

Lancashire County Council

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

April 2025 - March 2026

West Lancashire



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Introduction

The Childcare Act 2006 places a statutory duty upon local authorities to secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 or up to 18 for disabled children.

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) is a county wide review of the supply and demand of childcare, take up of funded provision, the availability of places, the quality and cost of provision. The information has been broken down into area reports for ease of reading, this provides the reader with an overview at a localised level.

Methodology

In order to gather up to date, accurate childcare supply data, we carried out an online survey with childcare providers. We also surveyed a sample of parents throughout Lancashire to ascertain demand including childcare needs, opinions and trends. As it is not possible to include data for all parents and providers in Lancashire, the information in this report should be seen as a guide to local provision, rather than being conclusive. It is also important to note that any figures represent a snapshot in time. Some tables will have blank cells as we may not have all provider types in each area, or the data has not been supplied by the providers. Caution should be given where there is only one provider type in that group. Data from the termly census and headcount claims is used to map the take up of funded childcare places and Ofsted data is used to identify the quality of childcare in Lancashire.

Types of Childcare

Childcare includes Childminders, Day Nurseries, Pre-Schools, Nursery Units of Independent Schools, Breakfast Clubs, After School Clubs, Holiday Schemes, Maintained Nursery Classes, Maintained Nursery Schools, and School Governor Led Provision (section 27).

Registered Childcare: Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. It regulates childcare for children from birth to 18 years of age. Ofsted operates two registers:

The Early Years Register: If a provider is caring for children from the age of birth to 5 years for more than two hours a day, on more than fourteen days per year they must register with Ofsted on the Early Years Register and meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The Childcare Register: A childcare provider must register on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register if they provide care for children aged 5 to 8 years for more than two hours a day on more than fourteen days per year. A childcare provider will be on both the Early Years Register and the Childcare Register if they care for children under and over the age of 5 years. Some childcare providers who care for children over the age of 8 years, who provide care in the child's home, are activity based i.e. sports coaching or for very short periods of time can join the voluntary part of the childcare register.

Schools

Maintained Nursery Classes and Governor Led Provision (section 27) are included within an overall school inspection and are not required to have a separate Early Years Ofsted registration; however, they must follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework.



Overview of Government Childcare Initiatives in Lancashire

The following section provides a summary of the government's childcare initiatives and outlines how they have been implemented across Lancashire to create new childcare places and enhance existing provision.

Extension of Early Education Funding

From September 2025, eligible working families have been able to access 30 hours of Early Education Funding per week, starting from when their child is 9 months old until they begin school.

To support this expansion, the government provided capital funding to increase the availability of places for children under the age of two and for two-year-olds in priority areas. We have funded 38 projects and created 471 new early education places for children aged two and under.

National Wraparound Programme

The National Wraparound Programme is to support families returning to work or increasing their working hours by improving access to before and after school childcare. To achieve this, the programme provided both capital and revenue funding to:

- Establish new wraparound childcare provision.
- Expand the number of places in existing settings,
- Extend provision hours to meet the core offer of 8:00am to 6:00pm.

Over the past 2 years capital & revenue funding has been allocated to 27 projects across Lancashire, resulting in the creation of 577 new wraparound childcare places. In addition, revenue funding has been made available to support operational costs, including staffing, resources and other running expenses. 141 projects have received revenue funding, contributing to the creation of 2450 additional childcare places across Lancashire.

The programme is helping to ensure that families across Lancashire have access to flexible, affordable childcare to enable them to access work or training.

School Based Nursery Capital Funding

Between September and December 2025, schools were invited to apply to the Department for Education (DfE) for capital funding to support the development of school-based nursery provision.

- 46 schools initially expressed interest in accessing the funding.
- 29 schools proceeded to submit formal applications to the DfE.
- 13 schools were successful in accessing the school based nursery capital funding.

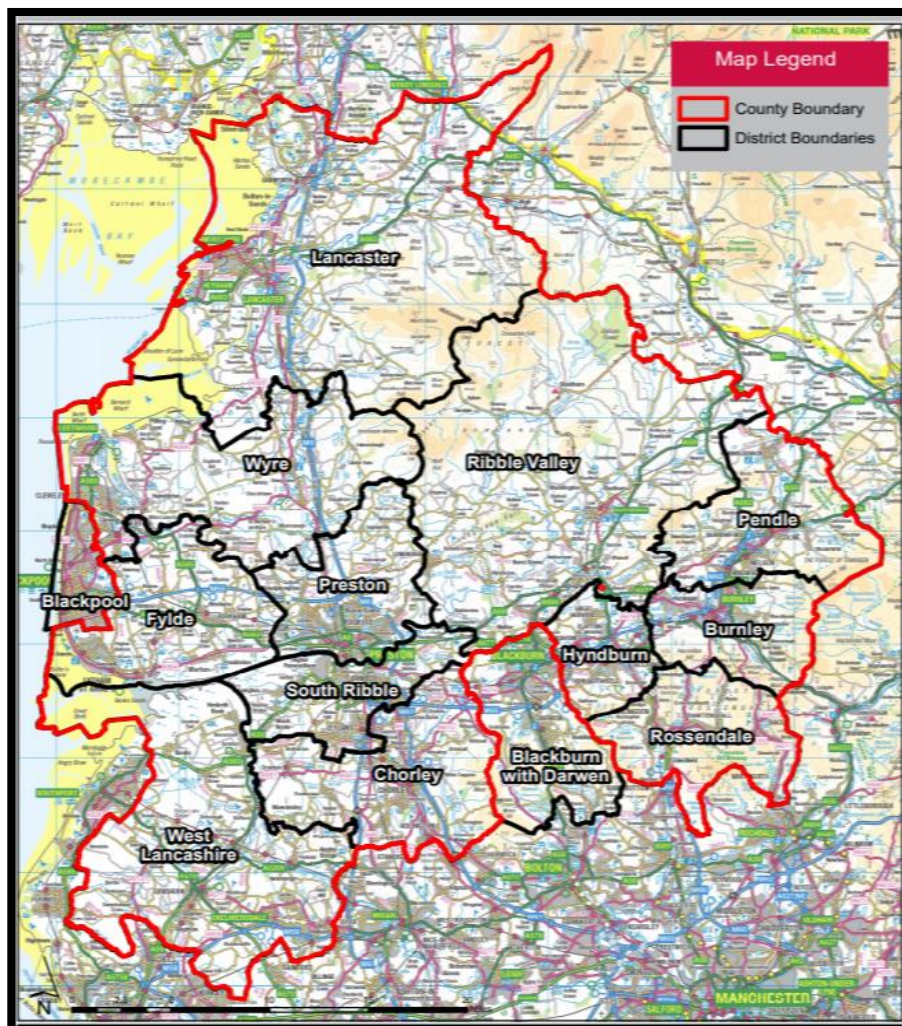
These successful projects will result in the creation of new early years places in schools.



Lancashire Overview

Lancashire County Council is the fourth largest County Council in the country. The population is 1,294,914 (Mid-year estimate 2024). The population for 0-19 year olds within this figure is 294,574. Lancashire is made up of 12 districts. Below you can see a map of Lancashire showing the county and district boundaries.

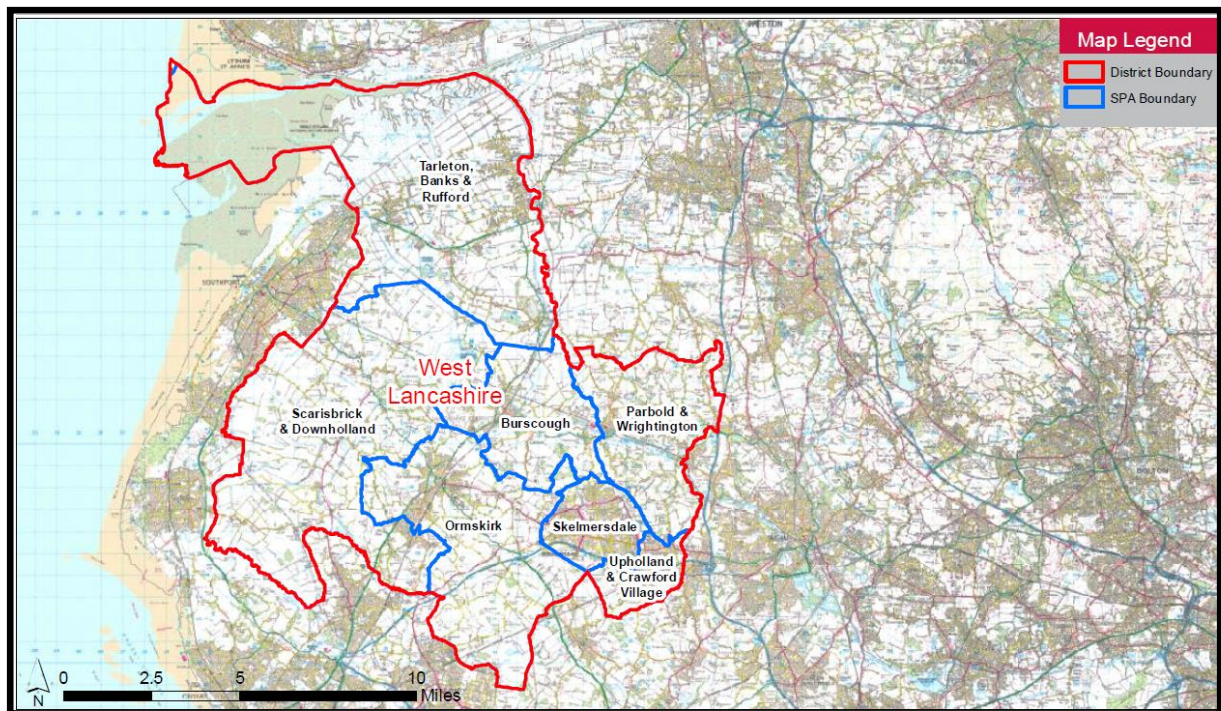
Lancashire's defining characteristics are its size and diversity. Each district has its own unique demography and geography. It is an area of vast contrasts with busy urban centres, coastal regions and large agricultural areas. For the purposes of this report these districts have been broken down further into localised geographical areas.



West Lancashire

The map below shows the local geographical areas for the West Lancashire district.

- Tarleton, Banks & Rufford
- Burscough
- Scarisbrick & Downholland
- Ormskirk
- Skelmersdale
- Parbold & Wrightington
- Up Holland & Crawford Village



Local Demographics

West Lancashire covers 347 square kilometres. It is estimated that between 2022 and 2047 the population of West Lancashire will increase by 8.3%. It has the second lowest growth in households in Lancashire.

The table below shows population figures for the district.

Area	Total Population	0-1 year olds	1 year olds	2 year olds	3&4 year olds	5-11 year olds
Burscough	14737	139	132	147	269	1021
Ormskirk	33799	245	207	257	483	1962
Parbold & Wrightington	7466	57	58	62	108	450
Scarisbrick & Downholland	7347	64	80	63	130	462
Skelmersdale	35930	348	389	485	866	3309
Tarleton, Banks & Rufford	14913	91	100	153	270	1032
Upholland & Crawford Village	7803	70	70	82	143	564
West Lancashire	121995	1013	1037	1249	2268	8799

The 2025 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) place West Lancashire as the 176th most deprived area out of 296 district and unitary authorities in England.

Area	No. of wards	No. of LSOA's	IMD average rank *	IMD in 20% most deprived
West Lancashire	15	73	176	No

West Lancashire has a good transport network including the M58 motorway which provides direct access to the M6 and routes into Sefton, Wigan and Liverpool. West Lancashire has good public transport networks via railway stations and bus routes providing families with options for commuting throughout the district and beyond.



Parent Survey

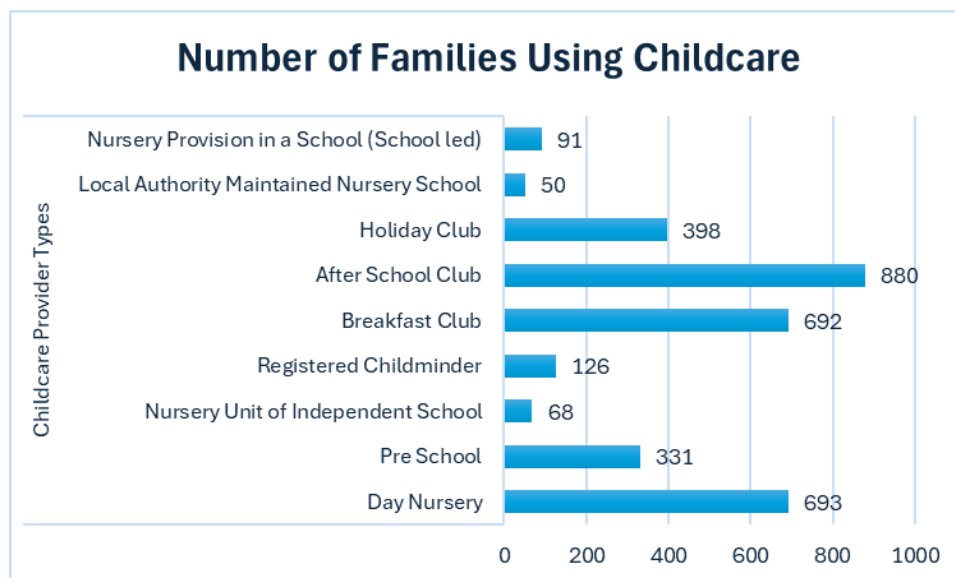
As part of our statutory duty, we gathered the views of parents and families that use formal childcare. Using the help of our early years' providers, parents were asked to complete a short online survey. Questions in the survey covered topics such as current childcare usage patterns, opening times, paying for childcare, satisfaction levels and Early Education Funding (EEF).

There were 1900 completions in total. Whilst the majority of responses were from Burnley, Lancaster, West Lancashire and South Ribble we did receive submissions from all 12 districts. The summary below is provided at a Lancashire level.

Your Household

Nearly all respondents to our survey are married or living with a partner, in most cases both partners are working full time. 40% of those surveyed have children in the early years category and 40% are 5-11 years old. 13% of respondents have children aged 11yrs +. We asked parents about their household income, most families surveyed earned between £20,000 and £80,000. 21% have a joint income of above £80,000.

The most used childcare provider types from those surveyed are shown below.



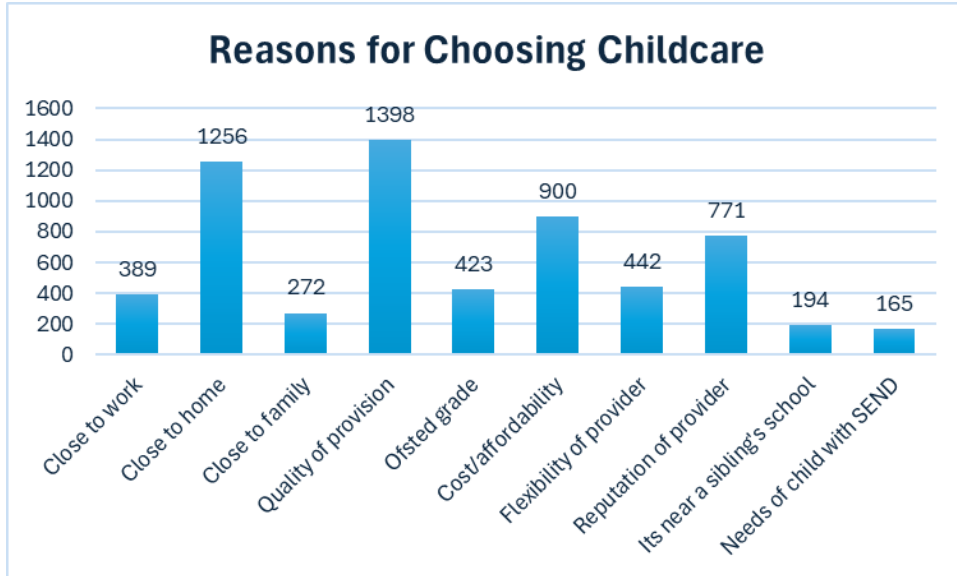
Childcare Needs

On average most families need between 10 and 40 hours of childcare per week with 6% of parents needing more than this. The majority said they use childcare because they work. 21% told us it is also for their child's learning and development or that their children enjoy it. A smaller percentage of parents/carers indicated they use childcare for respite, to study or look for work. Most parents need childcare all year round, however 38% wanted childcare term time only. 3% parents surveyed need childcare after 6pm or other patterns not specified.



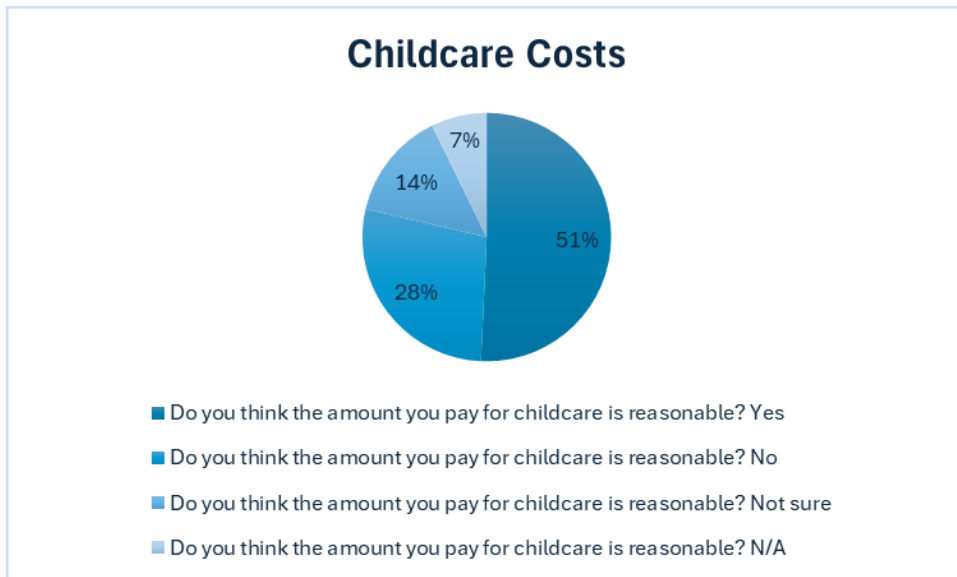
Nearly half of respondents said that finding information about suitable childcare was quite easy. Approximately 18% said it was very easy and a very small number of respondents said it was very difficult -5%.

We asked parents/carers what their most important factors were when choosing childcare, the responses are summarised below.



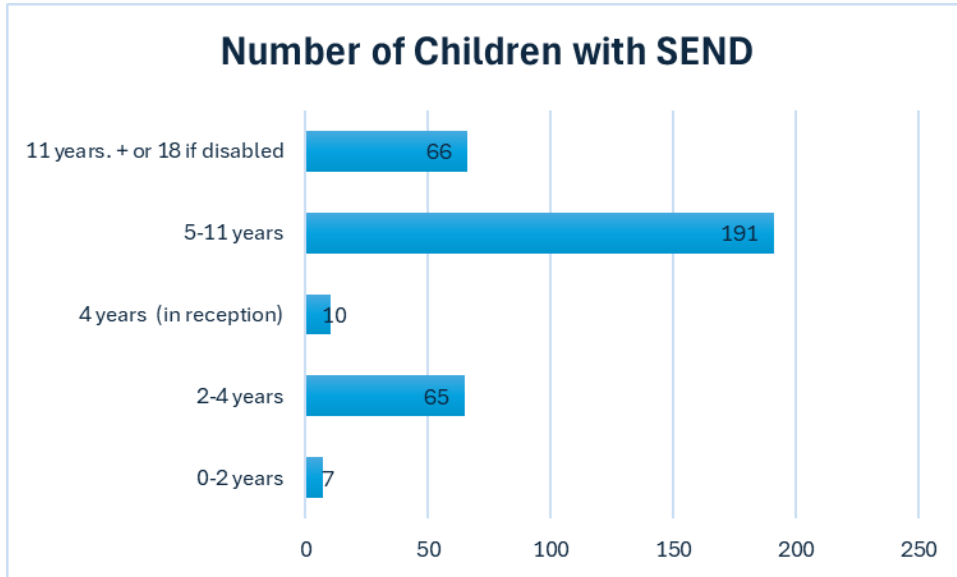
Over half of parents/carers that completed our survey pay for their childcare using wages, followed by the Tax-Free Childcare scheme and finally using Early Education Funding.

The chart below shows parent/carer views on the cost of childcare.

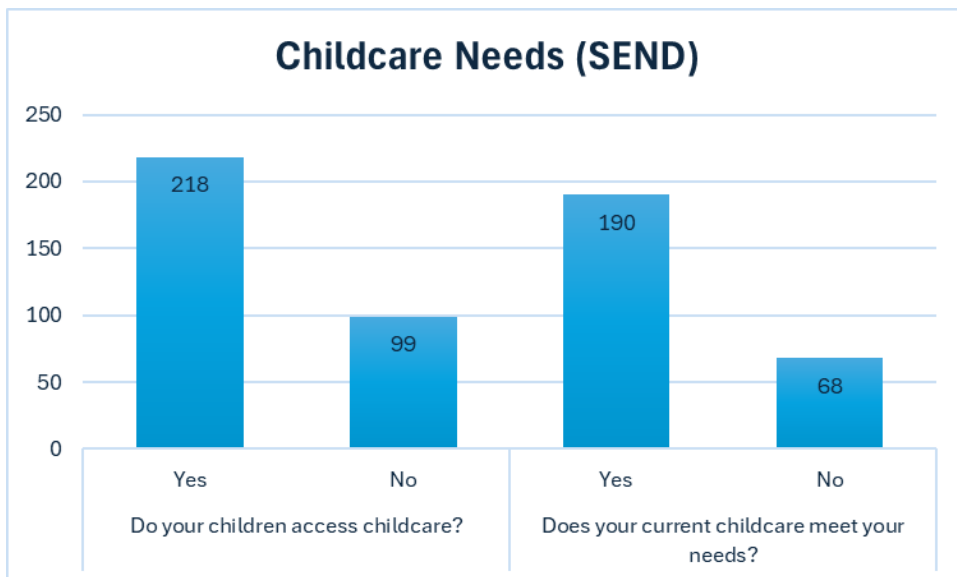


Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

We asked parents/carers if they have a child or children with special education needs and/or disabilities. The graph below shows the number of children with SEND.



The following graph shows those who access formal childcare and if this childcare meets their needs. For those parents currently accessing childcare 31% said it did not meet their child's individual needs. 15% stated that cost/affordability and a lack of alternative childcare were a concern.



Early Education Funding

The majority of those who responded to our survey are aware of Early Education Funding. 58% of respondents to this survey access a funded place with most accessing funded places at a Day Nursery or Pre-School Playgroup. 42% are not accessing a funded place. Those not accessing a place is either because they are now at school, they are not eligible or their child is too young



Childcare Provision

In Lancashire we have a large number of childcare providers offering a variety of childcare options and flexibility to enable families to access work and training.

The information provided in the tables below was captured in Autumn term 2025 and shows an overview of childcare providers in the area.

When counting the number of different providers, we include those who may offer more than one type of provision. In our provider type count this would be shown as three types of provision e.g. Pre-School Playgroup, Breakfast Club and After School Club however, those different types of provision may all come under one Ofsted registration. In the Movement in the Market and Quality of Provision sections of this report the numbers shown represent the number of Ofsted registrations rather than the number of provider types.

Provider Type Breakdown

The table below shows the district provider types available; on the following page the tables show provider types at a more localised level.

Provider Type	West Lancashire		
	Number	Responses	% Responses
Childminder	23	21	91%
Day Nursery	31	28	90%
Pre-School Playgroup	3	3	100%
Maintained Nursery School	1	1	100%
Maintained Nursery Class	31	28	90%
Governor Led Provision (s27)	15	13	87%
Nursery Unit of Independent Schools	0	0	0%
Breakfast Club	52	47	90%
After School Club	53	48	91%
Holiday Scheme	10	5	50%
Total	219	194	89%



Provider Type	Burscough			Ormskirk			Parbold & Wrightington			Scarisbrick & Downholland		
	Number	Responses	% Responses	Number	Responses	% Responses	Number	Responses	% Responses	Number	Responses	% Responses
Childminder	3	3	100%	8	6	75%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
Day Nursery	4	4	100%	9	9	100%	3	3	100%	3	2	67%
Pre-School Playgroup	1	1	100%	0	0	0%	2	2	100%	0	0	0%
Maintained Nursery School	0	0	0%	1	1	100%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
Maintained Nursery Class	4	4	100%	1	1	100%	1	1	100%	2	2	100%
Governor Led Provision (s27)	2	2	100%	4	3	75%	3	3	100%	1	1	100%
Nursery Unit of Independent Schools	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
Breakfast Club	8	8	100%	8	7	88%	8	7	88%	3	3	100%
After School Club	8	8	100%	8	7	88%	8	7	88%	4	3	75%
Holiday Scheme	3	2	67%	0	0	0%	3	1	33%	0	0	0%
Total	33	32	97%	39	34	87%	28	24	86%	13	11	85%

Provider Type	Skelmersdale			Tarleton, Banks & Rufford			Upholland & Crawford Village		
	Number	Responses	% Responses	Number	Responses	% Responses	Number	Responses	% Responses
Childminder	6	6	100%	2	2	100%	4	4	100%
Day Nursery	7	6	86%	3	2	67%	2	2	100%
Pre-School Playgroup	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
Maintained Nursery School	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
Maintained Nursery Class	16	15	94%	4	2	50%	3	3	100%
Governor Led Provision (s27)	5	4	80%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
Nursery Unit of Independent Schools	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
Breakfast Club	16	14	88%	5	4	80%	4	4	100%
After School Club	16	15	94%	5	4	80%	4	4	100%
Holiday Scheme	3	1	33%	1	1	100%	0	0	0%
Total	69	61	88%	20	15	75%	17	17	100%



Movement in the Market

The table below shows the number of new Ofsted childcare registrations across West Lancashire alongside the number of providers who have closed.

In West Lancashire whilst there have been some closures during the past 12 months, overall, we have seen 7 providers join the childcare market and 12 leave. These numbers reflect the changes in the market and in some cases, provision may have been taken over by another provider or organisation. This shows in our data as a closed provider and a new provider, however, the provision and places available have remained in the area.

Area	Total Number Of Providers	New Provider Registrations	Closed Providers	Net Change	% Change
Burscough	15	2	0	2	15%
Ormskirk	24	0	2	-2	-8%
Parbold & Wrightington	10	2	3	-1	-9%
Scarisbrick & Downholland	7	0	0	0	0%
Skelmersdale	32	3	3	0	0%
Tarleton, Banks & Rufford	11	0	1	-1	-8%
Upholland & Crawford Village	10	0	3	-3	-23%
West Lancashire	109	7	12	-5	-4%

Summary of Movement in the Market

Over the last year in West Lancashire 12 providers have closed, this includes 8 Childminders, 2 Day Nursery, 1 Maintained Nursery Class, 1 After School Clubs. However, 7 providers have opened over the last year and this includes, 2 Childminders, 2 Governor Led Provisions (s27) and 3 After School Clubs.

Whilst we have seen these changes in the area, we do still have capacity, and some providers are willing to increase their capacity if demand requires it.

Area	Settings with Potential of Increasing Capacity if Required
Burscough	3
Ormskirk	3
Parbold & Wrightington	6
Scarisbrick & Downholland	1
Skelmersdale	27
Tarleton, Banks & Rufford	1
Upholland & Crawford Village	8
West Lancashire	49



Childcare Places

In this section we look at childcare places available in the area. The data is gathered over four weeks in Autumn term and should be seen as a snapshot of places at that time. Assessing childcare places is a complex process which depends on a large number of variables including but not limited to, the effects of changes in child population, demographics, housing developments, movement of families within an area, local geography and parental choice.

The number of childcare places should be seen as an estimate as a provider will be limited by the requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This includes having suitable floor space and staff to child ratio. Insurance policies may stipulate a maximum number of children they can care for at any one time. The tables below show information for both the maximum number of places available, and the number of places a setting is currently 'working to' at any one time. For example, whilst we have floor space for 24 children, we are staffed for 16 children, therefore in the example given a provider would be working to 16 places.

0-4 Year Olds

Area	Population requiring childcare	Maximum Number of Places	Surplus Capacity (Maximum Places)	Working to Places	Surplus Capacity (Working to)
Burscough	460	827	367	787	327
Ormskirk	842	1427	585	1417	575
Parbold & Wrightington	189	603	414	557	368
Scarisbrick & Downholland	165	400	235	388	223
Skelmersdale	1311	2281	970	2058	747
Tarleton, Banks & Rufford	416	507	91	487	71
Upholland & Crawford Village	192	305	113	295	103
West Lancashire	3575	6350	2775	5989	2414

Summary of Childcare Places 0-4 Year Olds

When removing the population requiring childcare from the maximum places and the working to places, the table above shows we have sufficient places for 0-4 year olds at district level and across all areas.

Providers still have the capacity to increase to their maximum number of places. 49 settings have said they would be willing to expand if the demand required it. Families may also choose to travel across West Lancashire and neighbouring districts to access a childcare place. We will continue to monitor the places in the district, in particular where places are lower to understand the demand for childcare in the area.



5-14 Year Olds

Area	Population requiring childcare	Maximum Number of Places	Surplus Capacity (Maximum Places)	Childcare places working to	Surplus Capacity (Working to)
Burscough	135	483	348	463	328
Ormskirk	258	296	38	296	38
Parbold & Wrightington	60	487	427	474	414
Scarisbrick & Downholland	62	116	54	116	54
Skelmersdale	440	1153	713	1050	610
Tarleton, Banks & Rufford	137	240	103	240	103
Upholland & Crawford Village	74	239	165	203	129
West Lancashire	1167	3014	1847	2842	1675

Summary of Childcare Places 5-14 Year Olds

Childcare for children of school age is complex to report on due to the different requirements for Ofsted registration. Some schools in Lancashire operate their childcare under Section 27 of the (Education Act 2002), which allows schools to operate community services, including childcare, directly under the management of the school and its Governors. This type of provision is exempt from Ofsted registration, as it is inspected as part of the school inspection. Therefore, these childcare places may not all be counted in our data.

This is also true of childcare solely for over 8 year olds as Ofsted registration for these providers is voluntary. As a result, there are likely to be more places available than we can predict, particularly in this age group.

Funding from the Wraparound Programme has created 370 new places for Before and After School provision in West Lancashire. These places have mainly been created after the data from this report has been gathered.

We will continue to monitor places in the area in case of any change in demand.



Early Education Funding

15 Hours Funded Childcare

Every 3&4 year old is eligible for 15 hours funded Early Education the term after their third birthday until they start school. If parents receive some additional forms of government support or are working and on low income, they can apply for 15 hours of Early Education Funding for their 2 year old.

Children can also be eligible for this funding if they: Are looked after by the council, have left care under a Special Guardianship Order, Child Arrangement Order or Adoption Order, if they get Disability Living Allowance, if they have a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN), a current Education Health Care Plan (EHC), they are identified as a Child In Need, have a Child Protection Plan, are children of Gypsy Roma Heritage living in Lancashire, are children of Serving Armed Forces Personnel residing in Lancashire or are children who meet the criteria for Portage.

Parents can choose to access this provision flexibly and use more than one provider to meet their childcare needs. The funding is available for 15 hours per week for 38 weeks per year. Some parents may choose more flexibility and use the funding throughout the year.

Funded Childcare for 3&4 Year Olds

The eligible population data is taken from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) which may not reflect the actual number of 3&4 year olds living in an area. The table below shows the take up of 15 hours Early Education Funding.

Area	Spring Term 2025			Summer Term 2025			AutumnTerm 2025		
	Eligible Population	No of Children	% take up	Eligible Population	No of Children	% take up	Eligible Population	No of Children	% take up
Burscough	248	249	100%	248	249	100%	248	270	109%
Ormskirk	426	479	112%	426	484	114%	426	491	115%
Parbold & Wrightington	100	102	102%	100	102	102%	100	101	101%
Scarisbrick & Downholland	128	80	63%	128	77	60%	128	78	61%
Skelmersdale	873	777	89%	873	801	92%	874	822	94%
Tarleton, Banks & Rufford	251	243	97%	251	240	96%	252	233	92%
Upholland & Crawford Village	144	98	68%	144	97	67%	144	102	71%
West Lancashire	2170	2028	93%	2170	2050	94%	2172	2097	97%

Funded Childcare for 2 Year Olds

This Early Education Funding is for families receiving, some additional forms of government support or if they are working and on low income. Where the percentage take up is over 100% families may have become eligible after the data was provided therefore are not included in the eligible population. The table below shows the take up of this funding.

Area	Spring Term 2025			Summer Term 2025			AutumnTerm 2025		
	Eligible Population	No of Children	% take up	Eligible Population	No of Children	% take up	Eligible Population	No of Children	% take up
Burscough	21	15	71%	21	15	71%	23	23	100%
Ormskirk	29	14	48%	28	12	43%	35	16	46%
Parbold & Wrightington	2	1	50%	3	1	33%	4	2	50%
Scarisbrick & Downholland	10	5	50%	10	1	10%	14	4	29%
Skelmersdale	192	155	81%	155	132	85%	131	115	88%
Tarleton, Banks & Rufford	19	11	58%	19	18	95%	10	7	70%
Upholland & Crawford Village	19	14	74%	16	12	75%	10	8	80%
West Lancashire	292	215	74%	252	191	76%	227	175	77%



30 Hours Childcare for Working Families

From September 2025 eligible working parents were able to apply for 30 hours of funded Early Education from the term after their child turns 9 months until they reach school age. Parents can choose to access this provision flexibly and use more than one provider to meet their childcare needs. The funding is available for 30 hours per week for 38 weeks per year. Some parents may choose more flexibility and use the funding throughout the year.

Working parents are eligible if they earn equal to a minimum of 16 hours at the National Minimum or Living Wage and less than £100,000 adjusted net income per year. Working parents can apply direct at www.beststartinlife.gov.uk

More information about Early Education Funding in Lancashire can be found at [Early Years Paying for Childcare](#)

From September 2024 working families of children aged 9 months - 2 years could access 15 hours of Early Education Funding. In September 2025 this offer was extended to 30 hours. The table below shows those providers offering the funding, if they are able to meet demand, and the number of families claiming the funding.

Area	Offering Early Education Funding			Able to meet demand			Number of Families Claiming Funding		
	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A	Spring Term 2025 15 hours	Summer Term 2025 15 hours	Autumn Term 2025 30 hours
Burscough	22	0	5	14	8	5	80	83	112
Ormskirk	26	0	3	14	12	3	126	148	165
Parbold & Wrightington	13	4	4	9	4	8	25	31	38
Scarisbrick & Downholland	0	1	1	0	0	2	17	14	19
Skelmersdale	51	3	0	46	5	3	123	131	141
Tarleton, Banks & Rufford	9	0	2	3	2	6	46	42	56
Upholland & Crawford Village	14	0	2	14	0	2	21	21	24
West Lancashire	135	8	17	100	31	29	438	470	555

From April 2024 until September 2025 working families of 2 year olds could access 15 hours of Early Education Funding until it was extended to 30 hours. The table below shows those providers offering the funding, if they are able to meet demand and the number of families claiming the funding.

Area	Offering Early Education Funding			Able to meet demand			Number of Families Claiming Funding		
	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A	Spring Term 2025 15 hours	Summer Term 2025 15 hours	Autumn Term 2025 30 hours
Burscough	14	6	7	5	9	13	77	76	74
Ormskirk	23	6	1	8	18	4	132	126	139
Parbold & Wrightington	9	0	9	2	7	12	30	27	37
Scarisbrick & Downholland	2	0	0	1	1	0	21	25	26
Skelmersdale	25	22	10	24	1	32	148	140	142
Tarleton, Banks & Rufford	8	3	0	6	2	3	65	56	50
Upholland & Crawford Village	8	6	2	8	0	8	19	19	15
West Lancashire	89	43	29	54	38	72	492	469	483



The table below shows working families of 3&4 year olds accessing 30 hours of Early Education Funding, if they are able to meet demand and the number of families claiming the funding.

Area	Offering Early Education Funding			Able to meet demand			Number of Families Claiming Funding		
	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A	Spring Term 2025 30 hours	Summer Term 2025 30 hours	Autumn Term 2025 30 hours
Burscough	26	1	0	16	5	0	132	143	97
Ormskirk	28	1	1	18	10	2	237	273	187
Parbold & Wrightington	21	0	0	18	3	0	45	58	31
Scarisbrick & Downholland	2	0	0	1	1	0	33	41	27
Skelmersdale	53	1	0	54	2	1	247	302	224
Tarleton, Banks & Rufford	11	0	0	5	6	0	121	128	85
Upholland & Crawford Village	14	0	2	14	0	2	41	48	32
West Lancashire	155	3	3	126	27	5	856	993	683

Summary of Early Education Funding

Accessing a funded place helps promote positive outcomes in children's health and wellbeing, learning and behaviour as well as preparing them for starting school. Increasing the take up of Early Education Funded places is key to helping ensure that all children have the best start in life and achieve their full potential.

We will continue to monitor the supply and take up of Early Education Funded places in relation to the introduction of the new working family entitlements.



Accessibility of Childcare

Some of the main factors which influence parent's decisions when considering childcare include opening hours, the cost of childcare, and the quality of provision, including provision for children with Special Educational Needs and or Disabilities (SEND). Flexibility of childcare enables parents to have a greater choice of provision and to balance work and family life. A summary of opening hours is contained in the table below. Please note if a provider selected multiple provider types in our survey and for example has selected a Day Nursery and Holiday Club and the Day Nursery is open 50 weeks of the year this will skew the opening hours for the Holiday Club. It may exaggerate the number of weeks the Holiday Club is open.

Opening Hours

Provider Type	Average Opening Days	Average Opening Weeks	Average Opening Hours	Open Weekends (%)
Childminder	4	48	10	0%
Day Nursery	5	48	10	0%
Pre-School Playgroup	5	38	7	0%
Maintained Nursery School	5	39	6	0%
Maintained Nursery Class	5	38	7	0%
Governor Led Provision (s27)	5	39	8	0%
Nursery Unit of Independent Schools	0	0	0	0%
Breakfast Club	5	38	1	0%
After School Club	5	38	2	0%
Holiday Scheme	4	12	11	0%
West Lancashire	5	40	5	0%



Help Paying for Childcare

There are many different kinds of financial support available to help families pay for childcare. The support available will depend on individual circumstances.

Support available for families

- Child Benefit
- Universal Credit
- Childcare Element of Universal Credit
- Childcare Vouchers (ends April 2026)
- Tax-Free Childcare
- Early Education Funding for 9 months - 4 year olds

Support available for parents who are studying

- Care to Learn (C2L)
- Childcare Grant
- Discretionary Learner Support Fund, Hardship Fund/Bursaries
- Parents Learning Allowance (PLA)
- Access to Learning Fund (ALF)
- NHS Student Grants and Bursaries
- Educational or Charitable Trust Funding

Families living with disabilities or special educational needs

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP) (for children aged over 16)
- Direct Payments
- Child Disability Additions element of Universal Credit

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/early-years-childcare-and-family-support/paying-for-childcare/help-paying-for-childcare/>



Childcare Fees

Cost remains a deciding factor when parents are looking for childcare, we asked our providers about their fees, the responses are summarised below.

Provider Type	Under 2's				2 year olds				3-4 year olds				5-14 year olds (18 yrs SEND)			
	Hour	Session	Day	Week	Hour	Session	Day	Week	Hour	Session	Day	Week	Hour	Session	Day	Week
Childminder	£6.67		£50.74	£217.00	£6.50		£50.37	£211.44	£6.39		£50.26	£210.44	£5.67	£18.00	£47.00	£215.00
Day Nursery	£9.00		£69.06	£335.27	£8.00		£62.58	£302.65	£7.73		£60.27	£289.56				
Pre-School Playgroup					£7.00	£24.50	£53.00	£265.00	£6.00	£19.33	£42.00	£210.67				
Maintained Nursery School									£7.00	£20.00	£39.00	£195.00				
Maintained Nursery Class					£5.44	£16.47	£36.23	£163.62	£5.08	£15.05	£33.17	£155.69				
Governor Led Provision (s27)	£8.00	£35.00	£65.00	£325.00	£5.33	£15.00	£36.33	£191.50	£5.43	£19.75	£46.00	£221.67				
Nursery Unit of Independent Schools																
Breakfast Club						£5.67				£5.11				£4.60		
After School Club						£14.00				£11.50				£9.83		
Holiday Scheme							£58.00	£228.00			£47.00	£214.00			£31.40	£126.67

Summary of the Cost of Childcare

Childcare providers have supplied us with their hourly, sessional, daily and weekly fees. Some may have different charging patterns, and this can depend on age, opening times and additional services offered. Therefore, it is more difficult to compare childcare charges across the sector. In West Lancashire a parent can expect to pay between £5.08 and £9.00 per hour.

Day Nursery is the provider type that has the most expensive hourly rate at £9.00 per hour Maintained Nursery Class is the provider type that has the lowest hourly rate at £5.08. However childcare fees in West Lancashire appear consistent without many extreme variables in hourly, sessional, daily and weekly charges. This should be seen as a guide to childcare fees in West Lancashire.



Quality of Childcare Provision

Quality of care and education is one of the most important aspects when a parent is choosing childcare for their children. Access to high quality childcare has long term benefits for children, particularly those from disadvantaged families. The tables below show an overview of Ofsted inspection outcomes for Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement and Inadequate providers. The tables also include providers who have yet to be inspected and those providers on the childcare register who receive a met or not met outcome. Childminders who are part of a Childminding Agency receive an overall judgement, in the table below this shows as effective or compliant. The majority of children in Lancashire will have access to good high-quality childcare.

Childcare on Domestic Premises - Childminders

Area	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Met	Not Met	Not Yet Inspected	Effective	Compliant
Burscough	0	11	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Ormskirk	4	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parbold & Wrightington	3	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Scarisbrick & Downholland	0	4	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
Skelmersdale	2	18	3	0	1	0	2	0	0
Tarleton, Banks & Rufford	0	4	1	1	2	0	1	0	0
Upholland & Crawford Village	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
West Lancashire	10	60	6	1	5	0	4	0	0

Childcare on Non-Domestic Premises – including, Day Nurseries, Pre-School Playgroups, Nursery Unit of Independent Schools, Maintained Nursery Classes, Maintained Nursery Schools, Governor Led Provision (S27), Breakfast Clubs, After School Clubs and Holiday Clubs

Area	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Met	Not Met	Not Yet Inspected	Excellent	Compliant
Burscough	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Ormskirk	1	3	0	0	0	0	2	2	0
Parbold & Wrightington	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scarisbrick & Downholland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Skelmersdale	0	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Tarleton, Banks & Rufford	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Upholland & Crawford Village	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
West Lancashire	2	12	0	0	2	0	3	4	0

Summary of the Quality of Provision

From the information shown we can see that 84 childcare providers in West Lancashire have been inspected and are Good and Outstanding. 7 providers are still awaiting inspection. Some providers may not have had early years children present at the time of inspection and some providers may only be registered on the Childcare Register, therefore will have received a Met or Not Met judgement. Ormskirk has the highest number of Outstanding providers. We can summarise that families accessing childcare in this area are using high-quality childcare provision.



Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

It is vital for children with SEND to be supported within high quality provision with practitioners who have an excellent understanding and are able to carry out effective observation, assessment and planning. Inclusion should be embedded as part of everyday practice, where staff are flexible and ensure individual needs are met.

The tables below show providers responses about their provision for children with SEND.

Area	Do You Offer Places for Children with SEND		Number Of Children Accessing With SEND
	Yes (%)	No (%)	
Burscough	100%	0%	63
Ormskirk	91%	9%	71
Parbold & Wrightington	100%	0%	42
Scarisbrick & Downholland	100%	0%	21
Skelmersdale	93%	7%	415
Tarleton, Banks & Rufford	100%	0%	22
Upholland & Crawford Village	100%	0%	37
West Lancashire	96%	4%	671

Area	Changes in Demand		
	Remained the same	Decreased	Increased
Burscough	79%	7%	14%
Ormskirk	40%	5%	55%
Parbold & Wrightington	89%	0%	11%
Scarisbrick & Downholland	40%	0%	60%
Skelmersdale	37%	7%	56%
Tarleton, Banks & Rufford	25%	0%	75%
Upholland & Crawford Village	80%	0%	20%
West Lancashire	53%	4%	43%

Summary of SEND provision

96% of providers in West Lancashire offer places for children with SEND. The numbers of children accessing a SEND place were highest in Skelmersdale.

53% of providers in West Lancashire who responded to our survey said that demand for SEND places remained the same. Tarleton, Banks & Rufford has seen the largest increase in demand for places for children with SEND.



Business and Finance

Changes in demand for childcare and rising staffing costs has placed financial pressure on the sector. Some providers are struggling to recruit knowledgeable, qualified practitioners. This has led, in some areas to settings reducing childcare places available or being unable to expand.

Moving forwards, we will continue to monitor the take up of childcare places to understand the impact of the extended funded entitlements and the recruitment and retention of staff.

Childcare providers were asked about the sustainability of their business and the impact of any changes over the last year. The tables that follow summarise the responses.

Area	Are You Sustainable	
	Yes (%)	No (%)
Burscough	100%	0%
Ormskirk	100%	0%
Parbold & Wrightington	75%	25%
Scarisbrick & Downholland	45%	55%
Skelmersdale	94%	6%
Tarleton, Banks & Rufford	50%	50%
Upholland & Crawford Village	95%	5%
West Lancashire	88%	12%

Area	Timescale Of Providers Being Concerned About Longer Term Viability				
	3 months	6 months	12 months	24 months	No concerns
Burscough	0%	0%	25%	25%	50%
Ormskirk	0%	3%	5%	24%	68%
Parbold & Wrightington	0%	0%	38%	13%	50%
Scarisbrick & Downholland	0%	0%	64%	36%	0%
Skelmersdale	0%	8%	23%	6%	63%
Tarleton, Banks & Rufford	28%	17%	22%	22%	11%
Upholland & Crawford Village	10%	19%	19%	0%	52%
West Lancashire	3%	6%	23%	15%	52%

Summary of Business and Finance

In West Lancashire 88% of providers say they are currently sustainable. 23% of providers in West Lancashire have concerns about their longer term viability within the next 12 months.



Key Findings and Action Plan

Area	Key Findings
West Lancashire	<p>West Lancashire has 109 Ofsted registered childcare providers. Over the last 12 months the net change in the number of providers is -5. 49 providers said they would increase their numbers if demand required it. West Lancashire district shows a surplus in places for 0-14 year olds. The average EEF2 take up for the district is 76%. The average take up for EEF 3&4 year olds is 95%. This is a decrease in take up of EEF2 and an increase in take up of EEF 3&4 year olds since our last published CSA. 93% of providers have received an Ofsted judgement that was Good or Outstanding. 96% of providers offer places for children with SEND, 43% have said demand for places has increased. In West Lancashire 88% of providers are sustainable. 23% have concerns about their longer term viability within the next 12 months.</p>
	<p>Actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will work with local providers and schools to understand the demand for childcare. 2. We will monitor providers who are concerned about the longer term viability. 3. We will continue to monitor the take up for Early Education Funding. 4. We will continue to support providers with staff recruitment by advertising vacancies on our website.

Conclusion

To summarise, West Lancashire has sufficient childcare places to meet the needs of working parents. Our latest assessment shows we have childcare places available across all age ranges and all provider types at district level. We will work with local providers to understand parental needs and capacity within existing settings. We will continue to monitor and respond to areas where demand for childcare remains low.

With the continued roll out of government initiatives including the expansion of early years funding entitlements, which has provided grant funding to create new places and the increase in before and after school places through the National Wraparound Programme and School Based Nurseries, we will continue to support the sector. We will also monitor the places created and the take-up of provision.

