

# **Childcare Sufficiency Duty Report**

**Spring 2026**

**Version 1  
(May 2026)**

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## **1. Executive Summary**

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the early years childcare landscape in Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) as of Spring 2026, assessing the sufficiency of childcare provision considering recent policy developments, demographic trends, and the expansion of Early Years Entitlement (EYE) funding.

There are approximately 5,817 children aged 0–4 living across B&NES, with significant variation between wards. Higher concentrations of young children are found in areas such as Keynsham South, Combe Down, Paulton, Westfield, and Radstock, while more rural and student-dominated areas have comparatively lower populations. Planned housing growth over the coming years is expected to increase demand in specific locations, requiring ongoing monitoring and responsive place planning.

B&NES has a diverse early year's sector, with over 200 Ofsted-registered providers, of which 164 settings deliver EYE-funded places. Provision includes childminders, private and voluntary settings, and school-based nurseries.

Most providers offer places for children aged 2–4, with a growing proportion also catering for children under two in response to the expanded entitlements.

Participation in funded early education across B&NES remains strong. Approximately 96% of 3- and 4-year-olds are accessing early education, while 76% of 2-year-olds are taking up funded provision, a rate which is above the national average. In addition, around 950 children under the age of two are now benefiting from the newly expanded entitlements, demonstrating continued growth in participation across all eligible age groups.

In total, approximately 4700 children are benefiting from some form of EYE funding. The introduction of expanded entitlements for children aged 9 months to 4 years has significantly increased demand and participation. This equates to an average sufficiency rate of approximately 81%, although this data does not take into consideration those children who are accessing childcare privately or not accessing childcare at all due to age restrictions and private arrangements.

More significantly, the data highlights variation between wards, some areas experience shortages (e.g. Kingsmead, Odd Down, Bathavon North, Radstock) and several wards have surplus capacity, including Keynsham East and Saltford.

This demonstrates that the key challenge is not only the overall number of places, but the uneven geographical distribution of provision, resulting in a mismatch between supply and demand.

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Progress has been made to expand early years provision across B&NES. A total of 242 new places have been created through the Early Years Capital Grant Programme, exceeding initial expectations. In addition, new providers and childminders have entered the sector, contributing further to local capacity. Expansion is also continuing through the School-Based Nurseries Programme, which is supporting the development of provision on school sites. Despite these positive developments, challenges remain, particularly in relation to workforce recruitment and the availability of suitable premises for new or expanding settings.

Significant progress has been achieved in expanding wraparound childcare provision. A total of 953 new places have been created, and 60% of schools now offer a full wraparound provision, representing a substantial improvement in accessibility. As a result, gaps in coverage have reduced considerably across the local authority. Additional initiatives, including the Free Breakfast Club Programme and the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, are further strengthening support for families and improving access to childcare outside of standard school hours.

While B&NES continues to demonstrate strong performance in terms of quality and participation in early years education. The expansion of entitlements has driven increased demand, resulting in increased demand for existing provision.

Moving forward, a targeted, place-based approach will be essential to address areas of highest unmet need, align provision more closely with population distribution, and ensure equitable access for all families. Ongoing monitoring, alongside strategic investment and continued collaboration with providers, will be important to maintaining a sustainable, responsive, and inclusive childcare system across B&NES.

## **2. Introduction**

Welcome to the Spring 2026 update of the Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) Council Childcare Sufficiency Duty Report. This report considers the current early years landscape across B&NES and reviews the number of children residing in the local authority area, the availability of places within Early Years providers, and the overall supply and demand for childcare across the sector. The most recent data has been used to reflect the rollout of the Early Years Entitlement (EYE) expansion for children aged nine months to four years, including information on which settings are offering places under the EYE scheme.

In addition, this report presents data and information on the conclusion of the Wraparound Care Programme for school-aged children, detailing the achievements made since the programmes launch in September 2024.

When reviewing this report, it should be noted that the data may not always reflect the current occupancy of early years places and spaces. At the point of publication, the data may be up to six months out of date. It therefore provides a snapshot in time and does not take account of additional factors that may increase demand or reduce providers' capacity to accommodate children. These factors include working patterns, parental choice, and children attending settings across different wards and/or neighbouring local authority areas. This report also excludes places and spaces used by families who are privately fee-paying.

Within this report, the term "places" refers to the number of Ofsted-registered childcare places within a setting, in line with statutory staff-to-child ratios. The term "spaces" refers to the total number of individual children accessing those registered places, rather than the number of available places within a setting.

For example, if one child attends a setting for two days per week and another child attends the same setting for three days per week, this would represent one registered place but two occupied spaces in total.

Determining early years places can be complex, as many children attend a range of sessions or divide their time across multiple providers. The picture is also fast-moving, with levels of demand fluctuating throughout the year.

### **3. Number of children aged 0 – 4 years old within B&NES**

The county of B&NES is classed as being 'urban with significant rural areas'<sup>1</sup>. Although, the district includes the major urban centre of Bath, over 90% of B&NES consists of rural towns, villages and hamlets. According to ONS data between 26% to 49% of the population reside in rural areas. At the time of writing this report, there were approximately 5817 early years children aged 0 – 4-years-old living across 33 wards within B&NES. The number of children per age group breaks down into the following:

<b>Age of child:</b>	<b>Approximate number of children within B&amp;NES:</b>
0–12-months-olds	1179
1-year-olds	1433
2-year-olds	1575
3-year-olds	1056
4-year-olds	574*

\*The number of 4-year-olds quoted above does not include those 4-year-old children who are of school age and in primary education. There is a total of 1757 4-year-old children living within B&NES.

Appendix A presents a breakdown of the number of children residing in each ward across B&NES who are eligible for a place in an Early Years setting. Analysis of this data indicates that the wards with the highest populations of children aged 0–4 are Keynsham South, Combe Down, Paulton, Westfield, and Radstock, collectively accounting for approximately 1,450 children.

In contrast, the wards with the lowest numbers of children within this age group are High Littleton, Moorlands, Oldfield Park, and Publow & Whitchurch, which together have an estimated population of around 295 children aged 0–4.

The notable disparity between these figures may be attributed to a range of factors, including the prevalence of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) associated with student populations, variations in local employment opportunities, and the characteristics of more rural areas, which typically have lower housing density and consequently smaller child populations.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/rural-urban-classification>

### **3.1 Local Housing Plan**

The figures above will be changing over the next 20 years due to the recently released “Local Housing Plan” which sets out where, how and how much housing (and other development) will be built in B&NES. The Local Plan is used to guide planning decisions and allocations of land for development. The emerging Local Plan will provide the planning framework up to around 2042–2043, and includes housing numbers, location of new homes, and affordable housing requirements.

Housing development plans will have a direct impact on the demand for Early Years providers and childcare places for children aged 0–4 living in wards identified for planned growth. Over the coming years, the pattern of need is expected to change as developments progress, with specific areas experiencing increased pressure on provision. Through this CSA report, B&NES will be able to monitor where housing development is commencing and, in turn, assess and comment on the sufficiency of early years provision within those areas.

Further information can be found here: <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/local-plan>

## **4. Providers within B&NES**

There are over 200 Ofsted-registered childcare providers listed on the LiveWell website, managed by B&NES Council. These providers offer a wide range of childcare options across different ages, from babies through to teenagers, and encompass a variety of provision types. Each setting tailors its offer to meet the individual childcare needs of families. Provision includes childminders, private, voluntary and independent (PVI) settings, as well as schools offering full-day care, sessional care, before- and after-school childcare, and holiday clubs.

During the spring 2026 headcount data collection, 164 of these settings offered the EYE funding to children from 9-months to 4-years-old; the breakdown of these settings is as follows:

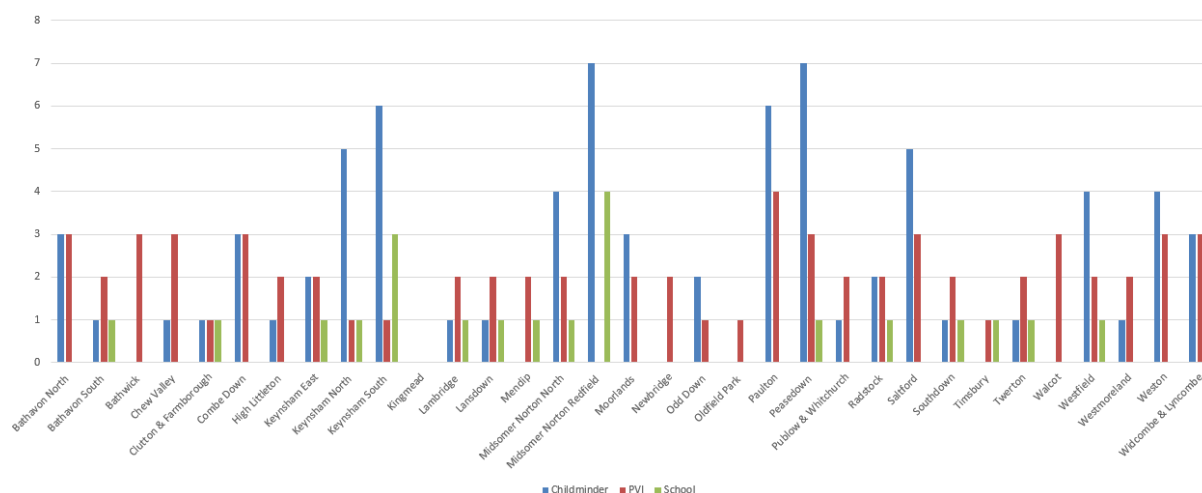
<b>Type of setting:</b>	<b>Approximate number of providers:</b>
Childminder	76
PVI Settings	67
Schools	21

These Early Years Education and Childcare providers are spread across the wards within B&NES. The wards with the highest number of childcare providers are Midsomer Norton Redfield, Peasedown, Keynsham South and Paulton. Each of

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these wards have at least ten Early Years Providers The wards with the lowest number of Early Years Providers are Kingsmead, Oldfield Park and Timsbury; these wards have two or fewer providers offering the EYE funding.

The graph below shows where the Early Years Education and Childcare providers are located across the wards within B&NES.



From the registered providers listed above, 56% offer the EYE funding all year round which equates to roughly 51 weeks of the year and 44% offer the EYE funding term-time only (38 weeks of the year).

All settings are registered with Ofsted. Of these, 59% have achieved a rating of Good, 17% Outstanding, and only 2% are rated as Requires Improvement. One provider has been inspected under the new Ofsted framework and successfully achieved Standards Met across all areas. The remaining 20% of providers are either newly registered or have not yet been issued an Ofsted rating, as they did not have any children on roll or in the setting at the time of inspection.

From reviewing the early years settings listed above alongside the Spring Headcount EYE claims, the data indicates that provision is broadly distributed across the different age groups. Within the Spring Headcount, 65% of providers offered places for children under the age of 2, 84% catered for 2-year-olds, and 82% provided places for children aged 3 and 4. This suggests that, while there is relatively strong sufficiency for funded places for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds, provision for children under 2 is more limited in comparison. This is due to a shift in the age ranges that some providers are now choosing to accommodate. This change is largely attributable to individual settings refining their offer to focus on specific age groups, often based on factors such as staffing ratios, financial viability, and the suitability of premises.

Across the 164 settings included in this report, the combined Ofsted registered capacity amounts to 4,133 places. Within individual settings, a single place may be used by more than one child where attendance is part-time. As a result the settings can offer this place to more than one child on different days or times of the week, due to this there is not a definitive way of knowing exactly how many places are on offer in total. A calculation can be made to provide an indicative figure for the number of places that are available within childcare providers. It should be noted that this estimate will fluctuate over time, and additional factors—such as staffing levels, statutory adult-to-child ratios, and variations in attendance across different days of the week—must also be considered. Using this calculation, there are approximately 5,370 childcare spaces available across the different funding streams. These spaces may be taken up by children accessing Early Years Entitlement (EYE) funding as well as by families paying privately.

The number of places offered by early years providers vary depending on the type of setting and the facilities available. Childminders typically offer between 3 and 6 places per day, depending on the ages of the children in their care, whereas some private, voluntary, and independent (PVI) settings can provide up to 160 places per day across all age groups. Naturally, both the availability of places and the number of children accessing each age group fluctuate in response to factors such as parental working patterns, demand for specific days, and part-time attendance arrangements.

Appendix B details a breakdown of where these Ofsted capacity childcare spaces are located within B&NES. The spaces detailed do not refer to spaces being available, but the total number of spaces within settings which children can utilise.

## **5. Early Years Entitlement Funding**

The Early Years Entitlement (EYE) funding has been in place since the 1990s and has been progressively expanded over subsequent decades. This expansion resulted in all 3- and 4-year-old children in England being entitled to 15 hours of funded childcare per week. In 2017, the entitlement was further extended to support working families. Eligible families were then able to access an additional 15 funded hours, providing a total of up to 30 hours of funded childcare per week.

In 2023, the government announced a further expansion of the Early Years Childcare Entitlements for working families with children aged nine months to four years, to be implemented over a two-year period. Since September 2025, eligible working parents have been able to access up to 30 funded childcare hours per week, delivered over 38 weeks of the year, for children aged 9- months to 4- years.

During the spring 2026 term, there were approximately 4710 children claiming some form of Early Years Entitlement. This is evaluated in more detail below.

## **5.1 Early Years Entitlement Funding for 3-and 4-year-olds**

B&NES have been offering children and their families the universal hours and the extended 30-hours since both schemes were launched.

During the spring headcount, B&NES had approximately 2570 3- and 4-year-old children accessing Early Years Entitlement across all its wards. This number can be broken down to identify approximately 1040 children who are accessing only their Universal Entitlement, and 1530 children who are accessing their Universal Entitlement and the Working Families Entitlements. The number of 3- and 4-year-old children has increased by 670 since the autumn headcount. This increase is likely due to additional children becoming eligible for this funding stream, as well as others beginning to access their universal entitlement funding.

It is also important to note that there are 1,630 children aged 3 and 4 residing within B&NES wards, while a total of 2,572 Early Years Entitlement (EYE) claims have been processed. This discrepancy may be explained by a proportion of children attending more than one setting, with each provider submitting a split claim accordingly.

Analysis using estimated population figures derived from birth data, alongside the latest data from the Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT), suggests that approximately 96% of 3- and 4-year-olds within B&NES are accessing provision at a registered early years setting.

## **5.2 Early Learning for 2-year-olds (ELF2)**

In February 2026, the government announced a change to the name of the funding available for some families with two-year-old children receiving government support. The funding was renamed from “Families Receiving Additional Support” to “Early Learning for Two-Year-Olds (ELF2)”. This change aims to reduce any stigma previously associated with the term “disadvantaged” and to encourage families to access the funding without perceiving as a negative connotation.

Since 2013, families who meet the ELF2 eligibility criteria have been able to access 15 hours of Early Years Entitlement funding for their 2-year-old children, starting from the term after their second birthday. This funded childcare can be accessed through a range of Ofsted-registered providers, including playgroups and pre-schools,

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nursery schools, nursery classes within primary schools, children's centres, and childminders.

Currently, B&NES supports 167 2-year-old children through the ELF2 funding entitlement. These children are accessing places across a range of provision types, including private, voluntary and independent (PVI) settings, childminders, and a proportion of school-based settings.

There remains a cohort of eligible children within B&NES who are not currently accessing their ELF2 funding entitlement. Ongoing engagement with these families takes place regularly, and targeted correspondence is issued to prospective families to raise awareness of the funding options available.

Analysis of internal data indicates a decrease in the number of children accessing the two-year-old ELF2 entitlement within B&NES. This trend is likely to reflect an increase in parental employment, resulting in more families becoming eligible for the Working Families Early Years Entitlement instead.

Some families may be eligible for both ELF2 funding and the Working Families Early Years Entitlement. B&NES is actively identifying and encouraging these families to apply for both eligibility codes and to access both funding streams where appropriate. This approach ensures that families are guaranteed a minimum of 15 hours of Early Years Entitlement funding per week throughout the year, providing reassurance should their circumstances change and they cease to meet the eligibility criteria for the Working Families entitlement.

### **5.3 Early Years Entitlement Funding for 2-year-olds**

Following the phased expansion of the Early Years Entitlement (EYE) for 2-year-old children, from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025 eligible working parents have been able to access up to 30 hours of funded childcare per week, delivered over 38 weeks of the year, from the term after their child's second birthday.

Spring headcount data indicates that approximately 1190 two-year-old children are currently accessing EYE funding through the Working Families entitlement. When this is compared to how many 2-year-olds are residing in B&NES, this indicates that 76% of children of this age range are accessing their Early Years Entitlement. This represents a slight decrease compared to the Autumn 2025 headcount. However, this figure remains significantly higher than the national average of 65.2%, indicating that participation in B&NES continues to exceed the national picture.

## **5.4 Early Years Entitlement Funding for children aged under 2-years-old**

Similarly, since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025, working families of children aged 9-months-old and above have been able to access 30 hours of Early Years Entitlement per week (over 38 weeks of the year) from the term after their child turns 9-months-old.

A review of the spring headcount data shows that approximately 950 children under the age of two are currently accessing Early Years Entitlement funding. This figure is broadly consistent with the previous autumn term. This data suggests that a strong proportion of children aged 9-months to 2-years-old continue to secure childcare places within settings that cater for this age group.

## **5.5 Early Years Pupil Premium**

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) has been available for all children aged 9-months to 4-years-old since September 2024. The EYPP hourly rate for 2026/2027 has increased by 15% from £1.00 to £1.15 an hour.

Since the expansion of the Early Years Entitlements, B&NES has continued to actively promote EYPP to all early year's providers to ensure that every child who is eligible for this additional funding is able to benefit from it. At the time of writing this report, just approximately 400 children within B&NES are accessing EYPP as part of their Early Years Entitlement offer. This is an increase on the Autumn headcount figures.

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) is typically paid to support children from low-income families and those in receipt of income-related benefits. It is also available for children who are looked after, adopted, or subject to a Special Guardianship Order under the care of the Local Authority.

EYPP is specifically designed to help narrow the attainment gap between these children and their peers, as children from eligible families often experience lower learning outcomes from pre-school through to school age and beyond.

## **6. Early Years SEND Funding in B&NES**

B&NES provide Early Years SEND funding to support children aged 9 months to five years with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) to access early education and successfully transition into school. Funding is overseen by the multi-agency Early Years SEND Inclusion Panel (SENDIP).

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Two main funding streams are available:

- **Inclusion Support Funding (ISF)** helps early years settings provide additional support, such as increasing ratios within the setting environment. Each child's needs are individual and different; therefore, a range of other support packages have been used in addition to increased ratio support. Research shows that a package of support (not just 1:1) is a better way of supporting children with SEND to develop their independence, resilience and interactions through small group work (lower ratio support) and targeted interventions. This includes a range of interventions such as purchasing additional speech and language support, occupational therapy support and additional resources.
- **Transition Support Funding (TSF)** supports children in their pre-school year and into reception, with funding for both the early years setting and the receiving school (during reception) to ensure a smooth and enhanced transition.

In addition, some children may be entitled to the Disability Access Fund (DAF) which is a UK government payment designed to help early years settings support young children with disabilities or additional needs. DAF is a one-off annual payment paid to early years providers. The funding is intended to help settings improve access and inclusion, such as buying specialist equipment, supporting staff training and enhancing provision to support the child's needs. A child qualifies if they, are aged 2, 3, or 4, receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and are accessing the early years entitlement funding.

Funding requests are usually made by early years settings using evidence from the graduated approach, though health professionals can submit requests in some cases. Parents and carers are encouraged to discuss concerns with their child's setting or health visitor in the first instance.

Due to data protection and sensitivity considerations, the level of detail that can be shared for identifiable data is limited. The following headline information provides an overview of Early Years Entitlement data for children who receive funding and have SEND. Please note that this information reflects the current position within B&NES as of May 2026 and is likely to evolve over the coming weeks as decisions are finalised and children commence school in September 2026.

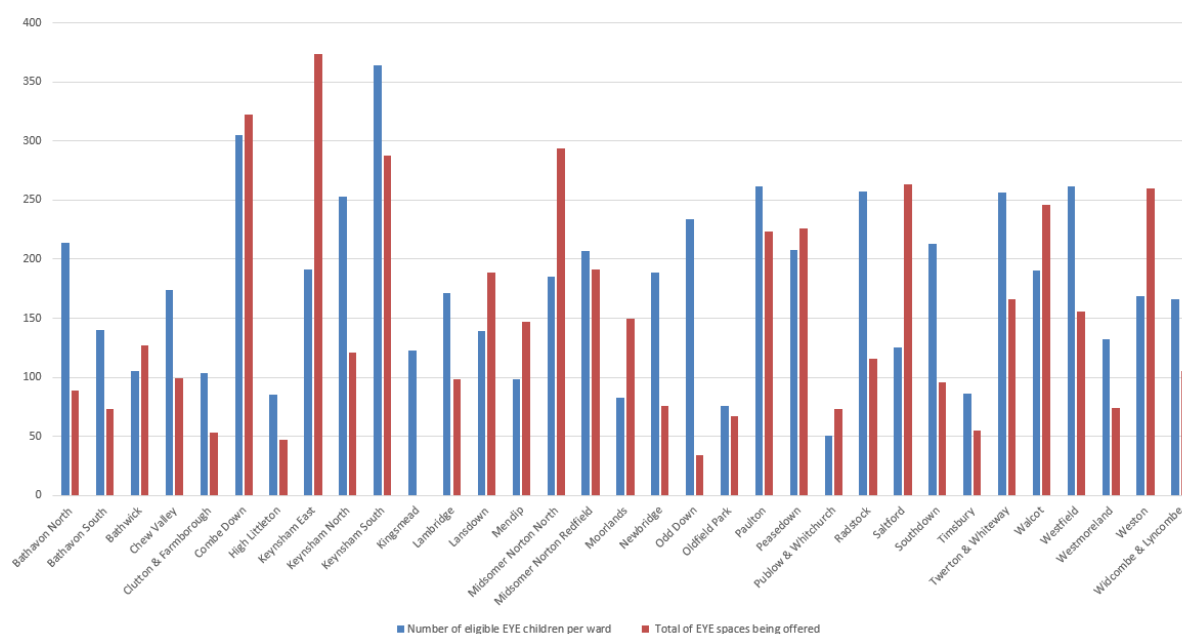
- The number of children receiving Inclusion Support Funding (ISF) is 235.
- The number of children in receipt of Disability Access Fund (DAF) funding is 78.
- The number of children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is 44.
- The number of children attending specialist provision is 33.

B&NES Early Years SEND funding plays a vital role in ensuring that young children with additional needs are supported to access early education and achieve positive

outcomes. Through targeted funding streams such as ISF, TSF, and DAF, alongside robust multi-agency oversight, the approach enables settings, families, and professionals to work collaboratively to meet children's needs and support successful transitions into school.

## 7. Sufficiency of Places Available

The total number of EYE spaces being claimed for from the spring headcount data across wards has been compared with the number of eligible EYE children residing in each ward who would be looking to utilise a childcare space. This comparison is illustrated in the graph below.



An assessment of childcare sufficiency has been undertaken by comparing the number of Early Years Entitlement (EYE) places being claimed with the number of eligible children residing in each ward. Expressing this as a percentage provides a clear indication of whether local supply meets, exceeds, or falls short of potential demand.

From the current data used from the Spring Headcount Data and the most recent GP data, there are 4,714 EYE places currently being utilised for the 5,817 eligible children, equating to an average sufficiency rate of approximately 81%. This indicates a potential shortfall when compared directly with the number of children and number of spaces being claimed. It must be noted that this analysis does not consider children who are accessing early years childcare through privately funded arrangements, those not eligible for funded entitlements, children cared for informally

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by family and friends, or families who choose to keep children at home until they are ready to enter a childcare setting or begin school.

Furthermore, the data does not reflect a range of additional factors that influence demand and accessibility, including parental working patterns, variations in attendance preferences (with higher demand typically observed on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and lower demand on Mondays and Fridays), parental choice of provider, and the movement of families commuting into or out of the local authority area.

As a result, despite the availability of recorded places, families may have trouble in securing childcare that aligns with their individual needs, including preferred locations, providers, and attendance patterns. This may limit their ability to take up a place within their chosen setting or within practical travel parameters and travel out of borders.

The percentage sufficiency data reveals significant variation between wards, highlighting localised pressures and imbalances. Several wards are experiencing shortages (below 50% sufficiency), where provision meets less than half of potential demand. These include:

- Kingsmead (0%)
- Odd Down (~15%)
- Bathavon North (~42%)
- Radstock (~45%)

In these areas, access to local childcare is likely to be particularly constrained, and families may face limited choice or the need to travel outside their immediate area.

A larger number of wards fall within the moderate shortage range (50%–80%), including Keynsham North, Southdown, Newbridge, and Twerton & Whiteway.

Some wards demonstrate broadly balanced provision (80%–110%), where supply is more closely aligned with local demand. These include areas such as Oldfield Park, Paulton, Peasedown, and Combe Down.

Conversely, several wards show surplus capacity (above 130%), including:

- Keynsham East (~196%)
- Saltford (~210%)
- Midsomer Norton North (~159%)
- Weston (~154%)

These surpluses may reflect overprovision in certain areas or indicate that settings are serving families from neighbouring wards.

The findings highlight that the primary challenge is not solely the overall number of places, but their distribution relative to where children live. The presence of both substantial deficits and surpluses indicates a spatial mismatch between supply and demand. This may have several implications for some families. Families in lower-sufficiency wards may experience reduced access and increased travel requirements. The surplus capacity in other areas may not be fully utilised due to geographical, transport, or preference barriers and the current pattern of provision may contribute to inequalities in access to early education and childcare.

## **8. Future Prospective Places and New Settings**

At the start of 2025, a provider in Farrington Gurney had their planning permission approved to create a brand-new early year setting. The development of this nursery has now been completed and is currently open and welcoming its first cohort of children.

Over the past 6 months, since the previous reporting period, several new childminders have joined the profession and registered to deliver Early Years Entitlement (EYE) funding. Six of these childminders have been able to offer EYE-funded places since September 2025, while others are still awaiting Ofsted registration or the placement of families. The childminders are located across the county, including Bath, Radstock, Keynsham and Saltford. These areas have a high population of young children, and the additional places and capacity are providing meaningful benefits to local families.

B&NES continues to engage with existing providers who are seeking to expand their businesses through the opening of additional settings. However, many face significant challenges, including securing suitable premises and fully staffing new provision due to ongoing recruitment difficulties. The Early Years Team have supported the recruitment within early years settings by developing a recruitment website dedicated to early years jobs within B&NES:

<https://www.shapeyourfuturebathnes.org.uk/>. It is hoped that this dedicated recruitment website for B&NES will ease some of the recruitment difficulties for both providers and prospective applicants.

The Early Years Funding Capital Grant project has been in progress for the past 18 months, during which, capital funding was allocated to a range of provider-led projects across the county in areas such as Paulton, Keynsham, Twerton and Bathavon. Investment was made to 14 providers, including both PVI settings and

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childminders. Projects have varied in scope, ranging from the purchase of additional storage and internal reconfiguration of space to physical extensions that increase overall floor area. While differing in scale, all projects shared a common objective: to support the sufficiency of early years places for children accessing provision through the expanded Early Years Entitlements for eligible working parents.

There are 3 projects yet to be completed. It is anticipated that these will be finalised by the end of the summer and will be ready to welcome children accessing the Early Years Entitlement from the beginning of September 2026.

The remaining 11 projects have been successfully completed and are now offering the newly created places to children accessing the Early Years Entitlement. Notably, the actual total number of places created exceeded the original projections submitted at the application stage. The table below provides a comparison of these figures:

	<b>Predicted number of places</b>	<b>Actual number of places created at time of writing report**</b>
Under 2s	59	91
2-year-olds	137	101
3- to 4-year-olds*	24	50
<b>Total:</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>242</b>

\* Unfunded spaces - created consequently because of making additional spaces within the setting.

\*\*This number will be finalised when the remaining projects have been completed.

All new places created are accessible to all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.

**9. School-Based Nurseries**

The School-Based Nurseries Programme is a Department for Education (DfE) initiative in England that funds the creation and expansion of nursery provision on primary school sites, with the aim of increasing access to affordable, high-quality early education, particularly in disadvantaged areas.

The School-Based Nurseries Programme provides capital funding to create or expand nursery spaces on school premises. It supports the government’s wider childcare expansion and issued 30 hours of funded childcare offer.

The programme is being delivered in 3 phases:

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**Phase 1 (2024–2025)** focused on the initial rollout of the programme and funded around 300 schools. This phase created up to 6,000 new nursery places across England and primarily concentrated on making use of surplus space within existing school buildings. Within B&NES, St. Johns CofE Primary in Keynsham school was successfully granted funding and has been successfully offering EYE provision since September 2025.

**Phase 2 (2025–2026)** built on this foundation with a further £45 million of investment. Schools were able to apply for up to £150,000 each in capital funding, and eligibility was extended to include maintained nursery schools. This phase placed a stronger emphasis on supporting disadvantaged communities and is expected to deliver at least a further 300 school-based nurseries, opening during the 2026–27 academic year. Schools have now been notified if this application was successful. A school within B&NES was successful within round 2 and development of this project will start imminently.

**Phase 3 (2027–2030)** represents a shift to a local authority-led model. Under this phase, councils are responsible for submitting strategic, multi-year plans to expand provision in areas of greatest need. These plans can include provision in primary schools, maintained nursery schools and Best Start Family Hubs, with a strong focus on effective place planning, inclusion for children with SEND, and achieving value for money. B&NES are currently in the planning phase of this process.

The funding is capital only and can be used for a range of building-related purposes. This includes converting or refurbishing existing classrooms, building or extending nursery spaces, and installing essential facilities such as toilets, kitchens and nappy-change areas. Funding may also be used to improve accessibility and inclusion through SEND adaptations, as well as to cover essential building works such as heating, electrical systems and fire safety improvements. The funding cannot be used for staffing costs or any other ongoing revenue expenses.

## **10. School-aged Childcare**

Announced in late 2025, the government's School-Age Childcare agenda aims to expand access to wraparound childcare, supporting working parents while promoting a coordinated local authority approach to before- and after-school provision and holiday activities.

Wraparound childcare refers to provision outside the standard school day, including before- and after-school and, in some cases, holiday provision. Services may be delivered by schools or private, voluntary, and independent (PVI) providers, including childminders and early years settings, either on school sites or within the local

community. Provision should be integrated so that parents are not required to transport children between locations.

## **10.1 National Wraparound Childcare Programme**

The National Wraparound Childcare Programme, announced in the 2023 Spring Budget, set out a commitment that by 2026 all working parents of primary-aged children would have access to high-quality term-time childcare from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. During the course of the programme this expectation was updated to reflect

To support delivery, £289 million of start-up funding was allocated nationally over two academic years. B&NES Council has received £975,000 to create 670 additional wraparound childcare places by March 2026.

The programme aimed to ensure sufficient capacity across Reception to Year 6 to meet demand, reducing the risk of parents being unable to secure places. Across B&NES, 62 schools were eligible for funding.

As of July 2024, 13 PVI providers (excluding childminders) delivered wraparound provision locally. Schools themselves accounted for 72% of before-school provision and 62% of after-school provision. Prior to the programme, provision was inconsistent:

- 5% of schools had no wraparound childcare provision at all;
- 10% of schools failed to offer both before- and after-school childcare to working parents;
- 45% of schools offered what the Department of Education deemed to be a full wraparound childcare programme (8am-6pm or 7.30am-5.30pm);
- The remaining schools provided a partial provision with gaps such as no after-school club on Fridays, or childcare that started after 8am and/or finished before 5.30pm.

These figures reflected availability of provision rather than capacity, with many settings operating at full capacity and reporting waiting lists.

Programme funding has since supported both new provision and expansion of oversubscribed services.

### **Programme outcomes (as of May 2026)**

- 51 applications from schools and PVIs were approved.
- £872,000 allocated to support 953 additional places.
- 60% of schools now offer a full wraparound provision.

## **Improving People's Lives**

- Many schools have increased their partial provision to closer to the Department for Education's target hours.
- Waiting lists have been virtually eliminated.
- 3% of schools have no provision at all now.
- Low demand has caused the closure of 4 settings during the latter stages of the programme, with a further 3 preparing to close in Summer 2026 for the same reasons.
- Demand has been identified as low in Twerton, Paulton and Southdown.
- 6 schools have reapplied for funding to expand provision due to strong uptake.

A small amount of funding remains. Work will continue to ensure all available Department for Education funding is utilised, prioritising schools with waiting lists or those nearing capacity, to ensure reliable access for working parents.

### **10.2 National Free Breakfast Club Programme**

Commencing in April 2025, the government initiated its commitment to provide a free breakfast club in every state-funded school with primary-aged pupils across England. The programme is designed to remove barriers to educational engagement by ensuring children arrive at school on time, well-nourished, and ready to learn.

To support its development, 750 Early Adopter schools were selected to pilot the initiative and provide valuable insights to inform the national rollout. Peasedown St. John Primary School and St Michael's Junior School were among those chosen to participate in the trial and have successfully delivered a universal free breakfast club offering to all pupils.

Following the initial phase, the next stage of the national programme commenced after Easter 2026, with a further three schools in B&NES joining the initiative: North Star 180, St Martin's Garden Primary School, and Twerton Infant School.

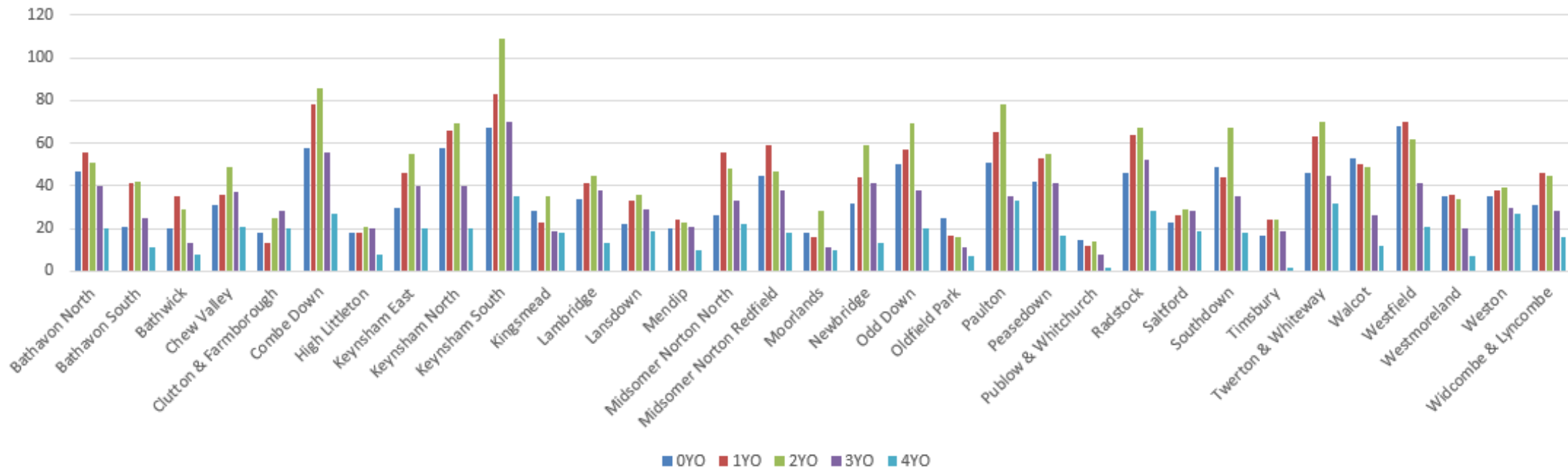
An additional primary school has been invited to join the September 2026 cohort; however, at the time of writing, confirmation of its participation is still pending.

### **10.3 Holiday Activities & Food Programme (HAF)**

B&NES Council is mobilising the in-source of the HAF programme from a previously outsourced model. Under the *Best Start in Life* framework, the National Wraparound Childcare Programme, National Free Breakfast Club Programme, and Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme have been aligned strategically to improve intelligence-sharing and collaboration between providers across the local authority.

The Summer 2026 HAF programme represents the first internal delivery of the programme by B&NES Council.

**Appendix A: Number of children per B&NES ward**



**Appendix B: Number of Ofsted capacity childcare spaces within B&NES**

