



Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

May 2023

Cambridgeshire County Council



Contents

Introduction	3
What is the national policy?	3
What are the Council’s responsibilities?.....	4
An overview of childcare in Cambridgeshire	5
Demand.....	5
Forecast demand	5
Supply.....	5
District Summaries	6
1. Cambridge City.....	6
Demand for childcare.....	6
Supply of childcare.....	6
Accessibility of funded education places	6
Sufficiency indicators from 2022 childcare survey	7
Provision due to open	7
2. East Cambridgeshire	8
Demand for childcare.....	8
Supply of childcare.....	8
Accessibility of funded education places	8
Sufficiency indicators from 2022 childcare survey	8
Provision due to open	9
3. Fenland.....	9
Demand for childcare.....	9
Supply of childcare.....	10
Accessibility of funded education places	10
Sufficiency indicators from 2022 childcare survey	10
Provision due to open	11
4. Huntingdonshire	11
Demand for childcare.....	11
Supply of childcare.....	11
Accessibility of funded education places	12
Sufficiency indicators from 2022 childcare survey	12
Provision due to open	13
5. South Cambridgeshire.....	13
Demand for childcare.....	13
Supply of childcare.....	13

Accessibility of funded education places	13
Sufficiency indicators from 2022 childcare survey	13
Provision due to open	14
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).....	15
Deprivation	15
Funded places	16
Affordability	17
Quality of provision.....	18
Other issues	19
Additional costs.....	19
Recruitment and retention crisis	20
Action plan	21
Appendices.....	22
Appendix 1: Methodology and response rate of provider survey	22

Introduction

This report aims to provide an assessment of how Cambridgeshire County Council is meeting its duty to secure sufficient childcare across Cambridgeshire. The report provides information on the current and projected supply and demand of childcare for early years children, school aged children and children with special educational needs and disabilities. It also outlines the affordability and quality of provision across the county. It concludes with an action plan for the next year.

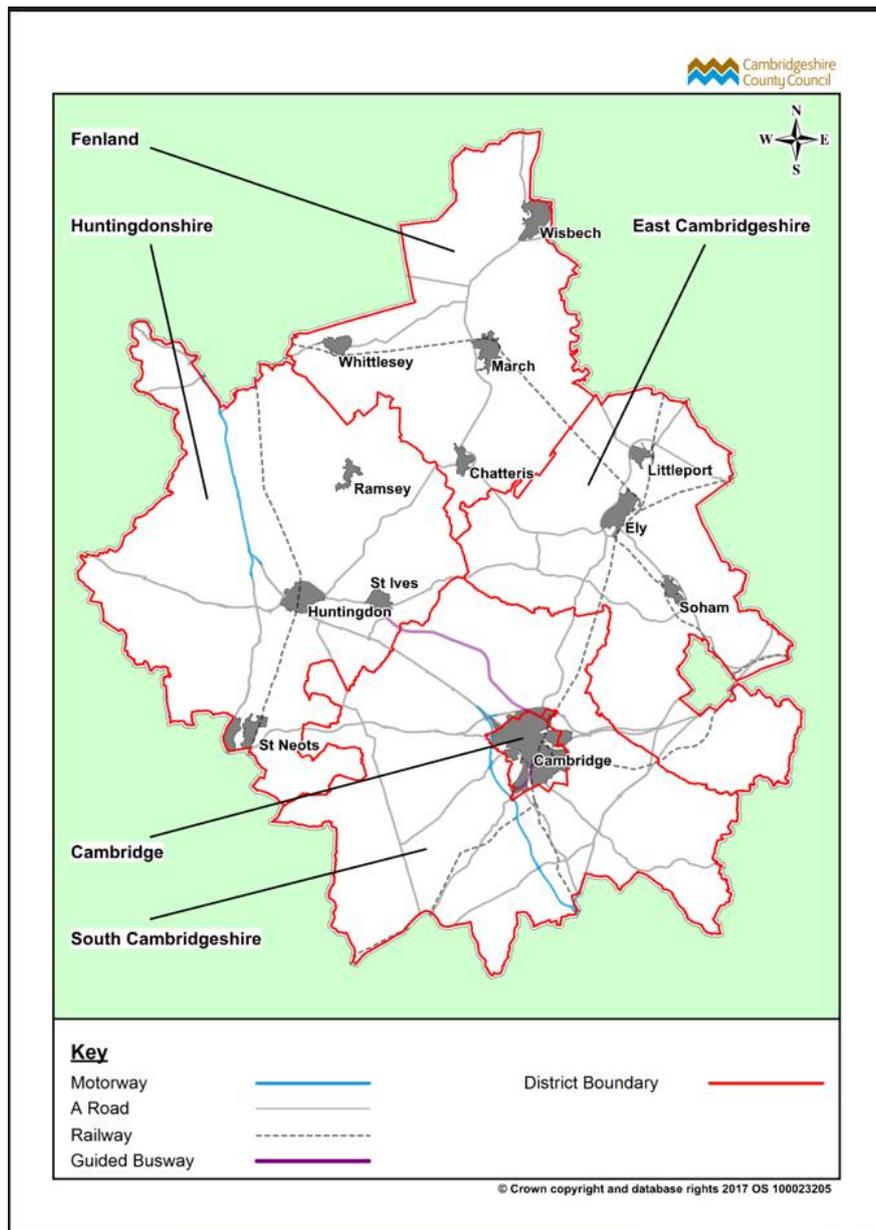


Figure 1: Cambridgeshire's main population centres

What is the national policy?

1. Childcare Act (2006)

The Childcare Act (2006) places a duty on local authorities to secure sufficient and suitable quality education and childcare places to enable parents to return to work or to undertake education or training which could lead to employment. The Education Act (2011) altered this to include an entitlement of 570 hours of free early education per year for eligible two year olds, starting the funding period following their second birthday. This was in addition to the 570 hours of free early education already in place for all three- and four-year-olds, starting the funding period following their third birthday (often known as the universal entitlement). This is usually taken as 15 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year, but it is flexible. Some parents may choose to take fewer hours over more weeks, for example.

Local authorities are not expected to operate childcare provisions themselves, but they are expected to work with local private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector providers to meet local need. Where this cannot be achieved, the local authority may be required to manage provision directly, as provider of last resort.

2. Childcare Act (2016)

The Childcare Act (2016) extended the previous entitlement and since September 2017, children aged 3 and 4 from working families have been entitled to an additional 570 hours (equivalent to 15 hours per week, 38 weeks per year) of funded childcare, subject to their parents meeting the following eligibility criteria:

- Both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family)
- Each parent earns, on average, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage and less than £100,000 per year

The overall entitlement for families meeting these criteria is now 30 hours of free childcare per week for 38 weeks per year.

3. Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to 5 years old. All schools and Ofsted-registered early years' providers must follow the EYFS, including childminders, preschools, nurseries and school reception classes. A revised framework for the EYFS was implemented in September 2021¹.

What are the Council's responsibilities?

- To ensure sufficient and suitable quality early education and childcare places to enable parents to work, or to undertake education or training which could lead to employment
- To secure sufficient and suitable early years and childcare places to meet predicted demand
- To secure free early years provision for all 3- and 4-year-olds, and the most vulnerable 2 year olds, of 570 hours per year
- To provide information, advice and assistance to parents and prospective parents on the provision of childcare in their area (including before and after school care) and other services which may be of benefit to parents, prospective parents or children and young people in their area

¹ [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97222/early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs-statutory-framework-2021.pdf)

- To provide information, advice and training to childcare providers to improve early years outcomes

The County Council, in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance, requires that funded two-, three- and four-year-olds can access their early education entitlement with registered early years/childcare providers (including early years registered childminders) that are newly registered and/or achieve an Ofsted grading of good or outstanding². Quality of provision is a criterion for consideration where schools directly manage provision, either through lowering their age range or community powers (section 27³), or, in the case of academies, the trust’s charitable objectives. The Council would not support a school to set up or take over early years provision if the school has received a ‘Requires Improvement’ or ‘Inadequate’ Ofsted rating, or where leadership capacity is limited.

An overview of childcare in Cambridgeshire

Demand

Population of early years children: in 2022 there were 28,070 0-3 year olds living in Cambridgeshire. These children may require early years childcare.

Population of school age children: in 2022 there were 56,100 primary aged children and 39,460 secondary aged children year olds living in Cambridgeshire. These children may require childcare before and after school, and/or during the school holidays.⁴

Forecast demand

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough population forecasts consider predicted house building and birth rates. These forecasts predict that:

- the number of 0–3-year-olds will climb steadily over the next five years to 31,370 in 2028.
- the number of 4–10-year-olds will remain reasonably constant over the next 5 years and will be 56,970 in 2028.
- the number of 11–15-year-olds will climb steadily over the next five years to 42,970 in 2028.

Supply

There are currently 1,145 providers in Cambridgeshire. They are broken down into type below.

Provision Type	Number of settings
Breakfast clubs	115
Childminders	456
Day nurseries	117
Holiday schemes	106
Maintained Nursery Schools	7
Out of school clubs	194
Pre-schools / Playgroups	160

² Relates to Section A3 of the Early Education and Childcare guidance (2018), see section 2.8 below.

³ Education Action 2002

⁴ Cambridgeshire 2020-based population forecasts: 2022 forecast data

Provision Type	Number of settings
Maintained Nursery Classes	39

Availability of places

% of providers with spaces for:	Cambridge City	East Cambs	Fenland	Hunts	South Cambs
2-year-olds	36%	59%	54%	42%	44%
3-year-olds	44%	66%	71%	55%	61%
4-year-olds	46%	62%	71%	54%	60%
Providers <i>generally able to meet parental requirements (%)</i>	72%	90%	82%	75%	76%

District Summaries

1. Cambridge City

Demand for childcare

2022 population:
 Early years children: 5,210
 Primary school aged children: 9,510
 Secondary school aged children: 6,700

2028 population forecast:
 Early years children: 5,470
 Primary school aged children: 9,480
 Secondary school aged children: 7,150

Supply of childcare

Families in Cambridge City have access to:

- 18 breakfast clubs
- 76 childminders
- 29 day nurseries
- 20 holiday schemes
- 5 maintained nursery schools
- 46 out of school clubs
- 14 pre-schools / playgroups
- 10 maintained nursery classes

105 providers currently deliver 15 hours funded childcare for two year olds

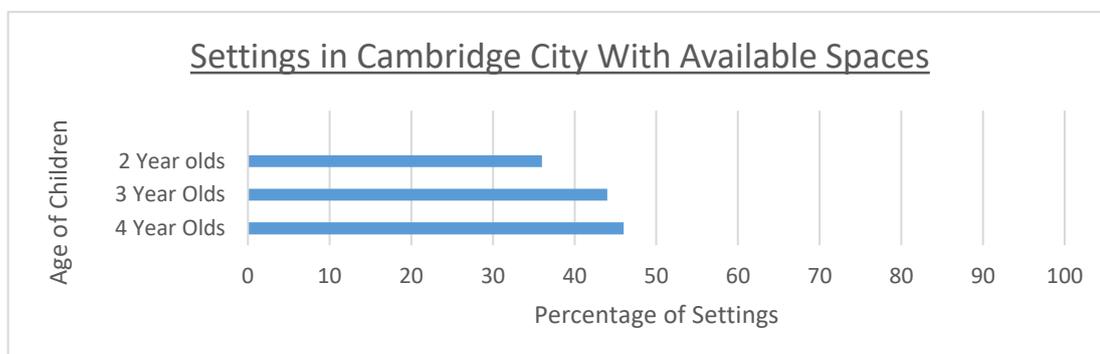
132 providers currently deliver 15 or 30 hours funded childcare for three and four year olds

Accessibility of funded education places

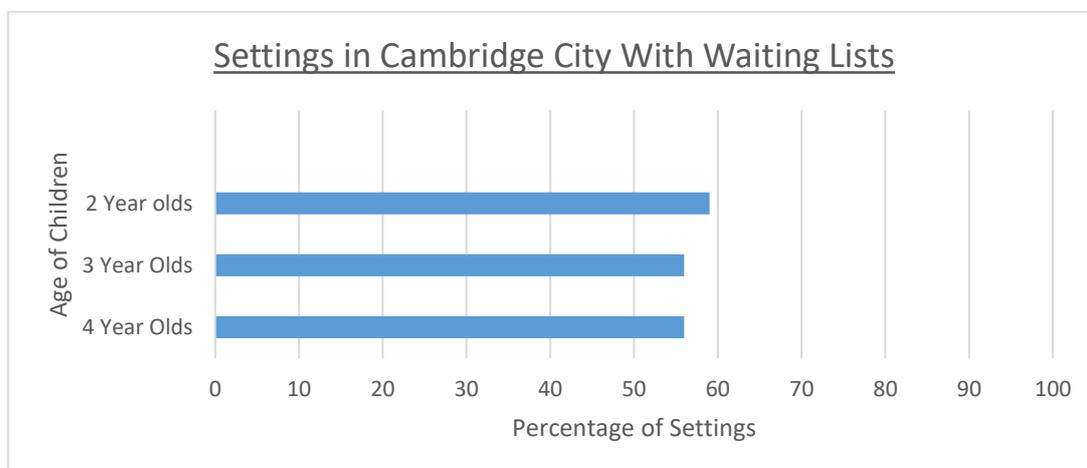
- 132 two-year-olds access up to 15 hours
- 1,161 three- and four-year-olds access up to 15 hours
- 560 three- and four-year-olds access between 15 and 30 hours

Sufficiency indicators from 2022 childcare survey

The chart below shows that 36 per cent of settings had available spaces for 2-year-olds, 44 per cent of settings had available spaces for 3 year olds and 46 per cent of settings had available spaces for 4 year olds.



The chart below shows that 59 per cent of settings operated a waiting list for 2 year-olds, 56 per cent of settings operated a waiting list for 3 year-olds and 56 per cent of settings operated a waiting list for 4 year-olds



- 72 per cent of settings said they were able 'usually', 'almost always' or 'always' to meet parent requests for places
- 66 per cent of settings were open for over 6.5 hours a day
- 66 per cent of settings were providing childcare for a child with SEND

Provision due to open

- Little Explorers Montessori Nursery is planning to open soon on Mill Road
- Invitations to tender are expected to run for a setting located at Trumpington Park Primary School (52 places).

2. East Cambridgeshire

Demand for childcare

2022 population:
Early years children: 3,760
Primary school aged children: 7,700
Secondary school aged children: 5,760

2028 population forecast:
Early years children: 4,470
Primary school aged children: 8,140
Secondary school aged children: 5,940

Supply of childcare

Families in East Cambridgeshire have access to:

- 19 breakfast clubs
- 72 childminders
- 16 day nurseries
- 12 holiday schemes
- 0 maintained nursery schools
- 29 out of school clubs
- 27 pre-schools / playgroups
- 8 maintained nursery classes

106 providers currently deliver 15 hours of funded childcare for two year olds

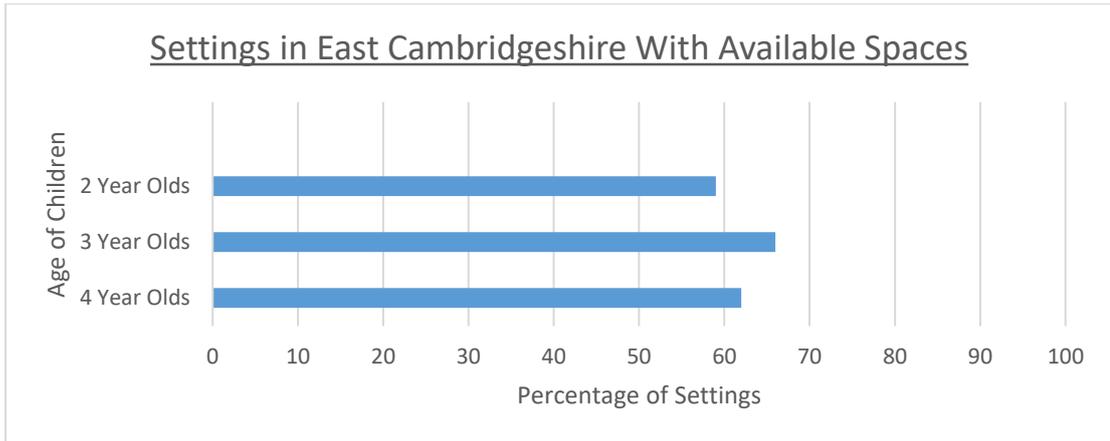
120 providers currently deliver 15 or 30 hours of funded childcare for three and four year olds

Accessibility of funded education places

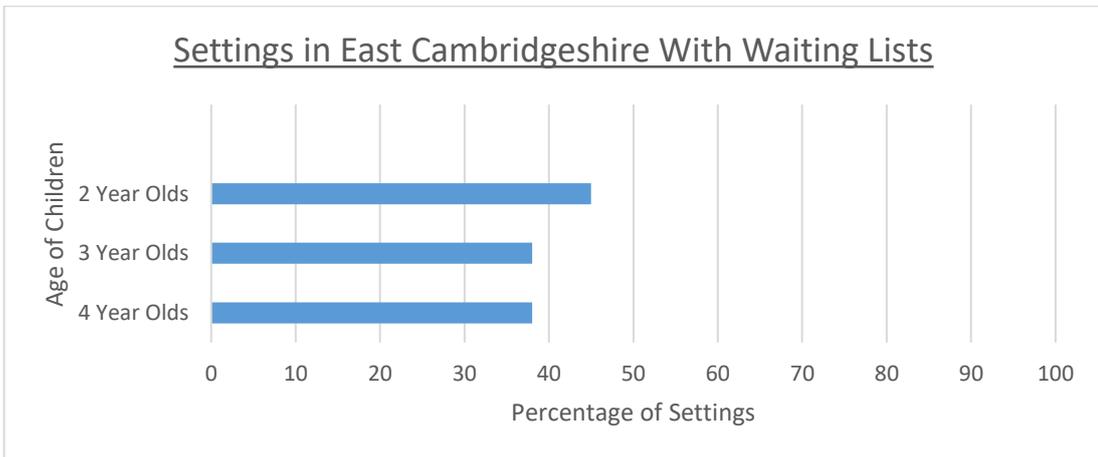
- 71 two-year-olds access up to 15 hours
- 802 three- and four-year-olds access up to 15 hours
- 664 three- and four-year-olds access between 15 and 30 hours

Sufficiency indicators from 2022 childcare survey

The chart below shows that 59 per cent of settings had available spaces for 2-year-olds, 66 per cent of settings had available spaces for 3-year-olds and 62 per cent of settings had available spaces for 4-year-olds.



The chart below shows 45 per cent of settings operated a waiting list for 2-year-olds, 38 per cent of settings operated a waiting list for 3 year-olds and 38 per cent of settings operated a waiting list for 4 year-olds.



- 90 per cent of settings said they were able ‘usually’, ‘almost always’ or ‘always’ meet parent request for places
- 66 per cent of settings were open for over 6.5 hours a day
- 79 per cent of settings were providing childcare for a child with SEND

Provision due to open

- None

3. Fenland

Demand for childcare

2022 population:

Early years children: 4,180
 Primary school aged children: 8,440
 Secondary school aged children: 5,570

2028 population forecast:

Early years children: 4,530
 Primary school aged children: 8,390
 Secondary school aged children: 6,530

Supply of childcare

Families in Fenland have access to:

- 10 breakfast clubs
- 68 childminders
- 15 day nurseries
- 12 holiday schemes
- 0 maintained nursery schools
- 10 out of school clubs
- 22 pre-schools / playgroups
- 8 maintained nursery classes

93 providers currently deliver 15 hours funded childcare for two year olds

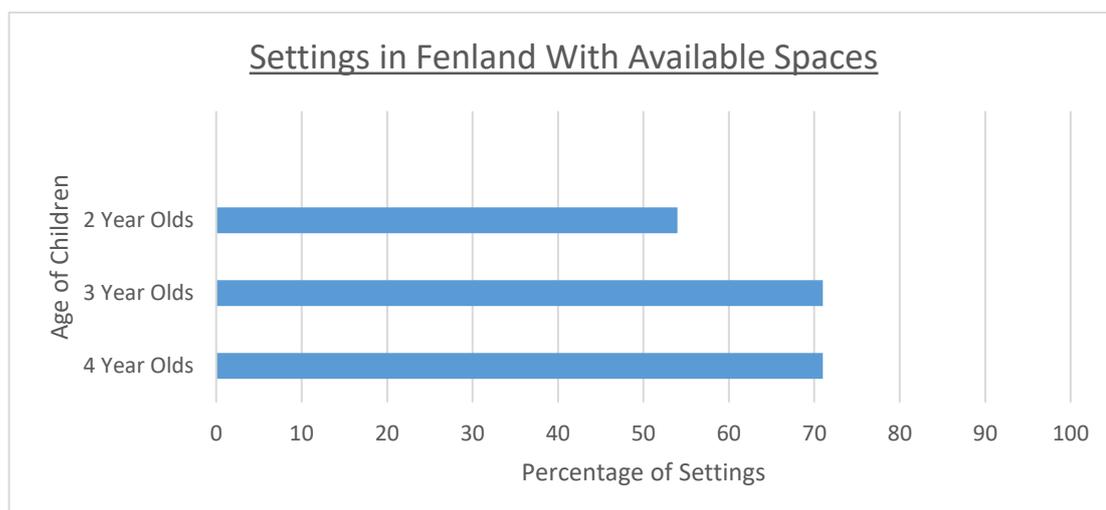
99 providers currently deliver 15 or 30 hours funded childcare for three and four year olds

Accessibility of funded education places

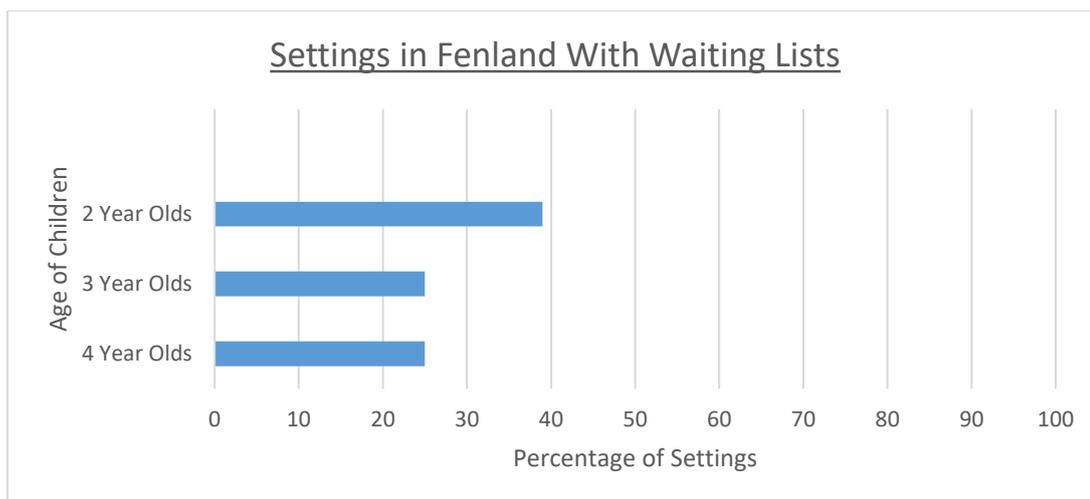
- 212 two-year-olds access up to 15 hours
- 1001 three- and four-year-olds access up to 15 hours
- 610 three- and four-year-olds access between 15 and 30 hours

Sufficiency indicators from 2022 childcare survey

The chart below shows 54 per cent of settings had available spaces for 2-year-olds, 71 per cent of settings had available spaces for 3-year-olds, 71 per cent of settings had available spaces for 4-year-olds.



The chart below shows that 39 per cent of settings operated a waiting list for 2-year-olds, 25 per cent of settings operated a waiting list for 3 year-olds and 25 per cent of settings operated a waiting list for 4-year-olds



- 82 per cent of settings said they were able ‘usually’, ‘almost always’ or ‘always’ meet parent request for places
- 57 per cent of settings were open for over 6.5 hours a day
- 71 per cent of settings provided childcare for a child with SEND

Provision due to open

- None

4. Huntingdonshire

Demand for childcare

2022 population:
 Early years children: 7,830
 Primary school aged children: 15,350
 Secondary school aged children: 10,650

2028 population forecast:
 Early years children: 8,650
 Primary school aged children: 15,510
 Secondary school aged children: 11,480

Supply of childcare

Families in Huntingdonshire have access to:

- 36 breakfast clubs
- 111 childminders
- 37 day nurseries
- 32 holiday schemes
- 1 maintained nursery school
- 51 out of school clubs
- 44 pre-schools / playgroups
- 7 maintained nursery classes

193 providers currently deliver 15 hours funded childcare for two year olds

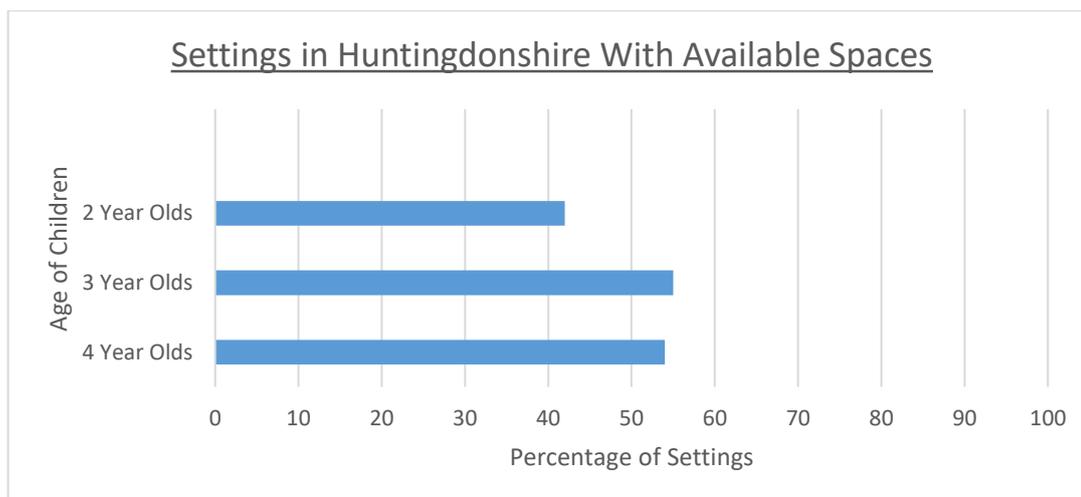
204 providers currently deliver 15 or 30 hours funded childcare for three and four year olds

Accessibility of funded education places

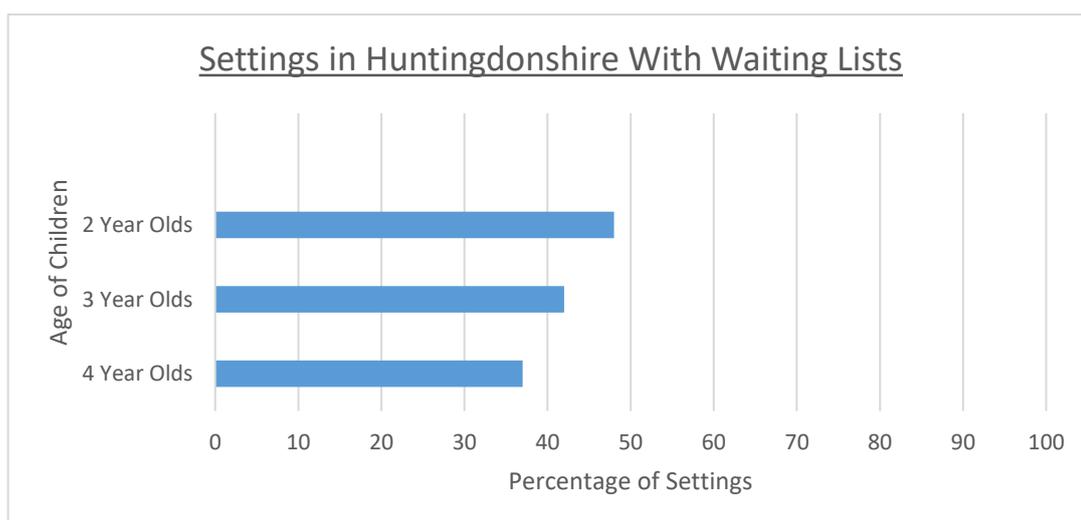
- 211 two-year-olds access up to 15 hours
- 1510 three- and four-year-olds access up to 15 hours
- 2384 three- and four-year-olds access between 15 and 30 hours

Sufficiency indicators from 2022 childcare survey

The chart below shows that 42 per cent of settings had available spaces for 2-year-olds, 55 per cent of settings had available spaces for 3-year-olds and 54 per cent of settings had available spaces for 4-year-olds.



The chart below shows that 48 per cent of settings operated a waiting list for 2-year-olds, 42 per cent of settings operated a waiting list for 3-year-olds and 37 per cent of settings operated a waiting list for 4-year-olds.



- 75 per cent of settings said they were able 'usually', 'almost always' or 'always' to meet parent requests for places
- 65 per cent of settings were open for over 6.5 hours a day
- 63 per cent of settings provided childcare for a child with SEND

Provision due to open

- Day nursery at Alconbury Weald

5. South Cambridgeshire

Demand for childcare

2022 population:	2028 population forecast:
Early years children: 7,080	Early years children: 8,590
Primary school aged children: 15,070	Primary school aged children: 15,500
Secondary school aged children: 10,810	Secondary school aged children: 11,880

Supply of childcare

Families in South Cambridgeshire have access to:

- 32 breakfast clubs
- 129 childminders
- 30 day nurseries
- 30 holiday schemes
- 1 maintained nursery school
- 58 out of school clubs
- 53 pre-schools / playgroups
- 6 maintained nursery classes

147 providers currently deliver 15 hours funded childcare for two-year-olds

154 providers currently deliver 15 or 30 hours funded childcare for three and four year olds

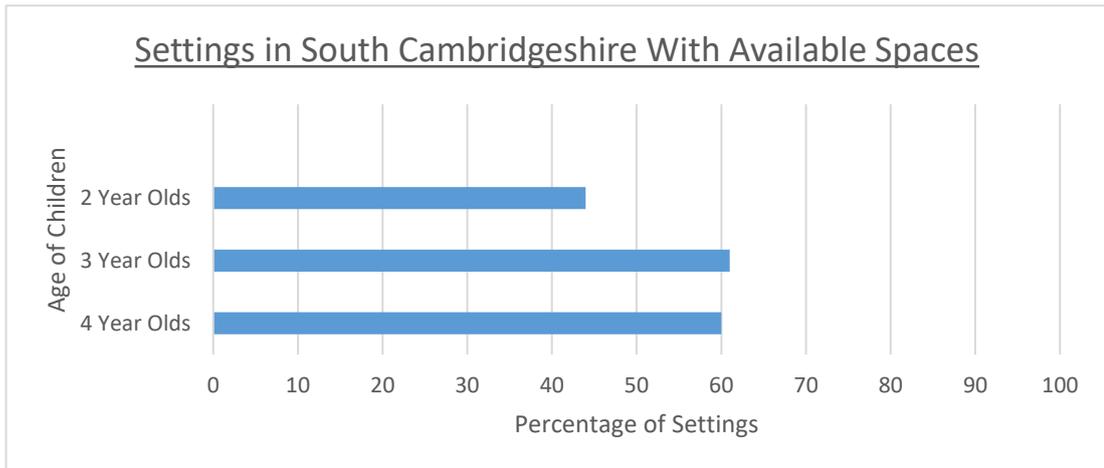
Accessibility of funded education places

Funded children in South Cambridgeshire:

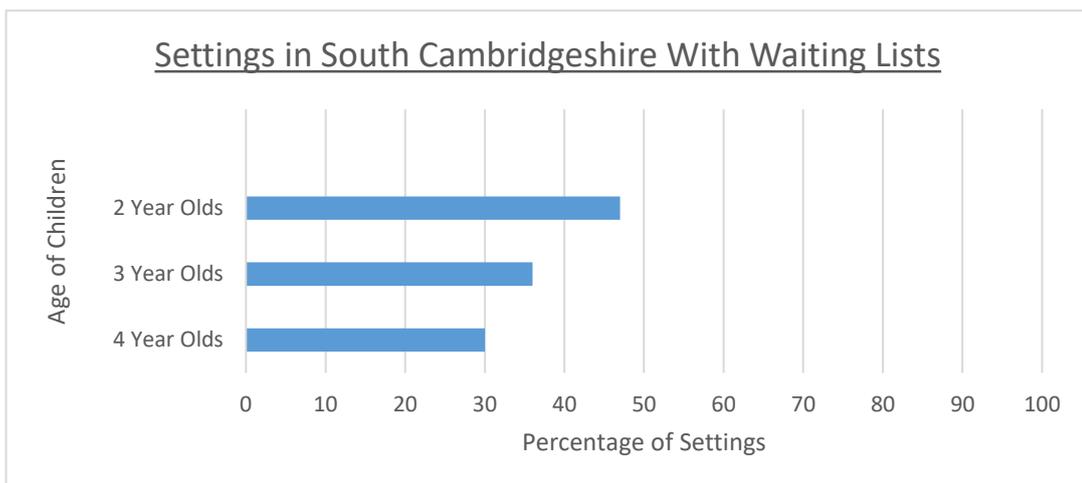
- 169 two-year-olds access up to 15 hours
- 1523 three- and four-year-olds access up to 15 hours
- 1292 three- and four-year-olds access between 15 and 30 hours

Sufficiency indicators from 2022 childcare survey

The chart below shows 44 per cent of settings had available spaces for 2-year-olds, 61 per cent of settings had available spaces for 3-year-olds and 60 per cent of settings had available spaces for 4-year-olds.



The chart below shows 47 per cent of settings operated a waiting list for 2-year-olds, 36 per cent of settings operated a waiting list for 3-year-olds and 30 per cent of settings operated a waiting list for 4-year-olds



- 76 per cent of settings said they were able ‘usually’, ‘almost always’ or ‘always’ meet parent request for places
- 47 per cent of settings were open for over 6.5 hours a day
- 53 per cent of settings provided childcare for a child with SEND

Provision due to open

- Invitations to tender are expected to run for a setting located at Fulbourn Primary School (approx. 35 places).

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The local authority has a duty to secure sufficient childcare for children with SEND up to the age of 18.

Children's needs change over time and are identified at different ages. Among the youngest children, SEND may only be identified when they start in childcare or school, and it can take some time from concerns being identified to an education, health and care (EHC) plan being issued. It is therefore inevitable that the number of children with SEND aged 0-4 is an underestimate. The majority of children receiving support for SEND do not have an EHC plan as their needs can be met without the need for one.

Under the Equality Act 2010, admission to a provision cannot be denied, or a child excluded, due to a child's health or developmental needs. Providers must support and enable all children with SEND to access their provision and the Early Years Foundation Stage. They must provide an inclusive environment which reflects their duty to promote equality and their obligations as outlined in the Act.

There are currently 255 0–5-year-olds with an Education Health and Care Plan living in Cambridgeshire,⁵ 203 of which are currently accessing a funded childcare place.⁶

The recent SEND review Green Paper, 'Right Support, Right Place, Right Time', has a section entitled 'Excellent Provision from Early years to Adulthood', which includes a proposal to increase the number of staff with a SENCo qualification in Early Years settings.

In total there are 5,010 children aged 5 to 18 with an Education Health and Care Plan living in Cambridgeshire, who may require childcare before and after school, and/or during the school holidays.

Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas (or neighbourhoods) in England. Using the IMD 'rank of average rank' summary measure, Cambridgeshire ranked 86 out of 151 of Upper Tier Local Authorities in England with rank 1 being the most deprived.

Scores are calculated across a number of domains. The table below show details on how Cambridgeshire ranks in each of those domains. Cambridgeshire is more deprived in terms of barriers to housing and services and less deprived in terms of employment and income.

Average rank for Cambridgeshire in each of the domains

Domain	Rank out of 151 (1 is the most deprived)
Cambridgeshire Overall IMD	86
Income	130

⁵ (DfE dataset on education, health and care plans 2021).

⁶ (DfE dataset on education provision: children under 5 years of age 2021).

Employment	134
Education, Skills and Training	114
Health Deprivation and Disability	122
Crime	124
Barriers to Housing and Services	46
Living Environment	103
Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index(IDACI)	128
Income Deprivation Affecting Older People(IDAOPI)	128

Cambridgeshire has 16 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the 20% most relatively deprived nationally. These are:

- Three in Cambridge City
- Two in Huntingdonshire
- Eleven are in Fenland. Four of the LSOAs in Fenland are in the 10% most relatively deprived nationally (F 007B March North, F003F Wisbech East, F002C Wisbech West, F002D Wisbech West)

In the summer of 2021 the Cambridgeshire Holiday, Activities and Food (HAF) programme was started as part of a national DfE initiative. This holiday provision is for school age children from reception to year 11 (inclusive) who receive benefits-related free school meals. For the Christmas holidays (2022) 19,555 children are eligible for scheme with 87 providers registered offering a total of 2,515 places.

In Cambridgeshire the summer 2022 programme reached 17% of all children eligible for free school meals. A range of positive outcomes were reported including increasing children's healthy behaviours through participation in physical activity, children enjoying new activities, children becoming more socially connected and the childcare meaning many parents were able to stay in work.

Funded places

The table below shows that the number of 3- and 4-year-old children accessing a funded early education place in Cambridgeshire is in line with national and east of England averages. It also shows that the number of 2-year-olds accessing a funded early education place in Cambridgeshire is slightly lower than national and east of England averages.

Percentage of 2-, 3- and 4-year-old children benefiting from universal places (%)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
2-year-olds							
Cambridgeshire	79	79	68	67	65	59	68
East of England	71	73	70	69	71	64	74
England	68	71	72	68	69	62	72
3 year olds							

Cambridgeshire	98	96	94	95	91	90	93
East of England	95	93	94	93	92	87	93
England	93	93	92	92	91	87	90
4-year-olds							
Cambridgeshire	95	96	95	95	96	92	94
East of England	96	95	95	95	95	93	95
England	96	95	95	95	94	93	94

Education provision: children under 5 years of age (DfE, January 2022)

Affordability

Coram childcare publishes an annual report⁷ on the affordability of childcare provision across England, Scotland and Wales. The average cost of childcare in the East of England is shown below.

Type of provision	Age of child	Cost per week for 25 hours childcare
Nursery	Under 2	£163.97
Nursery	2	£161.48
Nursery	3 and 4*	£89.95
Childminder	Under 2	£128.77
Childminder	2 and over	£130.20
Childminder	3 and 4*	£52.12

*includes Universal Entitlement.

Weekly price of after school care for children aged 5 to 11 in East of England

Using a childminder until 6pm	£59.27
Using an after-school club 5 days a week	£64.02

The survey results reveal a significant gap where the cost of childcare in many cases – particularly for children aged under three – exceeds the maximum costs supported through universal credit and the benefits system.

According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) in 2021 the median annual wage in Cambridgeshire was £33,924 for full time workers and £30,000 for all workers. The calculations below assume an even split across 52 weeks.

Average cost of childcare expressed as a percentage of median weekly income for the county

Type of provision	Age of child	Cost per week for 25 hours childcare shown as a	Cost per week for 25 hours childcare shown as a
-------------------	--------------	---	---

⁷[Childcare Survey 2023 Coram Family and Childcare.pdf \(familyandchildcaretrust.org\)](#)

		percentage of full time employment income	percentage of all employment income
Nursery	Under 2	25%	28%
Nursery	2	25%	28%
Nursery	3 and 4 (includes UE)	14%	16%
Childminder	Under 2	20%	22%
Childminder	2	20%	23%
Childminder	3 and 4 (includes UE)	8%	9%

Cost of childcare after school care for children aged 5 to 11 in East of England, expressed as a percentage of median weekly income for the county.

Using a childminder until 6pm	9%	10
Using an after-school club 5 days a week	10%	11%

Source: ONS ASHE

Quality of provision

All childcare providers must register with and be inspected by Ofsted, who give them an overall grade for the quality of their provision. The grade they are awarded may vary, depending on the type of provider. See the tables below for further details of which providers are eligible for which grades.

Childminders and private and voluntary providers are on the Early Years Register, and schools and standalone maintained nursery schools are on the Schools Register. The grades for both registers are equivalent. Schools with nurseries have an overall inspection grade for the whole school and many also have a separate early years' grade. Both schools and early years providers have four possible Ofsted grades: 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement', and 'inadequate'.

Childcare providers who have an Ofsted judgement of requires improvement or inadequate receive intensive support from the Local Authority. Intervention support remains in place until the setting achieves an Ofsted outcome of good or better.

Some providers are still awaiting their first full inspection. These providers are excluded from our calculation. Nursery classes in independent schools do not generally have an Ofsted grade.

Number of Early Years Settings in Cambridgeshire by Ofsted grade (January 2023)

Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	No inspection
49	169	28	10	34

SSRS Reporting: Ofsted outcomes

Number of Out of School providers in Cambridgeshire by Ofsted grade (January 2023)

Outstanding	Good	Met	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Not met (with actions)	No inspection
22	83	94	21	3	3	55

Number of Childminders in Cambridgeshire by Ofsted grade (January 2023)

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Met	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Not met (with actions)	No inspection
69	291	2	28	25	7	3	64

Other issues

Additional costs

Some providers in Cambridgeshire have reported that they are struggling to meet the additional costs of running a childcare business having seen increases in the living wage, pension contributions and business rates. This affects the sustainability of the childcare market.

Several settings have also raised concerns about the high cost of market rent on Council-owned buildings in Cambridge City and the immediately surrounding areas. These high rents can be difficult for settings to meet using only income received from DfE funded hours. This can lead to settings reducing the number of funded hours they offer in favour of offering private hours which can be charged at a higher rate to parents. It can also lead to settings getting into financial difficulties, putting them at risk of closure.

Childminders on Strategic sites

In recent years, the Council has received an increasing number of reports regarding the use of covenants which prohibit businesses from running from a home address, including childminders.

On 16 May 2023, a motion was unanimously agreed at Full Council whereby it was resolved to:

- Make a recommendation to the District Councils that on strategic new developments, a condition of planning is that such restrictive covenants which are to be put in place state explicitly that childcare on domestic premises will be exempt, where there is an identified need which can be demonstrated.
- Highlight the importance of such changes with developers and house builders to ensure that they are aware of the barrier that these covenants can cause.
- Signpost childcare providers, and residents, to the appropriate support within the local authority when concerns are experienced.

The Council is actively working to raise the profile of this issue with developers and is committed to support childminders / nannies to overcome these.

Recruitment and retention crisis

Recruiting and retaining qualified staff is one of the biggest challenges currently facing the sector nationally. This is not a new challenge but one which is significantly worse in the wake of the pandemic and Brexit.

In December 2021, the Early Years Alliance published its Breaking Point report which surveyed just under 1,400 people in the sector. They found that 84% of respondents were finding it difficult to recruit suitable new Early Years staff, with 60% finding it 'very difficult'.

Also in Autumn 2021, Cambridgeshire's Early Years and Childcare Service conducted an online survey which gathered response from 140 providers across Cambridgeshire. 61% of respondents had staff vacancies with almost a quarter stating that the staffing needs of their setting were not being met by their current staff team. 63% of respondents said that they would likely be looking to recruit in the next six months with only 44% confident of recruitment success. Respondents stated that those leaving the sector cited salary (49%), desire to change career (35%) and workload (31%) as the main factors.

There are two key pressure areas in the county: Cambridge and Huntingdon.

Many settings across the County report that they have a high number of children on the waiting list but are unable to provide the places due to lack of qualified staff. Many staff appear to be leaving the sector for higher paid non childcare related roles.

The most significant risk of a lack of qualified, experienced Early Years staff is to the quality of care and education experienced by the children.

For further information on gaps in the market, please refer to the Council's [Market Position Statement](#).

Summary

The detail above shows that there is generally sufficient childcare across Cambridgeshire, although there are areas with high waiting lists and areas which do require further provision. There are several serious challenges facing the sector today, the action plan below shows how are looking to influence or address these.

Action plan

- The Council's 0-19 Places Planning and Organisation Service will continue to work with new schools and other partners to secure early years and childcare provision in a timely way to match demographic need on new developments.
- The 0-19 Education Place Planning and Organisation Service will also continue to monitor up to date national and local data as it is released to ensure regular assessments of sufficiency are made. Using this information, the [Market Position Statement](#) outlining where new provision is required will continue to be updated on a six monthly basis.
- The Early Years' service will continue to work with existing providers, wherever possible, to support and sustain provision, where this is of good quality or has capacity to be so, in line with its statutory duties. This includes pedagogical, safeguarding and business and governance support.
- PACEY (Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years) colleagues will continue to be contracted by Cambridgeshire County Council to work with the childminding sector across the county. They will continue to work to recruit new childminders and provide comprehensive pre-registration support and training.
- Work will continue with colleagues in the Council's Strategic Assets Service to support providers occupying Council-owned buildings. Delegated powers allow for "less than best" rents to be charged where a full market rent is unaffordable, on the approval of the Council's Section 151 Officer.
- The Local Offer is published on the Cambridgeshire County Council website. This provides clear, accessible, and accurate information about the services available for children and young people with SEND, and has a section dedicated to childcare and early years education. The recently re-established Cambridgeshire Families Information Service team offer parents support in understanding childcare funding options and seeking appropriate childcare to meet their needs. There is also a Families Information Service helpline, should further information and assistance be required.
- In response to the recruitment crisis the Education Service is taking steps to improve training opportunities in the county, for example, by launching a new introductory training course in partnership with Cambridgeshire Skills and creating trainee hubs in partnership with local settings.
- In 2022 the Children and Young People's Committee approved the creation of a Pseudo Dynamic Purchasing System (PDPS) by the 0-19 Place Planning and Organisation Service, with the objective of streamlining the existing tender process by

creating a list of pre-approved Early Years and childcare providers who are interested in expanding into Council-owned premises. As of May 2023, three vacant settings have been advertised for tender via the PDPS; all three have been awarded and are due, subject to Ofsted registration, to open from 1st September. More adverts and awards in this process are scheduled for Autumn 2023.

- In March 2023 the government announced plans to expand the subsidisation of childcare in the UK as follows:
 - i. From April 2024, working parents of two-year-olds will be able to access 15 hours of free childcare.
 - ii. From September 2024, 15 hours of free childcare will be extended to all children from the age of nine months.
 - iii. From September 2025, working parents with children under the age of five will be entitled to 30 hours free childcare per week.

The assessment of demand and expansion of provision is expected to form a substantive part of the 0-19 Education Place Planning Service’s workload and priority until at least September 2025.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Methodology and response rate of provider survey

In November 2022 the Early Years Providers Capacity Survey was sent by email to a total of 477 Early Years providers within Cambridgeshire. By the time the survey closed a total of 237 of these settings had submitted information, making for a response rate of just under 50%. The table below shows the distribution of respondents across Cambridgeshire

District	Number of responses received	% of overall respondents
Cambridge City	39	16%
East Cambridgeshire	29	12%
Fenland	28	12%
Huntingdonshire	71	30%
South Cambridgeshire	70	30%