



ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL
CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY REPORT
2023





INTRODUCTION

This Childcare Sufficiency Assessment provides a current picture of the childcare market in St Helens and will be used to inform planning and to ensure that sufficient childcare is available across the borough, to meet the needs of parents and to ensure that the council is able to fulfil its obligations in providing funded early years education (FEEE) to eligible 2-, 3- and 4-years old's.

Childcare Information has been collected from the following sources:

- St Helens Family Intervention Service (FIS) Database - holding details of registered and non-registered childcare in St Helens
- May 2022 Early Years Headcount
- May 2022 Schools Census.

The information has been used in the following way to calculate capacity:

- Childcare capacity has been based on the latest information supplied by providers via the FIS provider portal.
- The number of places (capacity) that an early year's provider is registered for have been spread evenly across the 2 and 3- & 4-year-old age groups (unless detailed breakdowns have been supplied by providers via the FIS provider portal).

Broadly this document sets out to address the following questions:

- What does the childcare market in St. Helens look like now?
- How will changes in population influence the childcare that might be available in the future?
- What impact might the expansion of the entitlements for working parents have on childcare sufficiency?
- Will there be enough childcare available in St Helens to accommodate demand?
- Overall, what needs to be done to ensure that we have sufficient childcare available in St Helens to meet current and predicted demand across all age ranges?

GEOGRAPHY

The geographical basis for analysis in this Childcare Sufficiency Assessment is Electoral Ward. There are 18 electoral wards that make up the Borough of St Helens:

Figure 1: Electoral Wards from May 2022



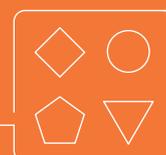
POPULATION

The current population estimates by age group (based on ONS population data) give an indication of the relative size of each ward in terms of childcare demand:

Figure 2: Population by Ward for 2019-20 (From ONS population data by ward).

ONS population data is not yet available with St. Helens' new wards.

Ward	1-year olds	2-year olds	3-4-year olds	5-11-year olds	Total 0-11-years
Billinge and Seneley Green	71	69	160	657	1024
Blackbrook	89	95	201	751	1231
Bold	118	112	245	918	1495
Earlestown	160	161	338	1157	1967
Eccleston	99	105	238	891	1423
Haydock	112	115	247	938	1507
Moss Bank	113	119	247	923	1493
Newton	170	193	315	1108	1977
Parr	204	219	416	1437	2466
Rainford	47	55	100	555	802
Rainhill	98	86	205	737	1206
Sutton	89	135	242	882	1462
Thatto Heath	164	181	396	1305	2175
Town Centre	153	139	277	967	1670
West Park	113	125	237	881	1472
Windle	124	95	274	900	1516
Grand Total	1924	2004	4168	15007	24886

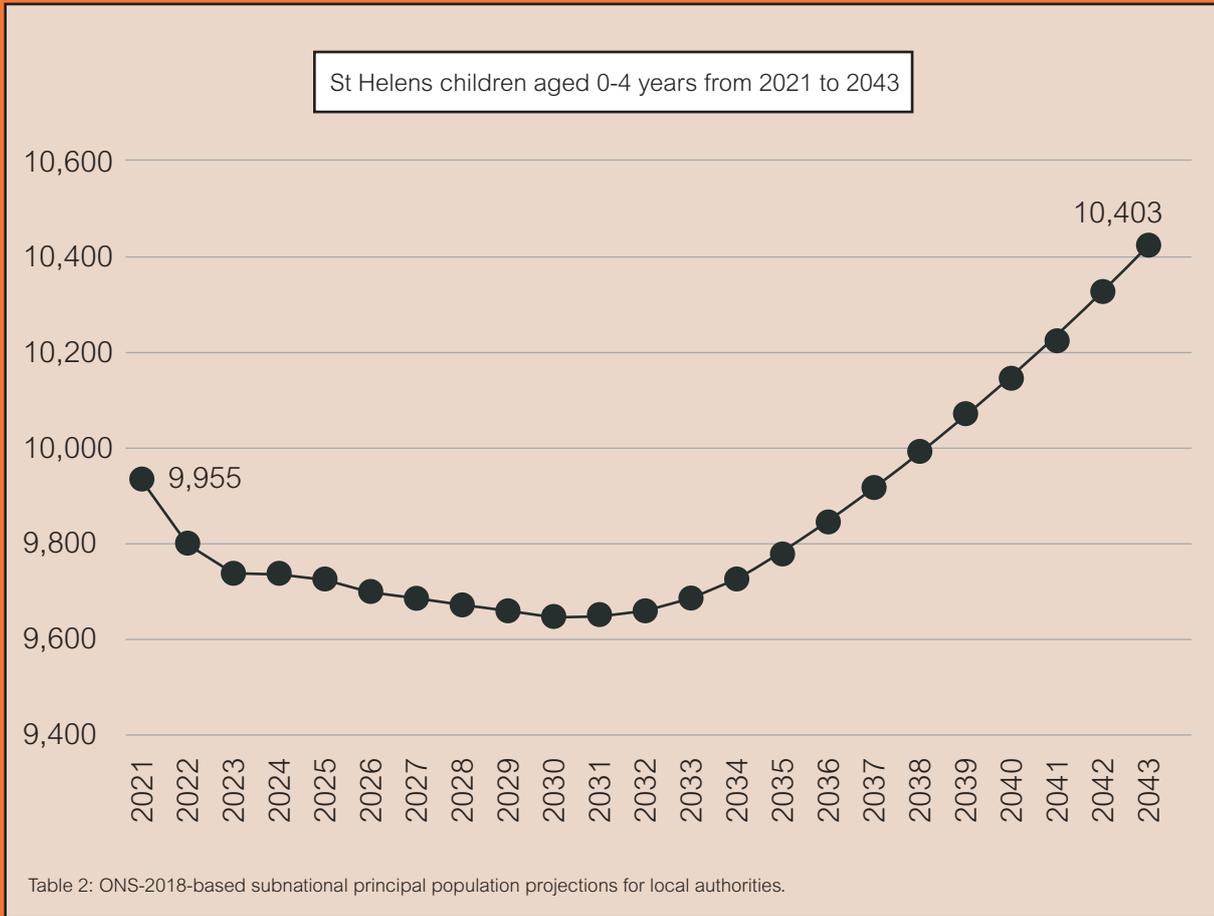


NUMBER OF LIVE BIRTHS BY ST HELENS WARDS
- 2010/11 TO 2020/21 ACADEMIC YEARS

Wards (new-May 2022)	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015
Billinge and Seneley Green	90	72	88	81	83
Blackbrook	105	137	136	102	116
Bold & Lea Green	152	166	146	143	138
Eccleston	57	68	58	77	79
Haydock	142	131	138	111	105
Moss Bank	107	114	113	117	105
Newton-le-Willows East	146	150	161	158	163
Newton-le-Willows West	184	145	174	183	150
Parr	192	200	196	202	184
Peasley Cross & Fingerpost	63	83	71	56	55
Rainford	61	57	64	53	46
Rainhill	95	74	95	88	90
St Helens Town Centre	109	89	112	110	86
Sutton North West	79	94	62	63	64
Sutton South East	93	89	73	80	86
Thatto Heath	181	180	168	133	179
West Park	158	168	145	112	129
Windle	114	110	101	118	111
Total	2128	2127	2101	1987	1969

POPULATION & BIRTHS

ONS Population Projections¹ for St Helens have estimated a 3.2% decrease in the age-0-4 population from 2021 to 2030, but the reductions are minor year on year from 2023. The projection states an 8% increase from 2031 to 2043 with a projected population of 10,403 0-4-year-olds.



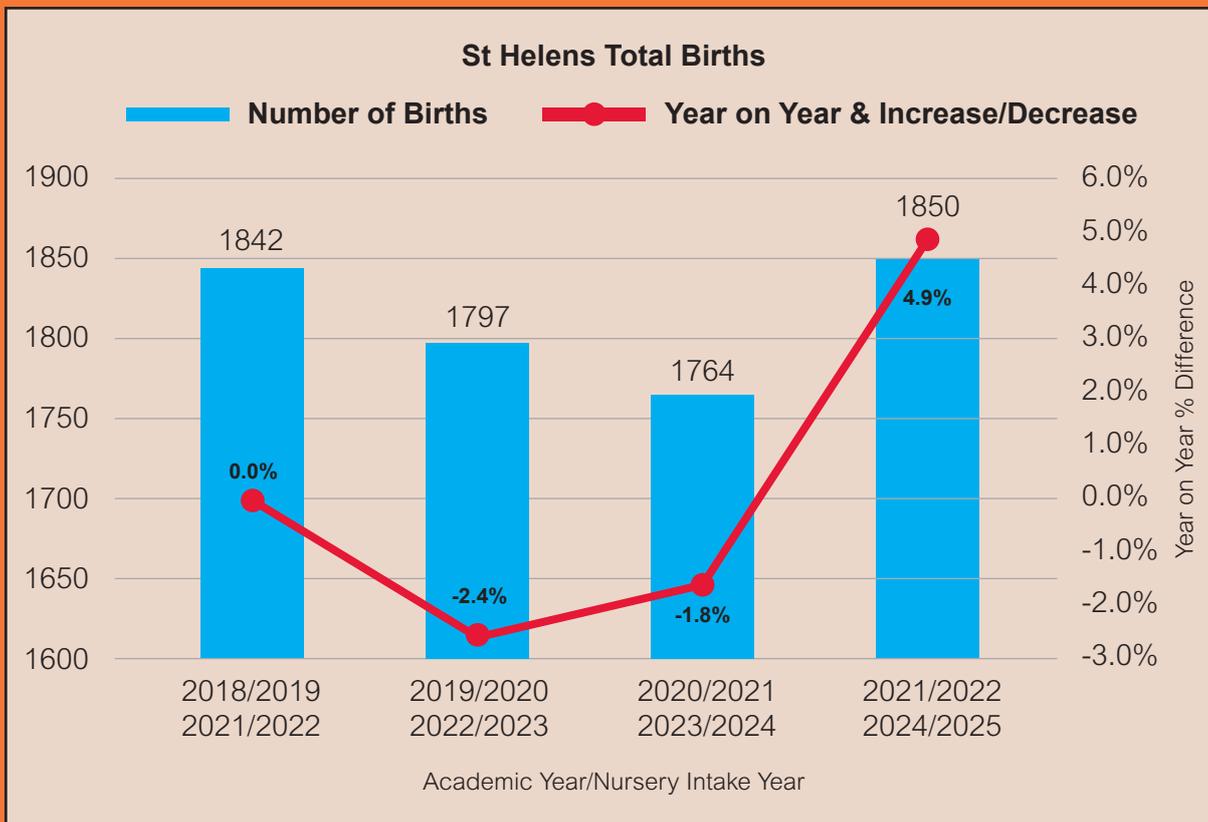
More recent data² from ONS shows reasonable accuracy with the projections above, with 9,659 0-4 years old in the 2021 census. Numbers can be seen by single year age group in the table below. What can be observed is a decrease in the younger populations.

Age	Census '21 Observation - St Helens Population (Persons)
Aged under 1 year	1826
Aged 1 year	1855
Aged 2 years	1960
Aged 3 years	1941
Aged 4 years	2077

Census 2021 unrounded population and household estimates for England and Wales, by sex and single year of age.

The latest available population data at Ward level from ONS is for 2020 however, St Helens Ward boundaries changed in May 2022. We can acquire live birth data from our Public Health team within the council; the table and chart below, which include the new Wards, are derived from this data.

	Academic Year Nursery Intake Year (3/4)	2018/2019 2021/2022	2019/2020 2022/2023	2020/2021 2023/2024	2021/2022 2024/2025
Billinge & Seneley Green	Number of births	72	66	59	60
	Year on year % increase/decrease		-8.3%	-10.6%	1.7%
Blackbrook	Number of births	89	104	94	91
	Year on year % increase/decrease		16.9%	-9.6%	-3.2%
Bold & Lea Green	Number of births	138	131	129	136
	Year on year % increase/decrease		-5.1%	-1.5%	5.4%
Eccleston	Number of births	81	87	95	99
	Year on year % increase/decrease		7.4%	9.2%	4.2%
Haydock	Number of births	106	81	100	90
	Year on year % increase/decrease		-23.6%	23.5%	-10.0%
Moss Bank	Number of births	87	90	75	99
	Year on year % increase/decrease		3.4%	-16.7%	32.0%
Newton-le-Willows East	Number of births	161	153	148	153
	Year on year % increase/decrease		-5.0%	-3.3%	3.4%
Newton-le-Willows West	Number of births	145	155	158	153
	Year on year % increase/decrease		6.9%	1.9%	-3.2%
Parr	Number of births	176	162	169	184
	Year on year % increase/decrease		-8.0%	4.3%	8.9%
Peasley Cross & Fingerpost	Number of births	69	50	54	61
	Year on year % increase/decrease		-27.5%	8.0%	13.0%
Rainford	Number of births	44	39	59	44
	Year on year % increase/decrease		-11.4%	51.3%	-25.4%
Rainhill	Number of births	94	92	82	93
	Year on year % increase/decrease		-2.1%	-10.9%	13.4%
St Helens Town Centre	Number of births	89	81	69	80
	Year on year % increase/decrease		-9.0%	-14.8%	15.9%
Sutton North West	Number of births	52	92	69	64
	Year on year % increase/decrease		19.2%	11.3%	-7.2%
Sutton South East	Number of births	68	89	84	107
	Year on year % increase/decrease		30.9%	-5.6%	27.4%
Thatto Heath	Number of births	118	107	118	127
	Year on year % increase/decrease		-9.3%	10.3%	7.6%
West Park	Number of births	138	129	98	98
	Year on year % increase/decrease		-6.5%	-24.0%	0.0%
Windle	Number of births	115	119	104	111
	Year on year % increase/decrease		3.5%	-12.6%	6.7%



Public Health Intelligence, St Helens Borough Council

OVERALL, OUR LIVE BIRTH DATA SHOWS A 4.2% DECREASE FROM 2018/19 ACADEMIC YEAR (2021 AGE 3 NURSERY INTAKE) TO 2020/21 ACADEMIC YEAR (2023/24 AGE 3 NURSERY INTAKE), BUT THEN AN INCREASE OF 4.9% IN 2021/22 (2024 AGE 3 NURSERY INTAKE).



CHILDCARE ANALYSIS

This document will consider the different types of childcare that are available across different age ranges and analysis will concentrate on the following broad categories:

- **Day care and Childminders**

Analysing childcare that is available for the 0-4 years age range, that is provided by Private Day Nurseries, Maintained Nursery Schools and Classes, Pre-school Playgroups and Childminders.

- **Funded Early Years Education Entitlement (for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds)**

- **Holiday Care**

Looking into the holiday care clubs that have generally been available across the Borough over the past 12 months for the 5-11 years age range and considering any issues of sustainability.

- **Out of School Care**

Analysing the availability of out of school care in relation to each Primary School in the Borough.

DAY CARE AND CHILDMINDERS

The following table shows the types of childcare that are available across the borough.

Number of Childcare providers by type as at October 2023

Political Ward Description	Childminder	Creche	Day Nursery	Children's Centre	Academy	Nursery School and Classes	Nursery Units of Independent Schools	Out of School Care	Private Out of School Care	Private Preschool Playgroup	School Preschool Playgroup	Total
Billinge and Seneley Green	1		2			2		5			2	12
Blackbrook	3					3		2		1		9
Bold & Lea Green	1		3			2		2			2	10
Newton-le-Willows East	2					2		4			1	9
Newton-le-Willows West	5		6			3		4			1	19
Eccleston	4		3			1		4				12
Haydock	2		2			2		3			1	10
Moss Bank	4		1			1		3				9
Parr	2		2	1		3		1				9
Peasley Cross & Fingerpost			2			1		1			1	5
Rainford	1		2		1	1		2			2	9
Rainhill			2			1	1	3			1	8
Sutton North West	1		2			3		3			1	11
Sutton South East	1		1			2		3				7
Thatto Heath	0		3	1		2		5		2		12
Town Centre			3		1	2		5		1	1	14
West Park	1		3					2				6
Windle	2		3			1		3		1		10
Total	30		40	3	2	32	1	55		5	13	

Current Childcare Capacity by Provider Type as at October 2023.

(Data reporting on 15 hour part time places)

Political Ward Description	Childminder	Creche	Day Nursery	Children's Centre	Academy	Nursery School and Classes	Nursery Units of Independent Schools	Out of School Care	Private Out of School Care	Private Preschool Playgroup	School Preschool Playgroup	Total
Billinge and Seneley Green	3		168			39				31	43	284
Blackbrook	1					12				2		15
Bold & Lea Green	0		195			37					4	236
Newton-le-Willows East	1					8					0	9
Newton-le-Willows West	2		297			53					15	367
Eccleston	13		444			1						458
Haydock	1		62			42					6	11
Moss Bank	2		70			13						85
Parr	0		212			36						248
Peasley Cross & Fingerpost			38			2					3	43
Rainford	0		37		5	42					46	130
Rainhill			9			0	81				0	90
Sutton North West	0		93			39					7	139
Sutton South East	0		80			42						122
Thatto Heath			126			47				86		259
Town Centre			167		26	25				49		267
West Park	0		31									31
Windle	0		117			0				31		148
Total	23		2146		31	438	81			199	124	



CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OR DISABILITIES

The Early Years Foundation Stage recognises that children learn in different ways and at different rates, and that practitioners must plan to meet the range of needs in the setting. This includes children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and all providers must have arrangements in place to support these children. Practitioners use a range of strategies for gathering information with which to make accurate assessments of children's development and learning. These might include observing children in their play and activities and carrying out checks such as the Two-Year-Old Progress Check.

In any early years setting, practitioners must consider whether a child may have a special educational need or disability which requires specialist support. They should link with, and help families to access, relevant services from other agencies as appropriate. Where there is an identified special educational need or disability, practitioners should develop a targeted plan to support the child's future learning and development involving parents and/or carers and other professionals (for example, the provider's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator or health professionals) as appropriate.

St Helens Brough Council encourages all early year's settings to identify a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, to ensure that each setting meets its obligations to plan for children with SEND.

The Early Years Quality and Inclusion team provides training and guidance designed to support settings in meeting these obligations. Some settings access further training to enable them to develop practitioners' skills in meeting the needs of children with, for example, complex health needs. Whilst all settings must therefore meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage in relation to children with SEND, parents and carers may wish to enquire further as to any specific training that might have been undertaken, or specific skills held by staff.

FUNDED EARLY YEARS EDUCATION

ENTITLEMENT

All three and four-year-olds are entitled to a funded part time early education place.

Children are eligible for a funded early education place if they are 3 on or before:

- 31 August to start of Autumn Term (September)
- 31 December to start in the Spring Term (January)
- 31 March to start in the Summer Term (April)

30 Hours Funding

Working families with 3- and 4-year-old children can get an extra 15 hours per week of funded childcare, so 30 hours in total if they live in England, they earn no less than £2,167 over a 3-month period and each parent earns less than £100,000 per year.

2-Year-Old Funding

2-year-olds can get funded childcare if they live in England and at least one of the criteria listed below.

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit, and your household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, not including benefit payments.
- Child tax credits, and your household income is £16,190 a year or less before tax.
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- The Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit).

2-year-olds can also get funded childcare if their parents are in receipt of:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit, and your household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, not including benefit payments.
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit (or both), and your household income is £16,190 a year or less before tax.
- The Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit).

2-year-olds can also get free childcare if they:

- are looked after by a local authority.
- have an education, health, and care (EHC) plan.
- get Disability Living Allowance
- have left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order or a child arrangement order.

You may have to pay for extra costs like meals, nappies, or trips.

If you're a non-UK citizen who cannot claim benefits

If your immigration status says you have 'no recourse to public funds', you may still get free childcare for your 2-year-old. You must live in England and your household income must be no more than:

- £26,500 for families outside of London with one child
- £34,500 for families within London with one child
- £30,600 for families outside of London with two or more children
- £38,600 for families within London with two or more children

You cannot have more than £16,000 in savings or investments.

Expansion to the Entitlements

The Government has committed to roll out the following from April 2024.

- From April 24 - Up to 15 hours for eligible working families with a 2-year-old
- From September 24 - Up to 15 hours for eligible working families with a child between 9 and 23 months old
- From September 25 - Up to 30 hours for eligible working families with a child from 9 months old up to school age.

MAP 1: TOTAL NUMBER OF PLACES AND VACANCIES (0-5 YEARS)



April 2024 - New Entitlement roll out phase 1

In April 2024 the new entitlement will be made available to two-year-olds of working Parents. The methodology distributes the national estimate of numbers of children using the entitlement to a Middle Super Output Area (MSOA) by a joint equal weighting between the estimated 2-year-old population in each MSOA, according to GP registration data, and the current level of usage of the 30 hours for 3-4-year-olds entitlement (which has the same eligibility criteria). This produces a projection of the number of users of the new entitlement, but the new demand for childcare places depends on the proportion of current formal childcare users who are eligible, and hence transfer to, the new entitlement. This proportion is uncertain and is therefore represented by three scenarios, low, central, and high. The central scenario corresponds to the national estimates of demand and is used in subsequent need calculations.

Super Output Area (MSOA)	Estimated 2yr old Population	Projected Users of the New Entitlement	Low Scenario	Central Scenario	High Scenario
Rainford	60	26	3	6	13
Billinge and Seneley Green	28	15	1	4	7
Garswood	40	22	2	6	11
Moss Bank	102	34	3	9	17
Haydock East	54	17	2	4	9
Haydock West	57	19	2	5	9
Windle and Dentons Green	84	40	4	10	20
Blackbrook	74	24	2	6	12
Eccleston	53	30	3	7	15
Earlestown North	66	28	3	7	14
Earlestown South	97	34	3	9	17
Broad Oak	102	28	3	7	14
Town Centre West	71	25	3	6	13
Town Centre East & Fingerpost	114	34	3	9	17
Newton-le-Willows	140	59	6	15	29
West Park	93	43	4	11	21
Derbyshire Hill	82	24	2	6	12
Eccleston Park	59	27	3	7	14
Thatto Heath and Lea Green	189	66	7	16	33
Sutton Leach	108	35	3	9	17
Rainhill North	55	24	2	6	12
Bold and Clock Face	113	41	4	10	21
Rainhill South	35	15	2	4	8

September 2024 - New Entitlement roll out phase 2

In September 2024 the new entitlement will be made available to 9-month to 36-month-olds. The methodology distributes the national estimate of numbers of children using the entitlement to Middle Super Output Area by a joint equal weighting between the estimated 9-month to 36-month-old population in each MSOA, according to GP registration data, and the current level of usage of the 30 hours for 3-4-year-olds entitlement (which has the same eligibility criteria). This produces a projection of the number of users of the new entitlement, but the new demand for childcare places depends on the proportion of current formal childcare users who are eligible, and hence transfer to, the new entitlement. This proportion is uncertain and is therefore represented by three scenarios, low, central, and high. The central scenario corresponds to the national estimates of demand and is used in subsequent need calculations.

Super Output Area (MSOA)	Estimated 2yr old Population	Projected Users of the New Entitlement	Low Scenario	Central Scenario	High Scenario
Rainford	128	48	5	16	32
Billinge and Seneley Green	70	29	3	10	19
Garswood	93	42	4	14	28
Moss Bank	254	68	7	23	45
Haydock East	114	31	3	10	20
Haydock West	131	36	4	12	24
Windle and Dentons Green	194	76	8	25	50
Blackbrook	168	46	5	15	30
Eccleston	133	58	6	19	39
Earlestown North	145	52	5	17	34
Earlestown South	229	67	7	22	44
Broad Oak	245	55	5	18	36
Town Centre West	182	51	5	17	34
Town Centre East & Fingerpost	264	66	7	22	44
Newton-le-Willows	327	113	11	37	75
West Park	219	83	8	27	54
Derbyshire Hill	173	44	4	15	29
Eccleston Park	131	51	5	17	34
Thatto Heath and Lea Green	450	128	13	42	84
Sutton Leach	250	67	7	22	44
Rainhill North	135	48	5	16	32
Bold and Clock Face	282	82	8	27	54
Rainhill South	72	28	3	9	19



PREDICTING FUTURE DEMAND FOR CHILDCARE

Predicting the future demand for childcare is known to be difficult due to a constantly changing number of childcare providers and therefore fluctuations in the number of childcare places that are available at any one time. Changing parental demand for childcare, which is dependent upon fluctuating employment situations and working patterns, exacerbates this situation. However, it is important to make attempts to predict how the childcare market will change, so that relevant plans can be implemented to ensure that there is enough childcare available in the Borough to meet the demands of parents.

Our projections are based upon calculations that have been carried out at Ward Level. The 2-year-old FEE projections are based on the current uptake by Ward as a proportion of the overall 2-year-old population to calculate a conversion rate. This conversion rate is then applied to the ONS Live Births in 2021-22 Academic Year who will qualify as potential 2-year-olds in 2023-24, to provide estimates of next year's uptake, by Ward.

THE 3- & 4-YEAR-OLD PROJECTIONS FOR 2023-24 ARE BASED ON THE ESTIMATED TOTAL NUMBER OF 3- AND 4-YEAR-OLDS BY WARD AREA. THE 4-YEAR-OLD POPULATION ESTIMATES ARE ADJUSTED BY A PERCENTAGE TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF A PROPORTION OF 4-YEAR-OLDS WHO WILL ALREADY HAVE TAKEN UP A PLACE IN RECEPTION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND WILL BE AGED 5 LATER IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR (AND THEREFORE WOULD NOT BE ENTITLED TO FEE FUNDING).

Applying the above methodology, we can predict how many places (and therefore any surplus or gap in provision) will be required in 2023-24 to ensure that St Helens is able to fulfil Government requirements in relation to the sufficiency of childcare provision across the borough.

CONSIDERATIONS

This Childcare Sufficiency report gives an overview of the childcare market in St Helens currently and for the next year. The information contained in this document is used for the following purposes:

- To assist parents to identify childcare provision across the Borough and overall capacity
- To help inform Local Authority Childcare Strategy giving regard to the expansion of funded early years education
- To help those who are thinking about setting up new nursery or pre-school provisions or entering childminding.

The document gives a broad picture of the childcare market and therefore any decisions to develop or support childcare provision should be backed up with more thorough localised market research.

St Helens Borough Council is working with Providers to develop increased childcare capacity in preparation for the new expansion to the entitlements.

- 15 hours for working parents of 2-year-old children commencing in April 2024
- 15 hours for children from 9 months old from September 24
- 30 hours for children from 9 months old to 2 years and from September 2025.

In addition, the government has also announced that there will be additional funding to support local authorities to work with schools and other providers to increase the supply of wraparound childcare, so that all parents of school-age children can access childcare from 8am - 6pm if they need it.



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