

Brent Childcare Sufficiency

2024-2025 UPDATE

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Context

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment provides an opportunity to examine current patterns of supply and demand for childcare in order to assess progress. Data gathering for this update uses take-up figures from Autumn 2024 headcount. The headcount indicates numbers of children who are taking up their entitlements to free early education at Brent private, voluntary and independent (PVI), childminder and school settings.

In Spring 2023 the Chancellor announced an expansion to the entitlements to free childcare for working families. The expansion has been implemented in a phased way with 15 hours of childcare for working families of 2 year olds in April 2024 and 15 hours of childcare for working families of children 9+ months having started in September 2024. From September 2025 this entitlement will expand further to 30 hours for working families of children 9+ months to school age. This expansion is having a significant impact on supply and demand for childcare places and a further update of this document will be provided to reflect these changes. Alongside the expansion of early years places, investment being made to expand the before and after school offer available. Schools can also apply to Brent for funding to expand their wraparound offer 8am-6pm. The Government has committed to offering a free breakfast club in every state-funded school with primary aged pupils in England (the new breakfast club offer). Several Brent schools have successfully applied to be adopter schools from 2025 to 2026 to test and learn how best to implement the new breakfast clubs ahead of national rollout.

Summary

Childcare supply in Brent – an overview

There is under-fives provision across all ward areas offering childcare places for 0-5s. There are variances across ward areas in registered place capacity with a difference of 677 registered places between the ward with the greatest (Roundwood) and fewest (Wembley Park) places. There is a balance of free entitlement places being delivered across different setting types. Overall quality of provision has improved with 97.6% of active providers across the PVI and childminder sector now judged as good or outstanding by Ofsted.

Registered childcare for school aged children is less consistently available across the borough with 2 ward areas having no before or afterschool school provision.

Demand for childcare in Brent– an overview

Brent council has a duty to ensure there is sufficient childcare to meet demand from families. Currently there appears to be sufficient provision to meet parental need as evidenced by vacancies in all areas across the borough. There are not, however, vacancies in all sector types (i.e., private, voluntary and independent providers, schools and childminders) in all ward areas. It is likely that some parents cannot access either the provision they want, at the times they want or at the right price to suit their budget. This is reflected in a parental survey conducted as part of this assessment (summary report attached as Appendix B) where 60% of parents indicated that childcare available met their needs. Cost was identified as the main barrier in accessing appropriate provision.

Take up of (demand for) the free entitlements to childcare for 2, 3, and 4 year olds is improving in some age ranges. Figures on take up are provided to local authorities by the Department for Education (DfE) on an annual basis in the summer of each year based on January census returns. The last release of these figures (June 2024) indicated take up in Brent as of January 2024 was 84.8% for 3- and 4-year-olds, an increase of over 5% on the previous year. Take up of the 2 year

old entitlement for families on lower incomes (also referred to as families accessing additional government support) increased to 65.4% last year but has now declined to 59.2%. The proportionate take up for working families with children 9+ months is not yet being provided to local authorities. At the Autumn 2024 headcount there were 774 two-year-olds in working families and 596 9-23 month olds in working families accessing childcare in Brent. Childcare places for those not claiming free entitlements are not captured in headcount information nor is this information currently collected from providers. Some providers have reported reduced demand for places and particularly for those places outside the free entitlements.

Plans for childcare in Brent

Sufficiency of childcare supply and demand in Brent is monitored against key indicators at ward area. This is used to identify priority areas of need and implement targeted support to ensure adequate supply and localised marketing to drive up demand.

It is anticipated that there will be significant change to the supply of and demand for childcare in 2025 in light of the further expansion of free entitlements to childcare for working families. Alongside this by 2026, all parents and carers of primary school-aged children who need it will be able to access term time childcare in their local area from 8am-6pm so that parents can access employment. This childcare will continue to be paid for by parents alongside the aforementioned pilot of a scheme to introduce funded breakfast club provision for all primary school children.

Sufficiency mapping exercises have already taken place to measure provider interest in delivery of the expanded entitlements and their capacity to meet potential increased demand. Capital funding is being used to incentivise providers to expand to meet this capacity. Similarly central government funding is being offered expand the supply of and demand for wraparound provision.

A Brent Childcare strategy encompassing the expanded entitlements and wraparound provision will be developed in 2025. Alongside this sits the Family Hubs and Start for Life offer which focuses on ensuring integrated pathway for families from pregnancy into the first 1001 days and beyond. This programme was initially funded 2022-2025 and has now been expanded for a further year. The programme involves early years and health providers, voluntary sector and local authority services. This offer provides a commitment to families that staff across agencies will know the pathway and can signpost accordingly. Irrespective of which agency the contact is from, staff will be aware of key milestones and can refer to these providing multiple points for families to access information and support. A partnership involving local authority teams including Family Wellbeing Centres, health teams, Job Centre Plus, voluntary sector and parent representatives to set a borough wide ambition for early years is in place and this group will report to the Early Help and Prevention Board. This partnership will also be key in addressing issues of demand management in the early years sector by supporting all families to take up their entitlement to early years provision.

Brent context

Characteristics of children and families

Census 2021 figures indicate that there are approximately 20,000 0-4 year olds, 19,800 children aged 5-9, and 20,900 children aged 10-14 living in Brent. These children may require childcare before and after school, and/or during the school holidays. For purposes of this sufficiency analysis the GLA borough preferred preferences have been used for population modelling.

The 2021 Census recorded that 65.4% of the total population of Brent is Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME). This is the second highest proportion in England and Wales. There are 149 languages spoken in Brent with 66.3% of the population speaking English as their home language. In 1 in 5 households nobody speaks English as their home language (the highest rate in the UK). Other than English, Gujarati, Romanian, Arabic, Portuguese and Polish are the most frequently spoken languages. Numbers of Romanian speakers have trebled since the last census with

reductions in the number of Polish speakers. 75.6% of babies born in Brent were to mothers born outside the UK.

Supply of childcare in Brent

Figures 1-3 below illustrate the spread of provision by type across the borough and the varying registered 0-5 places across ward areas. While some families are willing to travel to access their preferred provider, for many parents location is a key determinant of preferred provision. To that end, a spread of provision across the borough so that families in all ward areas can make use of provision locally is a priority. There is childcare provision for under-fives in all provider types in the vast majority of ward areas in the borough. There is PVI, childminder and school provision in all ward areas with the exception of Wembley Park which has only PVI providers, Wembley Central where there is no school based early years provision. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate that the largest number of 0-5 registered places are found in Stonebridge ward (765) of which the majority (66%) of these places are being offered in the PVI sector. Roundwood and Harlesden and Kensal Green wards have the second and third largest number of places (642 and 542 respectively). The smallest number of registered places by ward are found in Sudbury (190) followed by Wembley Park (191) and Kingsbury (209).

Figure 1: 0-5 childcare providers in Brent – Autumn 2024

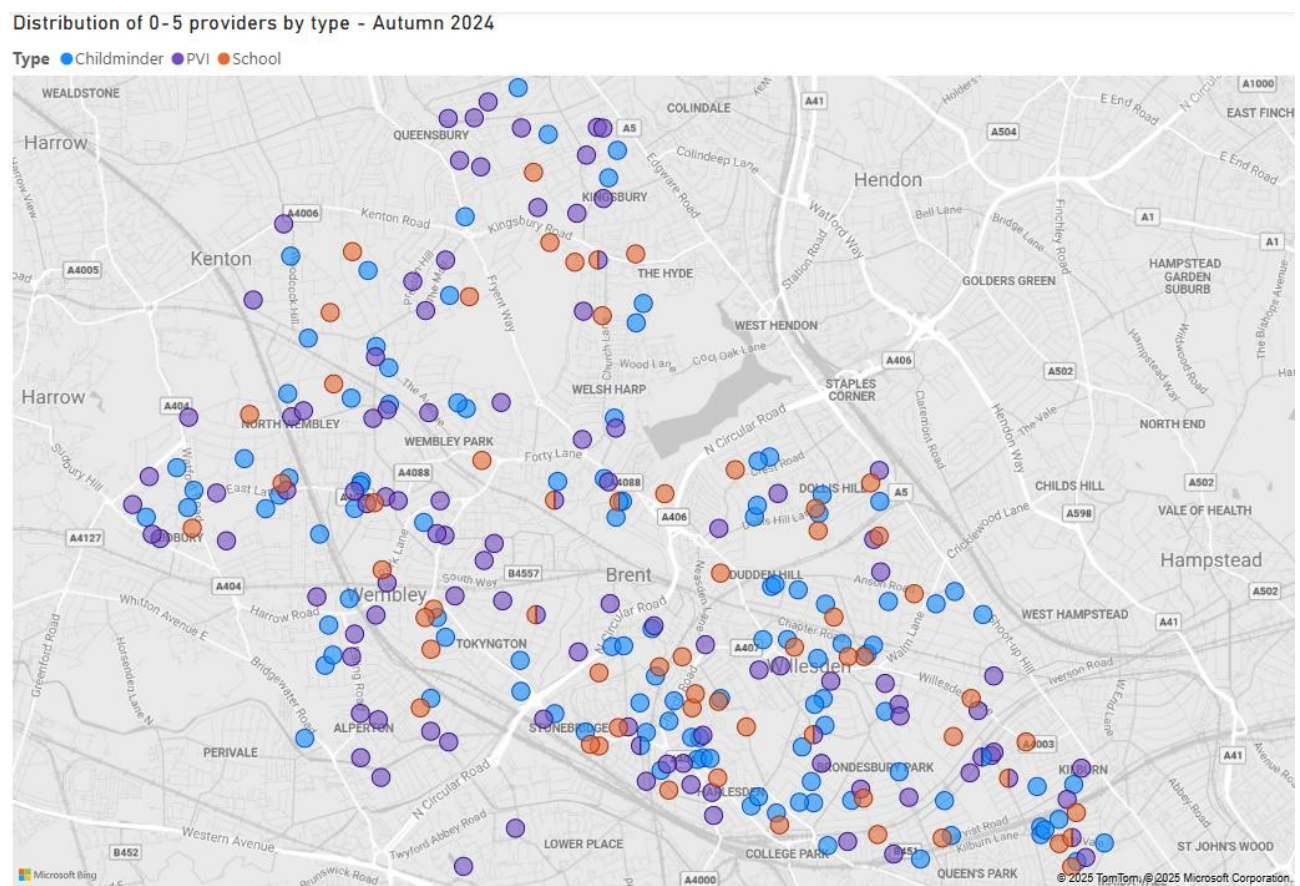


Figure 2: Distribution of childcare places in Brent

Registered places by ward - Autumn 2024

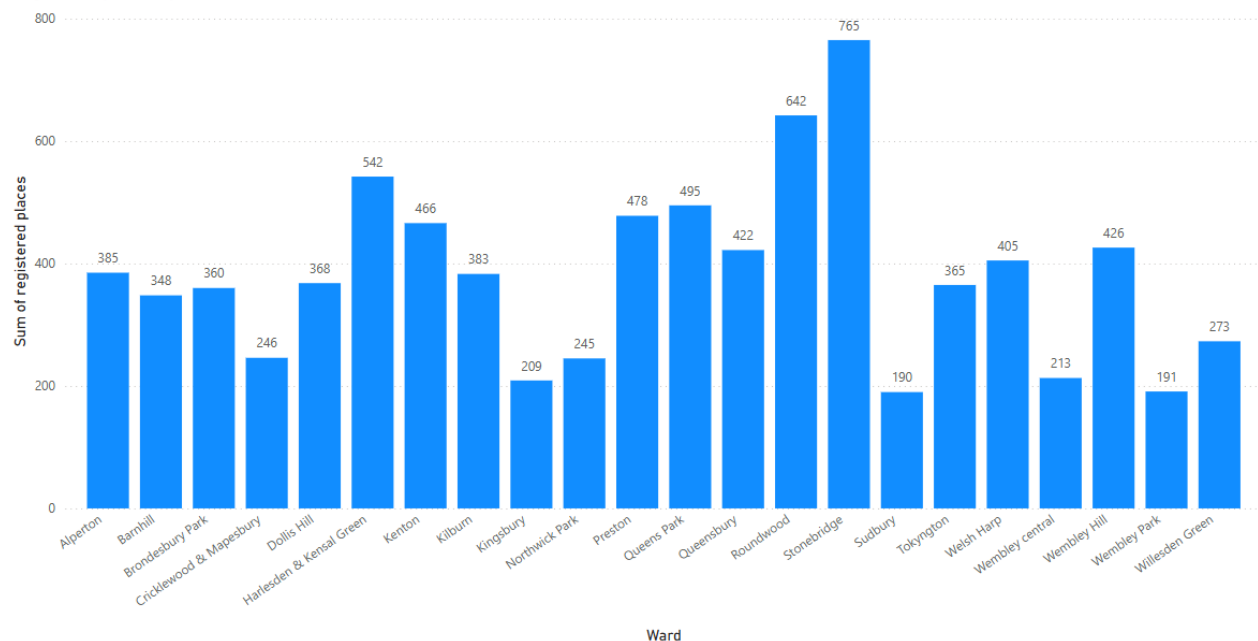
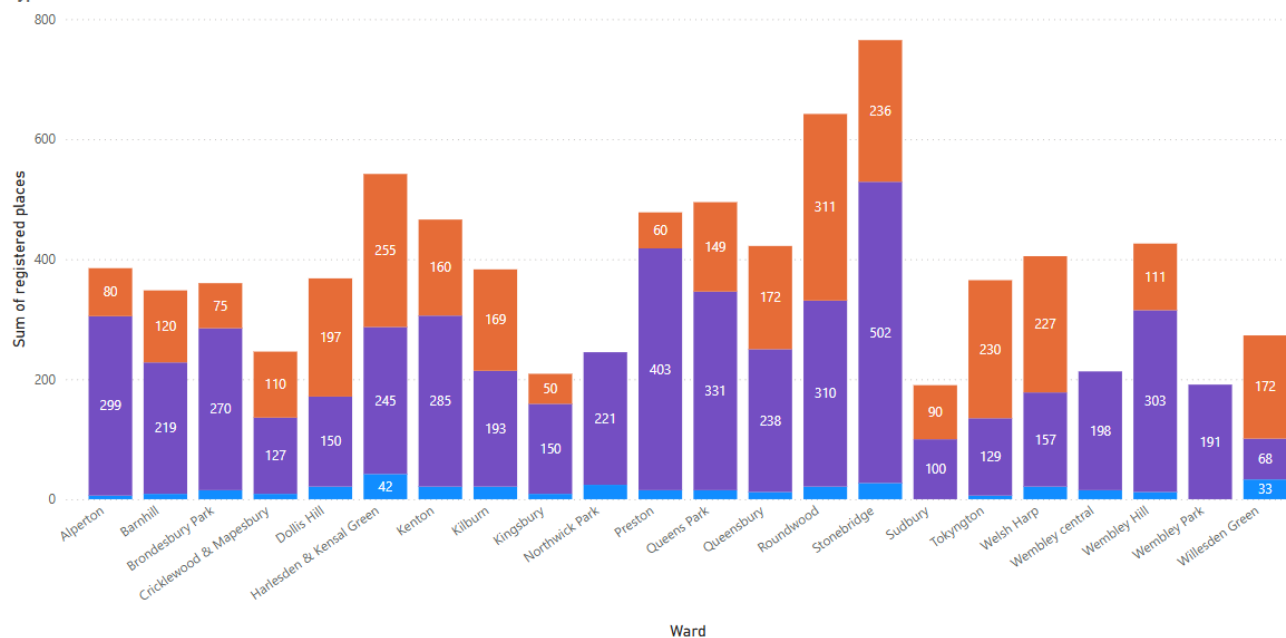


Figure 3: Registered places by provider type Dec 2024

Registered places by ward - Autumn 2024

Type ● Childminder ● PVI ● School



Changes in supply

As illustrated in Figure 4, the decline in the number of childminder providers in the borough has increased this year. Nationally Ofsted¹ report that the decline in childminding numbers has slowed year on year since 21/22 due to a decreasing number of leavers. In addition, there are a number of Brent childminders that whilst still registered with Ofsted, may no longer be taking on new children as they are in the process of closing (ie have notified Ofsted but this notification has not yet been processed) and anecdotal evidence suggests that genuinely available places may be lower than the figure given.

5 group based PVI providers closed in the period Jan - December 2024. One of these providers reopened under an amended registration. 8 providers opened. This included two providers opening a second site within the borough and one provider who closed a related registration early 2025.

Figure 4: Trends in provision by type - December 2024

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>2024 number of providers</i>	<i>2024 number of registered 0-5 places</i>	<i>2023 Number of providers</i>	<i>2023 Number of registered 0-5 places</i>	<i>2022 Number of providers</i>	<i>2022 Number of registered places</i>
Childminders	121	354**	129	749*	132	791*
Nursery classes in schools	49	2612	50	2664	50	2664
Maintained nursery schools	4	362	4	362	4	362
Private, voluntary and independent nurseries	113	5089	110	5037	111	5051
Total **	288	8417	293	8812	297	8868*

* full registration figure for childminders ** proxy of 3 places for under 5s has been included for childminders in 2025

NB 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. Children may attend childcare full time or part time. In practice, many providers choose to operate below their number of registered places. This table records number of places for which a provider is registered. In some cases, two

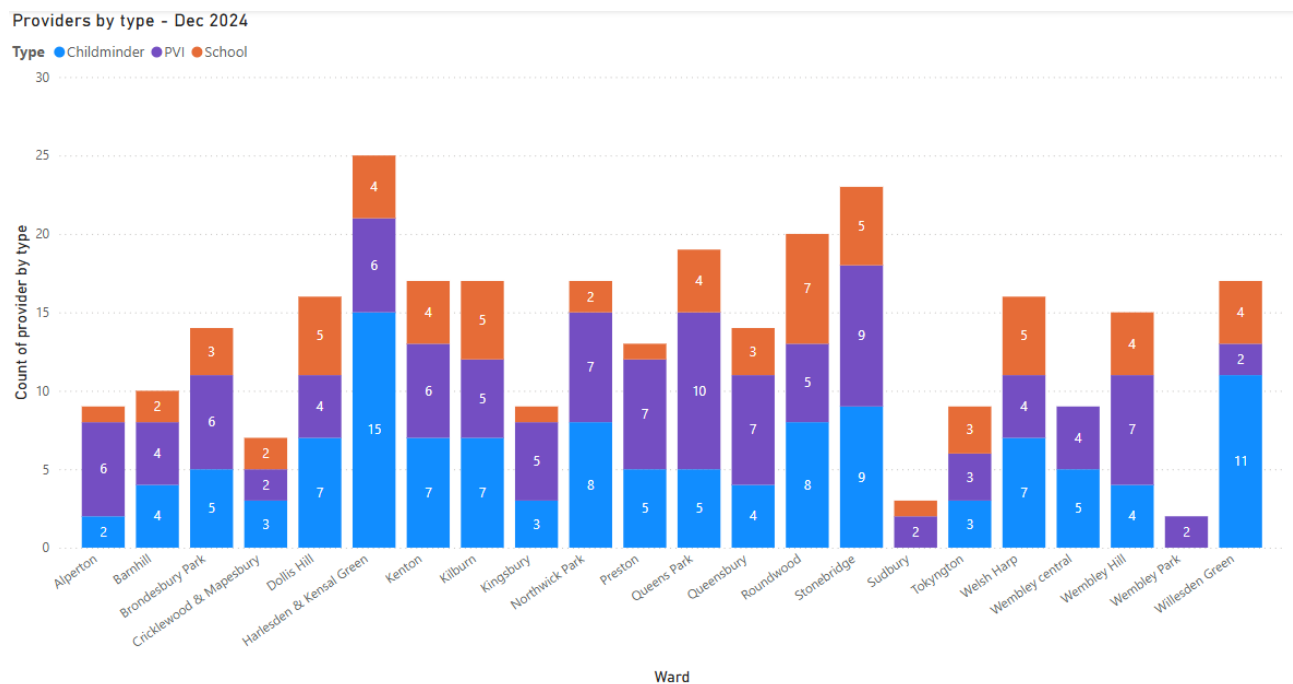
¹ Main findings: childcare providers and inspections as at 31 August 2024 - GOV.UK

or more children attending part time may use one full time equivalent place. For example, one child may attend in the morning and one child may attend in the afternoon.

Supply of free entitlement provision for under 2s, 2, 3 and 4 year olds

An overview of the entitlements to free childcare for under 2s, 2, 3 and 4 year olds is provided as Appendix A of this document. As noted above, these entitlements will change further later in 2025 and this will continue to impact sufficiency.

Figure 5: Distribution of free entitlement providers in Brent - December 2024



The wards with the highest number of providers are:

- Harlesden & Kensal Green - 25
- Stonebridge - 23
- Roundwood - 20

The 3 wards with the lowest number providers are;

- Wembley Park – 2
- Sudbury - 3
- Cricklewood & Mapesbury – 7

Quality of childcare

Overall quality of provision has improved with 97.6% of active providers across the PVI and childminder sector now judged as good or outstanding by Ofsted. This figure does not include providers with no children on role or those providers who are newly registered.

The early years quality improvement and early years inclusion support teams continue to work with settings to ensure that they are supported to reflect on and improve the quality of their delivery of the early years foundation stage requirements. It a borough aspiration that all Brent children will have access to good and outstanding provision. Providers report continuing issues around retaining high levels of quality with rising costs of supplies and staffing.

Some providers have reported that they are facing difficulties in recruiting staff (both qualified and un-qualified). The borough is continuing to work with providers to support them with recruitment through advertising vacancies on the council pages. A nationwide recruitment campaign to support new entrants into the sector is ongoing.

Figure 6: Ofsted Inspection results for early years providers in Brent - December 2024

Type of provision	Total number of providers	Providers who have a current Ofsted judgement**	% achieving good or outstanding
Childminders	121	73	97%
Nursery classes in schools	***	***	96.5% ***
Maintained nursery schools	4	4	100%
Private and voluntary nurseries	112	91	98%
Total	298	223	

** providers who are newly registered, inspected by ISI or who have received met/not met are not included in this figure²

*** Whole school inspection result

Figure 7: Comparing inspection grades over time

% of providers 'good' or 'outstanding'	2024	2023	2022	2018
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² Providers with met/not met grade

When providers do not have any children on site at the time of their inspection, they are given an Ofsted grade of 'met' or 'not met'. There are 31 providers with a 'met' grade across PVI and childminder settings. There are 3 providers with a 'not met' grade. These providers have not been included in the percentages above and below.

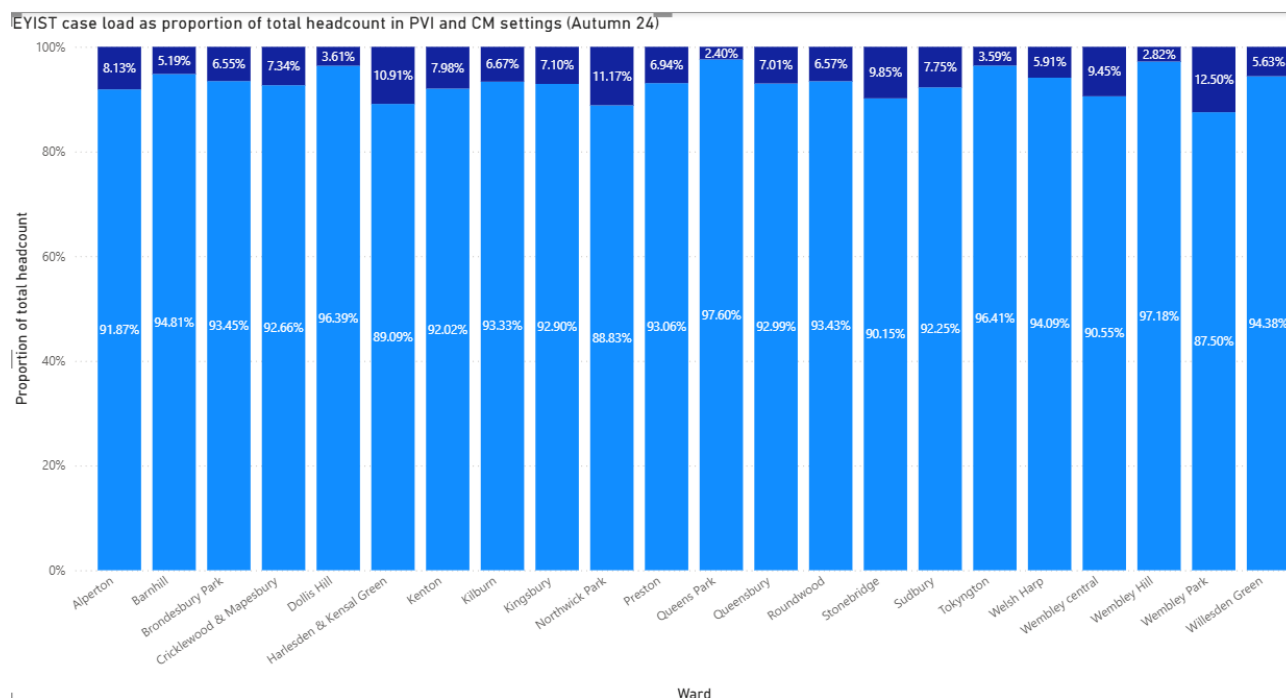
Childminders	97%	98%	98%	96%
State schools	96.5%	95%	96%	98%
Maintained nursery schools	100%	100%	100%	100%
Private and voluntary nurseries	98%	89%	95%	88.63%

Inclusion

Figure 8 provides an overview of the take up of children with additional needs (ie those on the Early Years Inclusion Support Team caseload) in the private and voluntary sector. There is great variance across settings with some settings having high proportions of children with additional needs and some settings with no children with identified needs.

There is not an existent data set that shows all children receiving specialist health services (eg community speech and language) in Brent and therefore it is not possible to determine what proportion of children with identified needs are accessing their entitlement to childcare. The January 2024 school census indicated approximately 18% of children in the England school cohort have identified needs. This is significantly higher than the proportions shown within the Brent early years cohort. This is explained in part by the fact that not all needs will have been identified in the earliest years but may also reflect the fact that some children with needs are unable to take up a place in a setting. Some parents of children with identified needs report that they have approached multiple settings only to be told that their child's needs cannot be accommodated. They do not always feel confident to disclose the names of settings where this has been their experience but where the local authority is informed of this practice settings are contacted immediately to ensure that they are aware of their duties in line with the Equality Act. Nationally there is anecdotal evidence that children with identified special educational needs are not always able to access the full entitlement with settings offering reduced timetables. Local anecdotal evidence indicates that this not common practice in Brent but that more analysis is needed.

Figure 8: Children on the Early Years Inclusion Support Team case load as a proportion of wider free entitlement cohort



Demand

Driving up demand for free entitlement places continues to be a borough priority with take up rates below regional and national averages. Figure 9 illustrates an improving picture regarding percentages of children taking up all entitlements (based on DfE statistical release June 2024).

Figure 9: Take up of funded early education based on national data sets

Age	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Age 2	59.2%	65.4%	57%	49%	64%
Age 3 and 4	84.8%	79.3%	77%	71%	73%
3 year olds	81.3%	78.6%	72%	68%	69%
4 year olds	88.1%	80%	82%	73%	78%

Figure 10: Comparing take up of free early education entitlements over time

Entitlement	Autumn 2 Headcount 2024	Autumn 2 Headcount 2023	Autumn 2 Headcount 2022	Autumn 2 Headcount 2019
15 free entitlement for eligible 2 year olds	731 (of which 96 in schools, 594 in PVIs and 41 in childminders)	921 (of which 0 in schools, 875 in PVIs and 46 in childminders)	1059 (of which 1 in schools, 1014 in PVIs and 44 in childminders)	1293 (of which 1 in schools, 1230 in PVIs and 62 in childminders)
Universal 15 hour entitlement for	3550 (of which 1703 in schools,	3934 (of which 1967 in schools,	3653 (of which 1823 in schools,	4166 (of which 2048 in schools and

3 and 4 year olds	1761 in PVI's and 86 in childminders)	1922 in PVI's and 45 in childminders)	1776 in PVI's and 54 in childminders	2118 in PVI's and childminders)
Extended 30 hour entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds	958 (of which 280 in schools, 638 in PVI's and 40 in childminders)	994 (of which 302 in schools, 644 in PVI's and 48 in childminders)	910 (of which 306 school 604 PVI and CM)	

*Based on total headcount claims in the specified period.

Take up of two year old entitlements

Take up in Brent went into sharp decline during the height of the pandemic recovered somewhat last year but has again declined. Figures 11 and 12 provide analysis of both eligible families and the take up of the two year old entitlements. The four wards with the highest number of DWP eligible families are also those with the highest take up. It should be noted that this take up is largely comprised of families who do not appear DWP eligible list but are still largely eligible based on financial criteria. The national income threshold for eligibility has not been reviewed for several years and this means there are fewer families nationally who are entitled to funded childcare for their two year old. Autumn headcount figures above indicate that overall take up at this point in year has reduced. This is despite a targeted series of contacts with families who were on the DWP eligible families list. These contacts indicated that the main reasons families are choosing not to access are because they feel they don't 'need' the childcare or that their child is too young for them to feel confident in being in the formal childcare environment.

Figure 11 – Eligible two year olds (as per DWP list)

2 year olds eligible for FEE based on family accessing additional support - Jan 25

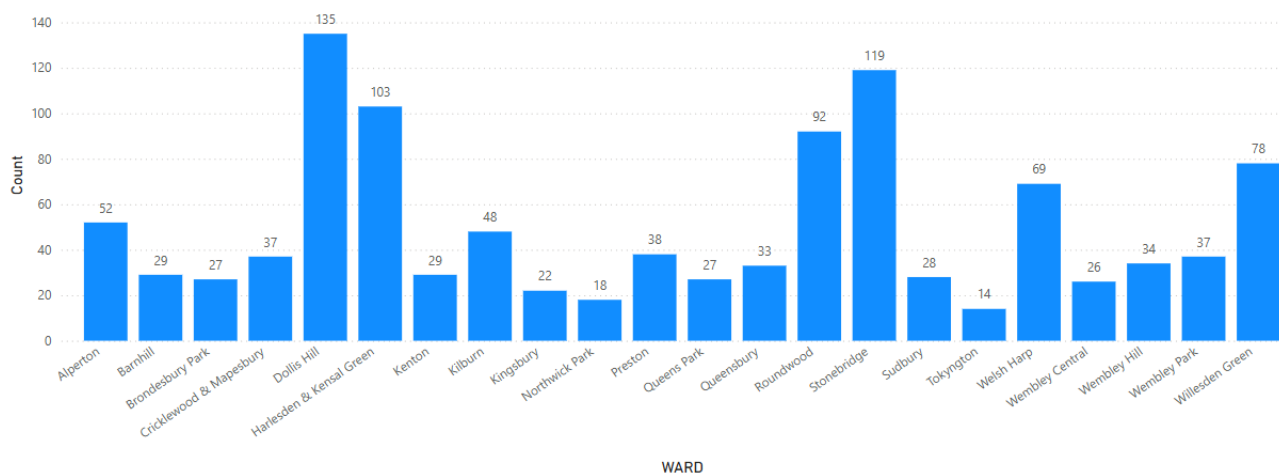
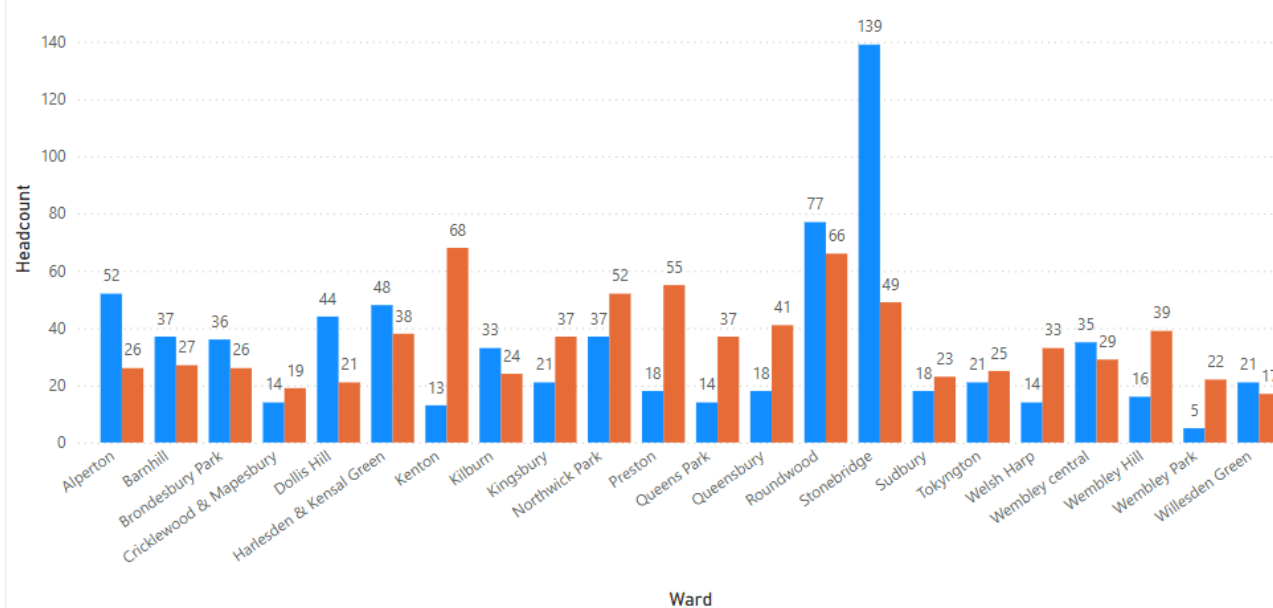


Figure 12: 2 year-olds taking up free entitlements

2 year headcount - families accessing additional support + working families Autumn 24

● Sum of 2 year olds accessing additional support (Autumn 24) ● Sum of 2 year olds working families (Autumn 24)



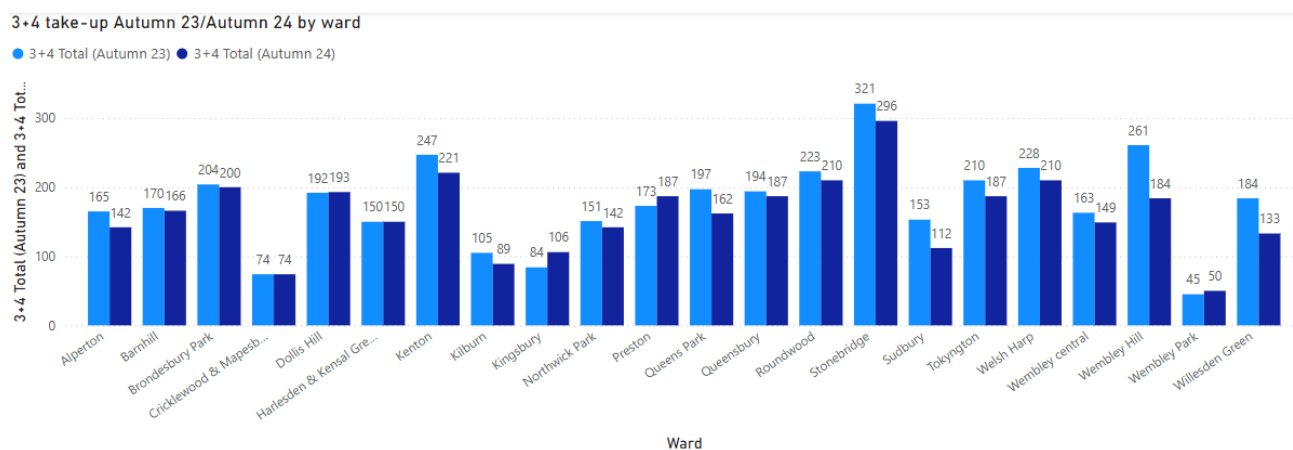
NB The above reflects provider provider headcounts within the respective wards

Take up of three and four year old entitlements

In Autumn headcount 2024, 52% of children were taking up their universal entitlement place with a PVI/childminder and 48% children with a school (including maintained infant and primary, nursery and academy settings) indicating a balance of delivery across different providers within the sector. The number of children taking up a funded 3 and 4 year old place has declined Autumn 2024 – this could reflect a lower proportionate take up or as GLA population estimates suggest, a decline in overall numbers.

67% of 30 hour extended entitlement places are taken up in PVI group provision. This indicates that some working parents require more hours than the standard school day delivers and are therefore choosing private providers for their entitlement. Figure 13 identifies the patterns of take up within each ward area. Children who take up a funded place in an out of borough setting are not captured in this analysis.

Figure 13: 3 and 4 Take-up by year on year comparison Autumn 23 / 24



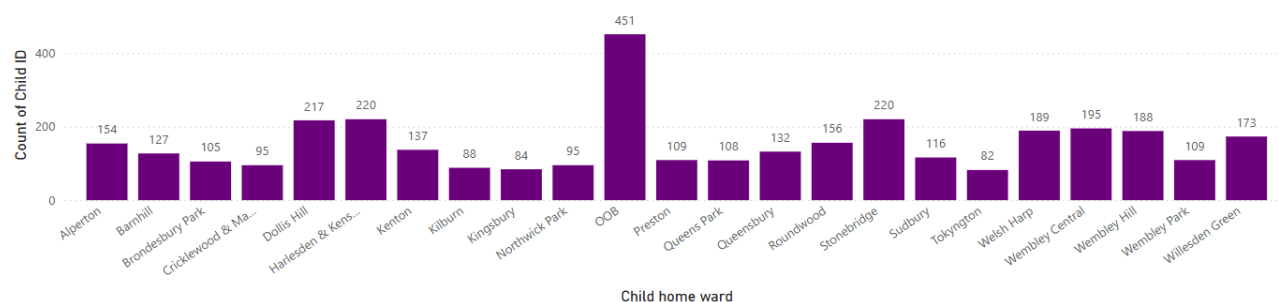
Ward	GLA estimate	3 and 4 in early years provision	4 year olds in reception as at August 24	Total 3 and 4 in provision	Approximate take-up
Alperton	336	154	124	278	83%
Barnhill	247	127	111	238	96%
Brondesbury Park	259	105	98	203	78%
Cricklewood & Mapesbury	270	95	82	177	66%
Dollis Hill	580	217	237	454	78%
Harlesden & Kensal Green	478	220	200	420	88%
Kenton	363	137	149	286	79%
Kilburn	327	88	96	184	56%

Kingsbury	255	84	100	184	72%
Northwick Park	234	95	90	185	79%
Out of borough		451		451	
Preston	298	109	121	230	77%
Queens Park	388	108	136	244	63%
Queensbury	363	132	142	274	75%
Roundwood	404	156	156	312	77%
Stonebridge	536	220	210	430	80%
Sudbury	328	116	116	232	71%
Tokington	174	82	97	179	103%
Welsh Harp	436	189	185	374	86%
Wembley Central	400	195	227	422	106%
Wembley Hill	346	188	177	365	105%
Wembley Park	216	109	86	195	90%
Willesden Green	409	173	179	352	86%
Grand Total	7647	3550	3119	6669	

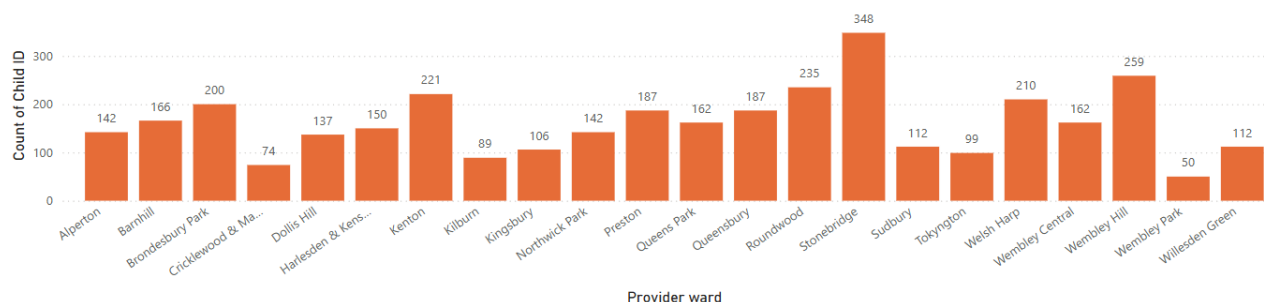
For purposes of the above analysis all 4 year olds in reception as at August 2024 have been included as taking up. Some children will have turned 5 during the Aug-Dec 2024 period and therefore these figures reflect a fixed point only.

Figure 14: Comparison of take by provider ward and child's home postcode

3 and 4 headcount by child home ward - Autumn 2024



3 and 4 headcount by provider ward - Autumn 2024

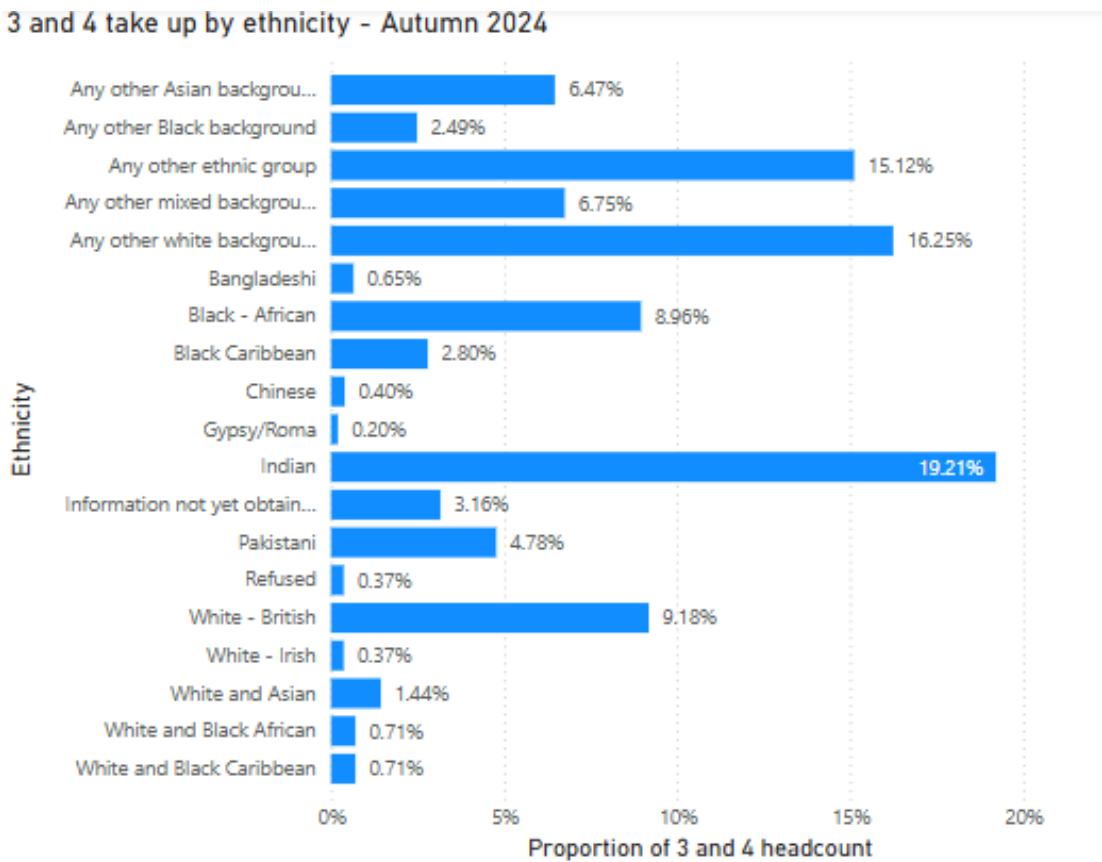


As illustrated in Figure 14 there are several ward areas in which providers are net importers of children – ie take up in these ward areas is high but this is not reflective of high levels of take up

from children resident in the ward. Conversely there are ward areas where high proportions of children take up entitlements (ie Wembley Park, Willesden Green, Dollis Hill, Harlesden & Kensal Green) but they do so outside of their ward area. This information can be usefully shared with providers in supporting understanding their take up patterns and forming marketing plans. It is also helpful in allowing the Brent council teams outreaching to families to more effectively target the offer.

Figure 15 provides detail of the Autumn 2024 3 and 4 headcount by ethnicity. Wider school ethnicity data obtained through January 2024 census has been used as a proxy against which proportional take up of the universal 3 and 4 year old entitlement (based on Autumn 2 headcount 2024) has been measured. For example, the high proportion of children identified as being of Indian heritage in EY settings is broadly in line with the 18% proportion in the wider school population whereas the approximately 30% of children identifying as White reflects an overrepresentation of this cohort compared with wider school proportions (approximately 26%). Ethnicity information has not been obtained for approximately 3% of children in EY settings. This is a reduction on the 8% of the previous year indicating that settings are now obtaining this information more systematically.

Figure 15: Take up by ethnicity - 3 and 4 year olds



Vacancies

There are vacancies across all parts of the early years sector with the highest numbers of vacancy reported in Stonebridge, Alperton and Tokyngton. Welsh Harp providers report the lowest level of vacancy followed by Queens Park, Dollis Hill, Brondesbury Park and Roundwood. It should be noted that not all providers return vacancy information. The data is also reflective of a fixed point in time and Autumn term is often when providers have their highest rates of vacancy. There is significant variance in vacancy by provider with some providers including their total physical capacity rather than current staffing. For example a provider may be able to offer 20+ additional places based on physical capacity but currently only has staffing for a percentage of this number.

Figure 16: 0-5s vacancies by sector

Provider type	Number of vacancies as at Autumn 24
Childminder	33*
PVI Setting	1162
School setting	195

*Note that for childminders, where providers reported multiple vacancies for under-fives, figures have been adjusted to reflect 1 vacancy per childminding setting

Costs of childcare

For early years childcare outside the funded entitlements, the analysis below identifies average prices per hour, reported to the local authority by settings.³ 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 lunch and other meals which are not included in these prices. It should be noted that not all providers supply their costing information. The averages provided below are indicative. This means that the weekly cost for a part time (25 hour place once the free entitlements have been taken into consideration) for an under two year old in Brent is £132 in a PVI setting and £106 for a childminder. This is considerably lower than outer London averages provided by Coram⁴ being £181.28 and £170.13 respectively however This is the first year at which average costings for under 2s take the free entitlements into account so London/national averages are not yet available.

Likewise the average price for a two year old to attend a setting for 25 hours is £174.36 in a PVI setting and £98 in a childminding setting, considerably higher than last year's the reported outer London average of £174.36 in PVI and £166.78 in childminding settings. The costs of childcare for 3 and 4 year olds are reflected in Figure 15 on the following page illustrating the variance in fees across the borough. These costs do not include free entitlements or support that parents may be receiving with the costs of childcare (e.g. Tax-free childcare).

³ Details of how this data was collected can be found in the methodology section below

⁴ [Childcare Survey 2024 - Coram : Coram](#)

Figure 18: Costings – Autumn 2024

Average price per hour	Private, voluntary and independent nurseries	School and maintained nursery schools which make charges to parents	Childminders
0 and 1 year olds	£12	N/A	£10.65
2 year olds	£10.45	£9.77	£10.55
3 and 4 year olds	£10.15	£7.77	£8.55

Out of school provision

Out of school provision for statutory school-aged children is largely delivered on site at school settings with many schools running a system of clubs rather than formal childcare provision.

Figure 19: Out of school provision by type

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Number of registered places</i>
Breakfast club – primary school	38	920
After-school club – primary school	37	850
Breakfast club – secondary school	0	0
After-school club – secondary school	0	0
Holiday clubs linked to schools	12	286

Tracking supply of childcare for school age children is difficult because not all of this type of provision is registered with Ofsted. It is possible that provision of breakfast and afterschool clubs and holiday clubs exceeds the supply outlined here.

The Spring Budget 2023 confirmed the government's commitment to expanding the supply of before and after school provision during term time. The expectation is that by 2026, all parents and carers of primary school-aged children who need it will be able to access term time childcare in their local area from 8am-6pm so that parents can access employment. This childcare will continue to be paid for by parents.

A delivery plan is in place to support the roll-out of wraparound provision across the borough. 40 primary schools currently identify as having partial provision in place – that is they offer morning or after provision but do not offer provision 8am-6pm. In addition to this provision, parents may also use provision which is not considered 'childcare', for example sports or arts clubs after school or in the holidays. Many schools offer a programme of after school clubs and whilst these are not registered with Ofsted, parents use a combination of these clubs to meet their childcare needs. Figures included in the assessment are reflective both of out of school provision run by school governing bodies and those that run privately. For provision delivered by and in schools, there is not always a registered number of places offered and this is determined by demand at a local level. Anecdotally, schools report that they can increase numbers based on demand and do not have a set maximum number of places. In practice

this means that depending on the school a child attends the family will or will not have access to provision. Currently only 12 schools indicate they deliver holiday provision. Out of hours provision for children with SEND is limited. Of the five special schools in the borough, none report running out of school provision during term time. One school (an all through provision) offer holiday schemes on site from a private provider.

Figure 22: Out of school provision costings

Setting and price unit	2024	2023	2022	2021	2018
Breakfast club per day	£3.57	£3.06	£3.11	£3.09	£1.60
After-school club per day	£10.14	£9.58	£9.34	£8.22	£6.00
Holiday club per week	£93	£120	£102.25	£90	£97.08

The Coram Childcare Survey⁵ indicates that the national average of cost for holiday provision is £157 significantly higher than the Brent average. Many Brent providers offer places through the Holiday Activity and Food Programme where children entitled to benefits related free school meals can access childcare and food provision during Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays. Brent has the flexibility to allocate additional places to children deemed to be vulnerable based on local criteria.

Appendix A – an overview of the free entitlements to childcare for under 2s, 2, 3 and 4 year olds

Some children are entitled to free childcare, funded by the government and administered by the local authority. These entitlements are for the equivalent of 38 weeks per year.

- All children aged 3 and 4 are entitled to 15 hours per week until they start reception class in school
- Children aged 3 and 4 where both parents are working, or from lone parent families where that parent is working, are entitled to 30 hours per week until they start reception class in school⁶. Families are eligible where each parent is earning the equivalent of 16 hours per week at minimum or living wage and earns under £100,000 per year. Families also qualify where one parent is on maternity leave, on Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance, Carer's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance and the other parent is working. Parents who think they are entitled to a 30 hour extended hours place apply for this online through the Government's Childcare Support website. The same website is used to apply for tax free childcare and parents can apply for either or both. 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 childcare.
- Children 9 months – 2 years in a families where the parent (or both parents in a two parent family) are working (using the same definition as applies above for 3 and 4 year olds) are entitled to 15 hours per week from the term after they reach this age. This will expand to 30 hours from September 2025.
- Children aged 2 whose families receive certain benefits (including in-work benefits with an income of less than £16,190 or £15,400 after tax if accessing universal credit), or who have a disability, or who are looked after by the local authority, are entitled to 15 hours per week. Families may also be entitled based on the identified special education needs of a child or vulnerabilities based on local criteria. In Brent for example those families meeting the Supporting Families (formerly Troubled Families) criteria are entitled.
- Parents do not have to use all the hours of their funded entitlement. They may choose to split them between providers. With the agreement of their provider, parents may also spread them across the year – for example, rather than taking 15 hours for 38 weeks a year they could take just under 12 hours for 48 weeks a year.
- Providers are paid directly by government for delivering funded early education and this funding is administered by Brent council. Childcare providers are not required to offer free entitlement places to parents, but parents may choose to use a different provider if they do not. Some providers offer a restricted number of free entitlement funded places.

⁶ Available to families where both parents (or a lone parent) are earning the equivalent of sixteen hours per week at the minimum/living wage