



Children & Families Directorate



Redcar and Cleveland Childcare Sufficiency Report 2025

this is Redcar & Cleveland

Contents

1. Overall assessment and summary	Page 3
2. Demand for childcare	Page 9
3. Supply of childcare	Page 14
4. Funded early education	Page 17
5. Prices	Page 21
6. Quality of childcare in our area	Page 22
7. Parents and providers views of sufficiency in our local area	Page 24
8. Appendix -Results of Occupancy Audit Data by Area	Page 30

1. Overall assessment and summary

The Childcare Act 2006 and subsequent Childcare Act 2016 place a duty on local authorities to report annually on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare.

Sufficient childcare means securing the right type and volume of provision, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents or those undertaking training with the intention of returning to work, for children aged 0 - 14 (up to 18 for a disabled child).

There is a separate but related duty to ensure sufficient early years provision, enabling families to access their free early education entitlement.

The Best Start in Life strategy document published in July 2025 outlines the government's aim to make early education and childcare more accessible and affordable for families. Key measures include:

- From 1st September 2025, working parents who meet HMRC eligibility criteria will be entitled to up to 30 hours of government funded childcare per week, delivered over 38 weeks of the year, for children aged from 9 months to 4 years.
- Families receiving additional support may be eligible for 15 hours of funded childcare per week, available the term after the child turns 2 years old.
- All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to 15 hours of universal funded childcare per week.

Families often access both their free early education entitlement and childcare together; many providers offer places to meet these requirements. Therefore, this report contains information about the supply and take-up of all free early education entitlement.

Childcare sufficiency is not just about having enough childcare places, it is about ensuring the provision is of a high quality; that it improves the outcomes for children, narrows the gap in attainment and is inclusive and flexible to meet families' needs.

Childcare provisions need to ensure continuity of care and service by being a sustainable business with affordable fees. A sufficient, sustainable, quality childcare market underpins the poverty agenda, supports local economic development and the Council's Early Help Strategy, which is delivered through the Council and its partner organisations.

Overall, the picture for childcare sufficiency in Redcar and Cleveland is currently satisfactory, however the roll out of the final stage of early years entitlements in September 2025, may create extra pressure on the supply of early years childcare places. The Families Information Service (FIS) will carefully monitor the take up of early years places and work with providers to address any areas of concern.

Although, there are currently sufficient places and the quality is good, the local childcare market in Redcar and Cleveland is facing the following several business challenges:

- A declining birth rate. Women in England and Wales had an average of 1.44 children between 2022 and 2023, the lowest on record. Only 591,072 babies were born in 2023, fewer than in any year since 1977 and a fall of more than 14,000 on the previous year. Source:ONS
- A significant number of parents continue to use informal childcare. 48.2% of parents surveyed who use or need childcare, rely on a mix of informal and formal provision to meet their childcare needs.
- Increased competition, in some wards, where more settings have started offering 2-year-old and 3-and-4-year-old 30 hour extended hours.
- Increasing living costs where parents struggle to afford childcare and providers are unable to generate sufficient income once essentials costs are met.
- Providers struggling to recruit and retain staff.
- Future demand for places is likely to increase, given the final roll out of entitlements in September 2025 whereby eligible working parents with a child aged between 9 months to 4 years can apply for up to 30 hours per week funded childcare.
- The expansion of the childcare funding has enabled existing parents to increase their hours; however this may reduce the availability of childcare places for other families.

Also, it must be noted that although 4 childminders have resigned, 5 new childminders have started to offer childcare and a new PVI is opening a nursery in the Redcar area by September 2025.

Since September 2024, the government's investment in the Wraparound Childcare Programme has continued to enable schools and providers to set up provision. The government's ambition is for all parents of primary school age children to be able to access affordable childcare in their local area from 8am – 6pm. This funding will be for schools and local authorities to introduce or expand childcare provision. The Labour government who came into power in July 2024 have also announced the intention for every school to provide a breakfast club from March 2026.

It is hoped that some of the measures introduced will encourage more parents/carers to access childcare with providers in Redcar & Cleveland and this will be monitored carefully by the FIS team to ensure that sufficient childcare places are available.

Moving forward it is still of paramount importance that the Local Authority is able to ensure affordable, flexible and quality childcare is available throughout the Borough so parents and carers can access work or education and make a difference to the lives of their families.

In order to inform the basis of the childcare sufficiency report, data was gathered relating to:

- baseline socio-economic information including population profiles.
- analysis of all known childcare places within Redcar and Cleveland; and
- demand for childcare services across the Borough.

In addition, over the last 12 months, the DfE have issued several Local Authority Readiness documents to support the analysis of childcare supply and demand in Redcar and Cleveland. This information was provided to help Local Authorities plan for the final, and most challenging milestone in the expansion roll-out in September 2025. The DfE data provides an indicative view of anticipated demand and is not intended to replace local intelligence. We have considered both DfE data and our own local sets of data when reviewing childcare sufficiency in Redcar and Cleveland. The DfE also supplies data on code validations, a valuable tool which highlights the number of eligible families who are successful in securing a place at a childcare provider.

The results of the April 2025 childcare occupancy audit indicates that overall, there are still sufficient childcare places across the Borough however there has been a 40.7% decrease in the number of vacant childcare places for 0–4-year olds available across the borough compared to 2024.

In the West of the Borough childminder market, the number of vacant places has decreased by 71.62%, while East Cleveland has seen a 22% increase in the number of vacant places available in the childminder market. These year on year variances may be due to the rising demand following the September 2024 extension of 15 hours funded childcare to all children from 9 months. This year's data is more accurate as 100% of childminders submitted vacancy data.

Some parents face challenges accessing childcare in their local community and even though there may be available childcare spaces in surrounding areas, some parents may not be able or are unwilling to travel outside their immediate community, particularly when school drop offs and pick-ups are involved.

The take up of places for eligible 2 year olds for free childcare places for Families in Receipt of Additional Support has decreased this year from 85.7% Spring 2024 to 75% in Spring 2025. This translates to 377 of two year olds in Spring 2025 compared to 442 two year olds in Spring 2024.

In Spring 2025, 215 universal funded places (15 hours per week) for children aged 3 and 4 years old, attended early years settings across the Borough (excluding school nurseries), a slight decrease from 227 in 2024.

Universal funded (15 hours per week) places for children aged 3 and 4 years old who attended school nurseries increased by 1.63% to 1488 children, up from 1464 in 2024.

Overall, the total number of children accessing universal funding for 3 and 4 year olds (15 hours) across all providers increased to 1703 in Spring 2025 compared to 1691 in Spring 2024.

During the Spring Term 2025, there were 805 funded places for 3 and 4 year olds, taking up extended entitlement, an increase from 707 in Spring 2024.

In Spring 2025, 480 children accessed the 30 hour extended entitlement for working parents (excluding schools) compared to 425 in Spring 2024 – an increase of 12%.

325 children accessed the extended entitlement through school nurseries in Spring 2025, up from 282 in Spring 2024 – an increase of 13%

These figures indicate an increase in uptake overall, with a shift from private providers to school nurseries of 2%. This trend reflects the increasing number of schools now offering extended hours for 3 to 4 year olds.

In Spring 2025, 489 children aged from 9 months to 2 years accessed the new working families funding, which was introduced in September 2024. Additionally, 540 two year olds attended early years settings claiming the 2 year old working families funding introduced in April 2024.

These figures demonstrate strong uptake of both funding streams, reflecting the ongoing demand for early years support among working families.

The number of children attending breakfast and after school clubs in schools in the Borough has increased by 32% in 2025 compared to 2024.

- In the East Cleveland area, attendance rose slightly by 0.7%
- In Greater Eston there was a 37% increase
- In Redcar attendance increased by 60%.

The increase could be attributed to an improvement in data returns, 86% of schools submitted data compared to 65% in 2024, as well as the government wraparound programme.

The government's National Wraparound Childcare Programme aim is that by 2026, all parents and carers of primary school-aged children who need wraparound childcare will be able to access term time childcare in their local area from 8am-6pm, so that parents can access employment and improve labour market participation.

It is the ambition of the RCBC Wraparound Team that at least 75% of schools will offer full wraparound provision, or the equivalent hours by March 2026.

As of September 2025, there were 37 primary schools in Redcar and Cleveland that offer wraparound childcare, during term time. Of these schools, 31 schools (70%) offer full wraparound childcare in line with the requirements of the National Wraparound Childcare Programme, either delivered by the school or by a PVI on-school-site.

A further 3 schools will have access to full wraparound provision, starting in November 2025. These wraparound places will be provided by a HAF (Holidays and Food Programme) provider, who has successfully registered with Ofsted and will open a 30 place wraparound childcare provision, supporting working families in Grangetown and Eston. This will increase

our overall percentage of schools offering full wraparound childcare places to 34 schools (77%).

Between October 2024 and March 2025, all the capital funding of £175,898 was allocated for the expansion of early years entitlements was awarded to providers within the borough to help create additional capacity for children under 3 years old. This funding is expected to have resulted in approximately 117 additional childcare places.

Information about childcare places is sufficiently accessible. Day nurseries, playgroups and childminders can be found via the Families' Information Service (FIS) telephone helpline, email or through the Redcar & Cleveland Information Directory.

In most areas, parents can choose from a range of childcare options when selecting a provider, with an appropriate balance between the various types of provision.

The quality of childcare places across the Borough is of high quality. This is evident due to the number of childcare providers achieving judgements of 'Good' or above by Ofsted in their inspection of registered service providers. In June 2025, 79% of the 77 registered childminders were rated 'good' or 'outstanding'; and 23 out of the 26 day nurseries were good or outstanding. This is a positive reflection of the support given to these settings by the Local Authority's Quality Improvement Team.

However, one childminder received an inadequate grading and one PVI setting received a Requires Improvement grading in this year's Ofsted inspections.

Findings around flexibility are inconclusive. While there are a range of options to accommodate different working patterns, requests for childcare outside standard working hours remains low with only a small number of parents requesting help finding childcare to cover atypical working patterns, such as evenings, weekends or overnight care. However, 70% of parents surveyed said their current childcare arrangements meet their needs. There are only a few providers who would consider offering evening, weekend or overnight services consistent with the national picture, and the majority of 3 and 4 year old nursery places are sessional and term time only, as they are school based.

Childcare for children with special educational needs (SEND) remains a challenge. To date the Early Years SENCO and FIS have been able to identify suitable childcare for children with SEND. However, finding placements that are both accessible and appropriate can be difficult.

The expansion of childcare entitlements has placed an additional pressure on support funding and the availability of childcare providers with trained staff that can meet the individual needs of children with complex additional needs. This continues to be a potential area of significant pressure for the local authority particularly as the new entitlements become more embedded. In the Summer Term 2025, our SEN Team were unable to place 6 children.

Factors included the

- one to one funding rate of £9.72 not covering the minimum wage or specialist staff rate, and providers unable to afford the difference
- Providers choosing to offer more places to other funded childcare schemes which may provide more opportunities to contribute to their business sustainability
- Recruitment and retention of qualified and specialised staff

Recent feedback from providers indicates a growing number of requests for children with additional needs, this is expected to continue as further entitlement rollouts increase demand. Providers are finding it increasingly difficult to provide SEN places due to recruitment and retention challenges and balancing staff:child ratios whilst keeping their business sustainable.

During August 2025, 21 out of our 27 PVIs provided feedback to our Staff Recruitment and Retention Survey. It showed:

- 47.6% estimated that they had sufficient number of staff to deliver the expanded entitlements
- 44% had current staff vacancies.
- Providers are finding it challenging to predict demand as they await parents confirming their eligibility and commitment to days in which they need childcare. Some providers plan to wait until September to assess actual demand and make informed staffing decisions.
- Many applicants for vacancies do not have the relevant qualifications or experience, and in some cases do not turn up for interview.

Following the further entitlement roll outs in September 2025, providers shared concerns and comments regarding childcare sufficiency:

- Some settings are holding off on recruitment until they can determine demand, others have reached full capacity due to limitations in building space.
- Existing parents at settings are increasing their hours due to the entitlement expansion.
- Some settings cannot provide childcare for children who require 1:1 support due to staff shortages.
- Staff are leaving the childcare sector due to the low (minimum wage) pay, lack of support and long working hours to maintain staff to child ratios.
- Fully trained, experienced, older staff are staying, but there is a high turnover among newer, younger employees.
- Part time staff being asked to increase hours

The FIS Team, Early Years Sufficiency Advisor and Early Years Quality Team monitor the number and type of childcare providers, including childminder registrations and resignations. They are proactive in terms of any sufficiency issues raised by parents. In addition, they:

- Liaise with childcare settings to ensure they are making the best use of the government financial support available to them via the Tax- Free Childcare scheme and the changes announced in the Spring 2023 Budget. This support may help their business remain sustainable and secure jobs in the sector.
- Continue to work with partners such as Family Hubs, Health Visitors and Job Centre Plus to identify and engage families eligible for the two-year-old early years entitlement for families on low incomes.
- Continue to ensure that working parents are aware of the extended childcare offers for children aged from 9 months to 4 years and apply in good time to secure childcare. The Families' Information Service (FIS) team will continue to work with the Corporate Communications team to promote the schemes available to help with childcare costs.
- Offer support to childcare providers that are identified as inadequate/requires improvement for an improved outcome.
- Continue to carry out mapping of supply and demand to inform the expansion of early years entitlements to ensure there are sufficient childcare places available to meet increased demand.

2. Demand for Childcare

In the 2021 census Redcar and Cleveland had a population of 136,661 of which 97.7% were White British. There is a greater level of diversity in the school-aged child population than suggested by the Census data (2021). As at June 2025 (<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>), 7.74% of children attending state-funded secondary schools and 8.41% of children attending a state-funded primary school in Redcar and Cleveland were from a BME background.

Schools	All pupils	BME Minority	Percentage
State-funded primary	11,840	996	8.41%
State-funded secondary	8243	638	7.74%
State-funded special school	545	38	6.97%
PRU	85	18	21.17%
Total	20,713	1690	8.12%

Changes to population of children in our area

The table below shows the child population and population in 2024, compared to 2022. The estimated population of Redcar and Cleveland in 2024 was 139,228, a rise of 0.8% since 2023.

Source :Population estimates for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics

	All residents	Aged 0-4 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 8-9 years	Aged 10-14 years	Child population (aged 0-14 years)
2024	139,228	6572	4447	3146	8438	22568
2023	138,115	6605	4457	3138	8351	22551
2022	137,233	6,621	4,560	3,180	8,184	22,545
% change 2023/2024	+0.8%	-0.5%	-0.22%	+0.25%	+1.03%	+0.23%

Source: ONS mid-year estimates April 2024

[Estimates of the population for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk) (mid 2011-mid 2023)

Child population projections

Child population forecasts predict that the 0-4 year old child population would decrease by 8.3% over the period 2023 to 2026, from approx. 6,500 to 6,000 children.

Source :Population estimates for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics

	Age range (000's)		10-14 years	Total 0-14 years
	0-4 years	5-9 years		
2022	6.6	7.7	8.2	22.5
2023	6.5	7.5	8.2	22.2
2024	6.3	7.5	8.3	22.0
2025	6.1	7.3	8.3	21.7
2026	6.0	7.1	8.1	21.2
% change 2023 to 2026	-8.3%	-5.6%	-1.2%	-4.7%

Source: 2022-based sub-national population projections, five year age groups. Population data rounded. Percentages rounded. [Population projections for local authorities by five-year age groups and sex, England - Office for National Statistics](https://www.ons.gov.uk)

The predicted decline in the child population and the challenges faced by the local authority to increase growth, will impact on the childcare market within the borough and will need to be closely monitored. The birth rate for England and Wales in 2023 was 1.44 children per woman, well below the 2.1 that is required to keep the population stable and its lowest value since records began in 1938. But despite a declining fertility rate in England and Wales since the 1970s, the population has continued to grow, largely because of net international

migration immigration. There were 16,300 more deaths than births across the UK in the year to mid-2023 but a 1% increase in the population of England.

Source: ONS

The area has a unique social and economic mix with areas of disadvantage situated alongside affluence. The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 shows that the borough ranks an average score of 40 out of the 317 local authorities in the country and ranked 29th within the 10% most deprived areas nationally. An update is expected late 2025.

Data suggests the gap between the most deprived and least deprived wards is widening. The health of people in Redcar and Cleveland is generally worse than the England average. Redcar and Cleveland is one of the 20% most deprived districts/unitary authorities in England and about 25.2% (6,080) of children live in low income families. Life expectancy for both men and women is lower than the England average.

Source: Public Health England – Local Authority Profile 2019

Economic activity rates January to December 2024

	Redcar and Cleveland %	North East %	Great Britain %
All people:	136,605	2,647,493	65,078,924
Economically active	76.3%	74.1%	78.6%
In employment	72.8%	70.8%	75.5%
Employees	66.3%	64.2%	66.0%
Self employed	6.3%	6.5%	9.3%
Unemployed	4.2%	4.5%	3.8%

Source: ONS annual population survey (NOMIS). Percentage is a proportion of economically active Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Labour Market Statistics (nomisweb.co.uk)

Across Redcar and Cleveland gross weekly pay and hourly pay (excluding overtime) are lower than across the North East and compared to Great Britain as a whole.

Earnings by place of residence (2024)

	Redcar and Cleveland	North East	Great Britain
Gross weekly pay	£636.50	£661.20	£729.80
Hourly pay	£15.95	£16.68	£18.73

Economic inactivity rates January to December 2024

	Redcar and Cleveland %	North East %	Great Britain %
All people: economically inactive	23.7%	25.9%	21.5%
Not wanting a job	73.8%	81.4%	81.8%
Wanting a job	26.2%	18.6%	18.2%

Source: ONS annual population survey (NOMIS) ONS annual survey of hours and earnings – residence analysis

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157062/report.aspx?town=redcar#tabempunemp>

It should be noted that a relatively high percentage of economically inactive residents (of working age) are on long term sick; 34.4% compared to 33.5% in the North East and 27.9% in Great Britain.

As at May 2025, 3.7% of Redcar and Cleveland's resident population aged 16-64 years old were claiming out of work benefits, compared to 4.0% regionally and 4.1% nationally.

19.9% of households in Redcar and Cleveland are workless, compared to 18.5% in the North East and 13.9 % across Great Britain (January to December 2023).

Source: ONS annual population survey.

Childcare for those with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

Settings across the borough continue to support children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). As of the end of May 2025:

- 247 children were receiving 1:1 intensive support, representing a 6% increase from 232 children in May 2024.
- 167 children were supported in school nurseries, a 20% increase from 133 children in May 2024.
- 80 children were supported in private day nurseries, showing a 19% decrease from 99 children in May 2024.

Throughout the last 12 months, schools and PVIs have found it increasingly difficult to offer support to Early Years children with SEND, as they continue to struggle to recruit and retain staff to support children, who require 1:1 or small group teaching.

Children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) are entitled to support with childcare up to the age of 18 (age 14 for children who do not have a special need or disability). There are 46 children in Early Years with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan in our local authority.

Children's needs change over time and are identified at different ages. Among the youngest children, additional needs may only be identified when they start in childcare or school, and it can take some time from problems being identified to an EHC plan being issued. It is therefore possible that the number of children with SEND aged 0-4 is an underestimate. Some children have SEN but do not have an EHC plan. They may have a SEND Support Plan in place which is written together with practitioners, parents and their childcare provider. Funding can be accessed through higher needs funding by completing termly SEND support plans.

Within the sector, the following four specialist settings provide early years' education places for 24 children with complex additional needs. The current occupancy is detailed below:

Woodlands School Nursery in Redcar	Kilton Thorpe Academy Nursery in Brotton
3 & 4-year-olds	10
Pennyman Primary (Nursery SEND)	Discovery Special Academy Nursery
3 & 4-year-olds	2

The places at Pennyman Primary and Discovery Special Academy Nursery were commissioned by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council as there were insufficient places within our borough.

From September 2025, three Early Years SEND practitioners will deliver the EarlyBird Plus course that has been accredited by The National Autistic Society. The EarlyBird Plus training is for parents and carers whose child (over 6-13 years) has a diagnosis of autism or is on the MAAT pathway. The programme offers advice and guidance, strategies, and approaches to support their neurodiverse child.

From October 2025 three Early Years SEND Practitioners will be accredited to deliver Attention Autism training to Early Years nurseries and schools. The training supports children who are neurodiverse with enhancing their listening skills, communication and attention.

Since May 2025, Early Years SEND practitioners have been providing support for children transitioning into reception who either present with SEND needs, have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), or are on a SEND support plan. These transitions are now occurring earlier to ensure children receive appropriate support and to enable schools to plan staffing requirements ahead of the autumn term.

3. Supply of Childcare

The table below shows the various types of Ofsted registered childcare provision across the borough, as obtained from the Families' Information Service in June 2025:

Provision Type	Number
Childminders	77
Day Nurseries	26
Pre School and Toddlers Playgroups	52
After School Clubs	13
Breakfast Clubs	36
Holiday Clubs/schemes	9
School 2 Year old Provisions	14
School 30 hour Provisions	31
Total	257

Geographical Distribution of Childcare Provision

For the purposes of the report, this information is displayed by areas:

Provision Type	West Cleveland Area	Redcar Area	East Cleveland Area
Childminders	24	28	25
Day Nurseries	10	9	7
Pre School Playgroups	15	16	22
After School Clubs	5	4	4
Breakfast Clubs	16	10	10
School 2 Year Old Provision	3	3	8
School 30 hour Provision	8	10	13

As at June 2025, 14 school-based 2 year old settings were being delivered from the following primary schools: Badger Hill, Chaloner, Errington, Grangetown, Handale, Hummersea, Kirkleatham, Lingdale, New Marske, South Bank, St Josephs, St Marys, St Peters and Whitecliffe.

From September 2025, two additional school based 2 year old provisions are expected to open. This will increase parental choice and offer additional supply of funded childcare

places. However, we may continue to see a trend in parents choosing school based settings over childminders or PVIs.

Our Childminder Recruitment Campaign throughout 2025 has seen an increased number of enquiries and we have 4 new Ofsted registered Childminders', and 2 childminders registered through the Tiney agency.

We have observed changes in how some childminders are structuring their childcare services. These changes include offering term-time-only care and discontinuing wraparound services and school pick-ups.

To understand the extent and capacity of all provision within the borough it was fundamental that all providers were included within the audit process. An occupancy/vacancy questionnaire was developed to ascertain the capacity provisions. The audit was undertaken by the Families' Information Service in April 2024, covering the holiday week of 21st April – 25th April and the term time week of 28th April – 2nd May. Please see appendix 1 for results.

The figures submitted by the childcare providers included children who were accessing the provision on a full-time basis or other part-time arrangements. Therefore, for the purposes of the audit, one full time place was defined as being available over 5 days, either morning or afternoon Monday to Friday.

Vacancy rates (number of spare places) are a snapshot and often change rapidly. In some cases, providers may have a vacancy which is only available for a specific age group, or for a particular part time arrangement. In general, vacancy rates are higher in the autumn, when children move to school. In summary, even though vacancy rates have fallen there are sufficient childcare places to meet the current demand for places across Redcar and Cleveland.

Additional data within the report was collected by the Families' Information Service and considered when producing the Childcare Sufficiency Report to give a broader picture of childcare in the Borough. This included the pricing policies within settings as well as their Ofsted judgements.

Childcare is most commonly delivered during the typical working day – between 7.30am and 6pm on weekdays. Some parents require childcare outside these times to fit with their work or other responsibilities.

It is acknowledged that a provision should be as flexible as possible to support those parents working typical hours, as mentioned above. The majority of childminders do state that they offer 5 or more days a week and can be contacted regarding specific requests from parents/carers which may include overnight weekend provision.

The Families' Information Service also provides a bespoke brokerage facility to match the needs of families with registered childminders. For the period July 2024 to June 2025, 40

childcare searches for childminders were requested, from which, 27 were successful and the remainder signposted to childcare at nurseries.

To date, all enquiries for out-of-hours provision made through the Families' Information Service childcare search facility have been responded to unsuccessfully. It should be noted, however, that the number of such enquiries is very low so cannot be relied upon as an accurate reflection of demand. Our parent/carer survey reveals that some parents, especially those on shifts, cannot find childcare early morning (before 7.30am) and/or evening (after 6pm) and affordable holiday childcare.

Tracking the supply of childcare for school-aged children presents challenges, primarily because not all providers are registered with Ofsted. As a result, breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, and holiday schemes may be under-reported in our data. Additionally, many parents rely on activities not formally classified as childcare—such as sports, arts, or recreational clubs.

Expansion of Early Year Entitlements and Wraparound

The DfE announced £100m of capital funding in 2023-2024 to support local authorities in delivering expansion of the 30-hours early years entitlement for working families and wraparound provision in primary schools. DfE have awarded Redcar and Cleveland £175,898.40 for Early Years Entitlements Expansion

Following extensive mapping of supply & demand using data from the DfE and headcount data, the FIS team identified Loftus and Brotton wards in the East locality along with South Bank and Normanby in the West locality as areas that may have a sufficiency shortfall for early years places as the new entitlements are rolled out. New data from the DfE is due to be available from end of October.

Between October 2024 and March 2025, all the capital funding for the expansion of early years entitlements was awarded to providers within the borough to help create additional capacity for children under 3 years old. This funding is expected to have created approximately 117 additional spaces.

In addition to this Capital Funding, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council were allocated Wraparound Programme Funding from DfE: Revenue £892,978 and Capital £43,974. The funding can be used to pay for staff costs and staff training, including specialist training to support children with SEND accessing Wraparound Childcare.

Schools and childcare providers can apply for funding and access support from the Wraparound Lead for RCBC to identify individual school and provider needs.

The government's National Wraparound Childcare Programme proposes that by March 2026, all parents and carers of primary school-aged children who need wraparound childcare will be able to access term time childcare in their local area from 8am-6pm, so that parents can access employment and improve labour market participation.

The key focus of the National Wraparound Programme is to build strong links between schools and private providers to ensure parents can access nearby wraparound services. The Families Information Service will also continue to actively signpost parents/carers to wraparound services.

Currently, from our 44 mainstream Primary Schools

- 24 primary schools offer school-run wraparound provision from 8am-6pm, or the equivalent opening hours to meet the requirements of the programme (for example 7:30am-5:30pm), as stated in the National Wraparound Programme Funding guidance.
- 6 schools have private childcare providers that offer on-school-site wraparound provision from 8am-6pm, or the equivalent opening hours to meet the requirements of the programme, as stated in the National Wraparound Programme Funding guidance.
- 5 primary schools that offer breakfast childcare and after school childcare, however their opening/closing times do not currently meet the times of 8am-6pm, as stated in the National Wraparound Programme guidance,
- 8 primary schools currently offer on-site breakfast childcare, but do not currently have after school childcare available.
- 1 primary school does not offer either breakfast childcare or after school childcare.

It is the ambition of the RCBC Wraparound Team that at least 75% of schools will offer full wraparound provision, or the equivalent hours by March 2026. This includes schools that work in partnerships with private childcare providers to ensure wraparound provision is available for the families of their school. For those schools that cannot provide onsite wraparound provision, the school must signpost parents to local private childcare providers such as day nurseries and/or childminders. RCBC Families Information Service can support families to find appropriate wraparound provision.

4. Funded early education

Some children are entitled to free childcare, funded by the government. These entitlements are for 38 weeks per year:

- All children aged 3 and 4 are entitled to 15 hours per week until they start reception class in school.
- From September 2025, working parents of children aged 9 months to 4 years will be eligible for 30 hours of funded childcare per week. This applies to families where both parents are working, or to single-parent households where the parent is in work. The entitlement continues until the child starts reception class in school.

Between September 2024 and August 2025, eligible parents could access 15 hours of funded childcare per week under the earlier phase of the scheme.

- Children aged 2 whose families are in receipt of additional support (receive certain benefits, including low income families in receipt of in-work benefits), or those who meet additional non-economic criteria, are entitled to 15 hours per week.

Nationally, in 2025, 1.7 million children were registered for government funded entitlements, up a third or over 400,000 children from a year earlier. This has been driven by children aged 9 months to 2 years registering for the expanded working parent entitlement. Source: DfE [Funded early education and childcare, Reporting year 2025 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

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.

2 year-old applications for Families Receiving Additional Support Entitlement FRAS (previously known as disadvantaged)

The number of children in Redcar and Cleveland accessing a 2 year-old place showed a decrease this year compared to 2024. At the end of Spring term 2025, 377 children were taking up a place which was 75% of those eligible according to the DWP, compared to 442 children the end of Spring term 2024 which was 85.7%.

The number of FRAS (Families in Receipt of Additional Support) 2-year-olds eligible and registered for the 15-hour entitlement has continued to decrease locally and nationally and the following are possible factors:

- falling birth rate in recent years
- income thresholds for the eligibility criteria remaining unchanged whilst average incomes have risen in recent years.
- Parents not engaging or unable to travel to settings outside their immediate community.
- Parents who successfully apply for working families funding unaware that they may also qualify for the 2 year old funding for Families in receipt of additional support.
- Families having difficulty finding childcare in the right location.

However, in Redcar and Cleveland the 2 year old take-up of free childcare places by eligible children (Spring 2025) is 75.0% which is still above the national average of 65.16%. The DfE and the Families Information Service continue to monitor the take up levels.

	Redcar and Cleveland %	North East %	National %
2 year old take up rates by eligible children	75.0%	73.07%	65.16%

[Source :Funded early education and childcare, Reporting year 2025 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)
[Expansion to early childcare entitlements: eligibility codes issued and validated, May 2025 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

Working Families funded entitlement applications for 9 Months – 23 months

As from September 2024, working parents of children 9 months up to 23 months could apply for up to 15 hours funded childcare per week. In Spring Term 2025, 489 children were attending a childcare setting, compared to Autumn term 2024 when 510 children were attending a childcare setting.

Working Families funded entitlement applications 2 Year old working families

As from April 2024, working parents of 2 year olds could apply for up to 15 hours funded childcare per week. In Spring Term 2025, 540 children were attending a childcare setting for 15 hours per week compared to Autumn term 2024 when 505 children were attending a childcare setting.

From September 2025, children aged 9 months to 3 years with working parents, could apply for up to 30 hours funded childcare per week.

Working Families funded entitlement and Universal applications for 3-4 Year olds

In January 2025, 74% of children in the North East took up a place in a school nursery, compared to a national average of 56%.

In Redcar and Cleveland, uptake is even higher, with 87% of children accessing school-based nursery provision. This figure reflects the strength of our local infrastructure: all 44 primary schools in the borough have attached nurseries, with some admitting children from their third birthday, rather than waiting until the following term.

In Spring term 2025 there were 1703 children accessing universal funding for 3 and 4 year olds across all providers, with 1488 children attending a school nursery.

Furthermore, an increasing number of schools are now offering the extended entitlement of up to 30 hours of childcare for 3- and 4-year-olds of working parents, further supporting families and encouraging early engagement with education.

	Redcar and Cleveland %	North East	National
		%	%
3 & 4 year olds receiving 15 hours universal funding	95.8%	97.9%	93.1%

Parents who may be entitled to a 30 hours extended 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 early education and childcare.

The number of 30 hours (extended entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds) places paid to childcare providers increased from 707 children (spring term 2024) to 805 children (spring term 2025). Most places for 30 hours were registered within private day nurseries, although this has decreased to 44% from 45% in 2024 and the childminder's proportion of the market for 30 hours slightly increased from 15% in 2024 to 16% in 2025. Schools proportion of the market remained at 40% in 2025 even though more parents chose to use the 15 hours extended alongside the universal 15 hours at a school setting (where school offered 30 hours provision).

The tables below summarise this data:

30 hours Extended figures Spring Term

Number of children	CMs	PVIs	Schools	Total	% Market Share	CMs	PVIs	Schools
2024	106	319	282	707	2024	15	45	40
2025	125	355	325	805	2025	16	44	40

Key: CM is abbreviation for Childminder, PVIs is abbreviation for Private, Voluntary & Independent Settings

The Families Information Service monitors the take up of Working Families validated codes by providers to update the mapping of supply and demand for childcare in the borough. The table below shows the number of new codes issued for Spring 2025 and the number of validated codes at our settings.

	9-month Olds	1 Year Olds	2 Year Olds
Number of New Codes Issued	90	516	652
Number of New Codes Validated	81	467	590
% of New codes validated	90%	90.5%	90.49%

DfE :[Explore our statistics and data - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

Redcar and Cleveland average take up is 90.33% compared to the National average of 89.67% and North East Region average of 90.65% for 9 months to 2 Year olds.

Providers offering funded early education places

Providers receive government funding for delivering early education places. Providers are not obliged to offer funded places, but parents may choose alternative providers if their preferred setting does not offer funded places. In the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector, all providers offer free places for the universal entitlement. Most providers also accept eligible 9 to 23 months olds, two year olds and children who qualify for the extended entitlement. It should be noted however, that providers can restrict the number of funded places.

5. Prices

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 extra payments for additional services, e.g. lunch and other meals which are not included in these prices.

The Families' Information Service holds charging information for all childcare providers. Establishing average charges for childcare is difficult as there may be additional payments for services, e.g. lunch and other meals which are not included in these prices and providers may offer discounts for extended hours or sibling groups.

Please see table below for average charges calculated for each type of childcare setting:

Provision Type	Average Rate
Childminder*	£210.63 (per week full time)
Day Nursery	£305.50 (per week full time)
After School Clubs	£15.62 (per session)
Breakfast Club	£2.50 (per session within school)
Breakfast Club	£6.75 (per session)
Holiday Clubs	£253.91 (per week full time)

Source: Money Advice Service, Family and Childcare Trust 2021; and Office of National Statistics 2020)

<https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/childcare-costs#full-time-childcare-costs> and

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157062/report.aspx?town=redcar#tabempunemp>

Coram Family and Childcare -Childcare Survey and Holiday Childcare Survey | Family and Childcare Trust

**The childminder average costs figure is influenced by some of our childminders preferring to discuss prices with parents rather than publish a set weekly amount.*

The average cost of a childminder per week in our region is lower than the national average at £210.63, compared to £302.10. However, the average weekly gross pay in Redcar and Cleveland of £636.50, is £93.30 lower than the England average of £729.80 per week.

During term time we report average daily prices for before school and after school care, and weekly prices for childminding. For holiday periods we provide average weekly prices for holiday clubs.

Although government funding helps with childcare costs, some parents still face additional costs. These can include paying for extra hours to match their work schedules, costs for meals and consumables. Some families are finding these additional costs unaffordable and lead them to consider informal childcare or a combination of different childcare options. Our parent survey shows 39% of parents who responded used a mix of childcare types.

6. Quality of childcare in our area

Ofsted inspection grades

All childcare providers must register with and be inspected by Ofsted. Childminders and Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) providers are on the Early Years Register. Schools and standalone maintained nursery schools are on the Schools register.

In England, from autumn 2025, a new report card will come into effect, detailing inspector's findings on key aspects of each school, including:

- quality of education
- behaviour and attendance
- personal development
- leadership and management

There will be five possible grades for each area:

- Urgent improvement
- Needs attention
- Expected standard
- Strong standard
- Exceptional

A separate part of the report card will say whether the provision's safeguarding duties have been met.

The single headline grades have been removed for schools, however childminders and PVIs have continued to receive overall judgements – the five Ofsted grades are:

- Outstanding
- Good
- Met
- Requires improvement
- Inadequate

Ofsted Inspection Judgements for Provisions

Provision Type	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Met/No grade	Inadequate
Childminders	8	53	0	15	1
Day Nurseries (incl. playgroups)	1	22	1	2	0
Schools Delivering 2 Year Places	2	9	3*	0	0

Please note: Ratings are as of June 2025. 'No grade' means that the provision is newly registered and has not yet received an Ofsted judgement. This affects 11 childminders and 1 nursery. 'Met' means there were no early years children present when the inspector called. 'Requires Improvement' is the grade formerly known as 'Satisfactory'.

* Chaloner Primary School had an overall "Good" rating but Early Years rated "Requires Improvement"

Lingdale and South Bank Primary Schools' had an overall "Requires Improvement" but Early Years rated "Good".

Type of provision	Total number of providers	% achieving good or outstanding
Childminders	77	79%
Private and voluntary nurseries (including playgroups)	26	88%
Schools Delivering 2 Year Old Places	14	79%
<i>Total</i>	117	81%

7. Parents and providers views of sufficiency in our local area

Findings from the Occupancy Audit and Overview on Childcare Sufficiency in the Redcar area

The Redcar Area is located in the centre of the borough and comprises of the following council wards:

- Coatham
- Dormanstown
- Kirkleatham
- Newcomen
- West Dyke
- Zetland
- Longbeck
- St Germains
- Wheatlands

This area has the highest number of registered childminders (36% of the total boroughwide). In the last 12 months 1 childminder has resigned but 1 has started to offer childcare. In this area, 100%, of childminders completed the data forms.

Our audit week showed that childminders had a total of 55 spaces. This included 36 pre-school places (2 to 4 year olds) and 19 babies (0-23 months old). In 2024, there were 21 spare pre-school aged places available to children in this area. This year has seen spare capacity within the Redcar childminding community allowing for additional places for children aged 0-4 years old, however, this may change with the final roll out of entitlements in September 2025.

There are 9 day nurseries in the Redcar area, those that responded to this year's occupancy survey reported a reduction in places from 197 to 73 – a decrease of 63%. This indicates

that nurseries have so far been able to absorb the increased demand resulting from the DfE entitlement rollouts in September 2024 and April 2025. There remains some capacity to accommodate future demand expected from the final phase of the entitlement roll out in September 2025.

All 15 primary schools in Redcar responded to the occupancy audit compared to 10 in 2024. The Breakfast Clubs had 409 occupied places nearly double the 210 recorded last year. After school clubs also saw an increase with 136 places occupied compared to 80 in 2024. This increase may be partly due to receiving data from all schools operating these clubs, as well as participating in the recently introduced government funded breakfast club initiative.

Childminders within this area have continued to express concern regarding competition from school's Breakfast and After School Clubs.

The parent survey revealed that 71% - 86 out of 120 of parents answered that the childcare was in the right location in the Redcar area. However, 49% - 61 out of 124 parents who replied said the cost of childcare in Redcar was not affordable.

Parents comments on childcare from the survey include:

"I haven't had difficulty finding childcare it's just the fact they don't accommodate for the hours of the majority of working parents and the hours we have to work to live on"

"I think childcare is difficult to afford for most families across the UK, however this is more due to the cost of it versus the minimum wage/actual average household income etc. I think childcare is as cheap as it can be while still providing the necessary care etc, but people still struggle to afford it."

"No childcare in Dormanstown for children accessing the SEN base. New afterschool and breakfast club is only funded short term and may not continue. Leaving us without morning and after provision."

"We have a very good childminder but are options other than her are very limited!"

Following the recent roll out of entitlements some parents will have benefited from additional funded childcare; however, some parents still struggle with affordability, opening times and choice of provision type. Childcare settings are experiencing increased demand from parents whose entitlement has increased from 15 to 30 hours, more parents becoming eligible and/or switching from informal childcare to funded childcare. Some settings are also struggling with recruitment and retention issues which may impact their ability to meet the growing demand, potentially limiting the number of places available.

To date providers are suggesting that they will be able to meet demand from their existing parents but have concerns for the Autumn term.

Findings from the Occupancy Audit and Overview on Childcare Sufficiency in the East Cleveland area

The East Cleveland area of the borough comprises of the following council wards:

- Brotton
- Guisborough
- Hutton
- Lockwood
- Loftus
- Saltburn
- Skelton East
- Skelton West
- Belmont

The data demonstrates that, 100% of registered childminders in the East Cleveland area responded to the audit, this equates to 31% of the total active childminders in the whole borough at this time. In the last 12 months, 2 childminders have stopped providing childcare, 1 has started and 1 is proposed from Ofsted.

These childminders told us that they had 36 spare pre-school places this year compared to 68 in 2024, this is 47% less than last year. This means there is some capacity within the childminding community to offer places for children aged 0-4 years old.

There are 7 private day nurseries in the East Cleveland area. In total, there were 37 spare pre-school aged places available through private day nurseries in 2025 compared to 62 in 2024 (40% decrease this year). The decreased number of spaces could be attributed to the entitlement expansion in September 2024 where children between 9 months and 2 year olds with working parents became entitled to 15 hours funded childcare especially from the more affluent areas in the East area and providers being prepared for the increased demand.

There are 15 primary schools in East Cleveland, of which 12 responded to the occupancy audit. In 2025 a total of 275 children attended breakfast and after school clubs, this remains consistent with the 2024 total of 276. In April 2025, 82 after school club places were taken; compared to 81 in 2024.

These figures may represent how the clubs in schools are established and the demand remaining consistent; some parents may move to school-based clubs from other childcare providers, as these are generally more affordable, though limited to term time only. It should be noted the data only represents 80% of the schools in the area so may not capture overall demand.

East Cleveland is a rural area and although the data shows there is capacity amongst day nurseries, there is still a sufficiency concern in terms of choice and location across some

specific towns and villages in the area and the reduction in the number of childminder places available generally across the locality.

Loftus and Brotton are a sufficiency concern as there is no day nursery and only 3 childminders, one childminder only offers places for children over 5 years old and another only offers childcare for children aged 2 years and over. Despite there being some childminders and other day nurseries in the surrounding areas which do have capacity to offer childcare spaces, some parents may not have the means or desire to travel to another village and would prefer to stay in their immediate community; especially if school pick-ups and drop-offs are required. Also, with the final roll out of entitlements in September 2025, parents may find neighbouring wards have fewer spare places to offer due to the overall increase in demand for childcare.

Based on the survey responses, 89 out of 106 parents (84%) indicated that childcare was in the right area. However, when asked if it was affordable, 34 out of 76 (44.7%) said it wasn't and 21 out of 76 (27.6%) said it was affordable. The remaining 21 respondents did not answer.

Parents comments from the survey include:

"It has probably got easier and more affordable now that funding has come into place for younger children, but as working parents I was only entitled for support from 3+. With no grandparents nearby, day care nursery was very expensive as I work full time. When my children were 3, wrap around care was expensive at a day nursery-nearly half a day rate for 2 hours childcare so didn't work out much cheaper. Now children are in school, wrap around is much more affordable using the school wrap around care! Still paying around £200 per month per child (and that is without using childcare every day!)"

"Difficult to find childcare services especially in the holidays. I also have a disabled child so that makes it more difficult. I feel like the introduction of the funded hours has made nursery's less flexible."

"As a lone parent with two children the fees take up a huge amount of income each month but the nursery setting we have chosen is outstanding and well worth the financial effort, we cannot commend them highly enough."

The Families' Information Service are aware of the sufficiency concerns and there have been several childminder searches that have had to be extended to include providers willing to offer pick up and drop off services outside their own community, or alternative options such as day nurseries have been suggested. FIS is continually working to attract more childminders.

Findings from the Occupancy Audit and Overview on Childcare Sufficiency in the Greater Eston Area

The Greater Eston Area includes the following council wards:

- Eston
- Grangetown
- Normanby
- Ormesby
- South Bank
- Teesville

The data shows there were a total of 38 available spaces for pre-school children among registered childminders, compared to 59 spare places reported in the 2024 childcare occupancy audit. Although 2 childminders have stopped offering childcare, 2 new childminders have started and a further one expected to join through the Tiney Agency. The number of childminders in the area currently remains at 25, and the data suggests there are still spare places available for pre-school aged children in the whole area but may vary between individual wards.

All the 10 day nurseries in the area responded to the survey (100% response rate). They have a total of 84 spare pre-school places available which demonstrates there are sufficient childcare places.

A total of 78.6% of primary schools/academies (11 out of 14) in the Greater Eston area responded to the survey. The number of children attending breakfast clubs has increased from 221 in 2024 to 302 in 2025 and children attending after school clubs increased slightly from 91 in 2024 to 98 in 2025. These increases could be due to affordability and more availability of school wraparound clubs. These figures could be underestimated given the response rate to the survey.

In the survey 44.7% of parents felt that childcare was in the right location to meet their needs – a significant decrease from 89% in 2024. 17 out of a total of 38 parents answered “Don’t Know” and only 2 parents said childcare was not in the right location. However, when asked if childcare was affordable, 36.8% said it was not affordable and 18.4% said it was and 44.7% didn’t know. These results only represent 38 out of 239 total responses from the borough (16%) are specific to parents living in the West.

Parents comments from the survey include:

“Given the current living wage, I don’t believe that the £60 a day fee I am currently paying would be affordable for most.”

“No option for after school childcare at school so am forced to pay for private”

“I work shift patterns that start out of hours”

The data demonstrates that childminders, day nurseries and schools in the Greater Eston area still have capacity to accommodate additional demand for all early years' age groups however the cost, type of provision choice, opening times and location of childcare maybe a barrier for parents. Some parents are trying to meet their requirements through flexible options which may include a blend of local childcare provisions, informal childcare or seeking childcare outside the area.

Appendix - Results of Occupancy Audit Data by Area

REDCAR AREA CHILDCARE PROVISION

Childcare Providers

Spare Places	Under 2 years	2 Year olds	3-4 Year Olds
Childminders	19	23	13
Daycare Provision	11	33	29
Total	30	56	42

School Childcare Provision

Spare Places	Under 2 years	2 Year olds	3-4 Year Olds
Schools with 30hour Childcare Provisions	0	2	26

Occupied Wraparound Places within a School Provision	3-4 Year Old	5-7 year old	8-11 Year Old
Breakfast Occupied Places	12	160	237
After School Occupied Places	8	69	60

Holiday Provision

Holiday Provision (all childcare types)	Available	Occupied	Spare
	306	181	125

EAST CLEVELAND AREA CHILDCARE PROVISION

Childcare Providers

Spare Places	Under 2 years	2 Year olds	3-4 Year Olds
Childminders	14	14	8
Daycare Provision	8	10	19
Total	22	24	27

School Childcare Provision

Spare Places	Under 2 years	2 Year olds	3-4 Year Olds
Schools with 30hour Childcare Provisions	0	24	21

Occupied Wraparound Places within a School Provision	3-4 Year Old	5-7 year old	8-11 Year Old
Breakfast Occupied Places	26	100	149
After School Occupied Places	5	34	43

Holiday Provision

Holiday Provision (all childcare types)	Available	Occupied	Spare
	376	235	140

GREATER ESTON CLEVELAND AREA CHILDCARE PROVISION

Childcare Providers

Spare Places	Under 2 years	2 Year olds	3-4 Year Olds
Childminders	14	14	10
Daycare Provision	37	26	21
Total	51	40	31

School Childcare Provision

Spare Places	Under 2 years	2 Year olds	3-4 Year Olds
Schools with 30hour Childcare Provisions	0	4	14

Occupied Wraparound Places within a School Provision	3-4 Year Old	5-7 year old	8-11 Year Old
Breakfast Occupied Places	16	116	170
After School Occupied Places	6	47	46

Holiday Provision

Holiday Provision (all childcare types)	Available	Occupied	Spare
	284	136	149