



# **East Sussex County Council**

## **Childcare Sufficiency Duty 2023**



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## 1. Introduction

The Childcare Sufficiency Duty (previously known as the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment) 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 and carers 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 sufficiency document meets the local authority's statutory duty under sections 6 and 7 of the [Childcare Act 2006](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/10/section/6) ([legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)). It is also in line with local authority statutory guidance.

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

It is placed within the context of post coronavirus (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.

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.

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).

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

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.

Childcare places are funded either by government entitlements or by parents.

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 and carers
- Providing information, support and training to early education and childcare providers.

Local authorities are required to secure fully funded places offering 570 hours a year over no fewer than 38 weeks, and up to 52 weeks for every eligible child in their area.

Eligibility depends on a child's age and whether they meet certain funding criteria:

**Figure 1: Eligibility Criteria for Funded two-, three- and four-year-olds**

Eligibility	Offer	Criteria
All three- and four-year-olds	15 hours a week x minimum 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 minimum 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 minimum 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

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

- Parent/carers must each expect to earn at least £152 per week. This is equal to 16 hours at the National Minimum or Living Wage for persons aged 23 and over
- If parent/carers 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/carer earns more than £100,000, they will not be able to receive 30 hours free childcare but will still receive 15 hours per week over a minimum 38 weeks a year
- Foster carers may also apply (subject to approval from the child's social worker) if they meet the above financial criteria

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

For non-European Economic Area (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’)

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 are the main carer of a British citizen (known as a ‘Zambrano Carer’)

Families can check with the local authority if they are unsure if they qualify for free childcare.<sup>1</sup>

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.

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<sup>1</sup> Statutory Guidance for local authorities updated by the Department for Education January 2021

## **2. Key findings**

Some of the key findings of the East Sussex Sufficiency Duty 2023 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 68,800 to 627,700 between 2020 and 2035. Forecasts project that there will be a small rise in the working age population (18-64) of 3.7% to 317,659 people in 2035<sup>2</sup>.

### **2.2. Sufficiency of provision**

East Sussex has 461 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. East Sussex has sufficient early years places in most areas, but we are forecasting shortfalls in some rural areas.

### **2.3. 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 September 2022 was 98.7%. The national average figure was 89%.

The East Sussex figure for children attaining a Good Level of Development (GLD) in the EYFS profile assessment at the end of the foundation stage is 69% which is 3.8% above the national average. The average point score is 31.6 which is 0.6 above the national average. This is the first year that data has been submitted under the new statutory framework, so no comparisons with previous years' data can be made.

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<sup>2</sup> (Source: East Sussex in Figures (ESIF) published in June 2022)

## 2.4. The cost of childcare remains just above national averages

The average hourly charge by providers for day-care in East Sussex is £5.72 per hour. The national average hourly charge according to The Family and Childcare Trust Childcare is £5.41 for children aged three and four<sup>3</sup>.

## 2.5. 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 Southeast<sup>4</sup>.

**Figure 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	£140.68	£135.28	£124.83	£122.33
Southeast	£147.06	£143.10	£124.43	£122.60

**Figure 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	£273.57	£265.38	£237.58	£236.01
Southeast	£289.06	£283.12	£241.55	£239.37

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<sup>3</sup> [Childcare Survey 2022 | Family and Childcare Trust](#)

<sup>4</sup> Family Childcare Trust: Childcare Survey 2022



**Figure 4: Average cost of 25 or 50 hours of childcare for children aged three to five accessing funded hours including the free entitlements**

	<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	£54.10	£105.76
Southeast	£55.56	£112.71

Childcare for younger children is often more expensive due to factors such as staff to child ratios. Most parent/carers 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 parent/carers fall.

## **2.6. The childcare picture in East Sussex**

In the South East there has been a higher than national decline in the numbers of childminders since 2015. In August 2021 there was a 9% decrease in numbers compared to 3% in England. In the year August 2021 to August 2022 East Sussex saw a drop of 8% in the number of registered childminders offering childcare places.

## **2.7. How COVID-19 impacted on childcare in East Sussex**

Providers across the sector are still feeling the economic impact from the Covid-19 pandemic.

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

The biggest issue facing the sector currently is recruitment and retention. Since the autumn of 2021 the sector has seen an increase in the number of qualified practitioners, especially at Level 3 leave the profession. This is a nationwide

problem and East Sussex Early Years teams are steadfastly working with all providers and the Department for Education (DfE) to address this issue. The lack of staff has been given as a reason for the closure of a number of settings across the county.

In total, five settings and twenty-eight childminders closed between August 2021 and August 2022. In the same period, seven new providers, including childminders, opened.

Since January 2022 we have seen an average increase of 10% in the number of families accessing the 30 hours extended offer reflecting the increasing number of parents and carers returning to work.

### **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 and 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 years places. Align the development of new 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 educating children at home
- Help parent/carers (particularly vulnerable families) to understand the benefits of high-quality childcare and early learning for their children

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

- Improve the quality of existing web-based information. Extend the number of topics available for providers to access, including SEND, 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 SEND Coordinator (SENDCo) training that can be accessed by all early years' providers and not just the setting SENDCo
- 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 and Carers**

### **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 parents 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 help with childcare costs webpage](#)

## 5. Population Statistics in East Sussex

### 5.1. Population

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2021 Census, the population of East Sussex was 545,850, and increase of 3.6% since 2011. It is estimated that there are 102,170 children aged 0 to 17 in East Sussex (2021 Census).

Over the last decade the population in East Sussex in the 0 to 17 age group has decreased by 2.2%.

**Figure 5: Population Increase (all ages) in the last decade 2011 to 2021<sup>5</sup>**

Area	2011	2021	Percentage change 2011-2021
England	53,012,456	56,4901,045	9.3%
East Sussex	526,671	545,852	3.6%
Eastbourne	99,412	101,685	2.8%
Hastings	90,254	91,006	0.9%
Lewes	97,502	99,912	2.4%
Rother	90,558	93,111	2.8%
Wealden	148,195	160,146	8.1%

It is projected that the population in the county will increase by 11.4% by 2035. The 0 to 17 population will increase by 1%.

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<sup>5</sup> 2021 Census data

The table in Figure 6 below shows the breakdown of numbers of children aged 0 to 17 and disabled children aged 10 to 17 using the disability projections output for 2021.

**Figure 6: Total population 0 to 17 and 11 to 17 and Projected number of children with overall disability in 2021<sup>6</sup>**

Area	Total population aged 0-17	Total population aged 11-17	Projected number of children with overall disability aged 10-17
East Sussex	106,891	44,308	1,985
Eastbourne	19,982	7,980	412
Hastings	19,115	7,413	394
Lewes	18,949	8,629	341
Rother	16,347	6,945	337
Wealden	31,483	13,342	501

In the latest published Department for Work and Pensions Family Resources Survey 2020 to 2021, (22 March 2022), 9% of children and young people were identified as disabled. In East Sussex, this figure for 10 to 17 year olds is 2.3%.

East Sussex is largely rural in character, although around three quarters of the population live in urban areas (Source: 2021 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.

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<sup>6</sup> East Sussex in Figures (ESiF) East Sussex County Council Census 2021 Data

In the urban areas of Eastbourne and Hastings there are 106 funded providers, in the more rural areas of Lewes, Rother and Wealden there are 209 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.

**Figure 7: Map of the five borough and district council areas in East Sussex**

East Sussex: Main settlements and transport connections in 2017



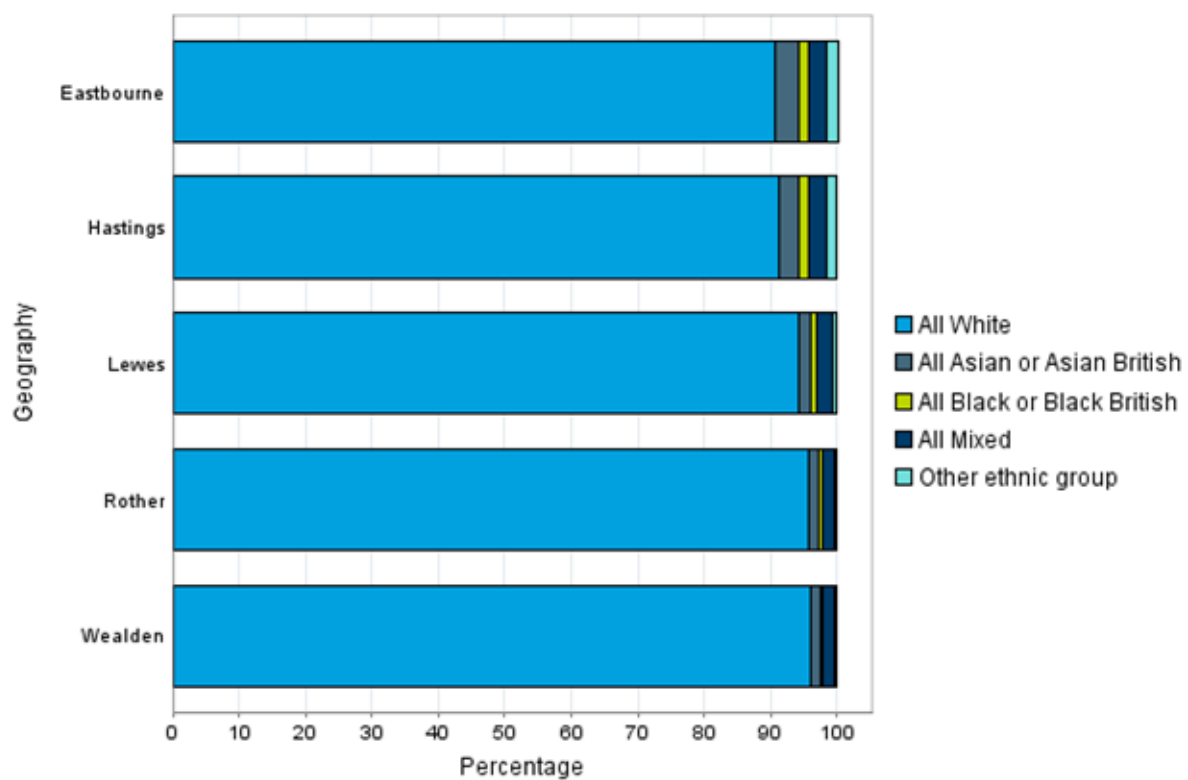
(c) Crown copyright - All rights reserved. 100019601, 2017.

## 5.3. Ethnicity

Around 512,440 residents (93.9%) of East Sussex identified their ethnic group as white in the 2021 Census, the second highest proportion in the South East after the Isle of Wight. The second most common high-level ethnic group was "Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups", comprising 2.3% of the population (12,310 people).



Figure 8: Ethnic group in 2011 - 2021 by District<sup>7</sup>



<sup>7</sup> Source: ESiF-: Ethnic group in 2011 -2021 by Districts

## 5.4. Languages

There are over 100 languages spoken in East Sussex. For around 4,606 (7%) of school children (5-16) in the county English is not their first language. Polish is the most spoken language other than English across schools in East Sussex.

**Figure 9: Number of Languages Spoken in Schools in East Sussex<sup>8</sup>**

Language	Number of Pupils	Percentage
English	63,377	93%
Polish	610	0.9%
Arabic	266	0.3%
Portuguese	243	0.3%
Romanian	226	0.3%
Believed to be English	211	0.3%
Russian	197	0.3%
Turkish	172	0.2%
Malayalam	167	0.2%
Kurdish	143	0.2%
Other than English	143	0.2%
Bengali	137	0.2%
Spanish	126	0.1%
Ukrainian	126	0.1%
Information not obtained	104	0.1%
Others	1,735	3.3%

## 5.5. Deprivation

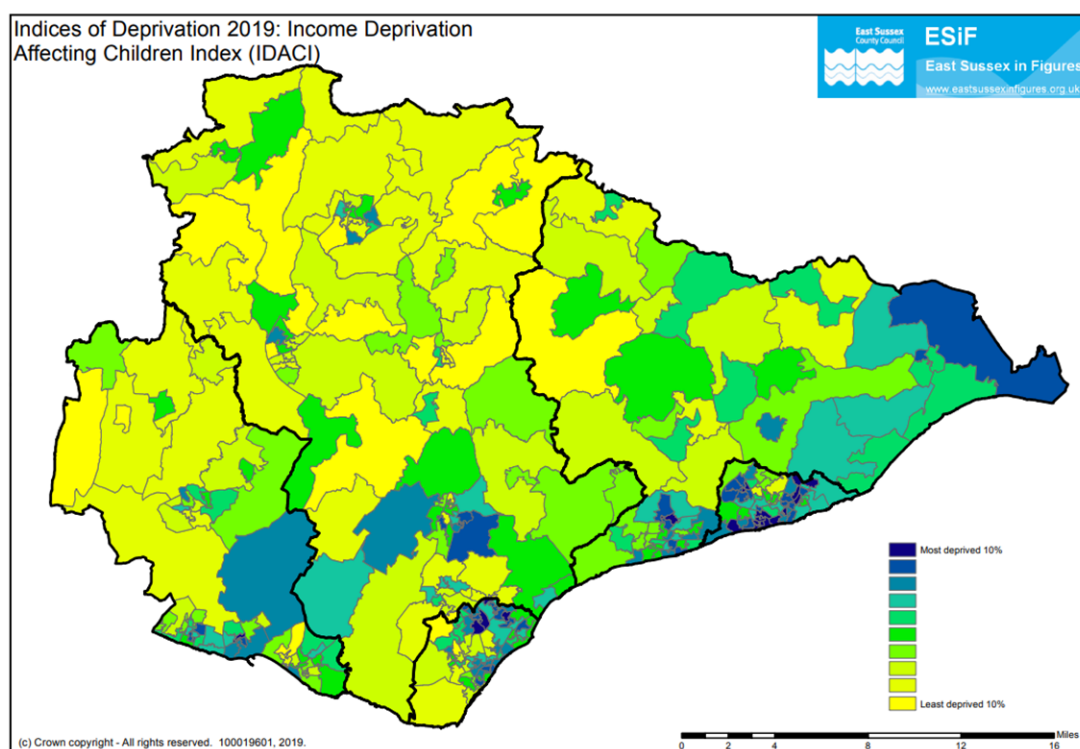
The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas (or neighbourhoods) in England. The map below

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<sup>8</sup> Data from May 2022 School's Census - Source CS - Field used = 'Descriptor'

(Figure 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 one (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).

**Figure 10: National deprivation rank in neighbourhoods LSOAs in East Sussex**



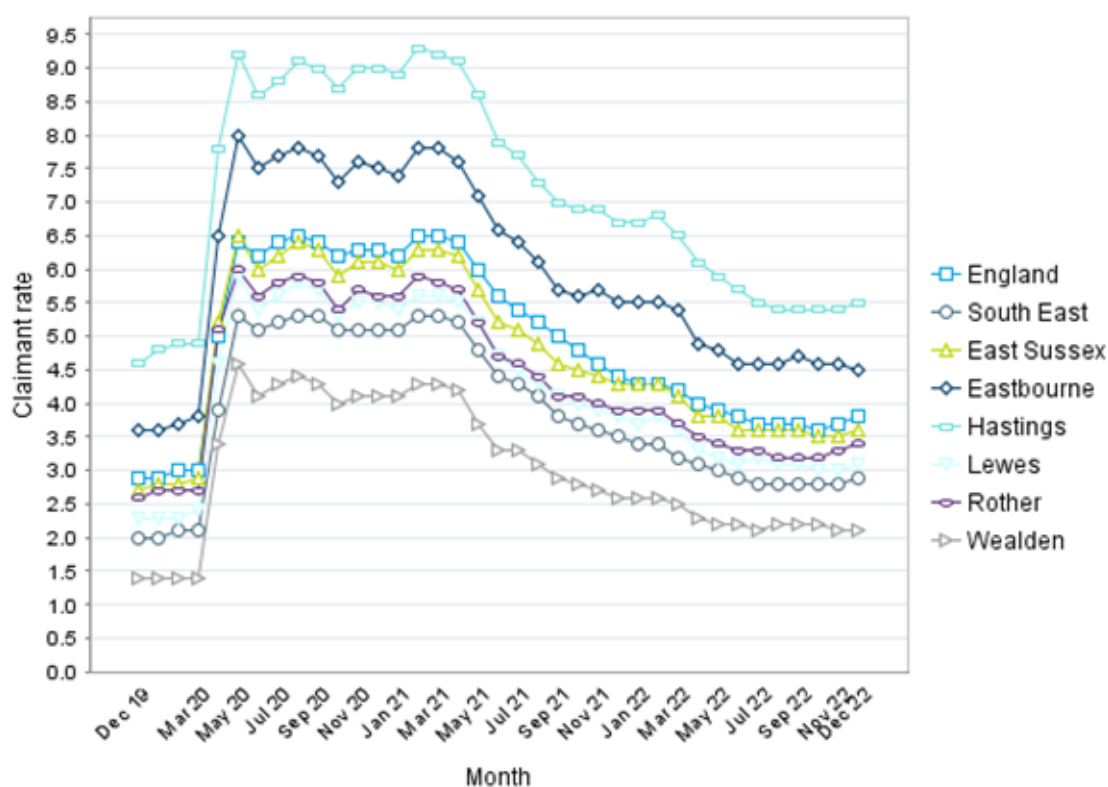
In East Sussex there are 329 LSOAs, 22 are in the most deprived 10% nationally. 16 of these are in Hastings, four in Eastbourne, and two in Rother. 21 LSOAs are in the least deprived 10%, 13 are in Wealden, six in Lewes, and two in Eastbourne.

## 5.6. Unemployment

There were 11,385 people in East Sussex (November 2022) receiving benefits because they are unemployed and claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) or on

Universal Credit (UC) searching for work. The number is 1.9% higher than in October 2022 but 23.8% lower than in November 2021.

**Figure 11: Claimant Count including JSA and Universal Credit, 2019-2022 - districts (post 2019)**



25 wards have rates at or above the England rate (3.7%), with the highest rates in Central St Leonards (9%), Castle (4.8%) and Gensing (7.8%) in Hastings, and Devonshire (7.7%) in Eastbourne. 60 wards now have rates below what the East Sussex rate was in March 2020 (2.9%), and rates have fallen significantly in all wards over the past year.

The sectors most severely affected by the Covid pandemic are very significant in the East Sussex economy: Wholesale, retail and motors, Accommodation and Food service, Arts, Entertainment and Recreation. These sectors have seen significantly better performance now they are able to operate normally but are seeing the effects of labour shortages. Supply issues are due to the combined effects of the war in Ukraine and Brexit. Increasing inflation due to rises in energy and other costs is also impacting.

Health and Social care; and Wholesale and Retail and Motors are the most important sectors in terms of the number of people employed. The fastest growing sectors are Construction, Business administration and support services, Transport and Storage. However, Health and care, Information and Communication have seen significant decline over the last five years.

While pay rates in East Sussex are rising at a similar rate to national wages, median monthly earnings in August 2022, at £1,947 in the county, remain considerably lower than national average (UK=£2,111).

Higher employment has impacted on the number of families accessing the Extended 30 Hours entitlement as this offer is only open to families in work. Take up of the Extended Offer has increased by 3% over the last year.

## 6. Projected housing growth

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.

**Figure 12: Number of new dwellings to be built by area<sup>9</sup>**

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

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<sup>9</sup> East Sussex State of the County Report - 2021

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.

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

East Sussex has 461 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.

**Figure 13: Number of providers by type in East Sussex<sup>10</sup>**

Childcare Provider Type	September 2022
Childminder and Childcare - Domestic	136
Maintained/Academy Nursery	18
Independent School Nursery	7
Nursery	163
Crèche	3
Nanny	10
Out of School Clubs	85
Standalone Holiday Play Scheme	39

### 7.1. Funded early education places

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

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<sup>10</sup> East Sussex Synergy FIS Portal- September 2022

**Figure 14 (a): Number of Nursery Provision & Childminders by Sector in Each District<sup>11</sup>**

District	Nursery Private	Nursery Voluntary	Childminder
Eastbourne	24	0	23
Hastings	25	2	14
Lewes	19	7	29
Rother	15	14	8
Wealden	31	21	26
Totals	114	44	100

**Figure 14 (b): Number of Schools by Sector in Each District<sup>12</sup>**

District	Non-Maintained (including Academies)	Maintained	Independent
Eastbourne	5	2	2
Hastings	8	1	0
Lewes	4	6	0
Rother	4	5	4
Wealden	3	8	5
Totals	24	22	1

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<sup>11</sup> East Sussex Synergy FIS Portal- October 2022

<sup>12</sup> East Sussex Synergy FIS Portal- October 2022



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.

**Figure 15 (a): Number of full time equivalent (FTE) places available by borough/district<sup>13</sup>**

Districts	(FTE Places) 2022 to 2023
<b>East Sussex</b>	<b>10,420</b>
Eastbourne	2,276
Hastings	1,728
Lewes	1,867
Rother	1,643
Wealden	2,906

**Figure 15 (b): Demand for full time equivalent (FTE) places by borough/district<sup>14</sup>**

Districts	Demand for FTE Places by District 2022 to 2023 Onwards
<b>East Sussex</b>	<b>8,715</b>
Eastbourne	1,819
Hastings	1,520
Lewes	1,574
Rother	1,340
Wealden	2,462

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<sup>13</sup> Early years forecasting model results - September 2022

<sup>14</sup> Early years forecasting model results -September 2022

## 7.2. Take up of funding streams<sup>15</sup>

Take up of the 15-hour universal entitlement for three- and four-year-olds is strong across all areas of the county with an increase of 5% since 2021, from 88% to 93%. This is above the national average of 92%.

Figure 16 shows the number of three- and four-year-olds accessing their universal 15 hour offer by borough or district.

**Figure 16: Number of three- and four-year-olds accessing a funded place in April 2022<sup>16</sup>**

District	Number of children accessing a Universal 15 hour offer place in April 2022
East Sussex	7,715
Eastbourne	1,503
Hastings	1,499
Lewes	1,292
Rother	1,169
Wealden	2,252

In East Sussex, the number of children taking up the extended 30-hour entitlement for the summer claim period in 2022 was 43% of the total number of three- and four-year-olds accessing a funded early education place. This equates to a 3% increase on the same period in 2021. Nationally in 2022 348,100 children registered for the extended 30-hour entitlement. This is 29% of the total number of children, 1,200,000 registered for the universal 15-hour entitlement, a six percent increase from 2021.

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<sup>15</sup> DfE Local Authority Interactive Tool - October 2022

<sup>16</sup> East Sussex Headcount data - April 2022

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 1,159 children accessed a funded two-year-old place in April 2022. This equates to 23% of the total estimated 2-year-old population. 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 17 shows the number of eligible two-year-olds accessing a funded early education place by district.

**Figure 17: Number of eligible funded two-year-olds accessing a funded place in April 2022<sup>17</sup>**

District	Number of funded two-year-olds accessing the 15-hour offer - April 2022
<b>East Sussex</b>	<b>1,159</b>
Eastbourne	244
Hastings	335
Lewes	151
Rother	196
Wealden	233

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<sup>17</sup> East Sussex Headcount data - April 2022

## 8. Consultation with parents and carers

Consultation with parents and carers is an important part of establishing the demand for childcare. The most recent Childcare Sufficiency Duty Parental Survey was undertaken in 2022. It ran from 20 September to 10 October 2022 and was available on the East Sussex County Council [Consultation Hub](#). The survey was advertised to parent/carers and early years providers in East Sussex via social media and via direct email communication.

By the close of the consultation period, 754 responses had been received. The responses can be broken down as follows:

- 92% of respondents were female
- 60% of respondents were a couple parent or carer household
- 93% of those that responded had children four years old or under
- 77% of those that responded had school age children (Reception to age 14, or 18 if disabled)
- 15% of respondents had children with a special educational need and or disability
- 48% of those that responded worked more than 30 hours a week and 40% worked part-time (29 hours a week or less). 3% of respondents indicated they were unemployed and looking for work and 3% indicated they were not looking for work. 1% of respondents were in education or training and 1% indicated being long term sick/disabled. 4% indicated other

Respondents told us:

- 41% of respondents wanted childcare all year round
- 75% of respondents wanted childcare on Monday to Fridays only
- 4% of respondents wanted childcare on Saturdays and 3% wanted childcare on Sundays
- The majority of respondents (39%) wanted between 20-30 hours of childcare a week

- 61% of respondents were willing to use more than one provider
- 41% of respondents needed childcare through the school holidays
- 27% of respondents with school aged children used a breakfast club and 47% used after school provision
- 51% of respondents looking for early years provision found it difficult to afford the childcare they wanted. 28% of families using before and after school care found affordability an issue. When accessing school holiday provision, 44% of parent/carers found affordability difficult
- 32% of respondents used the government's Tax-Free Childcare benefit
- 87% of respondents were aware that funding was available to help with childcare costs
- 34% of respondents were happy with the funded sessions offered. 52% of respondents were happy with where they could access funded hours. 43% stated they were happy with the choice of childcare available. 61% of respondents said childcare provision was within the right location
- 65% of respondents were happy with the quality of childcare provision on offer
- 28% of respondents found it difficult to access information on childcare provision in their area
- In the last 12 months 20% of respondents to the survey stated they had been unable to access childcare when needed

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.

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.

For the period 1 September 2021 to 31 July 2022, the Customer Relations Team responded to 1,082 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.

Direct enquiries to the Customer Relations Team have decreased steadily in recent years as the web content offer has developed. In May 2021 the number of calls to the team was 37. This reduced to 32 in May 2022.

Following COVID-19, and 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.

The Customer Relations team uses social media to promote the Early Years Education Entitlement, 30 hours funded childcare and tax-free childcare. The Facebook page reach was 67,000, meaning that content from or about the page was displayed 67,000 times on a person's screen. It had 3,818 likes and 4,207 followers<sup>18</sup>.

In the period from 1 September 2021 to 31 July 2022 the number of 'entrances' where visitors entered our website through our 'Help with childcare costs' page about funded childcare was 2,611. The bounce rate, where a user enters the site and leaves instantly without spending any time in the site, was 27.8%<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> East Sussex social media management platform - Hootsuite

<sup>19</sup> East Sussex customer management system - Fresh Desk and Google Analytics

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.

## 9. Demand for childcare

Data taken from the local authority's early years forecasting model, updated in October 2022, indicates that across the county there is sufficient capacity within the sector in most areas to meet demand for 0 to five childcare places.

Countywide, GP data is showing that the number of children aged under five is starting to flatten out. Pressures on the early years sector may start to increase in the next few years as birth rates start to rise although the economic and societal recovery post-COVID-19 may partly counteract the rise in numbers. For instance, take up of the 30 hours extended offer has already recovered to record levels.

**Figure 18: Shows the towns or areas in East Sussex that potentially have significant FTE shortfalls to 2025/26 of early year places:**

Town	Capacity	Solution to sufficiency gaps
Ditchling	Shortfall of places from 2022/23 to 2024/25 due to closure of a private setting in the area. A significant amount of current demand may be coming from out of area.	New providers investigating opening new provision.
Newick	Shortfall of places from 2022/23.	Look at capacity of existing provision and support opening new provision.
Wivelsfield	Shortfall of places from 2022/23.	Approval given for Wivelsfield Primary School to lower its age range and offer early years places from September 2023.
Bexhill	Shortfall of places from around 2025/26 due to proposed new housing development.	Look at capacity of existing provision and support opening new provision.
Hankham and Stone Cross	Shortfall of places from 2022/23.	Look at capacity of existing provision and support opening new provision. Capacity can be found at Polegate/Willingdon, Pevensey and Westham and north and east Eastbourne
Frant	Shortfall of places from around 2024/25. A substantial amount of demand coming from out of	New providers investigating opening new provision



	area and potential new housing developments.	
Ninfield	Shortfall of places from around 2025/26. Shortfall dependent on new housing with planning approval being built within timescales.	Look at capacity of existing provision and support opening new provision.

**Figure 19: Shows the towns or areas in East Sussex where settings are potentially forecast to be full**

Seaford  
 Barcombe  
 Hamsey  
 \*Plumpton  
 \*Chailey  
 Battle from around 2024/25  
 Brede  
 Staplecross  
 Stonegate  
 \*Hailsham  
 \*Heathfield  
 Uckfield (alleviated by additional places 2022/23)  
 Maresfield  
 Chiddingly  
 East Hoathly from around 2024/25  
 Five Ashes  
 Herstmonceux  
 Mark Cross  
 Mayfield  
 Punnetts Town  
 Hartfield from around 2025/26

\*Areas of potential concern over the next two to three years where there is a genuine prospect of a shortage of places to meet local demand. These areas will be monitored to look at capacity of existing provision and support opening new provision.

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

“High quality pre-schooling relates to better intellectual and social and 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.

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 September 2022 Ofsted judged 98.7% of registered early years providers in East Sussex as good or outstanding.

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.

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. All early years providers and childminders are invited to take part in this support on a rolling basis dependent on their last Ofsted inspection. Schools that have lowered their age range to take pre-school children are now included in this support if they wish to participate.

The East Sussex figure for children attaining a Good Level of Development (GLD) in the EYFS profile assessment at the end of the foundation stage is 69% which is 3.8% above the national average. The average point score is 31.6 which is 0.6 above the

national average. This is the first year that data has been submitted under the new statutory framework, so no comparisons with previous years' data can be made.

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.

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.

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 that providers can use to support the appointment and development of their workforce.

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.

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 the two partnerships via the Early Years Hubs for Excellence.

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.

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.

'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. Nearly 7,000 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.

The use of 'notifications' and an 'events' tab allows direct communication with families. A Facebook page dedicated to the project means ideas can be shared with schools, settings, and families. '50 Things to do before you're 5' has been incorporated into other projects within East Sussex to encourage schools and settings to see it as a universal offer for all families.

A new project to revive the use of poetry and rhyme to support oracy was launched in early 2022. This has been bought from Make Believe Arts and is called Poetry Baskets. Settings have access to poems and rhymes through a website. They have been tasked with using one per month from a pre-selected list which has been linked to an activity from '50 Things to do before you're 5'.

Another project that has been in the planning stages during the COVID-19 pandemic is about to be launched. This will work with 22 settings to carry out research into best practice in working with two-year-olds. Practitioners will research an area of practice that they would like to know more about or improve. This is led by the officers who delivered the Nursery World Award winning 'Interaction with babies' research project in 2019.

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

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.

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 and carers online. Extra information is available to parents and carers of children with SEND via the East Sussex Local Offer. Other services also offer support to parents and carers 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.

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.

There is a statutory duty for all local authorities to provide a Special Educational Needs 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 special educational needs who are in receipt of three- and four-year-old early years education funding. If appropriate funding can be allocated to children prior to their being age eligible to access early education funding. In the summer 2022 funding period, 147 children were in receipt of this funding stream, attending 75 different early years' providers.

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.

Although there is no statutory duty to provide additional funding for children who are in receipt of 2-year-old early years 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 summer 2022 funding period was 22.

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 years education entitlement. This annual payment of £800 goes to the provider nominated by the parent or carer. In the summer 2022 funding period the local authority made a DAF payment to 27 children.

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.

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 four-week run-on (paid for four 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

The amount of funding available is up to £302 per year, per eligible child. EYPP payments were made to 1,173 children during the summer 2022 funding period. This equated to 13% of the total number of three- and four-year-olds claiming early years education funding during this period.

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**

Looked after children are less likely than their peers to access early education.

In East Sussex 72% of looked after children eligible to access a funded place with childcare providers did so during the 2022 summer funding period. This compares with 93% of non-looked after children.

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.

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 2022 funding period.

### 13. Childcare for children over five

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.

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 or 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.

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.

Children taking part in organised sports and physical activities at the ages of five, seven 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<sup>20</sup>.

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

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<sup>20</sup> UCL: Institute of Education-Out of school activities improve children's educational attainment, study reveals. 20 April 2016

have to meet specified child to adult ratios if they only care for children over the age of eight.

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. Figure 20 shows the number of known providers offering wrap around care during term time and holiday care in East Sussex.

**Figure 20: Number of Ofsted registered providers offering care during term time and holidays<sup>21</sup>**

District or Borough	Number of breakfast clubs	Number of after school clubs
Eastbourne	10	14
Hastings	14	7
Lewes	9	17
Rother	9	10
Wealden	12	12

29% of schools in the primary phase run their own breakfast club on site. 33% 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 activities such as gardening clubs and film clubs. Figure 22 shows the number of known holiday clubs and play schemes run across the county.

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<sup>21</sup> Extract from Synergy FIS Provider Portal - September 2022

**Figure 21: Number of holiday clubs and play schemes across East Sussex<sup>22</sup>**

	Number of holiday clubs / play schemes
Total in PVI Sector	39
Total in Maintained Sector	0

Currently, no holiday clubs or play schemes are run by schools in the maintained sector in East Sussex.

**Fig.22: Link to the Location of after school clubs September 2022**

[After School Clubs - East Sussex | Tableau Public](#)

For the majority of families there is enough holiday childcare for 4-7-year-olds and 8-11-year-olds in all areas of the county. But for those families with disabled children or parents working full-time (9am-5pm on weekdays) or atypical hours there are still some gaps in provision.

From 2016 parents had the ‘right to request’ that their child’s school should consider establishing wraparound childcare or allowing PVI providers to use the school facilities to deliver childcare at times when the school is not using them. Whilst it is not compulsory to offer wraparound childcare at parental request, schools should not refuse a request without reasonable justification. To date East Sussex has not received any request under this policy.

The demand for childcare lowers for young people of secondary school age (11 years and over) as many parents and carers feel their children are independent enough not to need childcare outside of school hours. This age group of children are more likely to access activities run by leisure centres or other private organisations, or other type of provider.

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<sup>22</sup> Extract from Synergy FIS Provider Portal - September 2022

Figure 23 shows the current average cost of out of school care in East Sussex.

**Figure 23: Current average cost of out of school care in East Sussex<sup>23</sup>**

	Breakfast club session (average cost)	After school club session (average cost)	Holiday play scheme session (average cost)
Maintained Sector	£3.60	£6.75	n/a
PVI Sector	£4.20	£11.10	£33 per day £165 per week

### **The Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme**

- 13.1.** 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 (FSM) eligible children and young people during the Easter, summer, and Christmas school holidays. The programme was initially funded for a year (2021), but the DfE has since confirmed that funding will continue through to 2024.
- 13.2.** During the first year of the HAF programme in East Sussex more than 5,000 eligible young people attended funded provision. More than 35,000 funded sessions took place. The programme funded 97 external partners. Sessions were delivered across more than 150 sites. Whilst these were focused in six key target areas with the highest levels of FSM (Hastings, Eastbourne, Bexhill, Hailsham, Newhaven and Peacehaven), there was a geographical spread of provision in all parts of East Sussex.
- 13.3.** 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. The programme has continued to gain momentum in 2022.

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<sup>23</sup> Synergy Report: FIS Out of School Club Report (July 2021)

13.4. 50 providers, including five new organisations, were funded over the Easter holidays 2022. They ran more than 7,000 individual sessions, operating across 76 sites, for over 1,800 individual attendees.

13.5. 74 providers, including a further 14 new organisations, were funded over the summer holidays 2022. In total more than 26,000 sessions took place across 141 sites, for more than 4,000 individual attendees.

**Figure 24:**

[Location of all HAF providers across the county - July 2022](#)

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