

CROYDON'S CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

2024

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1. Introduction

Croydon Council is required by law to 'report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and make this report available and accessible to parents'. We have prepared this report to meet this duty.

Having sufficient childcare means that families can find childcare that meets their child's learning needs and enables parents to make a real choice about work and training. This applies to all children from birth to age 14, and up to 18 for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Sufficiency is assessed for different groups, rather than for all children in the local authority.

In this report, we have made an assessment of sufficiency using data about the need for childcare and the amount of childcare available.

We use information about childcare sufficiency to plan our work supporting the local childcare economy.

This report was compiled using data from the Office for National Statistics; Ofsted; the Department for Education (DfE); and the Early Years Sufficiency Team.

In the March 2023 Budget, the government announced plans to extend the existing 30-hour funded entitlement to all eligible working families of children aged nine months and above by September 2025.

- Since April 2024, working parents of two-year-olds have been able to access 15 hours of free childcare.
- Since September 2024, 15 hours of free childcare has been extended to all working parents of children from the age of nine months.
- From September 2025, working parents of children under the age of five will be entitled to 30 hours free childcare per week.

This staggered approach will give childcare providers time to prepare for the changes, ensuring there are enough providers ready to meet demand.

At this point in time, we believe we have sufficient childcare available across the borough for all age groups. However, we will need places for September 2025, please see section 5 of this report. The age groups in early years, which are determined by the adult : child ratios set out in the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, are 0-2 years; 2-3 years; 3-4 years.

To qualify for the working families funding, each parent needs to be working and earning the equivalent of 16 hours a week at national minimum/living wage and under £100,000 adjusted net income per year. This means that each parent needs to earn from £9,520 per year (increasing to £10,158 from April 2025) to be eligible for 15 hours a week of childcare during term time. Coupled with the current eligibility criteria for receiving funding (families in receipt of certain benefits and with a household income of £16,190 a year or less before tax), it is likely that the majority of 2-year-olds will be entitled to 15 hours a week of funded childcare.

Fewer settings currently provide care for children in the 0-2 years age group. The adult : child ratio is 1:3 and settings are finding it difficult to recruit and retain staff. The Early Years Sufficiency Team have undertaken analysis of the number of places for September 2024 and evaluated that there is sufficient provision. The analysis for September 2025 is under way, see section 5 of this report.

Local authorities have been provided with funding for the expansion of childcare in early years and for what is known as “wraparound care”. This is to ensure that there is affordable childcare for working parents of children under the age of 5 and that all parents of school-age children can access wraparound care in their local area from 8am – 6pm term-time. It is expected that, by September 2026, most primary schools will be able to provide their own before and after school care. Providers are in the process of applying for funds to expand their childcare provision to expand and create places.

There is a growing number of young children being identified as having additional Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Croydon. The needs of these children will need to be taken into account when considering both early years childcare and school “wraparound” childcare. All early education and childcare providers are required to fulfil their obligations under the [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#), [the Equality Act 2010](#), and the [SEN Code of Practice \(2015\)](#). This include ensuring arrangements are in place to identify and support children with SEND and promote equality of opportunity.

The Council’s Early Learning Team continue to work to support early years settings in offering high quality early education and childcare to all of Croydon’s young children. Croydon’s Family Hub, Start for Life model with foci on early health and education for under 2s will further support the Borough’s youngest children.

Early education is not statutory and, while there is a wealth of research about the benefits of early education, ultimately it is still a parental choice that determines whether places are taken up in early years settings. From September 2025 the majority of eligible working parent/carers needing early education / childcare will be accessing mostly government funded hours which is likely to decrease the number of privately paid hours providers will deliver. The funding rates for 2025-26 have not yet been released and so therefore it is not possible to tell the impact of this on providers who currently rely on privately paid places in addition to funded hours. However, there is a level of anxiety within the childcare sector in relation to their financial sustainability with the increase in funded provision and the recent announcement of rises in the minimum wage and employers national insurance contribution.

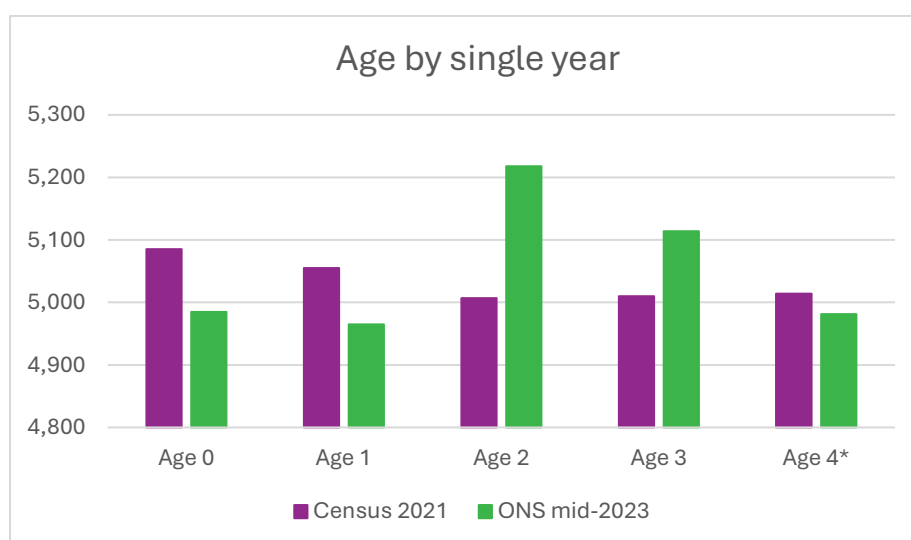
2. Demand for childcare

2.1 Population of early years children

As outlined at table 1 and graph 1, in total there are 25,171 children under the age of 5 living in Croydon¹. According to more recent population estimates for mid-2023², there are 25,263 children under the age of 5. These children may require early years funding, however, please note, some four-year olds will have started reception. Table 1 and graph 1 show a breakdown of the two datasets:

Census 2021	Age 0 5,085	Age 1 5,055	Age 2 5,007	Age 3 5,010	Age 4 5,014
Population estimates mid-2023	Age 0 4,985	Age 1 4,965	Age 2 5,218	Age 3 5,114	Age 4 4,981

Table 1: Population age 0-4



Graph 1: Population age 0-4

2.2 Population of school age children

In total, there are 35,240 children aged of 5-11, and 15,178 children aged 12-14 living in Croydon³. According to more recent population estimates for mid-2023⁴, there are 34,969 children aged of 5-11, and 15,390 children aged 12-14. These children may require wraparound childcare - before and after school -, and/or during the school holidays. Table 2 and graph 2 show a breakdown of the two datasets:

¹ Census 2021

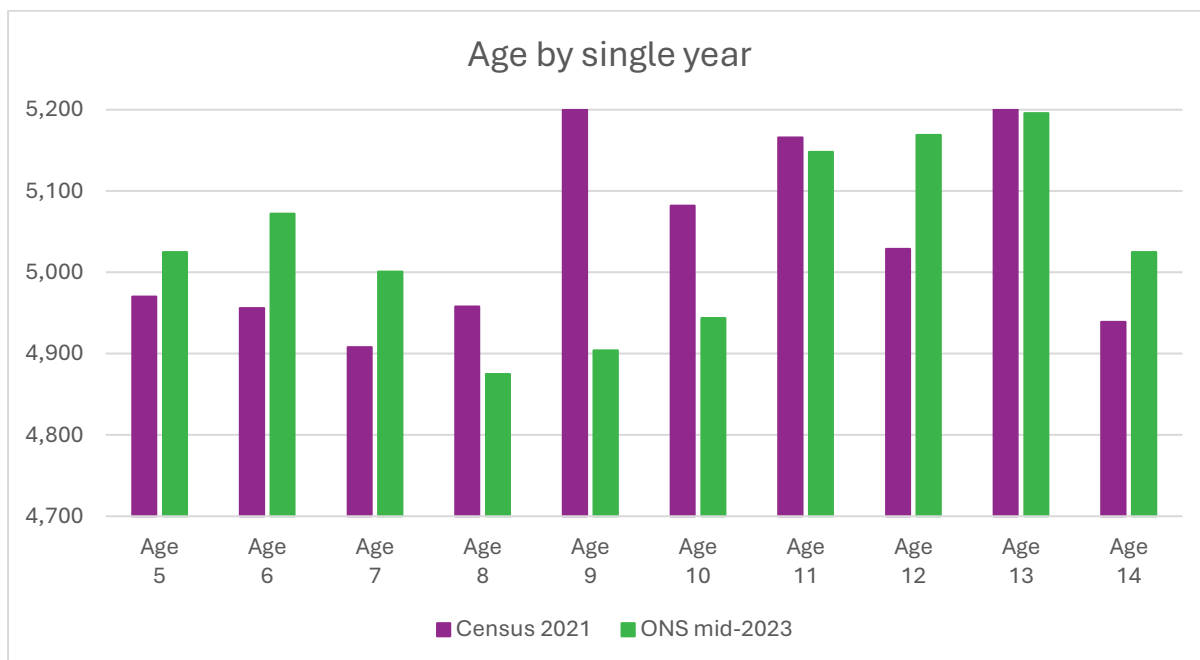
² Office for National Statistics (ONS), mid-year population estimates 2023

³ Census 2021

⁴ Office for National Statistics (ONS), mid-year population estimates 2023

Census 2021	Age 5 4,970	Age 6 4,956	Age 7 4,908	Age 8 4,958	Age 9 5,200	Age 10 5,082	Age 11 5,166	Age 12 5,029	Age 13 5,210	Age 14 4,939
Population estimates mid-2023	Age 5 5,025	Age 6 5,072	Age 7 5,001	Age 8 4,875	Age 9 4,904	Age 10 4,944	Age 11 5,148	Age 12 5,169	Age 13 5,196	Age 14 5,025

Table 2: Population age 5-14



Graph 2: Population age 5-14

2.3 Number of children with special educational needs and disabilities

Children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) are entitled to support with childcare up to the age of 18. The number of children/young people with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan in our local authority is: 5,303⁵

Age	Number of children
Birth to school age	205
Primary school (reception to year 6)	1,888
Secondary school (year 7 to 13)	2,322
Post secondary school (ages 18-25)	888

Table 3: Children/young people with an EHCP

⁵ 0-25 SEND Service, October 2024

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 a setting or school, and it can take some time from needs being identified to an EHC plan being issued. Currently there are 30 children where statutory assessment to consider an EHCP has been agreed by the LA in the 0-4 age group and 8 with final EHC plans.

The portage team support pre-school children with complex needs both at home and in settings. Currently 58⁶ children with highly complex needs are being supported in the home/SEN group (29 children at home and 29 children in group and school planning support) and 27 are being supported in PVI settings.

The Early Years SEND Team also support children with Medical Needs Care Plans (MNCP). These children have complex medical needs (i.e. more than one health need). There are currently 27⁷ children with MNCPs in settings, however as health care plans are for a range of children and Tulip neuro-disability nursing team support these directly with the settings there may be more for children who are not known to SEND as they are medical only, such as diabetes or epilepsy for example.

St Giles School, in the south of the Borough, offers 6 full time equivalent (fte) places for children with complex medical needs, complex physical disabilities and / or Severe (SLD) or Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) Learning Difficulties. Winterbourne Nursery is no longer for preschool and has been commissioned to take school age children only. Willow Tree Nursery is still suspended as places are allocated for Red Gates School for primary school age.

Many children have SEND but do not have an EHC plan. Early years childcare settings apply to the LA for Special Educational Needs Inclusion Funding (SENIF) to support children with additional needs.

- September 2021 – August 2022 - 178 pre-school children received SENIF
- September 2022 – August 2023 - 250 pre-school children received SENIF
- September 2023 – August 2024 – 364 pre-school children received SENIF

⁶ As of 8th November 2024

⁷ As of November 2024

3. Supply of childcare

3.1 Number of early years providers and places

There are a number of different types of Early Education and Childcare providers, each offering a variety of option for families, as detailed in table 4:

	Provision	Description of offer	Ofsted
PVIs	Day Nursery	Generally, open all year round; usual core hours 8am – 6pm; registered with Ofsted to take children from 3 months – 5 years; can be a stand-alone setting or part of a chain of nurseries; often privately run with a single proprietor.	Must join the Early Years register if caring for children aged from birth to 31 August after their fifth birthday. Need to meet all the safeguarding and welfare and the learning and development requirements of the Statutory requirements for the early years foundation stage.
	Pre-school	Usually operate in line with school hours so open term time only, 9am – 3.30pm; often run from church / community halls; often “pack-away” (need to clear rooms on a daily or weekly basis to allow for other uses); often committee run.	
	Independent	Operate as part of an independent school; term-time only; hours based on the school day.	Not required to register on early years register unless taking children under 2 years.
	Childminder	Most commonly a lone practitioner working from own home; all year-round provision; usually core hours 8am-6pm; able to work with assistants; several now affiliated to a Childminding Agency.	Must join the Early Years register if caring for children aged from birth to 31 August after their fifth birthday. Need to meet all the safeguarding and welfare and the learning and development requirements of the Statutory requirements for the early years foundation stage.
School	Maintained Nursery School	Stand-alone nursery school with head teacher and at least one Qualified Teacher Status staff member; qualified school SENDCo (Special Educational Needs Co-	Not required to register on early years register unless taking children under 2 years.

		ordinator); term-time only; usual hours 9am-3.30pm,	
	Nursery Class	Operate as part of a school or academy, led by school headteacher / principal; term-time only; usual hours 9am-3.30pm.	
	Nanny / Au pair	Also known as 'home childcarers'; look after children of any age in the child's own home. Can look after children from 2 different families at the home of one of the families.	Only need to register on the voluntary part of the Childcare Register if want parents to be able to get help with childcare costs.

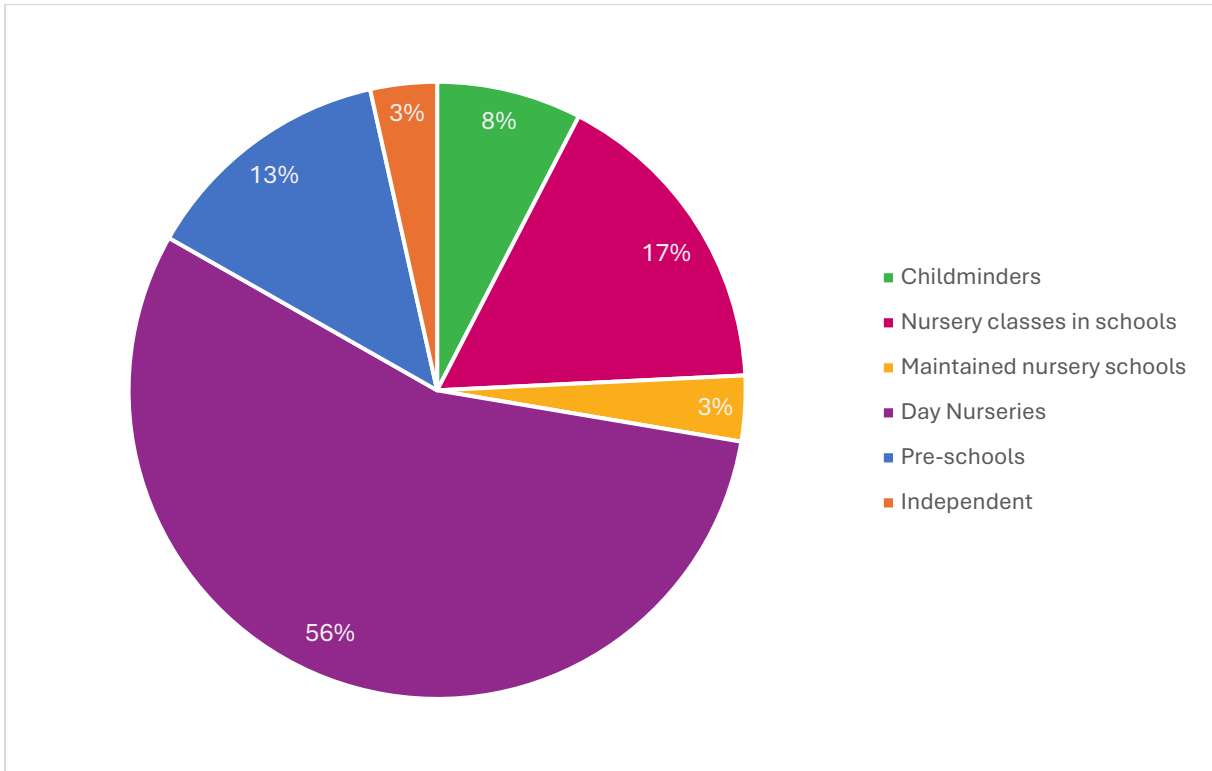
Table 4: Types of Early Education and Childcare providers

In total, there are 543 early years childcare providers in our local authority, offering a maximum of 10,860 full time equivalent early years childcare places:

Type of provision	Number of providers	Number of registered places
Childminders*	330	825
Nursery classes in schools	47	1,806
Maintained nursery schools	5	373
Day nurseries	109	6,034
Pre-schools	42	1,443
Independent schools	10	379

Table 5: Number of providers and registered place, November 2024

*Childminders usually have 2 or 3 early years aged children. For the purpose of this table, an average of 2.5 children has been assumed.



Graph 3: Percentage of places by setting type

For private, voluntary and independent nurseries and childminders, the number of registered places represents the maximum number of children who can be on the premises at any given time. In practice, whilst many providers choose to operate below their number of registered places, for many there is also the challenge of recruiting and retaining staff.

3.2 Early years vacancies

In Croydon we ask providers to report vacancies to us so we can help promote them. Not all choose to do this and therefore we do not have current data on the number of vacancies each setting type has. However, in the Autumn term we went live with this section of the provider portal on Synergy which now enables providers to update their vacancies directly. We hope this will give providers more autonomy for keeping their information up-to-date and will therefore provide us with more accurate vacancy rates. In general, vacancy rates are higher in the autumn, after older children have moved to school. As stated above, many providers do not operate at capacity numbers to ensure a lower adult : child ratio.

3.3 Early years atypical hours

Childcare is most commonly delivered during the typical working day – between 8am and 6pm on weekdays. Some parents require childcare outside these times in order to fit with their work or other responsibilities.

75 childcare providers in Croydon offer atypical hours on weekdays, with the majority of these settings operating from 7.30/7.45am and/or until 6.30pm. All these settings are day nurseries. There are no known settings operating at weekends. It is unknown how many childminders offer childcare outside of the typical hours or at weekends.

3.4 Number of school age providers and places

In total, there are 26 providers offering breakfast childcare, 29 providers offering after-school childcare and 51 providers offering breakfast and after-school care for primary school age children during term time. There are 7 providers offering out of school care, for example drama and art groups and 19 providers offering childcare during the holidays.

Type of provision	Number of providers	Number of registered places
Breakfast club – primary school or PVI	26	925
After-school club – primary school or PVI	29	1,401
Breakfast & after-school – primary school or PVI	51	2,291
Holiday club	19	1,252
Out of school care	7	554
Childminders*	330	825

Table 6: Number of school age providers and registered place, November 2024

**Childminders usually have 2 or 3 early years aged children. For the purpose of this table, an average of 2.5 children has been assumed.*

Other Ofsted registered provision for school aged children include tuition centres. In Croydon there are 21 settings in this category, with capacity for 526 places for after school provision.

4. Funded early education

4.1 Introduction for funded early education

9-month-old – working families

Children aged 9 months, where both parents are working, or from lone parent families where that parent is working, are entitled to 15 funded hours per week (totalling 570 hours). Children are eligible from the term after they turn 9 months old. From September 2025 this will increase to 30 hours.

2-year-old funding for families receiving some additional government support⁸

Some children aged 2 are entitled to 15 hours per week, over 38 weeks per academic year. The criteria for these funded hours is:

- Families are in receipt of certain benefits (including low-income families in receipt of in-work benefits)
- Child is looked after by a local authority
- Child has an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- Child gets Disability Living Allowance
- Child has left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order or a child arrangements order
- Some families who have 'no recourse to public funds' linked to an economic criteria.

The DfE estimates that nationally, about 40% of 2-year-olds are entitled to this offer, but the proportion varies by area.

2-year-old – working families

Children aged 2-year-olds, where both parents are working, or from lone parent families where that parent is working, are entitled to 15 funded hours per week (totalling 570 hours). Children are eligible from the term after they turn 2 years old. From September 2025 this will increase to 30 hours.

3- & 4-year-old – universal offer

All children aged 3 and 4 are entitled to 15 funded hours per week over 38 weeks (570 hours) until they start reception class in a maintained school or academy. This is known as the 'universal offer'. Parents can access these 570 hours over more weeks, with less hours per week, depending on each setting's offer. This is known as a 'stretched offer'. Children are eligible from the term after they turn 3 years old.

3- & 4-year-old – working families

Children aged 3 and 4, where both parents are working, or from lone parent families where that parent is working, are entitled to an additional 15 funded hours per week (totalling 1,140 hours) until they start reception class in school.

⁸ Also referred to as 2-year-old disadvantaged funding

Parents do not have to use all the hours of their funded entitlement, and they may choose to split them between providers.

In April 2023 the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced a number of significant changes to early years education and childcare. These childcare reforms have changed the offer provided to parents. Table 7 explains the changes the reforms have brought and the timeline for implementation. In addition to the childcare reforms, the government announced in the October 2024 budget that it plans to provide breakfast clubs in every primary school, and provide 300 new nurseries in schools. Expressions of interest to take part in the adopter breakfast club programme and to apply for grant funding to open a school-based nursery are open in the autumn term of 2024.

Timeline	Reforms
September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childminder grants became available to those entering the profession.
April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 hours of childcare each week for 38 weeks a year for eligible working parents of 2-year-olds launched.
September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 hours a week of childcare for 38 weeks a year for eligible working parents of children aged 9 months plus launched. The National Wraparound Care support began.
September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 hours of childcare each week for 38 weeks a year for eligible working parents of children aged from 9 months to school age to begin.
September 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All schools able to offer 8am-6pm wraparound on their own or in partnership.

Table 7: timeline for childcare reforms

4.2 Take up of funded early education – code validation

Table 8 shows the autumn 2024 local authority codes issued and validated for children aged 2 and under 2.

		Codes issued	Codes validated	Percentage validated
Total	England	367,947	321,462	87%
	London	43,462	35,095	81%
	Croydon	2,701	2,266	84%
Age 2	England	-	-	-
	London	-	-	-
	Croydon	793	670	84%
Age under 2	England	-	-	-
	London	-	-	-
	Croydon	1,908	1,596	84%

Table 8: Autumn 2024 Local Authority Codes issued and validated for 2 and under 2⁹

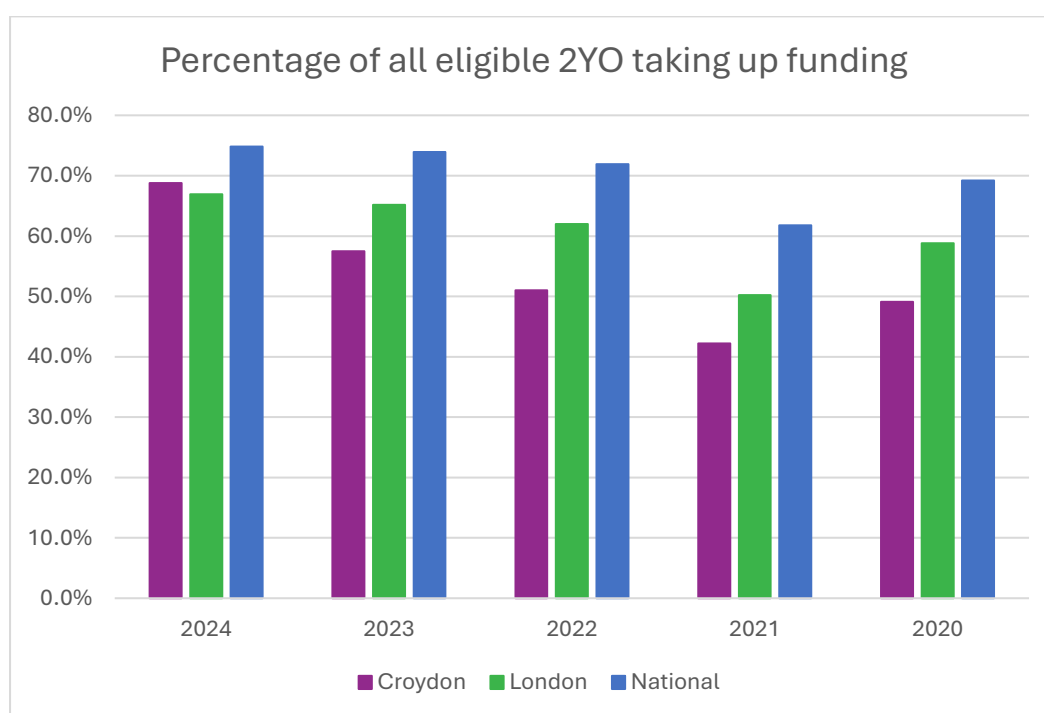
⁹ <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/fast-track/8ae9bd9d-c48d-4e71-ad9c-08dcedcfecfd>

4.3 Take up of funded early education – 2-year-olds (2YOs) from families receiving some additional government support

The percentage of children in Croydon that are taking up 2YO funding has increased year on year since 2021. The take-up of 2YO funded places is shown in table 9. In 2024, the percentage of 2YO taking up places was higher in Croydon compared to the London figure but lower than the National figure.

Year	Estimate of 2YOs eligible for funding Croydon	Number of funded 2YOs Croydon	Percentage of all eligible 2YOs Croydon	Percentage of all eligible 2YOs London	Percentage of all eligible 2YOs Nationally
2024	1,322	910	68.8%	66.9%	74.8%
2023	1,549	890	57.5%	65.2%	73.9%
2022	1,680	857	51.0%	62.0%	71.9%
2021	1,801	760	42.2%	50.2%	61.8%
2020	2,066	1,014	49.1%	58.8%	69.2%

Table 9: take-up of 2-year-old funding¹⁰



Graph 3: percentage of all eligible 2YO taking up funding¹¹

¹⁰ <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/education-provision-children-under-5>

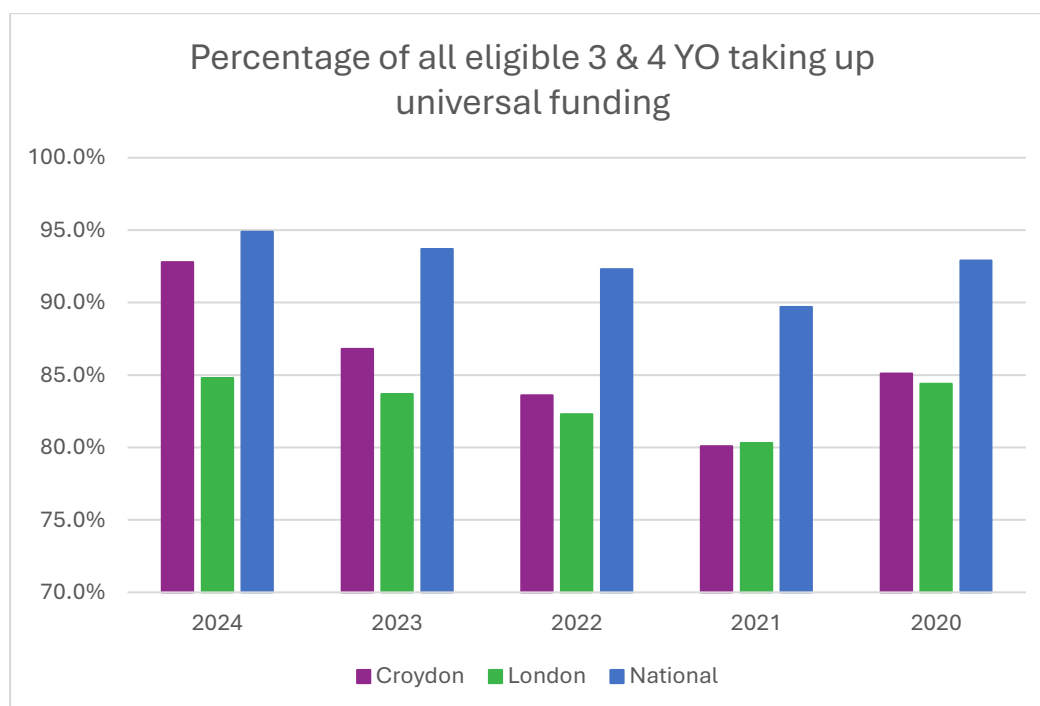
¹¹ <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/education-provision-children-under-5>

4.4 Take up of funded early education – 3- and 4-year-olds – universal offer (15 hours per week) and additional 15 hours

The percentage of children in Croydon that are taking up 3 & 4YO funding has increased year on year since 2021. The take-up of 3 & 4YO funded places is shown in table 10. For the last three years, the percentage of 3 & 4YO taking up places was higher in Croydon compared to the London figure but lower than the National figure.

Year	Estimate of 3 & 4YOs eligible for funding Croydon	Number of funded 3 & 4YOs Croydon	Percentage of all eligible 3 & 4YOs - Croydon	Percentage of all eligible 3 & 4YOs - London	Percentage of all eligible 3 & 4YOs - Nationally
2024	9,705	9,010	92.8%	84.8%	94.9%
2023	10,157	8,819	86.8%	83.7%	93.7%
2022	10,664	8,915	83.6%	82.3%	92.3%
2021	11,157	8,935	80.1%	80.3%	89.7%
2020	11,304	9,624	85.1%	84.4%	92.9%

Table 10: take-up of 3-and 4-year-old funding¹²



Graph 4: percentage of all eligible 3 & 4 YO taking up funding¹³

¹² <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/education-provision-children-under-5>

¹³ <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/education-provision-children-under-5>

4.5 Take up of funded entitlement applications – 3- and 4-year-olds – local data

The extended hours funding is for working parents. Parents who think they are entitled to the extended hours place apply for this online through the Government’s Childcare Choices website. The same website is used to apply for all working family and tax-free childcare. If a parent is eligible, the system creates a code which they can use with their chosen childcare provider. If they are ineligible, they will still be entitled to the universal 15 hours of early education and childcare.

Term	Number of children accessing universal hours funding - Croydon	Number of children accessing extended hours funding - Croydon
Summer 2024/25	6,828	2,461
Spring 2023/24	5,994	2,544
Autumn 2023/24	4,578	2,000
Summer 2023/24	6,364	2,816

Table 11: local data on the number of children taking up universal and extended hours funding from synergy

4.6 Providers offering funded early education places

Providers are paid directly by government for delivering funded early education. They are not required to offer funded places to parents, but of course parents may choose to use a different provider if they do not. Some providers offer a restricted number of funded places.

5. Sufficiency of places

5.1 Places required for September 2025

The Department for Education (DfE) supplied all local authorities with predictions of the number of places which could be required to fulfil the demand of the expanded funding streams available to children of working families from April 2024. It is estimated that in Croydon, 363 places will need to be created by September 2025 which is an estimated 7% increase in the estimated supply of childcare hours for under 2's. It is estimated that there will be sufficient places for over 2's.

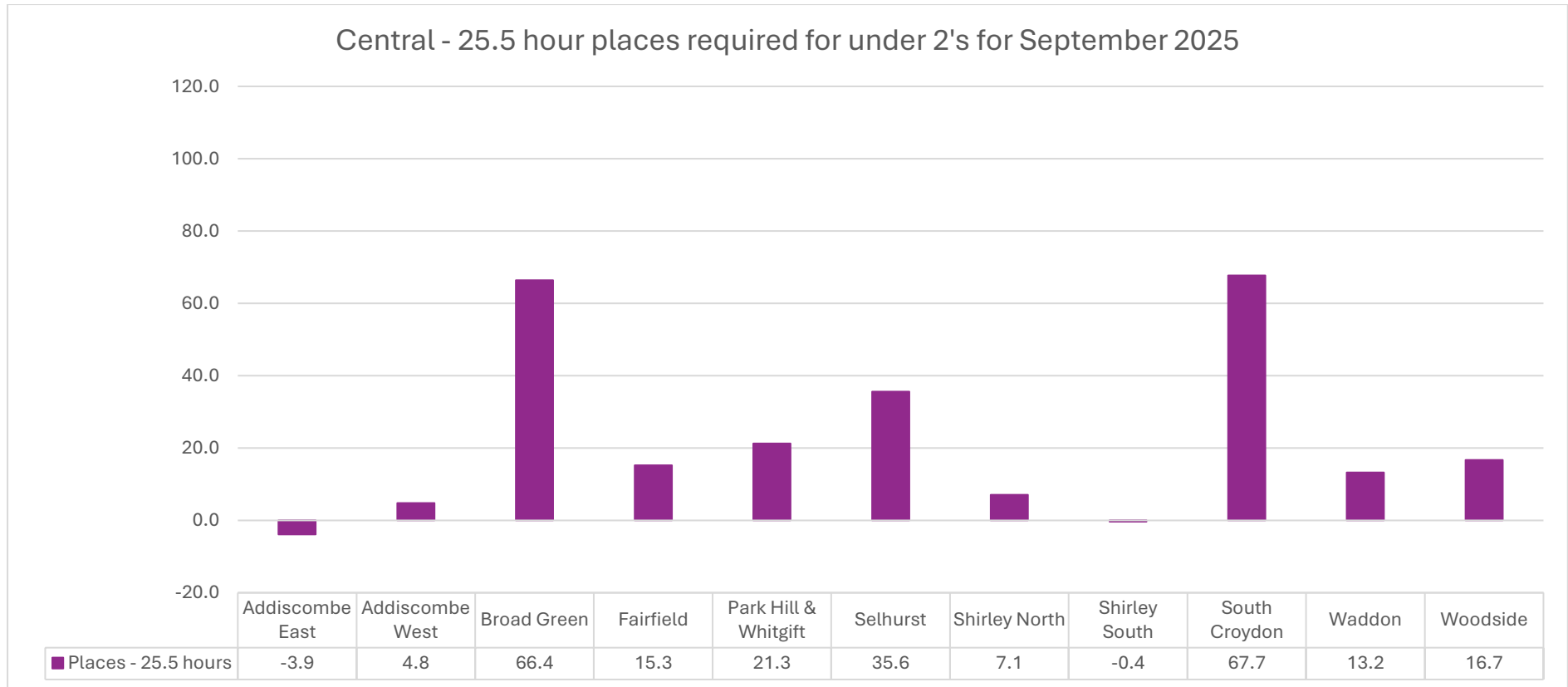
September 2025

363 places needed
+7%

The modelling from the DfE considered demand, supply and need in terms of hours which is then converted to places. The DfE have estimated that most parents will take-up 25.5 hours on average, tables 12 – 14 show the breakdown of estimated demand by locality and ward for September 2025.

CENTRAL	Under 2's Shortfall in hours	Under 2's Surpluses in hours	Total shortfall in hours	Shortfall converted to 25.5-hour places
Addiscombe East	0	-99	-99	-3.9
Addiscombe West	122	0	122	4.8
Broad Green	1,694	0	1,694	66.4
Fairfield	389	0	389	15.3
Park Hill & Whitgift	542	0	542	21.3
Selhurst	909	0	909	35.6
Shirley North	181	0	181	7.1
Shirley South	0	-9	-9	-0.4
South Croydon	1,727	0	1,727	67.7
Waddon	338	0	338	13.2
Woodside	427	0	427	16.7
TOTAL	6,330	-108	6,222	244.0

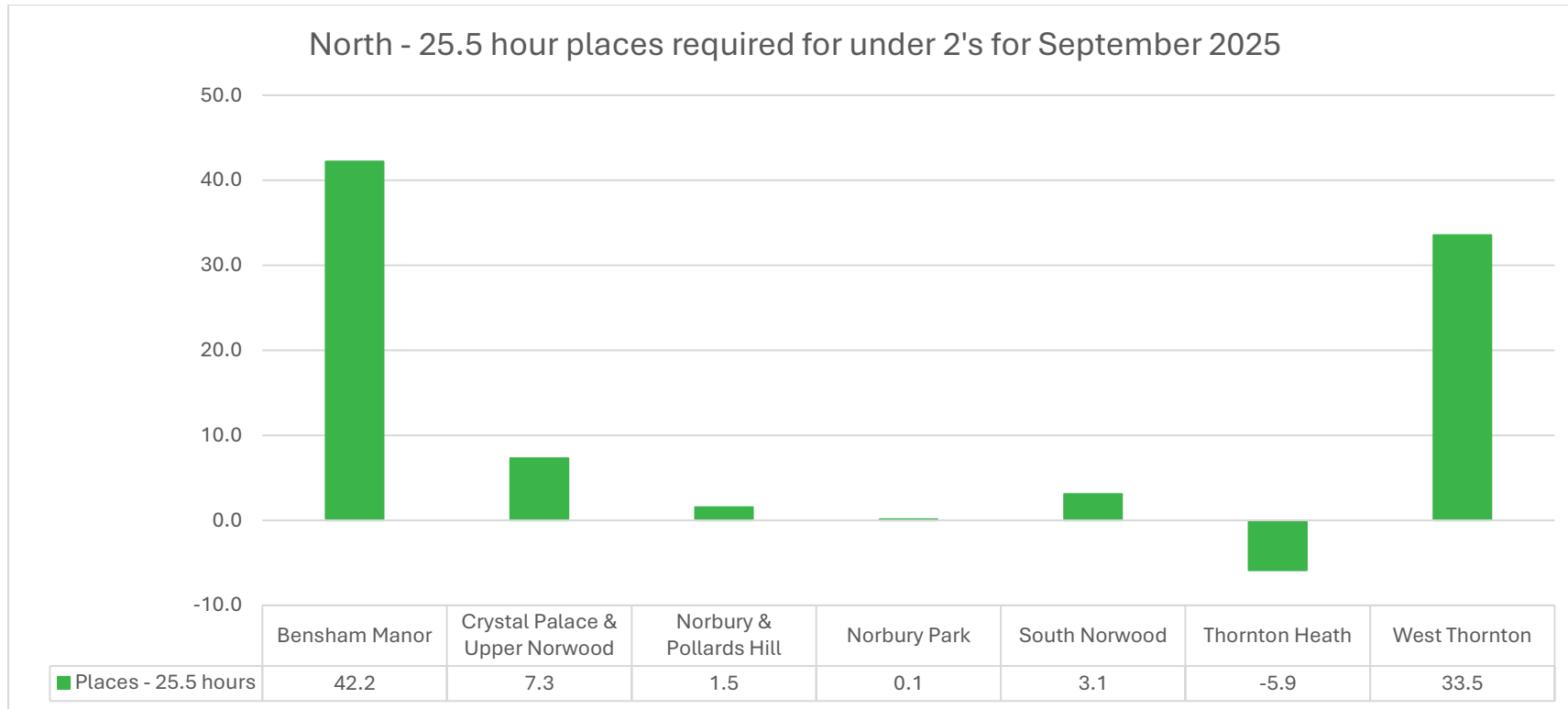
Table 12: ward breakdown of estimated demand for Central for September 2025



Graph 5: ward breakdown of estimated demand for Central for September 2025

NORTH	Under 2's Shortfall in hours	Under 2's Surpluses in hours	Total shortfall in hours	Shortfall converted to 25.5-hour places
Bensham Manor	1,076	0	1,076	42.2
Crystal Palace & Upper Norwood	187	0	187	7.3
Norbury & Pollards Hill	39	0	39	1.5
Norbury Park	3	0	3	0.1
South Norwood	79	0	79	3.1
Thornton Heath	0	-150	-150	-5.9
West Thornton	855	0	855	33.5
TOTAL	2,239	-150	2,089	81.9

Table 13: ward breakdown of estimated demand for North for September 2025

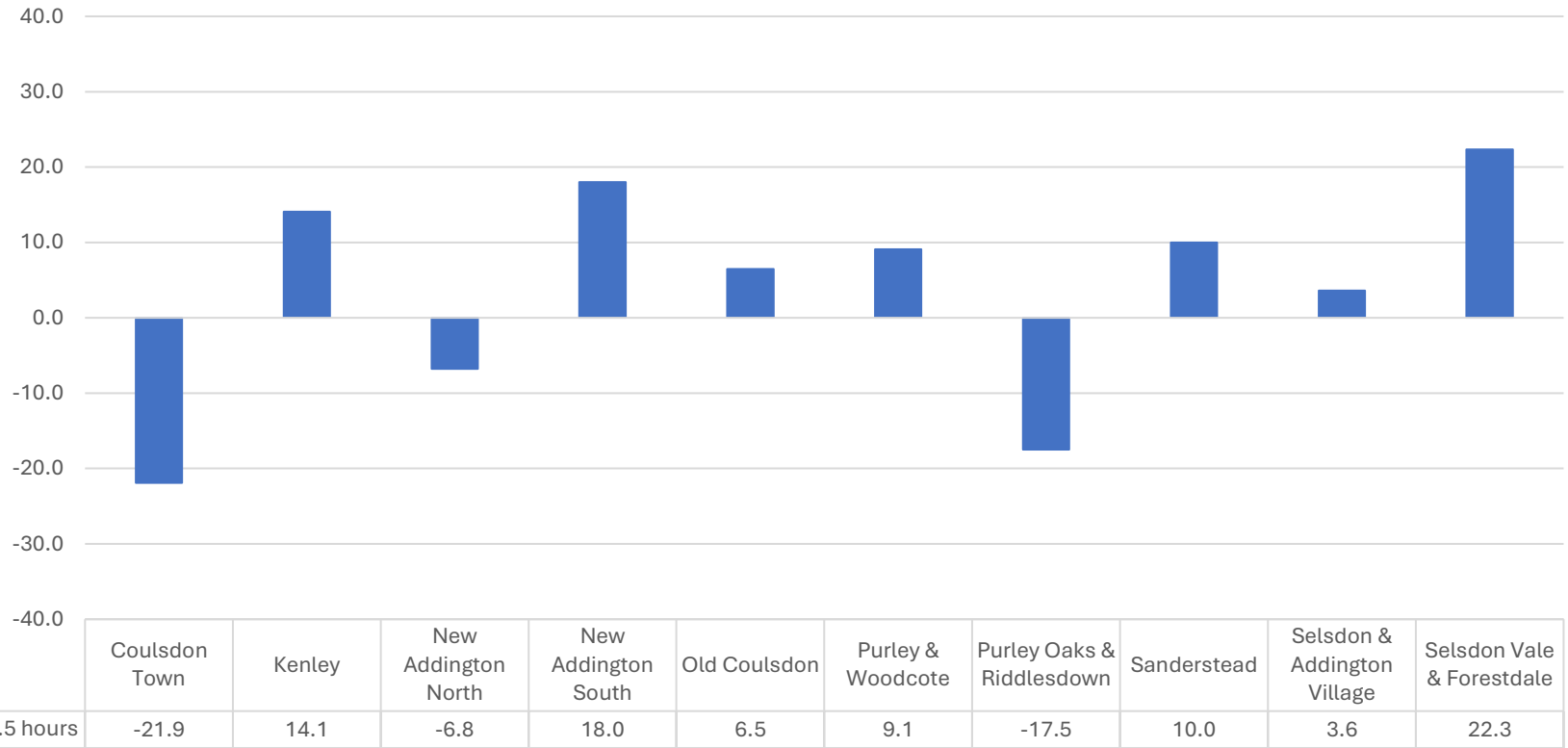


Graph 6: ward breakdown of estimated demand for North for September 2025

SOUTH	Under 2's Shortfall in hours	Under 2's Surpluses in hours	Total shortfall in hours	Shortfall converted to 25.5-hour places
Coulsdon Town	0	-558	-558	-21.9
Kenley	359	0	359	14.1
New Addington North	0	-173	-173	-6.8
New Addington South	459	0	459	18.0
Old Coulsdon	165	0	165	6.5
Purley & Woodcote	231	0	231	9.1
Purley Oaks & Riddlesdown	0	-446	-446	-17.5
Sanderstead	255	0	255	10.0
Selsdon & Addington Village	92	0	92	3.6
Selsdon Vale & Forestdale	569	0	569	22.3
TOTAL	2,131	1,177	954	37.4

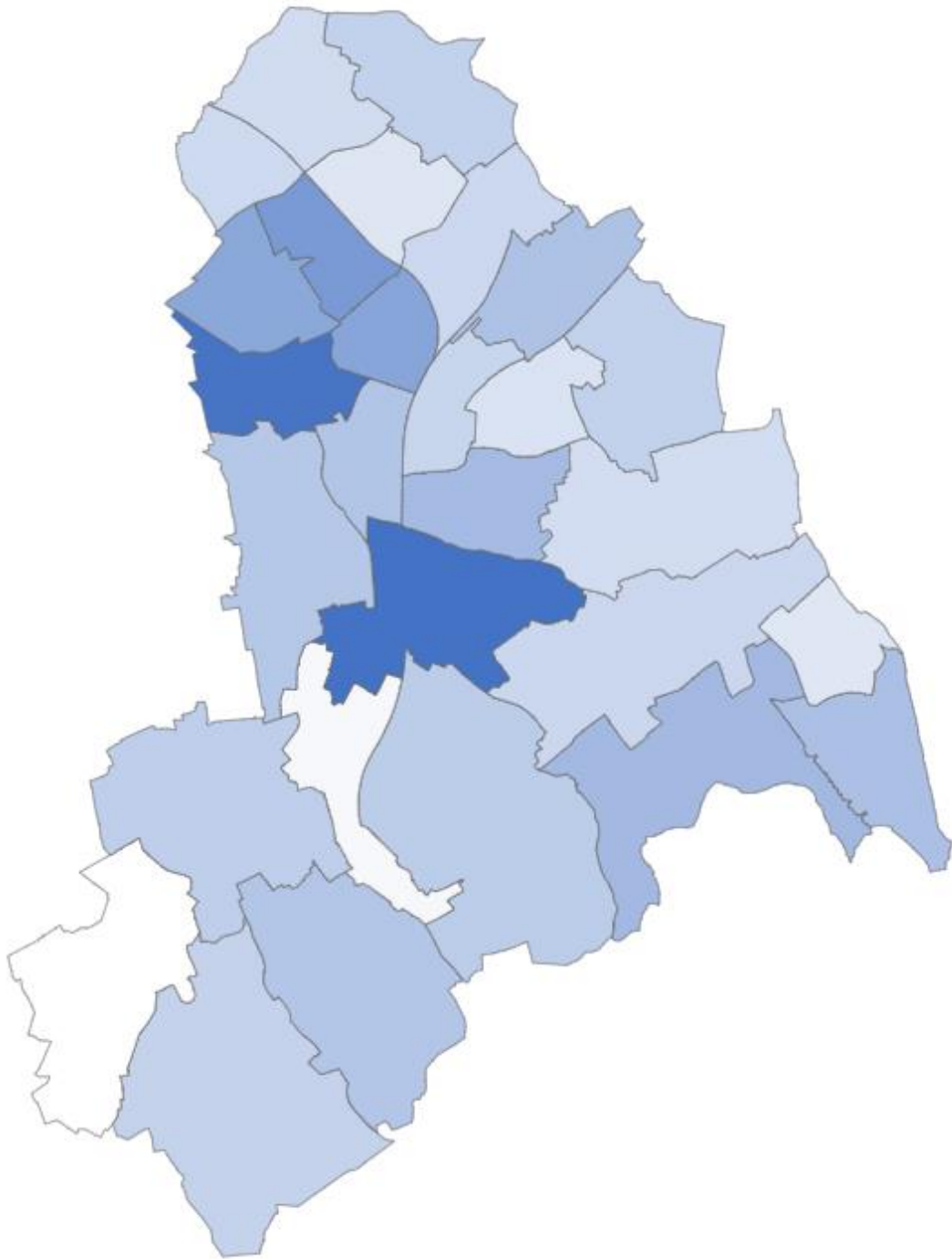
Table 14: ward breakdown of estimated demand for South for September 2025

South - 25.5 hour places required for under 2's for September 2025



Graph 6: ward breakdown of estimated demand for South for September 2025

Shortfall of 25.5 hour places by ward - September 2025



Map 1: map showing ward breakdown of estimated demand for September 2025

6. Prices

6.1 Prices of early years childcare

The Government funding is paid at an hourly rate. Currently the rates in Croydon are:

Working families Under 2's £12.96 per hour	Working families 2-year-olds £9.51 per hour	Disadvantaged 2-year-olds £9.81 per hour	Universal offer 3- & 4-year-olds £6.35 per hour	Working families 3- & 4-year-olds £6.35 per hour
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For early years childcare outside the funded entitlements, most settings offer a range of options for families. Table 15 below shows the average hourly rates, as reported to us by settings. There may be variations to prices based on the number of hours a family uses, with reductions for longer hours, or discounts for sibling groups. There may be additional payments for additional services, e.g. lunch, snacks, nappies, wipes sun cream etc. which are not included in these prices.

Generally, the charges vary by age group in line with statutory adult : child ratios which are 1:3 for 0–2-year-olds; 1:5 for 2–3-year-olds and 1:8 for 3–4-year-olds (1:13 when a qualified teacher or Early Years teacher is present).

Setting type	Average hourly rate								
	0–2-year-olds			2–3-year-olds			3–4-year-olds		
	South	Central	North	South	Central	North	South	Central	North
Day Nursery	£7.40	£7.50	£7.70	£7.30	£7.30	£7.60	£7.10	£7.00	£7.50
Pre-school	N/A	N/A	N/A	£7.40	£8.30	£8.60	£7.30	£7.80	£8.30
School	N/A	N/A	N/A	£7.80	£7.30	£9.30	£6.40	£7.50	£7.00
Childminder	Average £7.50								

Table 15: average hourly rates of early years childcare by setting type

6.2 Prices of school age childcare

For school age children, families can access childcare through breakfast clubs (these are usually run by schools); after-school clubs (again, usually run by schools); childminders and holiday clubs (often using schools as the venue but run by independent businesses). The average cost per hour for each of these services is detailed below in localities:

Provision type	Average hourly rate		
	South	Central	North
Breakfast club	£5.00	£4.80	£5.60
After school club	£5.20	£5.50	£5.20
School age childminder	Average £7.50		
Holiday club	£6.50	£5.00	£5.40

Table 16: average hourly rates of school age childcare by setting type

In addition, a small number of tuition centres offer places for children after school and at the weekends or during school holidays. These include academic tuition centres and art centres. Prices vary considerably but are £25 per hour on average.

7. Quality of childcare in Croydon

7.1 Ofsted inspection grades

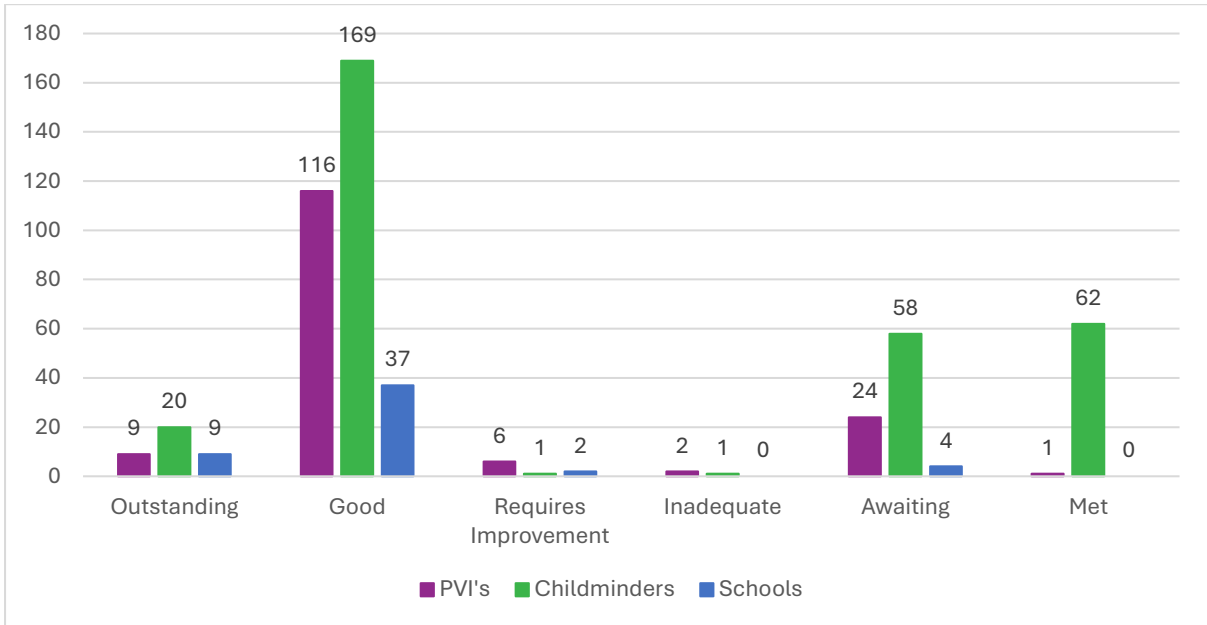
All childcare providers must register with and be inspected by Ofsted, who give them an overall grade for the quality of their provision. Childminders and private and voluntary providers are on the Early Years Register, and schools and standalone maintained nursery schools are on the schools' register. The grades for both registers are equivalent. Schools with nurseries have an overall inspection grade for the whole school and most also have a separate early years grade.

Prior to September 2024, both schools and early years providers had four possible Ofsted grades: 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement', and 'inadequate'¹⁴. Some providers are still awaiting their first full inspection. In September 2024, the inspection outcomes for schools were changed with the removal of the grade for overall effectiveness however Ofsted will continue to grade the four sub-areas (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management).

To receive funding from the Local Authority, settings cannot be graded as 'inadequate'. To receive funding for 2-year-old funding for families receiving some additional government support places, settings must be judged 'good' or 'outstanding'. Settings are able to offer funded places for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds whilst they are awaiting their first Ofsted grading.

When providers do not have any children on site at the time of their first inspection, they are given an Ofsted grade of 'met' or 'not met'. This shows whether they are meeting the requirements for Ofsted registration, and usually happens when new providers are being set up. Graph 7 below shows the number of Ofsted gradings for Croydon settings:

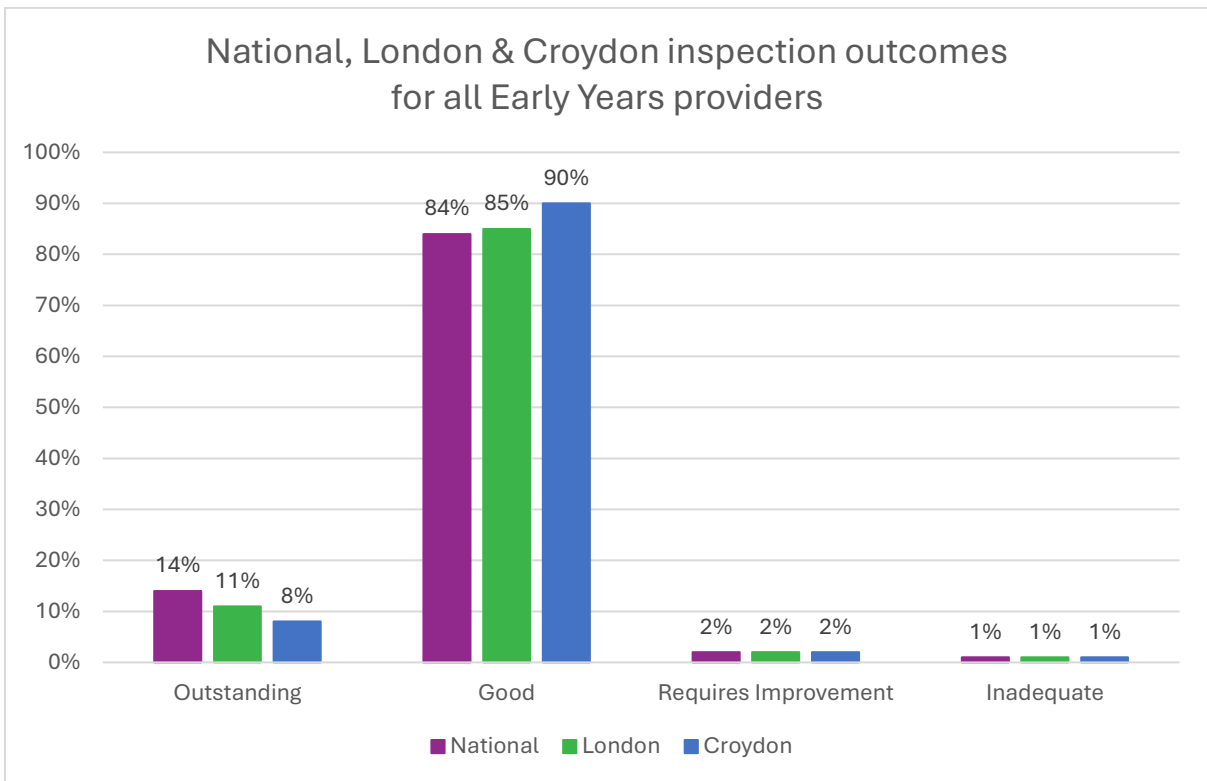
¹⁴ For more information see <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/about-our-inspection-reports>



Graph 7: Ofsted gradings for Croydon settings

Of the 521 settings which have received an Ofsted grading, 69% are 'Good' or 'Outstanding' and 3% are 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate'.

As at the end of the Summer term of 2024, Croydon has less early years settings judged to be 'outstanding' in comparison to national and London figures, however Croydon has more settings judged to be 'good' compared to national and London figures, see graph 8:



Graph 8: National, London and Croydon early years inspection outcomes

8. Parents/carers and providers views of sufficiency in Croydon

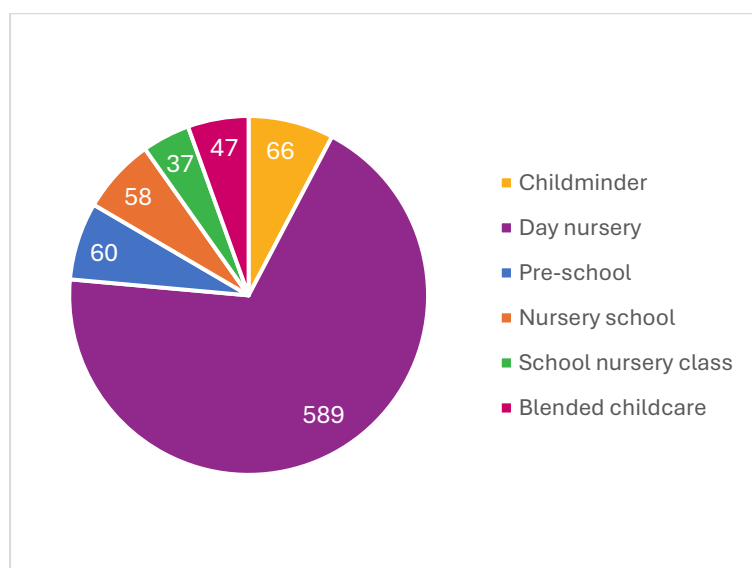
8.1 Parent/carers survey

An online questionnaire was sent out to parents/carers of children currently attending early years settings across the Borough to assess the need for places in light of the Childcare Reforms being rolled out from April 2024. There were a total of 939 responses. 857 respondents said they were currently accessing childcare and 82 said they were not.

Respondents were asked what type of childcare they used.

Type of provider	Number of children
Childminder	66
Day nursery	589
Pre-school	60
Nursery school	58
School nursery class	37
Blended childcare	47

Table 17: type of childcare used



Graph 9: type of childcare used

Respondents, who are currently accessing places, were asked how those places were paid for:

- 497 respondents were paying for all of their childcare hours.
- 222 respondents were blending both government funded hours with paid for hours.
- 138 respondents were accessing funded hours only.

Of the 138 respondents who were only accessing funded hours, 87 were accessing 2-year-old funding; 114 were accessing 15 hours of 3/4 yr old funding; and 159 were accessing the 30 hours (extended) 3/4 yr old funding.

Almost all respondents were interested in accessing funding places. The majority were keen to access 2-year-old funding for both 15 hours per week and 30 hours per week (477 respondents).

266 respondents would access both the 2-year-old funding (15 hours per week and 30 hours per week) and the funding available to children from 9 months old (15 hours per week and 30 hours per week).

94 respondents were interested in the funding for 9 months old (15 hours per week and 30 hours per week) only.

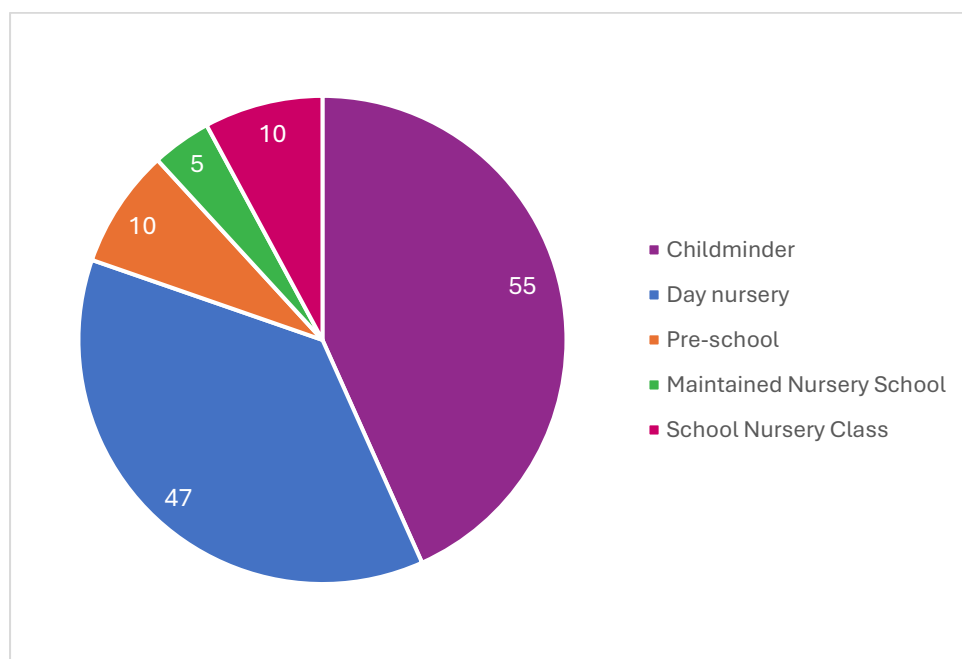
Finally, respondents were asked how the funding available under the Childcare Reforms would affect them. There were 829 responses:

- 346 said that they would use the funding to increase the number of hours their child attended an early years setting.
- 483 said that they would not increase the number of hours attended but it would reduce their childcare costs.

8.2 Provider survey

Providers of early years childcare were sent a questionnaire in relation to their capacity to increase the number of places available when the Childcare Reforms were rolled out from April 2024. A total of 127 responses were received.

The majority of responses were from childminders and day nurseries. All 5 maintained nursery schools responded.



Graph 10: number of responses to survey

Settings were asked about numbers of children and funded places. Of the 127 respondents, 100 accepted funded children and 27 only provided for fee-paying children. The majority of settings currently provide for 2-year-olds and of the 27 settings which do not, 12 said they are considering it from April 2024 (it was mostly school settings which are not considering taking 2-year-olds). The main reasons cited for not expanding provision for 2-year-olds included lack of accommodation space and concerns over funding rates.

Settings were then asked about taking babies (from 9 months old). 40 of the 127 settings currently provide for babies and a further 57 settings said they were considering providing for babies from September 2024. The main reasons cited for not expanding provision for babies included lack of suitable accommodation and availability of staff.

8.3 Next steps

In preparation for the last phase of the childcare reform / expansion from September 2025, the following steps will be undertaken:

- Review of previous survey questions.
- Parent/carer survey to be launched Spring 2025.
- Implement termly provider surveys commencing Spring 2025.
- Implement annual data collection via Synergy for the Sufficiency Assessment, commencing Summer 2025.
- Review of wards where data identifies a shortfall of places to look at neighbouring wards and transport links for accessibility of places.
- Work with providers in areas of need to ascertain their ability and desire to expand their provision to create additional places and support them with expansion.