



**East Sussex County Council**

**Childcare Sufficiency Assessment**

**2022**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1** The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) is a statutory document. It outlines how East Sussex County Council (the local authority) plans to secure enough childcare places as far as is reasonably practicable, for parents who are working, studying, or training for employment. The report covers childcare for children from birth to 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children). The publication of this CSA meets the local authority's statutory duty under sections 6 and 7 of the Childcare Act 2006. It is also in line with local authority statutory guidance.
- 1.2** The report focuses on two key areas of the childcare market in East Sussex:
- measuring the demand for, and supply of childcare within the five districts of East Sussex, identifying gaps in the market.
  - planning how to support the childcare market within East Sussex to address any shortfall.
- 1.3** It is placed within the context of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic which has had a significant impact on families resulting in a changed demand for childcare. The scale of the impact may take some time to be fully understood.
- 1.4** To assess the supply and demand for childcare places, the local authority compares current known capacity with predicted demand. This takes account of factors such as births, housing growth and patterns of inward and outward migration.
- 1.5** The Childcare Act 2006 gives local authorities a role in shaping the childcare market. The local authority is committed to working with providers from the private, voluntary, and independent sectors (PVI) and the school run sector. This is to create a strong, sustainable, and diverse childcare market that meets the needs of families and supports children's learning through the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- 1.6** The local authority is required to report annually to elected members and publish information for families to show how it is meeting its sufficiency duty. This includes providing specific information about:
- the supply and demand for early education and childcare places
  - affordability, accessibility and quality of early education and childcare places
  - details of how any gaps in provision will be addressed.
- 1.7** Whilst local authorities are required by law to ensure there are sufficient childcare places, attendance by children from birth to age five at any early education or childcare setting is voluntary. It is not compulsory for a child to attend education provision until the term after their fifth birthday.
- 1.8** Childcare places are funded either by government entitlements or by parents.
- 1.9** The Childcare Act 2006 requires the following actions and measures which identify the strategic role local authorities' play. Local authorities should support (though not directly provide) the following:
- early education places for two-, three- and four-year-olds supporting eligibility, flexibility, and quality
  - distributing government funding that supports early education places
  - securing sufficient childcare so far as is reasonably practicable in a free market
  - providing information to parents/carers
  - providing information, support and training to early education and childcare providers.

**1.10** Local authorities are required to secure fully funded places offering 570 hours a year over no fewer than 38 weeks a year, and up to 52 weeks of the year, for every eligible child in their area, until they reach compulsory school age (the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday).

**1.11** Eligibility depends on a child’s age and whether they meet certain funding criteria:

**Fig.1 Eligibility Criteria for Funded two-, three- and four-year-olds**

<b>Eligibility</b>	<b>Offer</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
All three- and four-year-olds	15 hours a week x 38 weeks a year. 570 hours a year	Universal offer open to all age eligible children resident in East Sussex. No financial criteria to be met
Some eligible three- and four-year-olds	Extended Entitlement. 30 hours a week x 38 weeks a year. 1,140 hours a year	For working family’s resident in East Sussex where both parents are working, or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family
Some eligible two-year-olds	15 hours a week x 38 weeks a year. 570 hours a year	For family’s resident in East Sussex on either low income or a range of benefits, including Universal Credit

**1.12** 30 Hour Extended Entitlement for some eligible three- and four-year-olds – additional criteria:

- Parents must each expect to earn at least £142.56 per week. This is equal to 16 hours at the National Minimum or Living Wage for persons aged 23 and over.
- If parents are on maternity, paternity or adoption leave they may still be eligible. If they are unable to work due to a disability or having caring responsibilities, they may also be eligible.
- If either parent earns more than £100,000, they will not be able to receive 30 hours free childcare.
- Foster Carers may also apply (subject to approval from child’s social worker) if they meet the above financial criteria.

**1.13** Funded places for eligible two-year-olds – additional criteria:

- Looked after children, those that have left care through special guardianship or through an adoption or residence order are also eligible. Children in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) can also apply for a funded place for a two-year-old.

**1.14** For non-EEA citizens who cannot claim benefits, some families with an age eligible child may get free childcare if they are receiving support under the Immigration and Asylum Act and have either:

- claimed asylum in the UK and are waiting for a decision (known as ‘part 6’).
- been refused asylum in the UK (known as ‘section 4’).

**1.15** Families may also receive free childcare for a two-year-old they care for if their household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, and they have:

- leave to remain with ‘no recourse to public funds’ on family or private life grounds, or
- the right to live in the UK because they’re the main carer of a British citizen (known as a ‘Zambrano Carer’).

**1.16** Families can check with the local authority if they are unsure if they can get free childcare.

Source: Statutory Guidance for local authorities updated by the Department for Education (DfE) January 2021

**1.17** Government funding is intended to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of funded, high quality, flexible childcare. It is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours, or additional activities. Families can, therefore, expect to pay for any meals offered by the provider alongside the fully funded entitlement, as well as paying for consumables e.g. nappies, or additional activities.

## 2. Key Findings

Some of the key findings of the East Sussex CSA 2022 are summarised below. More information on each of the key areas is provided in later sections of this document.

### 2.1 East Sussex is growing and changing

The population of East Sussex is projected to increase by 61,465 to 621,787 between 2020 and 2034. Forecasts project that there will be a small rise in the working age population (18-64) of 2.7% to 314,898 people in 2034.

Source: East Sussex in Figures (ESIF) published in May 2021

### 2.2 Quality of childcare in East Sussex is high

The quality of early education and childcare in East Sussex is high. The percentage of early years providers in East Sussex judged to be good or outstanding at the end of November 2021 was 99%. The national average was 97%.

The last published data (2019) shows that 76% of children achieved a good level of development at the end of the Foundation Stage, which is 4.2% above the national average. Since 2019, the Department for Education (DfE) has cancelled the collection of profile data due to the COVID-19 pandemic so there is no data for 2020 or 2021.

### 2.3 The cost of childcare remains just above national averages

The average hourly charge by providers for day-care in East Sussex is £5.21 per hour. The national average hourly charge according to The Family and Childcare Trust Childcare is £5.20 for children aged three and four.

[Childcare Survey 2021 | Family and Childcare Trust](#)

### 2.4 Cost of childcare places

Data on the cost of childcare is currently gathered annually in December each year by the Family Childcare Trust. Figures 2, 3 and 4 show the current average cost of 25 hours of childcare a week (part-time place) and 50 hours of childcare a week (full-time place), in England and in the South East.

**Fig.2 Average cost of 25 hours of childcare for children 0-5**

Cost of 25 hours a week childcare	Nursery under two	Two and over	Childminder under two	Two and over
England	£140.27	£134.73	£119.02	£117.86
South East	£145.90	£140.05	£119.40	£118.65

Source: Family Childcare Trust: Childcare Survey 2021

**Fig.3 Average cost of 50 hours of childcare for children 0-5**

Cost of 50 hours a week childcare	Nursery under two	Two and over	Childminder under two	Two and over
England	£268.06	£258.08	£228.77	£230.06
South East	£284.07	£268.73	£231.86	£237.07

Source: Family Childcare Trust: Childcare Survey 2021

**Fig.4 Average cost of 25 or 50 hours of childcare for children 0-5 accessing funded hours**

	<b>Cost of 25 hours a week childcare, including universal entitlement for three- and four-year-olds (paying for 10 hours)</b>	<b>50 hours a week, including extended entitlement (paying for 20 hours)</b>
England	£52.44	£101.58
South East	£52.83	£104.73

Source: Family Childcare Trust: Childcare Survey 2021

**2.5** Childcare for younger children is often more expensive due to factors such as staff/child ratios. Most parents find that their childcare costs reduce as their child grows. All children are entitled to some form of funded nursery education from the funding period following their third birthday, meaning childcare fees for parents fall.

**2.6 The childcare picture in East Sussex**

In East Sussex there has been a higher than national decline in the numbers of childminders since 2015, a decline of 32% compared to 17% in England. In the year to August 2021 East Sussex saw a drop of 13% in the number of childminders.

**2.7 How Covid-19 impacted on childcare in East Sussex**

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the childcare market and how families now access childcare provision.

During the first lockdown in early 2020 all childcare providers, whether they were closed or open continued to receive government funding for their funded two, three and four -year-olds, but their income from privately funded hours stopped. Those providers who remained open to provide childcare places for vulnerable and key worker children were awarded additional grant funding during the March to June 2020 funding period. The local authority also funded children outside of advertised funding periods for parents who needed access to a childcare place through holiday periods. This additional financial support provided by the local authority incentivised settings to remain open. The local authority also signposted the sector to other financial support provided by central government e.g. the Job Retention Furlough Scheme and grant application schemes at district and borough level.

When most early years childcare providers re-opened in September 2020 the local authority continued to provide practical and financial support to providers. Support included grants to providers to address the deficit in funding caused by the difference in the number of children attending provision due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This included recognising the drop in the numbers of children accessing non-funded hours. This additional support enabled providers to remain viable at a time of challenge in the sector.

The second lock-down in January 2021 saw most providers remain open. Funding levels were guaranteed even though the number of children accessing provision dropped dramatically due to parental concern.

Since March 2020 the local authority has provided information on updates from the DfE, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and Public Health to ensure providers have been kept fully updated on the pandemic.

The Early Years Improvement and Funding teams in the local authority have kept in regular and targeted communication with all open childcare provision to offer advice and support, and this communication remains ongoing.

Through-out the pandemic the local authority has supported families to either access a childcare place or support their choice not to attend. Information has been made available via social media and through the Customer Relations team.

In total, five settings and twenty-eight childminders closed between August 2020 and August 2021. In the same period, seven new providers, including childminders, opened.

Many families have adapted their work patterns or used family or friends to manage their childcare needs. This continues to be the case as we move forward. Many parents and carers have continued to work from home or share childcare responsibilities.

### **3. Childcare sufficiency – areas for development**

To ensure the supply of high-quality early years and childcare provision, the local authority will take the following actions in three key areas:

#### **3.1 Data/Sufficiency**

- Propose to undertake regular capacity audits through the online provider portal as well as an annual data refresh. This will help to identify any sufficiency issues.
- Encourage Early Years Hubs to work together in partnership to better understand local availability to meet parental demand.
- Track areas of new housing development and community growth to target new early year's places. Align developments of early years places with school place planning priorities where applicable.
- Continue to track all sectors of the market to identify potential reasons for any decline in provider numbers.
- Use the early years forecasting model to analyse sufficiency across all five districts, looking particularly at supply and demand.
- Encourage take-up of funded places, particularly two-year-old funded places, in areas where take-up rates are lower.

#### **3.2 Family Information**

- Use social media and the East Sussex Children and Families web pages to widen access to information about early education and home learning.
- Help parents (particularly vulnerable families) to understand the benefits of high-quality childcare and early learning for their children.

#### **3.3 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

- Improve the quality of existing web-based information. Extend the number of topics available for providers to access. Including Special Educational Needs, behaviour, funding, universal childcare support and increase usage of social media.
- Ensure all information is up to date and accessible via the Local Offer website.
- Use data from across the local authority to ensure all children identified with SEND are accessing their early education entitlement and that support is in place.
- Improve the skills and knowledge of the early years providers to meet the needs of children with SEND. Review through inclusion groups and implementing on-line Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) training that can be accessed by all early years' providers and not just the setting SENCo.
- Continually review and update current training offers to providers with a specific SEND focus. Most training is offered at no cost to childcare settings.

## **4. Support for Parents**

### **4.1 Affordability**

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

The local authority does not determine the business models of childcare providers, market forces influence the sector. Local authorities do have a legal duty to ensure there is sufficient affordable childcare for families who need it and will identify any gaps in the market.

Legislation states that local authorities cannot intervene in how providers operate their private business. This includes charges for provision over and above a child's funded place.

### **4.2 Help with childcare costs**

There are options available to parents and carers to help with childcare costs. Parents and carers must select the option that best suits their personal circumstances. Parents and carers in East Sussex can find further information on the local authority's website at: [east Sussex-help with childcare costs](#)

## 5 Population Statistics in East Sussex

### 5.1 Population

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2020 mid-year estimates, the population in East Sussex is around 558,852. This is approximately 1% of the population of England. It is estimated that there are 117,119 children aged 0-19 in East Sussex (2020).

Over the last decade the population in East Sussex in the 0-19 age group has increased by 0.6%.

**Fig.5 Population Increase (all ages) in the last decade 2010 to 2020**

Year	2010	2020	Percentage change 2010-2020
England	52,642,452	56,550,138	7.1%
East Sussex	523,651	558,852	6.5%
Eastbourne	98,510	103,324	4.7%
Hastings	89,623	92,554	3.6%
Lewes	97,079	103,525	6.4%
Rother	90,578	96,716	6.5%
Wealden	147,861	162,733	9.5%

Source: ONS Mid-year estimates, published June 2020

It is projected that the population in the county will increase by 10.3 % by 2034. The 0-17 population will increase by 0.4%

**Fig. 6 Population projections (all ages) from 2020 to 2034**

Year	Population 2020	Projected population 2034	Projected change 2020-2034	% Change 2020-2034
East Sussex	560,322	621,787	61,465	10.3%

Source: East Sussex County Council projections, April 2021

The table in figure 7 below shows the breakdown of numbers of children aged 0-17 and disabled children aged 10-17 using the ONS mid-year estimates 2019 and disability projections.

**Fig.7 Total population 0-17 and 10-17 and Projected number of children with overall disability in 2021**

	Total population aged 0-17	Total population aged 10-17	Projected number of children with overall disability Aged 10 to 17
<b>East Sussex</b>	107,273	62,960	1,984
<b>Eastbourne</b>	20,124	12,109	414
<b>Hastings</b>	19,066	11,653	393
<b>Lewes</b>	20,103	11,460	342
<b>Rother</b>	16,267	9,430	335
<b>Wealden</b>	31,666	18,309	501

Source: ESIF East Sussex County Council Projections April 2021

In the latest published Department for Work and Pensions Family Resources Survey 2019/20, (25 March 2021), around 8% of children and young people were identified as disabled. In East Sussex, this figure for 10-17 year olds is 3.1%.

East Sussex is largely rural in character, although around three quarters of the population live in urban areas (Source: 2011 Census). The main centres of population and employment are concentrated in the southern coastal strip of the county in Eastbourne, Hastings and St Leonard's, Bexhill, Newhaven, Seaford, Peacehaven and Lewes.

In the urban areas of Eastbourne and Hastings there are 120 funded providers, in the more rural areas of Lewes, Rother and Wealden there are 214 funded providers.

## 5.2 Districts and Boroughs

East Sussex comprises five borough and district council areas: Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes, Rother, and Wealden. Parts of the county are within the South Downs National Park.

**Fig.8 Map of the five borough and district council areas in East Sussex**

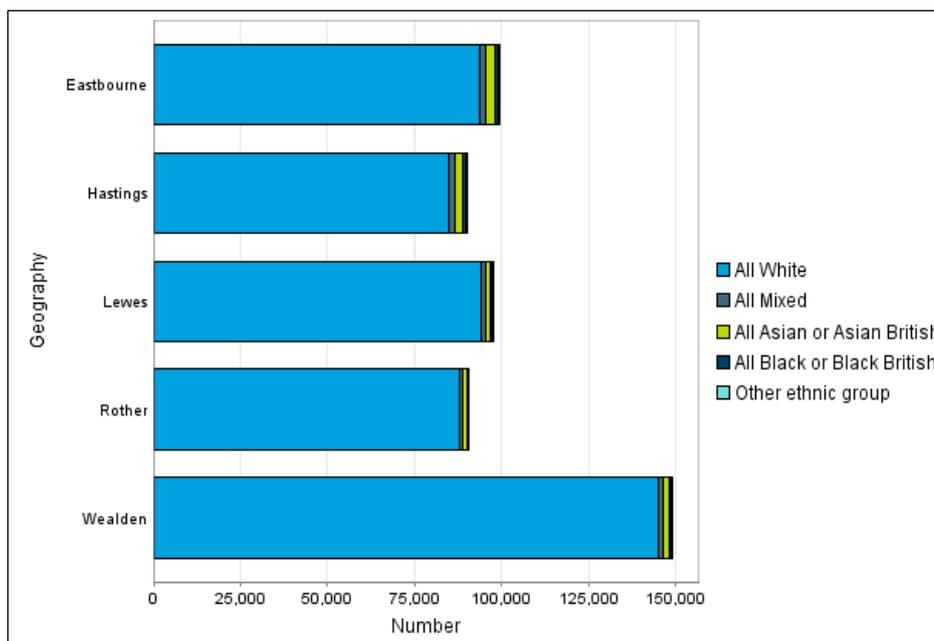
East Sussex: Main settlements and transport connections in 2017



## 5.3 Ethnicity

The population characteristics of East Sussex are predominantly White British. The percentage of other ethnicities is 12.6% in Eastbourne and 10.7% in Hastings at 10.7%, these two areas have the largest levels of other ethnicities.

**Fig. 9 Ethnic group in 2011 - super output areas**



Source: ESIF-: Ethnic group in 2011 - super output areas

#### 5.4 Languages

There are over 100 languages spoken in East Sussex. For around 4,195 (6%) of school children in the county English is not their first language. In the 0–5-year age group there are 5,417 children with English not as their first language, making up 8% of the number. Polish is the most spoken language other than English across schools in East Sussex.

**Fig.10 Number of Languages Spoken in Schools in East Sussex**

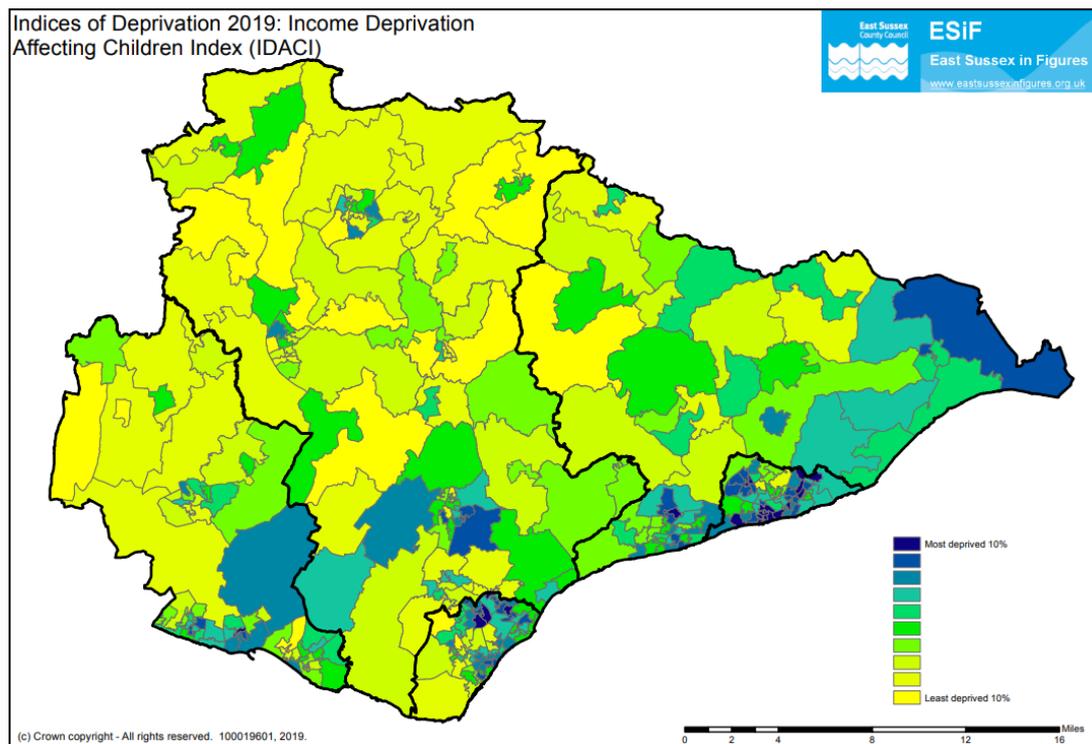
Language	Number of Pupils	Percentage
English*	63,164	93.4%
Polish	630	0.9%
Believed to be English*	258	0.4%
Arabic	253	0.4%
Portuguese	252	0.4%
Romanian	226	0.3%
Russian	176	0.3%
Turkish	154	0.2%
Malayalam	153	0.2%
Bengali	145	0.2%
Kurdish	135	0.2%
Other than English	135	0.2%
Spanish	131	0.2%
Hungarian	105	0.2%
Tamil	102	0.2%
Others	1,598	2.7%

Data from March 2021 School's Census - Source CS  
Field used = 'Descriptor'

## 5.5 Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas (or neighbourhoods) in England. The map below (Fig.11) shows the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), which measures the proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families. IDACI is a data subset of the Income Deprivation Domain of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD). This data measures the proportion of the population in an area experiencing deprivation relating to low income. The small areas used are known as Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs), and there are 32,844 in England. The measures rank every LSOA in England from 1 (most deprived area) to 32,844 (least deprived area). The 10% of LSOAs with the lowest rank in the country are in the most deprived decile (coloured dark blue on the map below). The 10% highest rank are in the least deprived decile (yellow).

**Fig.11 National deprivation rank in neighbourhoods LSOAs in East Sussex**



Two Hastings neighbourhoods are amongst the most deprived 1% in the country. These are in Baird and Tressell wards. Eight Hastings neighbourhoods are among the most deprived 5%, along with one neighbourhood in Bexhill.

East Sussex has a higher number of neighbourhoods in the most deprived groups – 7% compared to the rest of the South East at 3%.

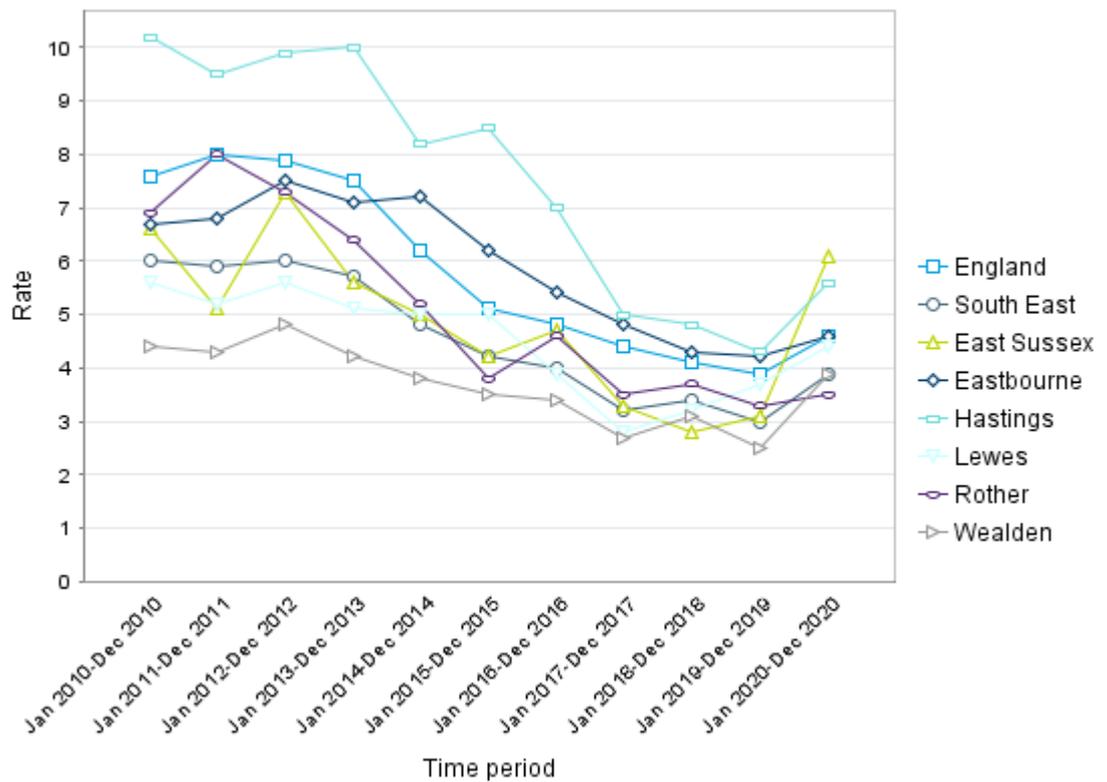
## 5.6 Unemployment

The labour market profile comparison between East Sussex, South East of England and England shows East Sussex is performing better than average for being economically active but falls behind the South East average.

High unemployment will impact on the number of families accessing the Extended 30 Hours entitlement as this offer is only open to families in work.

Figure 12 below shows unemployment rates for the ten years from 2008. Unemployment rates in East Sussex reflect the downward England and regional trend. At the end of 2018, the rate in East Sussex (2.8%) was lower than the England average (4.0%). The rate was above the national average in Hastings (4.8%) and Eastbourne (4.03%).

**Fig. 12 Unemployment estimates, 2004-2020 – districts**



Source: ESIF Model-based estimates from Annual Population Survey data combined with Claimant Count Data.

## 6. Projected Housing Growth

- 6.1 Local Plans produced by local planning authorities, including the South Downs National Park Authority, show the level and distribution of planned housing growth across the county, see Fig13.

**Fig.13 Number of new dwellings to be built by area**

<b>Adopted Local Plans (adoption date)</b>	<b>Number of dwellings over plan period</b>
Lewes and the South Downs National Park Authority: Joint Core Strategy (June 2016)	6,900 (2010-2030) 345 p.a.
Hastings: The Hastings Planning Strategy (February 2014)	3,400 (2011-2028) 200 p.a.
Eastbourne: Core Strategy Local Plan (February 2013)	5,022 (2006-2027) 239 p.a.
Rother: Core Strategy (September 2014)	5,700 (2011-2028) 335 p.a.
Wealden: Core Strategy (February 2013)	14,228 (2006-2027) 450 p.a.

Source: East Sussex State of the County Report - 2021

- 6.2 Planning authorities are starting to review their Local Plans, which could lead to higher levels of housing development in future years. In some areas of the county, notably Hailsham, Bexhill and Uckfield, new housing may attract the need for childcare provision which may exceed current levels of supply and require new or expanded provision to meet demand for places.
- 6.3 The local authority works closely with the local planning authorities in East Sussex to ensure there are the right numbers of childcare places in the right locations at the right time to meet demand.

## 7. Sufficiency of childcare places

- 7.1 East Sussex has 547 childcare providers across the county. Several providers operate more than one type of childcare. Schools may have a breakfast and/or after school club as well as a nursery or a pre-school offering a holiday club.

**Fig.14 Number of providers by type in East Sussex**

Childcare Provider Type	April 2021
Childminder and Childcare - Domestic	178
Maintained/Academy Nursery	45
Independent School Nursery	12
Nursery	176
Crèche	3
Nanny	109
Standalone Holiday Play Scheme	24

Source: East Sussex Synergy FIS Portal- April 2021

- 7.2 Not all childcare providers offer funded early education places. The table below shows the number of childcare providers by borough / district offering funded early education places in the PVI sector, in local authority-maintained schools and in non-maintained schools, including academies.

**Fig.15 Number of providers by sector in Each District**

District	Nursery Provision & Childminders			School Provision		
	Nursery Private	Nursery Voluntary	Childminder	Non-maintained (inc. academies)	Maintained (inc. Children Centres)	Independent
Eastbourne	22	5	27	5	2	2
Hastings	21	10	16	8	1	1
Lewes	22	7	27	1	8	0
Rother	19	10	12	2	5	2
Wealden	27	24	30	3	10	5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>10</b>

Source: East Sussex Synergy FIS Portal- April 2021

- 7.3 The number and distribution of funded childcare places offered by childcare providers varies between districts. Most places are located within urban areas. For families living in rural areas the choice of type of provision is more limited.

**Fig.16 Number of full time equivalent (FTE) places available by borough / district versus FTE demand for all children**

Districts	Provider capacity (FTE Places)	FTE demand all children				
	2020/21 Onwards	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Eastbourne	2,314	1,879	1,904	1,852	1,813	1,800
Hastings	1,758	1,754	1,773	1,730	1,673	1,634
Lewes	1,880	1,524	1,575	1,514	1,541	1,582
Rother	1,598	1,386	1,385	1,382	1,379	1,366
Wealden	2,885	2,449	2,417	2,353	2,354	2,430
East Sussex Total	10,503	8,176	8,224	8,424	8,501	8,564

Source: Early years forecasting model results (Apr 21) – August 2021

#### 7.4 Take up of funding streams

Take up of the 15-hour universal entitlement for three and four olds is strong across all areas of the county but there has been a drop of 6% since 2020 from 94% to 88%. This is in line with the national average but a falling birth rate in East Sussex will be a contributory factor.

Source: DfE Local Authority Interactive Tool – November 2021

Figure 17 shows the number of three- and four-year-olds accessing their universal 15 hour offer by borough / district.

**Fig.17 Number of three- and four-year-olds accessing a funded place in April 2021**

District	Number of children accessing a Universal 15 hour offer place in April 2021
<b>East Sussex</b>	<b>7,769</b>
Eastbourne	1,643
Hastings	1,501
Lewes	1,351
Rother	1,086
Wealden	2,188

Source: East Sussex Headcount data – April 2021

In East Sussex, the number of children taking up the extended 30-hour entitlement for the summer claim period in 2021 was 39.8% of the total number of three- and four-year-olds accessing a funded early education place. This equates to a 4.4% increase on the same period in 2019.

7.5 Analysis of the supply of and demand for places for eligible funded two-year-olds shows that take-up is lower than for the universal three- and four-year-old entitlement. Only 40% of the two-year-old population meet the DfE eligibility criteria to access a funded place. In East Sussex 1,220 children accessed a funded two-year-old place in April 2021. This equates to 59% of the total 40% of 2-year-olds potentially eligible to access a funded place. The economic and social vulnerability of these families can impact on take-up rates. One key factor is parental preference for wanting to keep very young children at home; this is particularly relevant for two-year-olds. Local childcare offers which do not meet parental preferences and the use of informal childcare instead of the more formal options such as a nursery, all contribute to the impact on the pattern of take-up. Figure 18 shows the number of eligible two-year-olds accessing a funded early education place by district.

**Fig.18 Number of eligible funded two-year-olds accessing a funded place in April 2021**

District	Number of funded two-year-olds accessing the 15-hour offer – April 2021
<b>East Sussex</b>	<b>1,220</b>
Eastbourne	282
Hastings	354
Lewes	195
Rother	160
Wealden	229

Source: East Sussex Headcount data – April 2021

## 8. Consultation with Parents

**8.1** Consultation with parents and carers is an important part of establishing the demand for childcare. The last childcare survey was undertaken in June 2021. The title of the consultation was the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) Parental Survey 2021. The survey ran from 10 May to 20 June 2021 on the East Sussex County Council [Consultation Hub](#). The commencement of the survey was advertised to parents and early years providers in East Sussex via social media and the Early Years Message Board.

**8.2** By the close of the consultation period, 551 responses had been received. Responses were received from:

- 91% of respondents were female
- 85% of respondents were a couple parent/carer household
- 93% of those that responded had children four years old or under
- 75% of those that responded had school age children (Reception to age 14, or 18 if disabled)
- 11% of respondents had children with a special educational need and/or disability
- 41% of those that responded worked more than 30 hours a week and 43% worked part-time (29 hours a week or less). 2% of respondents were in education or training.

**8.3** Respondents told us:

- 65% of parents wanted childcare all year round
- 75% of respondents wanted childcare on Monday to Fridays only
- 5% wanted childcare on Saturdays and 3% wanted Sundays
- The majority of parents (52%) wanted between 20-30 hours of childcare a week
- 55% of respondents were willing to use more than one provider
- 65% of respondents needed childcare through the school holidays
- 53% of respondents with school aged children used both breakfast and after school provision
- 48% of respondents looking for early years provision found it difficult to afford the childcare they wanted. Only 9% of families using before and after school care found affordability an issue. But when accessing school holiday provision 14% of parents found affordability difficult
- 31% of respondents used the Government's Tax-Free Childcare benefit
- 90% of respondents were aware that funding was available to help with childcare costs
- 46% of respondents were happy with the funded sessions offered. 52% of respondents were happy with where they could access funded hours. 38% stated they were happy with the choice of childcare available. 75% of respondents said childcare provision was within the right location
- 80% of respondents were happy with the quality of childcare provision on offer
- 24% of respondents found it difficult to access information on childcare provision in their area
- In the last 12 months 23% of respondents to the survey stated they had been unable to access childcare when needed. This was due to the impact of Covid-19 restrictions.

**8.4** The information provided by those that responded will be used to inform where there are gaps in provision within the county. This information will be shared with current providers and new providers moving into East Sussex to help meet the needs of families.

- 8.5** The local authority's Customer Relations Team (which incorporates the Family Information Service) takes enquiries by email, social media and by phone between 10am and 3pm during weekdays. This service helps parents (particularly vulnerable families) to understand and access the benefits of high-quality childcare and early learning for their children.
- 8.6** For the period 1 September 2020 to 31 July 2021, the Customer Relations Team responded to 1,392 enquiries. The enquiry data shows that childcare and Early Years Funding enquiries were the third most common enquiry. The most common enquiry was about applying for two-year-old and 30 hours funding.
- 8.7** Direct enquiries to the Customer Relations Team have decreased steadily in recent years as the web content offer has developed. In May 2020 the number of calls to the team was 52. This reduced to 37 in May 2021.
- 8.8** With the effects of COVID, including increased homeworking, more people are now using the local authority's website to answer their questions on help with the cost of childcare. People also use the linked directory East Sussex Community Information Service website to find childcare. When customers do contact the Customer Relations Team, those contacts are now more often via digital means (email, web form or social media). The helpline now receives the more complex enquiries regarding eligibility to additional available funding streams from professionals working with vulnerable families.
- 8.9** The Customer Relations team uses social media to promote the Early Years Education Entitlement, 30 hours funded childcare and tax-free childcare. The top Facebook post in 2020 (ranked by engagement) reached 27,800 people. It had 3,644 likes and 3,992 followers.  
Source: East Sussex social media management platform - Hootsuite
- 8.10** In the period from 1 September 2020 to 31 July 2021 the number of 'entrances' where visitors entered our website through our 'Help with childcare costs' page about funded childcare was up 10%. The bounce rate, where a user enters the site and leaves instantly without spending any time in the site, was up 10.2% compared with the same period in the previous year.
- 8.11** The page has information about funded early education, tax credits and childcare vouchers for parents and professionals working with families, such as social workers and health visitors.  
Source: East Sussex customer management system – Fresh Desk and Google Analytics

## 9. Demand for childcare

- 9.1 Data taken from the local authority's early years forecasting model, updated in October 2021, indicates that across the county there is sufficient capacity within the sector in most areas to meet demand for 0-5 childcare places. Countywide, GP data is showing that the number of children aged under 5 will generally continue to fall in the short term. Pressures on the early years sector should lessen in the next few years, although the economic and societal recovery post-Covid may partly counteract the fall in numbers. For instance, take up of the 30 hours extended offer has already recovered to record levels.

**Fig. 19 Shows the towns/areas in East Sussex that currently have minimal spare capacity of early year places:**

Town	Capacity	Solution to sufficiency gaps
Battle	Capacity within the town is tight. GP registered early years cohorts are generally falling, however around 300 new homes are expected to be built in the area over the next 3 years	New providers investigating opening new provision
Hankham / Stone Cross	There is little spare capacity in the area. GP data suggests early years numbers will remain high over the next couple of years	There is extra capacity in the neighbouring areas of Pevensey and Westham and Eastbourne East.
Hastings North Western	Capacity within the area appears tight, although GP data suggests early years cohorts are falling.	There is capacity elsewhere in Hastings.
Heathfield	There is currently sufficient capacity. GP data suggests there could be a high number of funded three- and four-year-olds in April 2022	Capacity verses demand will be tracked, and potential new providers approached if required
Seaford	Currently, there is capacity within the town, with a small surplus of places	The planned expansion of one setting and provisional plans to open a new nursery in April 2022, will reduce pressures going forward.
Uckfield	The closure of a setting in the town could lead to a shortfall of early years provision in the town from 2021/22	The potential plans to open a new nursery on the same site from 2022/23 would reduce this pressure
Wivelsfield	Currently due to a nursery closure in July 2021 there is no in-area provision to serve an area that has	Parents may be able to access settings in nearby Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath. There

	seen high volumes of new housebuilding in recent years	are, as yet unconfirmed, plans to open a new nursery in the Wivelsfield area from 2022/23
Barcombe, Brede, Chiddingly, Etchingam, Frant, Hamsey, Herstmonceux, Mayfield, Punnetts Town, Hartfield and Stonegate	Provision in these areas may be currently full or close to full	Capacity verses demand will be tracked
Burwash and Buxted	These areas currently have no Early Years provision despite having a reasonable number of children living in the area	Capacity verses demand will be tracked, and potential new providers approached if required

## **10. Quality of provision & workforce development in East Sussex**

- 10.1** “High quality pre-schooling relates to better intellectual and social/behavioural development for children” (taken from The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project). Findings from Pre-school to end of Key Stage 1 Inspections, undertaken by Ofsted measure the quality of early provision. Ofsted is the sole arbiter of quality and through the inspection process each setting will receive one of four grades (Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement or Inadequate) depending on the inspection findings.
- 10.2** Current inspection outcomes of registered early years and childcare providers in East Sussex show that the quality of provision across East Sussex is higher than the national average. By the end of November 2021 Ofsted judged 99% of registered early years providers in East Sussex as good or outstanding.
- 10.3** Support is available for providers to improve the quality of delivery and meet the requirements of the EYFS and Ofsted. The quality of provision plays an important part in the sufficiency of places.
- 10.4** All registered early years providers and childminders in East Sussex are offered a package of support by a team of Early Years Support and Intervention Officers within the local authority. The support entails a management and safeguarding audit and observations of practice to ensure providers are confident in delivering the Statutory Framework for the EYFS. With this continued support offered until their first inspection all new early years providers have achieved good or outstanding at their first Ofsted inspection.
- 10.5** In 2019, the attainment of children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) achieving a good level of development at the end of the EYFS was 62.1%, remaining 5.7% above the national average. The percentage difference between FSM pupils and national non-FSM pupils in 2019 was 12.6%, 5.7% below the national average. This means the gap between FSM and non-FSM children in East Sussex is smaller than nationally.
- 10.6** The local authority has a statutory duty in relation to provision of childcare training. The training programme delivered by the local authority’s Early Years Team aims to improve outcomes for children through the development of a skilled workforce. The training is available to practitioners working in any registered provision, as well as prospective childminders. The private and voluntary sector get subsidised courses.
- 10.7** Bespoke training is also provided fully funded to whole teams in settings where a package of support is in place or as a traded service. Feedback from providers evidence that training is needed and valued. Providers who have received a ‘Requires Improvement’ or ‘Inadequate’ Ofsted grade to improve practice receive priority access to training.
- 10.8** Recruitment of qualified and experienced practitioners remains a challenge for providers across the county. This reflects a national issue. The local authority provides a recruitment website for use by providers to support the appointment and development of their workforce.
- 10.9** The Early Years Team have established Early Years Hubs for Excellence. This is part of our approach to enable the wide variety of providers in East Sussex – private, voluntary, childminders, independent, maintained, and non-maintained – to work together to deliver sustained improvements. Currently there are 15 Early Years Hubs

which are linked to school Education Improvement Partnerships (EIPs). The Early Years Hubs meet within their EIP group to create an action plan that meets the needs of the local EIP group and informs the training and support that the hubs offer to their members.

- 10.10** East Sussex has also been funded by the DfE from the Early Years Social Mobility Programme to develop two Continuous Professional Development (CPD) partnerships in areas with high levels of children in receipt of 2-year funding and early years pupil premium (EYPP). The funding will support the training of four practitioners in each partnership which will be delivered by the DfE's national partner Educational Development Trust (EDT), in partnership with Elklan Ltd. This programme is to support the DfE's target to halve by 2028 the percentage of children leaving Reception year without the communication, language, and literacy skills they need to thrive, and it is anticipated that this will reach beyond our two partnerships via the Early Years Hubs for Excellence.
- 10.11** The local authority has completed a Baby Room Project which supports practitioners in baby rooms to reflect on their day-to-day interactions with the children in their care and to research how to improve their practice in early communication to support quality childcare. The project won an award at the Nursery World awards in 2019 in the new category of Working with Babies and Toddlers. A new project working with two-year-olds was postponed by the COVID-19 pandemic, but on-line training has been sourced in the interim and as preparation for the project, in-house training has been developed as a result of the Baby Room project. Three sessions have run successfully as online events.
- 10.12** The Integrated Progress Review is now embedded amongst our health visitors and early years practitioners; this allows for swifter intervention and support to children identified through the review process.
- 10.13** '50 Things to do before you're 5', is a list of fun and educational activities for families, carers, and childcare practitioners to do across East Sussex – all at low- or no cost. The aim of the project is to help solve the problem of children reaching their first school experience with low literacy levels, language skills, or a lack of life experiences. Over 5,500 families have signed up to the scheme since its launch in 2019. All primary schools and early years settings received resource packs to encourage working with parents to develop home learning activities. In 2020 the release of a short film celebrated the success of the project a year on from its launch.

## **11. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)**

- 11.1** Local Authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity for children with SEND. Nationally it is recognised parents often find it challenging to access childcare, this may be due to parental confidence in the provider's ability to attend to their child's individual needs.
- 11.2** All childcare settings have to follow the SEND Code of Practice with the requirements of the EYFS. Information on childcare is available to all parents online. Extra information is available to parents of children with SEND via the East Sussex Local Offer. Other services also offer support to parents to gain access to the funded early years entitlement offer. The East Sussex Local Offer pages list a wide range of activities and clubs for young people with a disability or additional needs.  
[East Sussex Special Needs and Disability-local Offer](#)
- 11.3** Research suggests some childcare providers may not be as confident in their own ability to meet the needs of children with a high-level medical need. The local authority offers providers training and specialist equipment if appropriate. Teams within the local authority work in partnership to ensure providers have access to advice and guidance to support the inclusion of all children.
- 11.4** There is a statutory duty for all local authorities to provide a SEN Inclusion Fund. This stream of funding has been operating in East Sussex since 2010. This funding is available to early years providers to meet the individual needs of children with SEN who are in receipt of three- and four-year-old early education funding. If appropriate funding can be allocated to children prior to their being age eligible to access early education funding. In the summer 2021 funding period 113 children were in receipt of this funding stream, attending 84 different early years' providers.
- 11.5** For children with more complex needs additional funding support is provided via a combination of funding streams including the Early Years and High Needs Block. For some children joint funding will be allocated from both the Children's Services and Health teams within the local authority.
- 11.6** Although there is no statutory duty to provide additional funding for children who are in receipt of 2-year-old Early Education funding, support within East Sussex is not age dependent so provision is made for this age group too. Requests for additional funding can be made if a child has an identified need that requires additional support. The number of awards made by the autumn 2021 funding period was 29.
- 11.7** During the pandemic not all children sustained their attendance at a setting and many children did not start their preschool education. This was due in part to the Government guidance given to preschool providers and children with more complex or medical needs regarding shielding. The additional challenges over this period may have an effect on the amount of funding allocated to children in settings. However, changes in children's behaviour and needs, as nationally reported, did see some more time limited additional funding allocations made.
- 11.8** The Disability Access Fund (DAF) is given to early years providers to support children with SEND. Its purpose is to remove 'barriers' which prevent children from accessing their funded early education entitlement. To attract DAF, children must be in receipt of Disability Living Allowance and the three- and four-year-old early entitlement. This annual payment goes to the provider nominated by the parent/carer. In the financial year 2020/21 the local authority made a DAF payment to 107 children.

**11.9** The Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) enables childcare providers offering funded places for three- and four-year-olds to apply for extra funding to support children from families on certain benefits.

**11.10** Families who meet the following criteria can claim EYPP. In receipt of:

- Income Support
- Income based Jobseeker's allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support allowance
- Support under part 6 of the immigration and asylum act
- Guaranteed element of the state pension credit
- Child tax credit and earn no more than £16,190 (provided not also entitled to Working Tax Credit)
- Working Tax Credit 4-week run-on (paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for working tax credit)
- Universal Credit – and earn no more than £7,400.

Or the child is:

- looked after by the local authority
- adopted from care
- left care through adoption, residence order or special guardianship

**11.11** The amount of funding available is up to £300 per year, per eligible child. EYPP payments were made to 1,052 children during the summer 2021 funding period. This equated to 13% of the total number of three- and four-year-olds claiming early years education funding during this period.

**11.12** The identification of eligible children relies upon parents making schools and settings aware so that they can apply for the funding. To ensure as many parents as possible talk with their childcare provider about possible eligibility, publicity work through leaflets and the local authority's website continue to raise awareness and increase the take-up rate.

## **12. Looked After Children**

- 12.1** Looked after children are less likely than their peers to access early education.
- 12.2** In East Sussex 42 looked after children accessed a funded place with childcare providers during the 2021 summer funding period.
- 12.3** The local authority's Early Years Funding Team works closely with colleagues in the Virtual School team, Adoption and Special Guardianship teams and Fostering teams to track looked after children to identify access to early years provision. However, it is acknowledged that childcare provision may not be suitable for all looked after young children.
- 12.4** Some foster carers are also entitled to claim the extended 30-hour entitlement. In East Sussex, less than five children were funded under these criteria within the summer 2021 funding period.

## 13. Childcare for children over 5

- 13.1** Out of school childcare includes breakfast clubs, after school clubs and holiday play schemes. This form of childcare can operate either on or off a school site and can be run by the school or by the PVI sector.
- 13.2** Many schools provide extra-curricular after school activities such as sports clubs, gardening clubs and film clubs. Although these may not be classed as childcare, they still provide a safe learning environment for children whilst parents/carers are at work or studying. These types of clubs may not operate throughout the school year and may vary from term to term and are often only an hour in duration.
- 13.3** Good quality out of school childcare has a positive effect upon children's outcomes. Research has shown that this type of good quality childcare can improve children's behaviour, social and emotional skills as well as impacting upon academic performance.
- 13.4** Children taking part in organised sports and physical activities at the ages of 5, 7 and 11 were almost one and a half times more likely to reach a higher-than expected level in their Key Stage 2 (KS2) maths test at age 11. Among disadvantaged children, those who attended after school clubs also fared better than their peers who did not take part in such groups. They achieved, on average, a 2-point higher total score in their KS2 assessments in English, Maths and Science at the end of primary school.  
Source: UCL: Institute of Education-Out of school activities improve children's educational attainment, study reveals. 20 April 2016
- 13.5** Dependent upon specific criteria, not all wraparound provision is Ofsted registered and there is no legal need to inform local authorities of operation. A provider who only offers two hours a day or provides two activities or less is not required to register with Ofsted. A setting may choose to join the voluntary part of the childcare register to allow parents to claim childcare vouchers. Providers do not have to meet specified child/adult ratios if they only care for children over the age of eight.
- 13.6** It is difficult to determine the exact number of places available for children outside of school hours and in holiday periods. Many non-registered holiday activities are run by local leisure or sport centres which may not be represented in local authority figures that show the number of places reportedly available by all registered providers in East Sussex. Fig.20 shows the number of known providers offering wrap around care during term time and holiday care in East Sussex.

**Fig. 20 Number of Ofsted registered providers offering care during term time and holidays**

District/Borough	Number of breakfast clubs	Number of after school clubs
Eastbourne	7	13
Hastings	10	13
Lewes	12	19
Rother	6	11
Wealden	27	31

Source: Extract from Synergy FIS Provider Portal – September 2021

- 13.7** 27% of schools in the primary phase run their own breakfast club on site. 28% of schools in the primary phase provide an after-school club on site. This data only refers to known childcare provision and does not include extra-curricular after school



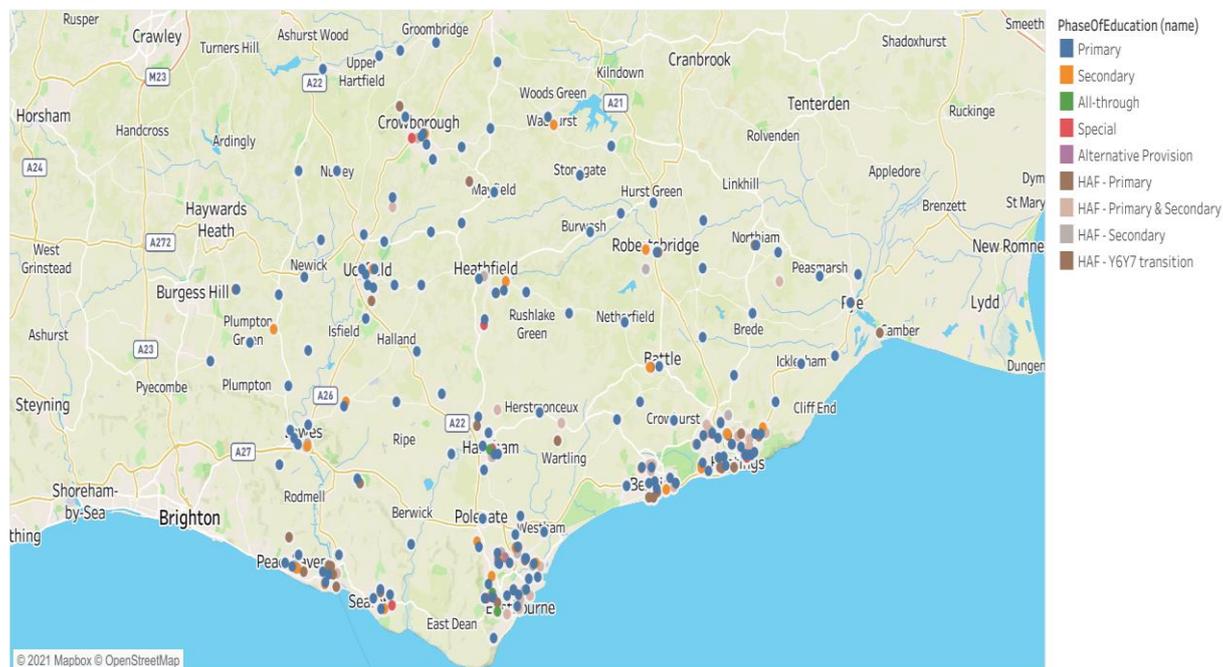


## The Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme

- 13.14** HAF is a DfE-funded initiative and has been running in East Sussex since April 2021. The programme has helped to develop a range of out-of-school provision on offer county wide. The programme's aims were to provide free enriching activities and healthy food for free-school-meal eligible children and young people during the Easter, summer, and Christmas school holidays in 2021.
- 13.15** Whilst the HAF programme had been piloted in other local authorities previously, 2021 was the first year it had been run in East Sussex. During the Easter holiday, 34 providers were funded to offer places, with 1,380 young people attending provision. The offer was developed for the summer holiday, with 71 providers operating across more than 100 sites county-wide, running more than 25,000 individual sessions between them. In total more than 82% of the available places were filled, with 3,612 eligible young people attending across the holiday periods. More than 40 providers offered places over the Christmas 2021 holiday period.
- 13.16** HAF grants were paid to established organisations running out of school activities and to a number of new providers during the Easter, summer, and Christmas school holidays in 2021. Many of those providers worked with the local authority to develop and extend their offer to families to utilise this funding opportunity.
- 13.17** Local authorities have now received confirmation from the DfE that funding for the HAF programme will be extend in to 2022. The local authority will work with providers to develop a programme of provision for the year.

**Fig.25 Location of all HAF providers across the county – July 2021**

January 2021 School Census Figures by School in East Sussex



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