.9% (1)

Wychavon has a high proportion of schools with 8am – 6pm wraparound provision in place.

Wyre Forest

Wyre Forest is a district of Worcestershire located in the north of the county. The district borders the counties of Staffordshire and Shropshire to the north, Bromsgrove District to the east, Wychavon District to the south, and Malvern Hills District to the South and West. The district has three main towns, Kidderminster, Bewdley and Stourport-on-Severn.

Wyre Forest is made up of twelve wards, with the largest three wards around the periphery of the district and the remaining nine smaller wards covering the town centres of Kidderminster and Stourport.

Wyre Forest had a population of 103,913 mid-2023¹⁸. In Summer 2025 there were 3,416 known 0 to 4-year-old children living in the Wyre Forest district registered with a Worcestershire GP.

NEF Provision – Summer 2025

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 2 - 4-year-old children	3,785
Number of NEF Providers	77
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	70,485
Weekly hours of childcare available	93,539
Difference	+20,054 hours
Assessment of District Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst there is sufficient provision available within the Wyre Forest district for all two to four-year-old eligible children, 5 wards, have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area. There is also 1 ward, Lickhill that is not mitigated by local provision.

NEF Provision – Autumn 2025

Assessment Criteria	Total
Estimated number of eligible 9month - 4-year-old children	2,793
Number of NEF Providers	77
Weekly hours of funded childcare required	66,645
Weekly hours of childcare available	93,539
Difference	+26,894 hours
Assessment of District Sufficiency	Sufficient

Whilst there is likely to be sufficient provision available within the Wyre Forest district for all 9 month to four-year-old eligible children, 4 out of 12 wards have an in-ward shortfall that is mitigated by provision available within the local area.

Wraparound Provision

District	8am – 6pm provision available	Before and after school provision available but not 8am – 6pm	Before and/or after school provision not available
Wyre Forest	82.6% (19)	17.4% (4)	0%

All schools in Wyre Forest offer before and after school provision, with the majority already offering 8am – 6pm provision.

¹⁸ <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>, Nomis 2024

Childcare Sufficiency Progress 2024/25

	Tasks complete	Outcome
Support the development of additional childcare places for children with SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting the development of Enhanced Early Years provision in North Worcestershire 	Dingley's Promise was opened in Summer 2025
Support the expansion of early years provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting the Childcare Expansion for all age ranges - Support the School Based Nurseries Capital Grant Process phase one to prioritise funding to areas with identified sufficiency risks and issues, without putting additional risk on the rest of the childcare market - Increase in the number of schools offering provision 8am – 6pm - Increase of providers offering funded provision for 2-year-olds 	<p>The supply of early years provision is sufficient to meet the demand for both funded and non-funded childcare.</p> <p>Wrap around care for the majority of schools in Worcestershire</p> <p>Sufficient Early Years provision across Worcestershire</p>

Childcare Sufficiency Action Plan 2026

Action	Tasks	Outcome	Lead
Improve the forecasting of early years sufficiency information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a way of assessing demand for non-funded hours - Update the Early Years Sufficiency Tool to consider stretched NEF offers - Develop a way to identify maximum funded hours at a setting - To include housing developments within the Early Years forecast tool - Review take up of FRAS entitlement following system changes to identify children who are eligible for both FRAS and Working family entitlement. - To capture school-based holiday provision 	The accuracy of early years sufficiency forecasting is improved.	Sufficiency and Place Planning
Support the expansion of early years provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce the Provider Support Fund to support the costs of expanding early years provision whilst demand grows - Allocate the Childcare Expansion capital funding to target areas with identified sufficiency risks and issues - Support the School Based Nurseries Capital Grant Process phases two and three to prioritise funding to areas with identified sufficiency risks and issues, without putting additional risk on the rest of the childcare market 	The supply of early years provision is sufficient to meet the demand for both funded and non-funded childcare.	Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency and Improvement Lead
Support the development of additional childcare places for children with SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support the development of Enhanced Early Years provision in North Worcestershire 	All children with SEND can access their early years entitlement.	Head of Inclusion Support Services
Support recruitment, training and retention of the childcare workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Free marketing of job vacancies via social media - Develop training to support early years and childcare practitioners to provide ongoing CPD - Maximise the NEF funding rates to support provider sustainability and enable appropriate salaries to be paid to practitioners 	Sufficient childcare provision continues to be available.	Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency and Improvement Lead

