

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Support

September 2021

hempsall's

Celebrating 20 years of supporting equality,
social mobility and best practice in children's services

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1 Introduction

The last full Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) was undertaken in 2018/2019.

Hempsall's was commissioned to support childcare sufficiency planning in August 2020, drafting an assessment of the childcare market in Barnsley, with consideration of the impact or potential impact of COVID-19 on childcare sufficiency and recommendations for next steps. This was reported in October 2020.

Hempsall's was commissioned to support delivery of the recommendations from the childcare sufficiency planning report, commencing in May 2021.

1.1 Key tasks:

1. Undertake a childcare sufficiency assessment survey of all registered early years and childcare providers in Barnsley. The focus of the survey was on:
 - Assessing the financial health of the market.
 - Exploring providers' experiences of demand.
 - Identifying the extent to which providers have been proactive in responding to changes in demand as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Capturing providers' assessments of their financial sustainability.
 - Providing a template for future snapshot surveys, with data analysis providing a baseline against which any further audit findings can be assessed.

The survey was hosted by Barnsley in June 2021, and data shared with Hempsall's for analysis purposes in July 2021.

2. Desk research to:

- Include child population data (including forecasts).
- Account for the ambitious new home development strategy across Barnsley and the potential impact on demand for childcare.
- Establish current supply of childcare at sub-locality level.
- Assess childcare rates to provide a basis for comparison between localities and to support assessment of where additional capacity may be required to meet

potential increases in demand as a result of population, new homes or new employment.

Desk research was undertaken May – July 2021.

2 Key findings

There is a good mix of provision across Barnsley to give parents and carers childcare choices. There has been an overall decrease in childminding and pre-school/sessional provision, however, overall capacity in terms of the number of places available has remained largely unchanged since the 2018/2019 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA).

Childcare settings reported changes in levels and patterns of demand since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic which have impacted differently on different types of provision. There may be a need to provide business support to settings experiencing a lack of financial security or confidence in their sustainability over the short term (the next six to 12 months), in particular if demand is forecast to increase either as a result of coming out of the pandemic in the short term, or as a result of new homes developments over the next few years. Settings may also need support to understand changes to childcare demand and how best to respond to changes.

2.1 Provision for children aged under five

There has been an overall decrease in the number of registered childcare settings in Barnsley, particularly in childminding where the number of registered active childminders has decreased by 31% (from 168 in 2018 to 133 in 2021). All areas have experienced a decrease, with Dearne area having the largest percentage decrease (38%) from 13 registered childminders in 2018 to eight in 2021.

There has also been a decrease in the number of play groups/sessional carers which have decreased from 20 in 2018 to 15 in 2021. In 2021, settings previously identified as sessional may now classify as family centres or voluntary and community nurseries. The number of day nurseries has decreased by two in the same period.

The number of childcare places on offer for children aged under five years (not including maintained schools) has decreased slightly from 3,684 in 2018 to 3,318 in 2021.

The average childcare ratio for children aged under five is 0.33, or one place for every three children in this age group. The Dearne area has a relatively low childcare ratio (0.26) and relatively low vacancy levels, suggesting a potential sufficiency issue.

On average, early years and childcare settings were using 92% of their registered capacity. A high percentage of registered places were being used in the Penistone area and in North East and South areas.

2.2 Provision for children aged five and older

Childcare provision for children aged over eight years old is not required to register with Ofsted and the local authority may not hold information unless individual providers choose to share it. For example, schools may offer childcare that wraps around the school day, or school-based activities at the end of the school day. Such provision is not included in the following place estimates.

There are 1,319 registered places for children aged five years old and over. The majority of places are provided up to the age of 11 but places are offered for children over 11 particularly when a child has a special educational need. On average, early years and childcare settings were using 87% of their registered capacity. A high percentage of registered places were being used in the Penistone and North areas.

Across Barnsley there are an estimated 29,190 children aged five-14 years old and an estimated 1,319 registered childcare places for this age range. This gives a childcare ratio of 0.05, or around one place for every 22 children in the five-14 age range. Non-registered provision (for example, based in schools and offering before and after school care) will be available.

2.3 The impact of COVID-19 on registered early years and childcare provision

2.3.1 Changes in overall demand

Provider audit respondents identified a general decrease in demand for early years and childcare since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, with over a third reporting a decrease,

compared to 19% reporting an increase. Lower levels of demand have impacted more on childminders (38% reported a decrease) and out of school settings (77% reported a decrease). Conversely, a higher percentage of group settings (day nursery, preschool/sessional, family centre and community/voluntary nursery) reported an increase in demand (38% compared to 19% overall).

Demand decreased for out of school and holiday provision, and for childminders in particular, the funded early years entitlements. Lower levels of demand for out of school and holiday provision may reflect children not attending school as a consequence of the pandemic, or parents/carers changing working patterns (e.g. furloughed, working from home etc.). Lower levels of demand for the funded early years entitlements may reflect lower take-up overall, or parents and carers choosing to use only one setting whereas in the past they may have used more than one setting.

2.3.2 Changes in patterns of demand

Respondents reported a trend towards parents and carers wanting to use fewer hours or shorter days and less demand for paid for hours, particularly in group and out of school settings. Changed demand has impacted differently, both in terms of types of provision (with, for example, a high percentage of childminders (51%) reporting parents and carers wanting fewer hours or shorter days) compared to 28% of group settings, and between providers (for example, 34% of group settings reported an increase in demand for paid for hours and 41%, a decrease).

Despite reported changes to levels of demand and patterns of demand, nearly two-thirds of respondents (63%) had not changed their provision as a result of COVID-19. Where changes have been made the most common were around offering fewer places, shorter days or fewer days.

2.3.3 The early years and childcare workforce

Provider survey data identified an early years and childcare workforce of around 820 excluding maintained staff, the majority of whom were employed in group-based provision.

At the time of the survey (June 2021), 8% of settings had staff on furlough, and the number of staff furloughed (11) equated to just over 1% of the workforce. Since the start of the pandemic around 3% of the workforce has been made redundant.

Staff recruitment was identified as a concern, particularly for group settings where 65% reported staff recruitment was a concern. Costs of, and access to, staff training were also reported to be of concern (identified as concerns by just over a quarter of respondents).

2.3.4 Financial sustainability and resilience

Provider survey responses identified some areas for concern with regards to the financial sustainability and resilience of the early years and childcare market in Barnsley.

Where settings have a relatively high percentage of income from paid for hours, they may be more financially vulnerable if the trend to lower levels of demand for paid for hours continues.

Settings that derive income from early years funding were protected to an extent across summer and autumn terms 2020 and spring term 2021 as the Government continued to fund on expected levels or numbers on roll and not on actual attendance. However, this support has now been rolled back and settings were funded on actual attendance in the summer term 2021. If demand for the funded early years entitlements has been lower than previously (as is reported to be the case with childminders, for example), this may have a negative impact on sustainability now.

Childminders and out of school settings reported a higher reliance on paid for hours. Group settings derive a much higher proportion of their income from the funded early years entitlements (around 67% compared to 35% in childminding and no funded provision on out of school settings).

Where settings had a healthy financial position at the start of the pandemic, and where they had taken the opportunity to access Government financial support (rather than use held reserves), it is more likely they will be financially sustainable in 2021. Where settings have

not accessed Government financial support and/or relied on held reserves to support their business throughout lockdown and recovery, there is concern they would not be in such a healthy financial position moving forwards.

- 26% of all respondents had cash reserves at the time of the survey, including 12% of childminders, 52% of group settings and 67% of out of school settings.
- The average cash reserve held provided an estimated 3.86 months operating costs, with a range of between 1 month and 24 months (from 21 settings providing information).

In general, early years and childcare providers took advantage of Government financial support, and local authority isolation payment and discretionary funding. Just under a quarter of respondents however had not applied for any financial support which may impact on their sustainability and financial resilience if they have drawn on other means of support and/or demand remains low in some settings.

In terms of current income, the majority of respondents (68%) reported projected income would be sufficient to meet their costs, with a relatively high percentage forecasting a loss (21% overall).

Just under half of all respondents (45%) reported being confident or very confident in their setting's financial sustainability in the next six to 12 months. Related issues of income levels, financial sustainability or resilience and cash flow were causing the greatest levels of concern amongst respondents.

2.4 Local authority support throughout the COVID-19 pandemic
Barnsley Council provided a range of support for early years and childcare settings throughout the pandemic. This included:

- Continuation of free entitlement funding during the first lockdown period (spring 2020).
- Early years top-up funding in the autumn term 2020.

- Access to briefings, guidance and information from the LA.
- Regular support (wellbeing calls, forums, wellbeing breaks).
- Access to COVID-19 testing, PPE supplies etc.
- Emails and other media updates from the LA.

Survey findings show support was accessed by a large percentage of respondents, and was well-received, in particular the regular email and other media updates provided.

2.5 Other sufficiency considerations

The population of children aged 0 to 14 years old is forecast to decrease between now and 2026 by 1.1%, with decreases mainly impacting on the 0 to four-year-old age range.

However, over the period 2021/2022 to 2025/2026, there are 6,686 new homes planned.

The highest numbers of these are in the North Area Council (in the wards of Darton East and Darton West) and in the South Area Council (Rockingham ward). North area has a low childcare ratio for children aged 0-4 years, however, vacancy levels reported in the June 2021 provider survey suggest there is currently spare capacity in the area. North area does have a high number of childminders (34) and it is noted there has been an overall decrease in registered childminders across Barnsley in recent years. This area will need to be monitored to ensure any increased demand from new homes development does not increase demand beyond the area's capacity to absorb additional demand. Dearne area has a relatively low childcare ratio (for children aged under five) and a low level of vacancies recorded in June 2021. It has also experienced a decrease in the number of childminders. There are plans to develop 594 new homes by 2026, which may increase demand for childcare beyond the area's capacity.

3 Recommendations

1. There has been an overall decrease in the number of registered childminders and lower levels of demand since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic reported by this sector. In addition, a fifth of childminders (20%) reported a lack of confidence in their financial sustainability in the short term and a lower proportion of childminders reported holding cash reserves at the time of the CSA survey.

Wards with the highest number of childminders include Darton East (North area), Cudworth (North East area), Darfield and Wombwell (South area). There is relatively low levels of alternative provision in these areas.

Work with childminders in areas that have a high degree of reliance on this type of provision to support sustainability by promoting provision and signposting to business support.

2. Patterns of demand have changed, although only 37% of settings have made any changes to their provision as a result of COVID-19.

There has been a decrease in demand for paid for childcare, particularly in childminding and out of school settings.

Share information from the CSA with providers and encourage all providers to review their business models and demand patterns. Signpost settings to business support and advice.

3. Overall, one in five settings (21%) forecasted projected income would be insufficient to meet costs and 68% forecasted breaking even (income sufficient to meet costs). A higher percentage of group settings were forecasting a loss. Over a quarter of group settings applied for a Government Bounce Back Loan. As loans start to become

repayable, settings may experience greater financial challenges, in particular where they forecast a loss in income over the next few months.

Provide settings with access to business planning tools that support financial planning (e.g. National Day Nurseries Association [NDNA Early Years Business Zone: <https://www.earlyyearsbusinesszone.org.uk/> Barnsley Council Early Years Business Support <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/childcare-nurseries-and-family-support/early-years-and-childcare-professionals/childcare-business-support/funding-and-finance/>]. Continue to promote vacant places through the FIS to support parents who are experiencing difficulties in finding appropriate childcare.

4. There is a relatively low childcare ratio for children aged under five years in the Dearne area, and a lower level of reported vacancies in summer 2021. There are 594 new homes planned to 2026 in this area.

Across the council area there are 6,686 new homes planned across the same period.

Work with schools planning to understand the projected impact of new home developments, and develop a forecast of potential increases in demand, particularly in areas that currently show potential for insufficient childcare (e.g. Dearne).

5. The early years and childcare market continues to adjust as the Country comes out of lockdown and new patterns of working are established. Some commentators forecasted an increase in unemployment as Government financial support schemes end (e.g. Furlough).

Continue to monitor the financial health of the early years and childcare market termly, to identify any new risks, or where current risks decrease, adjusting market management strategies accordingly.

6. Early Years settings have highlighted concerns regarding the recruitment and the costs of training staff. Work with local colleges, schools and universities and local apprenticeship providers to promote childcare as a career. Also provide, source and promote affordable training opportunities.

4 Barnsley in context

4.1 Population

There is an estimated total of 43,332 children aged 0-14 living in Barnsley (Office for National Statistics mid-2019 population estimates). The population was distributed fairly evenly across the different age bands, with 32.6% of total aged 0-four years, 34.5% aged five-nine years and 32.8% aged 10-14 years.

At area locality level, the highest number of children in each age range live in Central and North areas.

Population estimates by area locality (mid-2019 estimates)

Area locality	0-4	5-9	10-14
Central	3,205	3,453	3,012
Dearne	1,617	1,481	1,462
North	3,195	3,403	3,261
North East	2,125	2,338	2,264
Penistone	1,182	1,476	1,531
South	2,818	2,808	2,701
Barnsley totals	14,142	14,959	14,231

Source: Office for National Statistics mid-year population estimates.

At ward level, the highest number of 0–four-year-olds are in the wards of Wombwell (Central), Dearne South (Dearne) and North East (North East). North East also has the highest number of school aged children, along with Penistone West (Penistone), St Helens (North) and Stairfoot (Central).

Population estimates at ward level (mid 2019 estimates)

Ward	0-4 years	5-9 years	10-14 years	5-14 years
Central	707	711	565	1276
Cudworth	714	746	740	1486
Darfield	652	665	661	1326
Darton East	560	555	618	1173
Darton West	514	535	566	1101
Dearne North	778	733	638	1371
Dearne South	839	748	824	1572
Dodworth	482	577	524	1101
Hoyland Milton	728	756	716	1472
Kingstone	711	682	655	1337
Monk Bretton	725	808	663	1471
North East	808	901	831	1732
Old Town	616	644	654	1298
Penistone East	461	607	707	1314
Penistone West	721	869	824	1693
Rockingham	558	628	609	1237
Royston	603	691	693	1384
St Helens	780	861	760	1621
Stairfoot	751	884	745	1629
Wombwell	880	759	715	1474
Worsbrough	554	599	523	1122
Barnsley totals	14,142	14959	14231	29190

Source: Office for National Statistics mid-year population estimates.

4.1.1 Population projections

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2018-based population projections (released March 2020)¹ estimate the child population (children aged 0-14 years old) at just under 43,170 in 2018. The child population is projected to decrease by 2026 by 1.1% to 42,677. Increases are forecast in the 10-14 age range and decreases in the younger age ranges.

In contrast, the total population is projected to increase by 5% in the same period.

¹

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/localauthoritiesinenglandtable2>

Child population forecast 2018 to 2026

Age range	2018	2023	Change over 2018	2026	Change over 2018
0-4	14,227	13,221	-7.1%	13,205	-7.2%
5-9	14,911	14,650	-1.8%	14,071	-5.7%
10-14	14,032	15,377	+9.6%	15,401	+9.8%
Child population 0-14	43,170	43,248	+1.8%	42,677	-1.1%
Overall population	245,199	253,424	+3.4%	257,456	+5.0%

Source: Office for National Statistics.

4.2 New housing development

Barnsley's Local Plan (adopted January 2019)² outlines the council's plan to deliver at least 21,546 homes by 2033, maintaining at least a rolling five-year deliverable supply of new housing, as well as growing the economy by 28,840 jobs (the Local Plan works from a base date of 1 April 2014 to 2033). Such developments will impact on demand for childcare, a population numbers may change and people will require childcare to support them to work.

It is important that new developments consider the impact on the demand for childcare and plan accordingly to ensure the local authority can continue to meet its childcare sufficiency duties.

Over the period 2021/2022 to 2025/2026, there are 6,686 new homes planned. The highest numbers of these are in the North Area Council (in the wards of Darton East and Darton West) and in the South Area Council (Rockingham ward).

Some of the planned developments cross wards which is identified by symbols in the Housing Trajectory Table below (see the key at the foot of the table for the linked areas). Where a development crosses an area council boundary the recording of new homes

² <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/9924/local-plan-adopted.pdf>

planned is in the area council where most homes will be built for example MU2&3 all homes are recorded in Monk Bretton ward in North East Area Council.

Homes that should have been constructed in 2019 and 2020 that have been delayed due to the Covid Pandemic and may currently be under construction are not included in the table below but were included in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment in 2019.

New housing trajectory 2021/2022 to 2025/2026

Ward	Area Council	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Central	Central	48	18	80	58	40	244
Dodworth	Central	55	40	40	75	103	313
Kingstone	Central	0	0	18	40	40	98
Stairfoot	Central	14	40	40	40	40	174
Worsbrough#	Central	40	62	74	0	0	176
	Overall						1,005
Dearne North	Dearne	40	30	40	40	68	218
Dearne South	Dearne	101	109	120	40	6	376
	Overall						594
Darton East	North	223	187	185	212	255	1,062
Darton West	North						
Old Town+	North	43	0	0	0	0	43
St Helens	North	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Overall						1,105
Cudworth	North East	40	40	40	81	61	262
Monk Bretton	North East	40	140	251	258	200	889
North East	North East	30	69	0	27	40	166
Royston	North East	81	73	70	80	80	384
	Overall						1,439
Penistone East	Penistone	12	72	120	80	80	364
Penistone West	Penistone						
	Overall						364
Darfield	South	2	40	69	80	80	271
Hoyland Milton	South	20	0	0	0	0	20

Rockingham*	South	180	241	264	338	198	1,221
Wombwell	South	135	120	70	40	40	405
	Overall						1,917
All new housing		1,104	1,281	1,481	1,489	1,331	6,686

*Rockingham and Hoyland Milton; +Old Town and Darton West; #Worsbrough and Kingstone.

Source: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council schools planning data

4.3 Market capacity

There are a total of 199 active registered early years and childcare settings in Barnsley, and 55 maintained nursery classes. Collectively, these settings offer a total of 6,132 places (full time equivalent). The majority of places are for children aged under five years (4,639, 76% of total).

There are nine registered standalone out of school providers, however, other types of setting will also offer out of school provision. Based on the early years and childcare provider childcare sufficiency survey (reported in section 5), around a third of all registered settings offer out of school provision, the majority as part of a wider offer. Out of school provision listed in the table below shows standalone provision and not where out of school is available as part of a setting's wider offer.

Childminding provision is available in all areas and day nursery provision in the majority of wards. Wards with no day nursery provision include Dodworth and Stairfoot (Central area); Darfield (South area). There is maintained nursery provision in all wards and areas.

There are only two pre-school/sessional settings registered in Barnsley, both located in the North East area. All bar Penistone area has at least one family centre that offers childcare places and family services, Penistone does not offer childcare but does offer family services.

Number of settings by type of provision – area and ward

AREA/ward	Childminding	Day nursery	Family centre	Out of school	Sessional	Voluntary/ community nursery	Maintained nursery
CENTRAL	18	9	1	0	0	0	15
Central	1	6	0	0	0	0	3
Dodworth	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Kingstone	6	1	0	0	0	0	4
Stairfoot	7	0	0	0	0	0	3
Worsbrough	2	2	1	0	0	0	3
DEARNE	8	3	2	0	0	1	7
Dearne North	2	1	1	0	0	1	4
Dearne South	6	2	1	0	0	0	3
NORTH	33	6	1	4	0	1	11
Darton East	14	1	0	2	0	0	3
Darton West	7	2	0	0	0	1	1
Old Town	6	2	0	2	0	0	2
St Helen's	6	1	1	0	0	0	5
NORTH EAST	26	8	1	3	2	1	9
Cudworth	11	1	0	1	0	1	2
Monk Bretton	2	3	0	0	0	0	2
North East	5	3	1	1	1	0	3
Royston	8	1	0	1	1	0	2
PENISTONE*	13	7	0	1	0	2	3
Penistone East	4	3	0	1	0	1	1
Penistone West	8	4	0	0	0	1	2
SOUTH	35	10	1	1	0	1	10
Darfield	11	0	1	0	0	0	2
Hoyland Milton	4	4	0	0	0	1	3
Rockingham	8	3	0	0	0	0	2
Wombwell	12	3	0	1	0	0	3
OVERALL	133	43	6	9	2	6	55

4.3.1 Changes since the last CSA

There has been a marked decrease (31%) in the number of active registered childminders – down from 168 in 2018 to 133 in 2021. Whilst all areas have experienced a decrease, Dearne area has seen the largest percentage decrease (38%), with childminder registrations down from 13 in 2018 to eight in 2021.

There has also been a decrease in the number pre-school/sessional settings which have decreased from 20 in 2018 to 15 in 2021. The number of day nurseries has decreased by two in the same period.

4.3.2 Provision for children aged under five years

The majority of places for children aged under five years are available in maintained nurseries and (private) day nurseries. Collectively these settings account for 3,774 places, 81% of provision for this age range. Within that, day nurseries offer the highest number of full-time equivalent (FTE) places (2,341, 62% of all registered places for under-fives). Childminders account for around 487 places for children aged under five years (10% of total).

The number of registered places defines total capacity of provision in Barnsley. Settings offering places to children 0 to eight years of age must register with Ofsted on the compulsory childcare register. Not all providers will work to maximum registered capacity, for a variety of reasons. During the COVID-19 pandemic, settings may have reduced the number of places they offered to ensure COVID guidelines could be met (e.g. operating in 'bubbles'), or may have experienced staffing issues (e.g. staff shielding or isolating).

Providers were asked in the Childcare Sufficiency Survey (June 2021) how many places they were registered for, and of those, how many they were using. On average, early years and childcare settings were using 92% of their registered capacity. A high percentage of registered places were being used in the Penistone area and in North East and South areas.

Registered places for children aged under five years – by area

Area	FTE places in maintained settings	Registered places	Total places for under 5	Number of places used (Not including maintained settings)	% of registered places
Central	373	723	1,096	639	88%
Dearne	176	217	393	187	86%
North	258	501	759	395	79%
North East	247	665	912	634	95%
Penistone	79	473	552	457	97%
South	273	739	1,012	757	102%
Overall	1,407	3,318	4,724	3,066	92%

Source: BMBC early years and childcare sufficiency survey June 2021. Percentages rounded.

4.3.4 Registered places by age band

Overall, settings reported using 48% of registered places for children aged under five years, for three- and four-year-olds, 18% for children aged under two and 34% for two-year-olds. There is a fairly uniform pattern in terms of places by age range with the exception of Dearne area, which has a much higher percentage of registered places for two-year-olds.

Registered places by age band

Area	Age range		
	% of registered places (number)		
	Under 2 years	2 years	3 and 4 years
Central	18% (136)	32% (229)	50% (358)
Dearne	13% (29)	47% (102)	40% (86)
North	19% (94)	32% (161)	49% (246)
North East	18% (118)	35% (230)	48% (317)
Penistone	22% (103)	26% (121)	53% (249)
South	18% (134)	32% (233)	50% (372)
Overall	18% (614)	34% (1,076)	48% (1,628)

Source: BMBC early years and childcare sufficiency survey June 2021. Percentages rounded

Comparing 2021 provider survey data to the 2018 CSA, there has been an overall decrease in the number of places for children aged under five years. Data shows a small decrease in the number of places in maintained nurseries; the 2021 figure below is based on part-time- equivalent (PTE) places, and reported as full-time-equivalent (FTE) elsewhere.

Number of places by age range 2021 compared to 2018

	Registered places – by age range			Early education places in maintained nurseries
	Under 2 years	2 years	3 and 4 years	
2018	635	1,198	1,786	2,853
2021	614	1,076	1,628	2,814
Difference	-21	-122	-158	-39

4.3.5 Childcare ratios 0-four years old

Childcare ratios provide a means of comparing relative supply across different areas of the borough. Across Barnsley there are an estimated 14,142 children aged 0-four years old and an estimated 4,726 early years and childcare places for this age range (including school-based provision and childminders). This gives a childcare ratio of 0.33, or around one place for every three children in the 0-four age range. The North East and Penistone areas have relatively

high childcare ratios for the 0–four-year-old age group (based on registered capacity) – 0.43 and 0.47 respectively. These ratios equate to around one place for every 2.5 children aged 0–four years. In contrast, Dearne and North areas have relatively low childcare ratios – roughly equating to one place for every 4 children.

Childcare ratios – by area

Area	Estimated population aged 0-4	Number of early years and childcare places (based on registration)	Childcare ratio 0-4 years
Central	3,205	1,096	0.34
Dearne	1,617	393	0.24
North	3,195	759	0.24
North East	2,125	912	0.43
Penistone	1,182	552	0.47
South	2,818	1,012	0.36
Barnsley totals	14,142	4,726	0.33

Source: ONS mid-year population estimates. BMBC early years and childcare sufficiency survey June 2021.

Relatively low childcare ratios do not necessarily mean there is a lack of provision in a given area; it may be parents choose to access childcare in other areas. Vacancy data also provides a useful insight into childcare sufficiency. For example, North area had a relatively low childcare ratio overall, but a relatively high level of vacancies, suggesting the lower childcare ratio does not mean there is a lack of provision to meet demand. In contrast, Dearne, also with a relatively low childcare ratio, had low vacancy levels across all types of provision. This suggests childcare sufficiency could become an issue if demand increases, or supply decreases, particularly in the summer term.

4.3.6 Vacancies for children aged under five years

Across all provision there were a total of 472 vacancies recorded week beginning 21 June 2021. This equates to 13.8% of registered capacity and 15.4% of used capacity. Summer term is usually the term when childcare providers reach a peak in terms of demand, ahead of the yearly school intake in September. The fact that there were a relatively high proportion of vacant places suggests sufficiency is not an issue generally at this time.

Demand for provision is reported to be lower in a number of settings (see section 5.2 for details). Nearly half of settings responding to the survey (48%) reported they did not have any vacancies. Vacancy levels differed across Barnsley and between different types of provision, but averaging at around 14% vacancies against registered capacity. The following table shows registered capacity and declared vacancies (averaged across the week), by area and type of provision.

Vacancies for children under five years

Type of provision	Area						
	Central	Dearne	North	North East	Penistone	South	Overall
Childminding							
Registered places	62	42	106	111	42	124	487
Vacancy rate (number)	16% (10)	5% (2)	16% (17)	11% (12)	12% (5)	15% (18)	13% (65)
Day nursery							
Registered places	625	91	328	402	377	563	2,386
Vacancy rate (number)	13% (83)	10% (9)	5% (17)	67 (17%)	10% (36)	22% (122)	14% (334)
Out of school							
Registered places	0	0	13	0	0	35	48
Vacancy rate (number)	N/A	N/A	31% (4)	N/A	N/A	11% (4)	17% (8)
All other provision*							
Registered places	68	84	54	161	54	88	509
Vacancy rate (number)	24% (16)	Neg (0.2 place)	26% (14)	2% (3)	41% (22)	11% (10)	13% (64)

* All other provision = family centre, sessional, voluntary and community nursery.

Source: BMBC early years and childcare sufficiency survey June 2021.

The overall vacancy rate is highest in South area (19% compared to 14% overall), and lowest in Dearne area (6%).

Overall vacancy rate for children aged under 5

	Central	Dearne	North	North East	Penistone	South	Overall
Total vacancies under 5 years	109	12	51	83	63	154	472
% of all registered places	14%	6%	10%	12%	13%	19%	14%

Source: BMBC early years and childcare sufficiency survey June 2021.

4.3.7 Provision for children aged five years and over

Childcare provision for children aged over eight years old is not required to register with Ofsted and the local authority may not hold information unless individual providers choose to share it. For example, schools may offer childcare that wraps around the school day, or school-based activities at the end of the school day. Such provision is not included in the following place estimates.

There are 1,319 registered places for children aged five years old and over. On average, early years and childcare settings were using 87% of their registered capacity. A high percentage of registered places were being used in the Penistone and North areas.

Registered places for children aged five years and over – by area

Area	Registered places	Number of places used	% of registered places
Central	170	149	88%
Dearne	79	64	81%
North	267	244	91%
North East	277	220	79%
Penistone	221	205	93%
South	305	265	87%
Overall	1,319	1,147	87%

Source: BMBC early years and childcare sufficiency survey June 2021.

4.3.8 Childcare ratios for children aged five and over

Across Barnsley there are an estimated 29,190 children aged five-14 years old and an estimated 1,319 registered childcare places for this age range. This gives a childcare ratio of 0.05, or around one place for every 22 children in the five -14 age range. It is reiterated, other, non-registered provision (for example, based in schools and offering before and after school care) will be available.

Childcare ratios – by area

Area	Estimated population aged 5-14	Number of childcare places (based on registration)	Childcare ratio 5+
Central	6,465	170	0.026
Dearne	2,943	79	0.027
North	6,664	267	0.040
North East	4,602	277	0.060
Penistone	3,007	221	0.073
South	5,509	305	0.055
Barnsley totals	29,190	1,319	0.045

Source: ONS mid-year population estimates. BMBC early years and childcare sufficiency survey June 2021.

Places for children aged five and over – by area and type of provision

Type of provision	Area						
	Central	Dearne	North	North East	Penistone	South	Overall
Childminding							
Registered places	76	49	146	103	52	175	601
Day nursery							
Registered places	94	0	20	30	107	77	328
Out of school							
Registered places	0	0	77	144	36	53	300
All other provision*							
Registered places	0	30	24	0	36	0	90

* All other provision = family centre, sessional, voluntary and community nursery.

5 Early Years and Childcare Providers Childcare Sufficiency Survey

All active registered early years and childcare settings in Barnsley were asked to complete a childcare sufficiency survey in June 2021. A total of 201 completed surveys were received (98% response rate).

Response rate

Number of responses by type of provision and % by provider type						
Childminder	Family centre	Out of school provider	Playgroup/sessional care	Private nursery	Voluntary/community nursery	Overall
134	6	9	2	44	6	201
98%	100%	90%	100%	100%	100%	98%

Source: Provider audit/Barnsley Council.

For data analysis purposes, family centres, playgroup/sessional care, private nurseries and voluntary/community nurseries have been combined and reported as group settings.

Just under a third of respondents (31%) offered out of school provision, with 4% (nine settings) offering standalone out of school provision (the remainder as part of their wider offer). Of those settings offering out of school care, the majority (68%) offered provision for children 0-11 or 12, with 23% caring for children aged over 12, and 10% caring for children aged up to five years old.

Out of school provision is reported separately. Please note: low base (there are only a small number of standalone out of school clubs).

5.1 Availability of early years and childcare

Respondents were asked if they offered childcare outside of 'normal' office hours. Nearly half of all childminders (49%) offered early morning care (before 7.30am) with few settings offering late evening or weekend care.

Early morning, late evening and weekend care

Type of care	% of respondents (number) offering			
	Childminder	Group settings	Out of school	Overall
Early morning care (before 7.30am)	49% (65)	17% (10)	33% (3)	39% (78)
Late evening care (after 6.30pm)	7% (9)	0% (0)	0% (0)	4% (9)
Weekend care	4% (5)	0% (0)	0% (0)	2% (5)

Base: all respondents, 201. Percentages rounded.

5.2 Demand

Respondents were asked how demand has changed since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Responses identified a mixed picture, with some settings experiencing a decrease in demand (in particular, childminders), and others, an increase in demand (including a relatively high proportion of group settings). Whilst from a small base, a high percentage of out of school settings reported a decrease in demand (77%). Overall a third of respondents (36%) reported demand had decreased, either slightly or a lot, with 19% reporting increased demand.

Demand since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic

Demand	% of respondents (number)			
	Childminder	Group settings	Out of school	Overall
Decreased a lot	17% (23)	16% (9)	33% (3)	17% (35)
Decreased slightly	21% (28)	10% (6)	44% (4)	19% (38)
About the same	49% (66)	36% (21)	11% (1)	44% (88)
Increased slightly	8% (11)	19% (11)	11% (1)	11% (23)
Increased a lot	4% (6)	19% (11)	0% (0)	8% (17)

Base: all respondents, 201. Percentages rounded.

Comments

Respondents were asked if they had any comments about demand since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. There were a range of experiences reported with some settings reporting demand was starting to pick up as parents were returning to work, although some reported requests for shorter hours. There was mixed feedback from out of school providers with some having experienced an increase in demand, whilst others have experienced a decrease.

Respondents reported a decrease in demand for out of school and holiday provision since before the COVID-19 pandemic and for the funded early years entitlements, particularly in childminding.

5.3 Changes in demand

The following tables show reported changes in demand for childcare for children two-years-old and under, the funded early years entitlements, paid for provision and out of school and holiday childcare.

Demand for children aged two-years-old and under

Overall, a quarter of respondents reported demand has decreased albeit for the majority of settings, demand has remained unchanged compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic:

Demand for under two-year-olds	% of respondents (number)			
	Childminder	Group settings	Out of school	Overall
Less demand	28% (38)	22% (13)	0% (0)	25% (51)
Increased demand	12% (16)	28% (16)	0% (0)	16% (32)
Stayed the same as previous years	60% (80)	50% (29)	100% (9)	59% (118)

Demand for two-year-olds	% of respondents (number)			
	Childminder	Group settings	Out of school	Overall
Less demand	30% (40)	17% (10)	0% (0)	25% (50)
Increased demand	10% (13)	28% (16)	0% (0)	14% (29)
Stayed the same as previous years	60% (81)	55% (32)	100% (9)	61% (122)

Demand for the funded early years entitlements

A higher percentage of childminders reported a decrease for all funded early years entitlements.

Demand for the two-year-old entitlement	% of respondents (number)			
	Childminder	Group settings	Out of school	Overall
Less demand	31% (41)	24% (14)	0% (0)	27% (55)
Increased demand	10% (13)	26% (15)	0% (0)	14% (28)
Stayed the same as previous years	60% (80)	50% (29)	100% (9)	59% (118)

Demand for the universal entitlement	% of respondents (number)			
	Childminder	Group settings	Out of school	Overall
Less demand	28% (37)	10% (6)	22% (2)	22% (45)
Increased demand	10% (13)	33% (19)	0% (0)	16% (32)
Stayed the same as previous years	63% (84)	57% (33)	78% (7)	62% (124)

Demand for 30 hours	% of respondents (number)			
	Childminder	Group settings	Out of school	Overall
Less demand	28% (38)	17% (10)	11% (1)	24% (49)
Increased demand	10% (14)	28% (16)	0% (0)	15% (30)
Stayed the same as previous years	61% (82)	55% (32)	89% (8)	61% (122)

Demand for out of school and holiday childcare

Demand for out of school and holiday childcare has remained about the same as pre-COVID-19 levels for around half of respondents, but decreased markedly for a relatively large minority, especially for out of school in group and out of school settings.

Demand for out of school	% of respondents (number)			
	Childminder	Group settings	Out of school	Overall
Less demand	31% (41)	43% (25)	78% (7)	36% (73)
Increased demand	15% (20)	5% (3)	22% (2)	12% (25)
Stayed the same as previous years	54% (73)	52% (30)	0% (0)	51% (103)

Demand for holiday childcare	% of respondents (number)			
	Childminder	Group settings	Out of school	Overall
Less demand	32% (43)	31% (18)	33% (3)	32% (64)
Increased demand	10% (14)	14% (8)	22% (2)	12% (24)
Stayed the same as previous years	57% (77)	55% (32)	44% (4)	56% (113)

Comments about changes in demand for different age ranges

There was a mixed response with childminders reporting reduced demand for holiday care and other providers experiencing a reduced demand for out of school provision. Some private nurseries commented on increased demand for 30 hours.

5.4 Changes in patterns of demand

There was a trend towards parents/carers wanting fewer days or shorter hours and less demand for paid for hours, particularly in group and out of school settings. Findings again identified a mixed picture, with just less than a quarter of settings overall (23%) reporting an increase in demand for paid for hours.

Parental changes in demand

Changes:	% of respondents experiencing (number)			
	Childminder	Group settings	Out of school	Overall
Parents/carers wanting fewer hours or shorter days	51% (68)	28% (16)	67% (6)	45% (90)
Less demand for paid for hours	28% (38)	41% (24)	22% (2)	32% (64)
More demand for paid for hours	19% (25)	34% (20)	22% (2)	23% (47)

Base: all respondents, 201. Percentages rounded.

5.5 Unmet demand

A third of respondents (34%) reported they had demand that cannot be met.

Respondents were asked to outline the types of enquiries they were receiving that they could not meet.

Childminders reported requests for early morning or late night places and weekends. This is not reported by the majority of other providers. Childminders also reported an increase in demand for before and after school provision. Providers have had increase demand for shorter days around school hours. Some reported that whilst they are currently full, they would have places from September 2021. Family centres reported maintaining a waiting list due to difficulties recruiting staff.

5.6 Changes to provision

Respondents were asked if they had made any changes to their provision as a result of COVID-19. Across all respondents, 63% (127 settings) reported they had not changed their provision, in particular in childminding and group settings.

Changes to provision as a result of COVID-19

	% of respondents (number)			
	Childminder	Group settings	Out of school	Overall
No changes made	61% (82)	72% (42)	33% (3)	63% (127)
Changes made	39% (52)	28% (16)	67% (6)	37% (74)

Base: all respondents, 201. Percentages rounded.

Where respondents had changed their provision as a result of COVID-19, the most common changes were offering fewer places, shorter days or fewer days. This reflects the reported changes in parental demand.

Changes to delivery models – all respondents

	% respondents (number)
Changes made:	
Fewer places	27% (20)
Shorter days	26% (19)
Fewer days	19% (14)
Fewer hours	14% (10)
More places	14% (10)
Longer days	14% (10)
Fewer weeks a year	8% (6)
More hours	5% (4)
More weeks of the year	3% (2)
More days	1% (1)

Base: all respondents, 74. Percentages rounded. Multiple choices.

Comments regarding changes to provision

Respondents were invited to comment on any changes they had made to their provision since COVID-19. Settings reported changes due to the impact of COVID-19 – for example, creating bubbles. Several reported increasing fees, whilst some reduced the fees during lockdown. Respondents also commented on requests for shorter days or hours and less demand for Fridays.

Comments relating to changes to provision are shown in the appendices.

5.7 Staffing

Respondents were asked to provide some information about their staffing levels, and if staff had been furloughed or made redundant.

The majority of childminders (84%, 112 childminders) reported they did not employ any permanent staff.

Across all respondents, there was a total of 820 staff permanently employed. The highest number of those were in group settings.

Permanent staff employed

Number of permanent staff employed			
Childminder	Group settings	Out of school	Overall
32	748	40	820

Base: all respondents, 201.

At the time of the survey (June 2021), seven settings (8% of respondents with permanent staff) had staff furloughed. The total number of staff furloughed was 11, 1.3% of the permanent workforce.

Across all settings, there were 29.5 temporary or agency staff employed, the majority (24.5) in group settings, with three in out of school and two in childminder settings.

Of respondents employing permanent staff (89 in total), 12% (11 respondents) had made staff redundant since the start of the pandemic, with a total of 25 permanent members of staff being laid off (around 3% of the permanent workforce). The majority of these employees (84%, 21 people) worked in group settings with 16% (four people) having worked in childminding.

A small number of respondents (six, 7% of those with permanent staff) reported they were considering future redundancies.

Respondents were asked the extent to which they had any concerns around staff recruitment, retention or training. 28% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed the cost of training was a concern with 26% agreeing or strongly agreeing access to training was a

concern. This was particularly evident in group and out of school respondents. Staff recruitment was also reported as a concern (overall 23% agreed or strongly agreed), and this was a particular concern for group setting respondents where 65% agreed staff recruitment was a concern. Staff retention was also a concern for some.

Issues around staffing causing concern

	% (and number):				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Staff retention	19% (37)	12% (24)	58% (115)	7% (14)	5% (10)
Staff recruitment	15% (29)	8% (15)	56% (111)	12% (23)	11% (22)
Access to training	12% (24)	15% (29)	48% (96)	20% (39)	6% (12)
Cost of training	9% (17)	16% (31)	49% (97)	18% (35)	10% (20)

Base: all respondents, 200. Percentages rounded.

5.8 Percentage of income derived from funded hours

Demand for paid for hours has decreased in many settings since the start of COVID-19.

Where settings have a relatively high percentage of income from paid for hours, they may be more financially vulnerable as the pandemic continues to impact and if the trend to lower levels of demand for paid for hours continues. Settings that derive income from early years funding were protected to an extent across summer and autumn terms 2020 and spring term 2021 as the Government continued to fund on expected levels or numbers on roll and not on actual attendance.

Respondents were asked what the split was between funded and paid for hours income.

Responses showed childminders and out of school settings have a higher reliance on paid-for hours.

Note: percentages did not necessarily add up to 100% and a relatively high percentage of respondents (27%) either did not answer the question or were unsure of the income split.

Average income from early years funding (including EYPP and DAF) and private fees

	Childminder	Group settings	Out of school	Overall
Early years	35.07%	67.03%	0%	41.23%
Private income	64.70%	32.94%	100%	58.61%

Base: all respondents, 146. Percentages rounded.

Just under a quarter of all respondents (23%) did not receive any early years funding, including 25% of childminders and all out of school settings.

Overall, 8% of respondents reported they did not receive any private fee income, including 31% of childminders and 21% of group settings.

5.9 Held financial reserves

Where settings had a healthy financial position at the start of the pandemic, and where they had taken the opportunity to access Government financial support (rather than use held reserves), it is more likely they will be financial sustainable in 2021. Where settings have not accessed Government financial support and/or relied on held reserves to support their business throughout lockdown and recovery, there is concern they would not be in such a healthy financial position moving forwards.

Respondents were asked for an estimate of how many months operating costs they had in reserve. The purpose of collating the data was to support an assessment of the financial health of the childcare market in Barnsley.

Not all respondents chose to provide an estimate, as this information can be regarded as sensitive or confidential. Based on information shared:

- 26% of all respondents had cash reserves at the time of the survey, including 12% of childminders, 52% of group settings and 67% of out of school settings.
- The average cash reserve held provided an estimated 3.86 months operating costs, with a range of between one month and 24 months (from 21 settings providing information).

5.10 Current income

Respondents were asked to describe current income into their business. The majority of respondents (68%) reported projected income is enough to meet costs with a small percentage anticipating a profit, and a fifth (21%) reported projected income is insufficient to meet costs.

Projected income

Projected income:	% of respondents (number)			
	Childminder	Group settings	Out of school	Overall
Insufficient to meet costs	19% (26)	28% (16)	11% (1)	21% (43)
Enough to meet costs	73% (98)	57% (33)	67% (6)	68% (137)
Will exceed costs	7% (10)	16% (9)	22% (2)	10% (21)

Base: all respondents, 201. Percentages rounded.

5.11 Access to financial support

The Government introduced a range of financial support packages to support all businesses during lockdown and recovery. These were in addition to Government support specifically for the childcare sector where public funding for the early years free entitlements. The range of financial support schemes included:

- Small Business Rates Relief
- Small Business Grant Funding
- Coronavirus Job-Retention Scheme (staff furlough scheme)

- Business Interruption Loan Scheme
- Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)
- Bounce Back Loan Scheme
- Isolation payment (now Test and Trace support payment) – a one off payment to help people who are required to self-isolate
- LA Discretionary Grant (for those not qualifying for the isolation/test and trace support payment) – a one off payment to support people self-isolating that meet eligibility criteria

The extent to which early years and childcare settings have applied, and been successful, for these support measures will probably impact on their business health through 2021.

Some of the Government financial support (e.g. Bounce Back Loans) are subject to repayment, and if demand for childcare remains low at the time repayments are due, this could put some additional pressure on some settings.

Support was targeted differently. For example, the SEISS supported (and continues to support) people that are self-employed (in most cases this relates to childminders), whereas furlough was introduced to support employees and so relates to businesses that employ staff (e.g. mainly group childcare settings).

Respondents were asked if they had applied for any of the Government financial support schemes listed above, isolation payment and local authority discretionary funding.

Across all respondents, 77% had applied for at least one form of financial support, including:

- 74% of childminders (predominantly SEISS)
- 81% of group settings (predominantly making use of furlough and the small business rates relief)
- 89% of out of school settings (note small base)- predominantly the small business grant funding and furlough

Just under a quarter of respondents (23%) had not applied for any form of the identified support, which may be of concern. However, some respondents did not answer this question; some did not need to claim due to no decrease in take up and others did not want to disclose this information).

Percentage of respondents applying for financial support

	% (and number)			
	Childminder	Group settings	Out of school	Overall
Small Business Rates Relief	0% (0)	57% (33)	11% (1)	17% (34)
Small Business Grant Funding	4% (6)	41% (24)	56% (5)	17% (35)
Coronavirus Job-Retention Scheme (Furlough)	8% (11)	76% (44)	78% (7)	31% (62)
Business Interruption Loan Scheme	0% (0)	5% (3)	11% (1)	2% (4)
Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)	68% (91)	12% (7)	44% (4)	51% (102)
Bounce Back Loan Scheme	4% (6)	26% (15)	22% (2)	11% (23)
Isolation payment	8% (11)	2% (1)	0% (0)	6% (12)
LA Discretionary Grant	1% (2)	7% (4)	11% (1)	3% (7)

Base: all respondents, 201. Percentages rounded. Multiple responses.

The vast majority of applications for financial support were successful:

Successful applications – all applying

Small business rates relief	Small business grant funding	Furlough	Business interruption loan scheme	SEISS	Bounce Back loan	Isolation payment	Discretionary payment
94%	86%	95%	50%	95%	96%	67%	100%

Base: all respondents applying for financial support.

Comments regarding available financial support are shown in the appendices. Comments identified the range of support accessed by settings. Not all self-employed settings accessed SEISS for a variety of reasons including not trading for long enough. Other provides commented on using reserves or making a claim through their business interruption insurance.

5.12 Confidence in financial sustainability in the next six to 12 months

Respondents were asked how confident they were in their setting’s financial sustainability in the next six to 12 months. Overall, 45% reported being confident or very confident, albeit 17% reported they lacked confidence in the financial sustainability. A fifth of childminder respondents (20%) lacked confidence.

Confidence in financial sustainability in the next six to 12 months

How confident:	% (and number)			
	Childminder	Group settings	Out of school	Overall
Not very	11% (15)	10% (6)	0% (0)	10% (21)
Unconfident	9% (12)	3% (2)	11% (1)	7% (15)
Neither confident nor unconfident	37% (50)	34% (20)	44% (4)	37% (74)
Confident	35% (47)	31% (18)	33% (3)	34% (68)
Very confident	7% (10)	21% (12)	11% (1)	11% (23)

Base: all respondents, 201. Percentages rounded.

5.13 Sustainability and resilience

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which issues were of concern, from a range of options. Average scores provide a means of comparing issues and have been calculated on the basis of a range between five (strongly agree) to one (strongly disagree). The higher the average score, the greater the concern. Related issues of income levels, financial sustainability or resilience and cash flow were causing the greatest levels of concern:

Issues causing concern – all respondents

	% (and number)					Average score
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Income levels	17% (33)	19% (38)	46% (92)	16% (31)	3% (6)	3.31
Cashflow	14% (28)	25% (35)	49% (97)	17% (33)	4% (7)	3.22
Expenditure exceeding income	13% (25)	13% (25)	52% (103)	19% (38)	5% (9)	3.10
Financial sustainability or resilience	11% (22)	17% (34)	55% (110)	14% (27)	4% (7)	3.19
High levels of demand (which I cannot fulfil)	8% (15)	6% (12)	51% (101)	24% (48)	12% (24)	2.73
Low levels of demand	12% (24)	18% (35)	47% (35)	16% (32)	8% (16)	3.10

Base: all respondents. Percentages rounded.

5.13 Additional support to benefit ongoing recovery

Respondents were invited to comment on what additional support would benefit their business' ongoing recovery.

A common theme, across all providers, related to a need to increase the hourly funded rates to ensure business sustainability. Providers have welcomed financial support however, some providers felt that business rates should not apply to early years providers. The cost of training was raised as an issue for several providers.

5.14 Local authority support

Barnsley Council provided a range of support for childcare settings throughout the pandemic. This included:

- Continuation of free entitlement funding during the first lockdown period (spring 2020)
- Early years top-up funding in the autumn term 2020
- Access to briefings, guidance and information from the LA
- Regular support (wellbeing calls, forums, wellbeing breaks)
- Access to COVID-19 testing, PPE supplies etc.
- Emails and other media updates from the LA

The following table shows the percentages of respondents accessing each type of support (by type of provision) and an average 'usefulness' score. Here, average scores are based on a range of scores between 0 (not useful) to five (very useful). The higher the average score, the more useful respondents accessing that support found it. The regular email and other media updates provided by the local authority were reported as having been particularly useful.

LA authority support during the pandemic – access and usefulness

Type of LA support	% of respondents accessing (number)				Average score
	Childminder	Group settings	Out of school	Overall	
Continuation of early education funding (spring 2020)	58% (74)	85% (47)	0% (0)	63% (121)	2.82
Early years top up funding (autumn 2020)	15% (19)	43% (23)	0% (0)	22% (42)	2.82
Access to LA briefings, guidance and information	60% (78)	91% (51)	67% (6)	70% (135)	2.68
Regular LA support (wellbeing calls, forums and wellbeing breaks)	55% (71)	76% (42)	67% (6)	62% (119)	2.41
Access to COVID-19 testing, PPE supplies etc.	69% (87)	84% (46)	78% (7)	73% (140)	2.63
Emails and other media updates from the LA	91% (116)	94% (51)	89% (8)	92% (175)	3.43

Base: all respondents, 191- 193. Percentages rounded.

Additional comments around future business plans

Respondents were invited to make any additional comment about their future business plans. A number of respondents chose to do so and these will be followed up individually by their allocated Quality Improvement Officer.