



# Early Years & Childcare



Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2025

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## Statutory duty

**‘Local authorities should report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare. This report should be made available and accessible to parents.’**

(Source: B2, Early Education and Childcare statutory guidance, applies to England and updated 21 February 2025, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-education-and-childcare--2/early-education-and-childcare-effective-from-1-april-2025#part-b-securing-sufficient-childcare>.)

The Childcare Act 2006, Section 6, places a duty on English local authorities, so far as is reasonably practicable in a free market, to secure sufficient childcare in their area for working parents. Childcare places are funded either by government entitlements or by parents. Attendance by children from birth to age five at any early education or childcare setting is voluntary. A child doesn't have to attend education provision until the term after their fifth birthday.

In this report, sufficiency is assessed using data about the need for childcare and the amount of childcare available.

Information about childcare sufficiency is used to plan and support the local childcare economy and to inform council priorities.

The Swindon Plan sets out three priority missions for the next decade to build a 'fairer', 'better' and 'greener' Swindon:

- **Build a Fairer Swindon** - Making Swindon a fairer place, reducing disadvantages and reducing big disparities in life expectancy, education levels and social justice.
- **Build a Better Swindon** – Creating a town ready for the challenges of the coming decades. Where possible, leading town centre improvement and creating more affordable housing with the private sector.
- **Build a Greener Swindon** – Fully playing our part as a council and a town in combatting climate change. Working with communities to find new ways of doing things that help, not hinder, the natural environment.

Parents and carers looking for a local childcare provider can visit our [Family Information Directory](#).

## Types of childcare

### Childminder

Registered childminders are self-employed childcare professionals who mainly work in their own homes. They care and support each child's learning in line with their age and stage of development. They will often care for a range of ages. Childminders may offer flexibility to accommodate parents individual working patterns. This assessment only includes places provided by Childminders for Early Years children.

### Home carer

Home carers are usually nannies who care for children of any age up to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday wholly or mainly in the child's own home and usually care for children from no more than two families. Details of Home carers have not been included in this assessment.

### Full day care – group provider

Full day care settings care for and support children's learning in line with the ages and stages of development of children, some offering places for children aged from 3 months to 5 years and are predominantly open from 8.00 – 6.00pm, some are open for even longer hours. Most are open from Monday to Friday, but a few may open at weekends to help support parents' different working patterns. Day nurseries operate all year round usually, except for bank holidays. Some close between Christmas and New Year, while others remain open. Most offer the free early education places for children aged the term after they turn 9 months to 4-year olds.

### School nursery class – group provider

This type of provision is based within primary schools that have a specific nursery class. They are found both in LA maintained schools and in academies. Sessions operate term time only.

### Nursery school – group provider

We do not have any Nursery schools in Swindon. This type of provision is based within schools maintained by a local authority and sessions operate term time only.

### Pre-school / Pre-school playgroup – group provider

Pre-schools and playgroups provide early education and childcare. Most are open Monday to Friday and many run sessions in term time only.

### Wraparound childcare

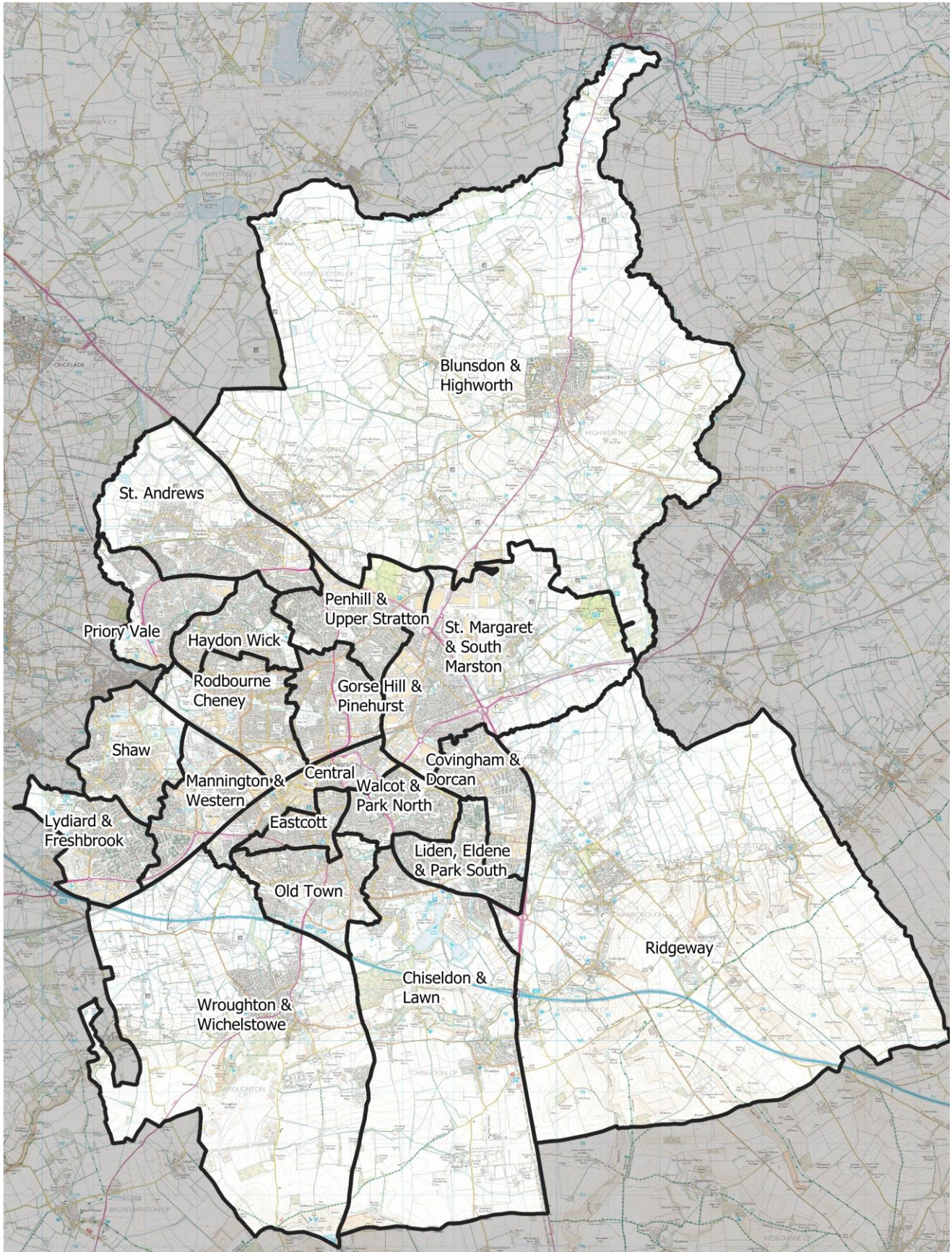
These are often referred to as Breakfast and After School Clubs. They provide care and play opportunities for school age children at times when schools are not open. They can operate before school in the mornings, from the end of the school day to the end of the working day. It is important to note that many of the out of school provisions respond to fluctuating community need and the majority are run by schools themselves. Some providers operate on Friday afternoons as some schools in Swindon are closed on Friday afternoons. Much of this provision when school-based is term-time only.

### Holiday play scheme

Holiday play schemes take place during school holiday periods and may be run by a school, private or voluntary organisation. Some only operate for a limited number of days through the school holidays, for example if only providing sessions that are funded by the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme.

## About Swindon

Swindon is made up of 20 wards.



Located in the north-east of Wiltshire, the thriving town and borough of Swindon is home to over 230,000 people. It has seen population growth outstrip the national average over the past decade, with people coming to live and work here from all over the world.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation ranks Swindon number 38 out of all English unitary authorities (there are a total of 63, rank 1 = most deprived, 63 = least deprived.) Swindon is ranked number 147 out of all 317 authorities in England (rank 1 = most deprived, 317 = least deprived.)

This report is written with reference to wards. The Department for Education provides analysis of Childcare Sufficiency based on wards and local authorities have to report back to them regarding Childcare Sufficiency in terms of wards. This differs from School Planning Areas which are based on the geographical areas defined by the secondary school catchments and feeder schools aligned to them.

In the 2023 Office for National Statistics Mid-Year Population Estimates, Swindon's population was estimated to be 238,417. Residents aged 0-19 years made up approximately 24% of the total population of Swindon in 2023. Children aged 0-4 years made up approximately 6% of the total population of Swindon in 2023.

Area	Population Age in years			
	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19
Swindon	13,370	15,208	15,742	13,418
South West	268,242	307,154	332,452	329,477
England	3,064,637	3,348,767	3,528,940	3,405,063

Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates 2023

## Sufficiency summary

Our Swindon Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency Assessment aims to share the current assessment of childcare sufficiency made by the Early Years and Childcare Team in Swindon as at March 2025. We also aim to share our estimation of the future childcare needs of Swindon given the expansion of the Early Years and Childcare offer across the country as announced in the government Spring budget 2023 and rolled out from September 2024. We aim to set out some of the information that informs our assessment and then to set out some of the actions we are already taking or plan to take to improve and address any gaps in childcare provision.

We need to complete a full review of sufficiency for both overall holiday childcare and of Wraparound Childcare (term time only, from 8am to 6pm for children in Reception Classes to Year 6).

- Our current assessment is that we do not have sufficient Early Years Childcare funded places in all wards, particularly for 9 months to 2 years-old, or for early years children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- We estimate Swindon will have a particular shortfall in places for children aged 9 months to 2 years-old from September 2025 when the working family funded entitlement is increased from 15 hours to 30 hours.
- Our current assessment is that we do have sufficient places on the Holiday and Food (HAF) programme as consistently more places are offered than are taken up.

## Early Years and Childcare expansion

Free Early Education Entitlements (FEEE) are funded by the government as follows:

	9 – 24 months	2 years	3 & 4 years
Current offer as at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025 until 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2025	Working parent – 15 hours	Eligible *FRAS – 15 hours Working parent – 15 hours	All children – 15 hours Working parent – 30 hours
From 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2025	Working parent – 30 hours	Eligible *FRAS – 15 hours Working parent – 30 hours	As above

(\*FRAS – Families receiving some additional forms of support)

Parents can use their FEEE from the term after their child turns the relevant age to use that entitlement. The relevant age for the working parent entitlement is 9 months old.

Eligibility criteria exists for each FEEE. For working parent funded entitlement parents are issued a code by HMRC which they are responsible for keeping in date by reconfirming their eligibility via a government childcare account.

How to apply for FEEE and eligibility criteria can be found on the government Childcare Choices website [here](#).

## Childcare before and after school

There are 67 schools in Swindon providing Primary Education (Reception - Year 6 / age 5-11). \*The term 'Full Wraparound' used in the table below generally refers to provision that is available term time only from 8am to 6pm, wrapped around the school day that requires parents to only drop off and pick up their child once (that is they do not need to take their child to or from school from the Wraparound provision). Where Full Wraparound is in place it is offered to children in Reception classes to Year 6.

Provision type	Number of schools where this provision is in place
Full Wraparound*	<b>43</b>
Breakfast club only	<b>14</b>
After School Club only	<b>2</b>
Total	<b>59</b>

October 2024

## Childcare during the school holidays

Some Childcare providers offer places to children all year round. In our next assessment we need to include an overview of the type and number of places available in Swindon.

## Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme

We have established that we currently have ample sufficiency in Swindon of places on the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme as we consistently have been able to offer more spaces than have been booked through the booking system.

The HAF programme is a government initiative that provides free, engaging activities and nutritious meals to eligible children from Reception to Year 11 (aged 4 to 16 inclusive) during school holidays. There are 37 providers registered to offer the HAF Programme to Swindon children during the Easter holiday 2025. A wide variety of activities are offered, which are all underpinned by the HAF Programme standards.

Some activities provided through HAF include:

<b>Arts &amp; crafts</b>	<b>Tennis</b>	<b>Performing Arts</b>
<b>Clay modelling</b>	<b>Cricket</b>	<b>Multisports</b>
<b>Football</b>	<b>Forest activities</b>	<b>Dance</b>

The aim of the programme is to make free places available to children eligible for benefits related free school meals for a minimum of four hours a day, four days a week for:

- One week at Easter
- Four weeks in the summer
- One week at Christmas.

Parents and carers looking for more information about the HAF programme can visit this link:

[Swindon Holiday and Food Programme](#)

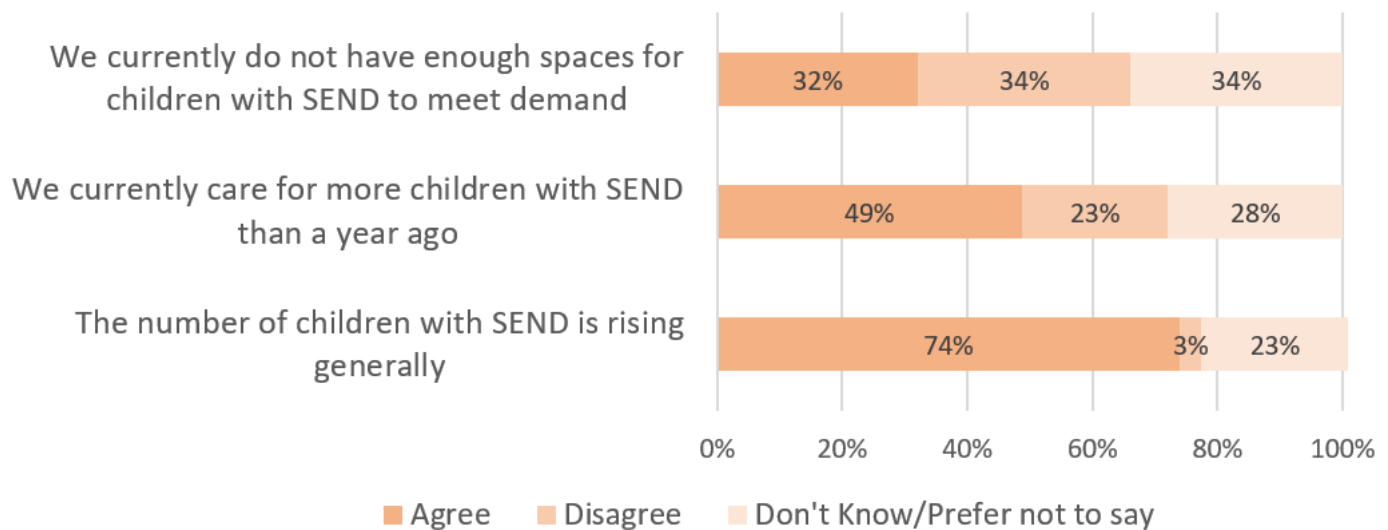
## Childcare for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

Children with SEND are entitled to support with childcare up to the age of 18 (age 14 for children who do not have SEND).

The table below is based on the Spring 2025 Provider Survey, which was completed by 115 providers:

### How far do you agree with the following statements?

Derived from responses to SEND based questions



The responses above would indicate that places for children with SEND are not sufficient as only 34% of providers that responded to the survey stated that they do currently have enough spaces for children with SEND to meet demand. We have far more work to do to understand why 34% of providers answered 'Don't know/Prefer not to say.'

In Swindon we currently offer the following support, training and guidance for Early Years Childcare providers to improve their inclusive practice:

- Encouraging providers to complete free inclusion training.
- Free network meetings for Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs).
- Area SENCOs who provide free visits to settings to provide support to staff.
- Free Early Years Childcare consultation sessions with SEND advisory professionals.
- Follow up visits to evaluate and maximize the use and impact of inclusion funding.

Following the review of Early Years Childcare sufficiency in March 2025, we have established that we do not have sufficient Early Years Childcare places in all wards in Swindon for all ages, which includes places for children with SEND.

### Prices per hour for Early Years Childcare outside the funded entitlements

For early years childcare outside the funded entitlements, we have provided below an average of prices per hour reported to us by providers in their sufficiency task. There may be variations to prices based on the number of hours a family uses, with reductions for longer hours or discounts for sibling groups. There may be additional payments for additional services, e.g. lunch and other meals which are not included in these prices. We have provided one average price for childminders and then 3 different average prices for 3 different age bands from across all group providers.

Age Group	Average price per hour
Childminder 0-5 years	<b>£5.34</b>
Group provider 0-2 years	<b>£5.75</b>
Group provider 2 years	<b>£6.19</b>
Group provider 3-4 years	<b>£5.98</b>

March 2025

### Quality of Early Years and Childcare

#### Ofsted

Ofsted will inspect providers under their education inspection framework (EIF). These inspections give parents information about the quality of education and care their children are receiving. Ofsted also check that the people working with children remain suitable to look after children and that they are meeting the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

#### Quality of childcare in Swindon

The quality of Early Years and Childcare provision in Swindon is high with 98% achieving good or outstanding judgements as at March 2025. The National average was 96.5% providers at good or outstanding in August 2023.

Provider type	Number of providers inspected	% achieving good or outstanding
<b>Childminder</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>98%</b>
<b>Full day care</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Pre-school/ Playgroup</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>95%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>98%</b>

As of March 2025, there are 72 providers that have not had a quality inspection yet, which may be because they have only recently registered. School nursery classes are inspected as part of the overall inspection of schools.

#### Providers with Met/Not Met/ Requires improvement or Inadequate grade

When providers do not have any children on site at the time of their first inspection, they are given an Ofsted grade of 'met' or 'not met'. This shows whether they are meeting the requirements for Ofsted registration and usually happens when new providers are being set up. In Swindon we have 2 providers with a 'Met' grade and no providers with a 'Not Met' grade. In addition to this, there are 3 providers with

an Ofsted judgement of 'Requires Improvement' who are receiving support from the Early Years and Childcare Team and no providers judged 'Inadequate'.

### Early Years and Childcare sufficiency in Swindon, March 2025

Provider type	Number of providers
Childminder	<b>131</b>
Full day care	<b>34</b>
School nursery class	<b>41</b>
Pre-school/ Playgroup	<b>26</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>

Following the review of Early Years and Childcare sufficiency in March 2025, we have established:

- Our current assessment is that we do not have sufficient Early Years and Childcare funded places in all wards, particularly for 9 months to 2 years-old, or for early years children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- We estimate Swindon will have a particular shortfall in places for children aged 9 months to 2 years-old from September 2025 when the funded entitlement is increased.
- Our current assessment is that we do have sufficient places on the Holiday and Food (HAF) programme as consistently more places are offered than are taken up.

We need to complete a full review of sufficiency for both overall holiday childcare and of Wraparound Childcare (term time only, from 8am to 6pm for children in Reception Classes to Year 6).

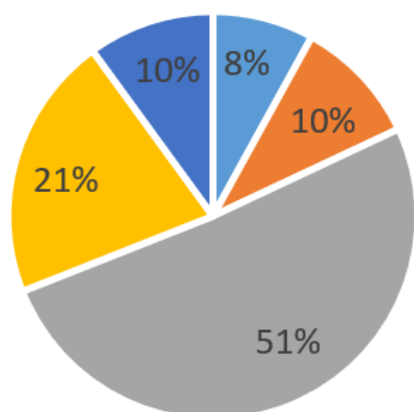
Given the continued expansion of funded childcare, particularly from September 2025, we will continually assess supply and demand and take positive action to support and sustain the sector in order to improve the early years and childcare offer in Swindon.

The table below shows the approximate number of children in each age range living in Swindon Borough, the number and then the percentage of these children taking up their funded Early Years Childcare place. Children often do not take up their childcare entitlement in the ward in which they live.

Age range	Living in Swindon Borough	Number taking up a funded place	% taking up a funded place
9-24 months	3058	1071	35%
2 years	2477	1476	60%
3-4 years	3839	3520	92%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9374</b>	<b>6067</b>	<b>65%</b>

**Please note:** 'Living in Swindon Borough' column above is informed by data from Swindon Health Visiting Team Spring 2025.

Also, there are approximately 1777 children aged 0-8 months currently living in Swindon Borough. The table below is based on the Spring 2025 Swindon Provider Survey completed by those offering Early Years Childcare. 115 (49%) providers completed this survey.



**When Early Years and Childcare providers were asked to choose a description that best matched their current capacity:**

8%	answered: "We usually operate below our Ofsted registered capacity because we cannot recruit enough staff to meet required staff-child ratios."
51%	answered: "Our operational capacity is the same as our Ofsted registered capacity and we are usually full to capacity."
21%	answered "Our operational capacity is the same as our registered capacity but we usually have vacancies."
10%	answered "We usually operate below our Ofsted registered capacity because there is not enough demand for childcare places."
10%	answered 'Other'.

### Ward based information, Early Years Childcare, March 2025 (alphabetical order).

Based on Spring Sufficiency Task completed by 85% providers, then averages applied across remaining 15%.

#### Blunsdon and Highworth, Early Years Childcare March 2025

Full Day Care	Pre School	Childminder	School Nursery Class	Total
0	1	7	3	11

Age range	Living in ward	Taking up funded hours	Places offered by group providers:	Vacancies
9-24 months	103	35 (34%)	2	1
2 years	95	59 (62%)	23	4
3-4 years	171	145 (85%)	131	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>239 (65%)</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>27</b>



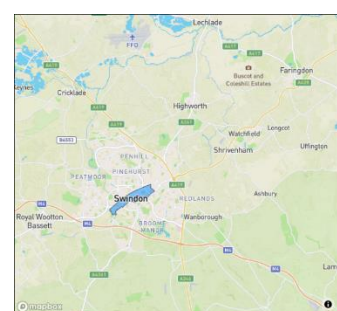
Currently an additional 30 places are provided by Childminders in this ward who have 3 vacancies for Early Years children.

Early Years Childcare group providers told us that they currently have 1 vacancy for children aged 9-24 months and 4 vacancies for children aged 2 in this ward. This indicates a need to increase places for children aged 9-24 months and 2 years old in this ward.

#### Central, Early Years Childcare March 2025

Full Day Care	Pre School	Childminder	School Nursery Class	Total
2	1	3	0	6

Age range	Living in ward	Taking up funded hours	Places offered by group providers:	Vacancies
9-24 months	221	20 (9%)	15	2
2 years	202	59 (29%)	36	9
3-4 years	264	192 (73%)	84	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>325 (47%)</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>24</b>

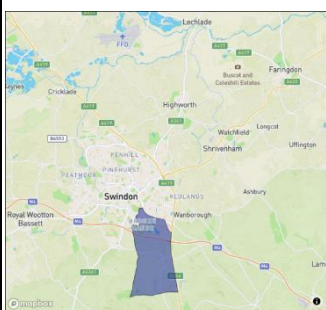


Currently 12 additional places are provided by Childminders in this ward who have 0 vacancies for Early Years children. Early Years Childcare group providers told us that they currently have 2 vacancies for children aged 9-24 months in this ward. This indicates a need to increase places for children aged 9-24 months. This ward has a low level of take up of the funded Early Years Childcare offer at 47%. We need to establish if this is due to lack of demand, because parents are not aware of the funded offer or because the offer does not meet the needs of parents.

**Chiseldon and Lawn, Early Years Childcare March 2025**

Full Day Care	Pre School	Childminder	School Nursery Class	Total
1	0	7	3	11

Age range	Living in ward	Taking up funded hours	Places offered by group providers:	Vacancies
9-24 months	105	47 (45%)	24	3
2 years	102	63 (62%)	45	7
3-4 years	162	152 (94%)	132	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>262 (71%)</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>44</b>



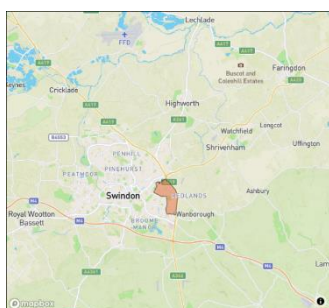
Currently an additional 30 places are provided by Childminders in this ward who have 3 vacancies for Early Years children.

The Early Years Childcare group providers told us they currently have 3 vacancies for 9-24 months which indicates a need to increase places for this age group.

**Covingham and Dorcan, Early Years Childcare March 2025**

Full Day Care	Pre School	Childminder	School Nursery Class	Total
0	3	8	1	12

Age range	Living in ward	Taking up funded hours	Places offered by group providers:	Vacancies
9-24 months	124	44 (35%)	0	0
2 years	85	58 (68%)	23	13
3-4 years	141	124 (88%)	106	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>226 (65%)</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>52</b>



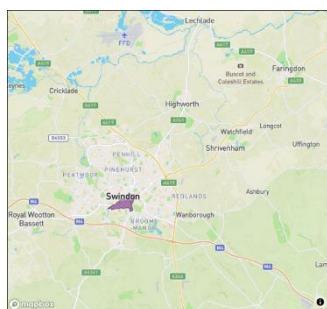
Currently an additional 19 places are provided by Childminders in this ward who have 2 vacancies for Early Years children.

Currently no group providers in this ward offer places for children aged 9-24 months. This is an area of focus as it indicates that the children who cannot access provision with one of the 8 Childminders in the ward have to travel out of the ward to access their funded entitlement.

### Eastcott, Early Years Childcare March 2025

Full Day Care	Pre School	Childminder	School Nursery Class	Total
1	3	4	1	9

Age range	Living in ward	Taking up funded hours	Places offered by group providers:	Vacancies
9-24 months	179	42 (23%)	2	3
2 years	159	49 (31%)	23	2
3-4 years	209	174 (83%)	131	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>265 (48%)</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>13</b>

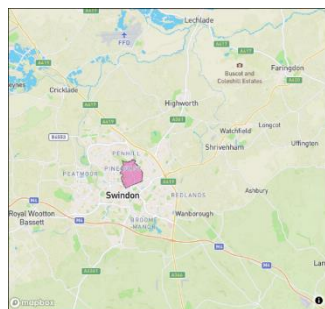


Currently an additional 12 places are provided by Childminders in this ward who have 2 vacancies for Early Years children. Early Years Childcare group providers told us that they currently have 3 vacancies for children aged 9-24 months and only 2 vacancies for children aged 2. This indicates a need to increase places for children in these age brackets. The level of take up of the funded Early Years Childcare offer is low at 48%. We need to establish if this is due to lack of demand, because parents are not aware of the funded offer or because the offer does not meet the needs of parents.

### Gorsehill and Pinehurst, Early Years Childcare March 2025

Full Day Care	Pre School	Childminder	School Nursery Class	Total
4	1	4	2	11

Age range	Living in ward	Taking up funded hours	Places offered by group providers:	Vacancies
9-24 months	173	37 (21%)	26	3
2 years	154	66 (43%)	72	15
3-4 years	204	188 (92%)	162	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>291 (55%)</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>47</b>

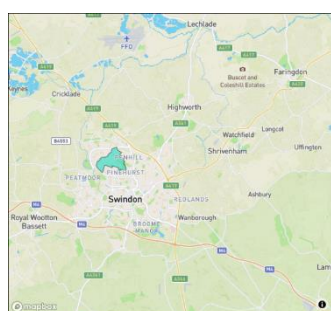


Currently an additional 7 places are provided by Childminders in this ward who have 2 vacancies for Early Years children. Early Years Childcare group providers told us the currently have 3 vacancies for 9-24 months which indicates a need to increase places for this age group, though the current take up is low at 21%. We need to establish if this is due to lack of demand, because parents are not aware of the funded offer or because the offer does not meet the needs of parents.

### Haydon Wick, Early Years Childcare March 2025

Full Day Care	Pre School	Childminder	School Nursery Class	Total
3	1	14	0	18

Age range	Living in ward	Taking up funded hours	Places offered by group providers:	Vacancies
9-24 months	111	44 (40%)	57	14
2 years	105	66 (63%)	41	10
3-4 years	147	147 (100%)	176	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>257 (71%)</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>53</b>



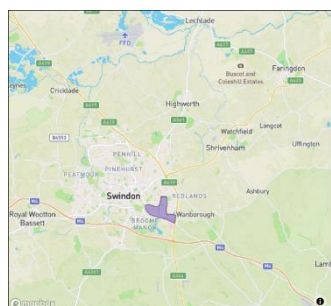
Currently an additional 57 places are provided by Childminders in this ward who have 7 vacancies for Early Years children, which indicates this is a popular type of provision for families and a possible focus for expansion.

100% of children aged 3-4 years old take up funded hours which indicates a high level of demand.

### Liden, Eldene and Park South, Early Years Childcare March 2025

Full Day Care	Pre School	Childminder	School Nursery Class	Total
1	0	6	3	10

Age range	Living in ward	Taking up funded hours	Places offered by group providers:	Vacancies
9-24 months	133	29 (22%)	7	0
2 years	119	63 (53%)	28	2
3-4 years	183	147 (80%)	128	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>239 (55%)</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>27</b>



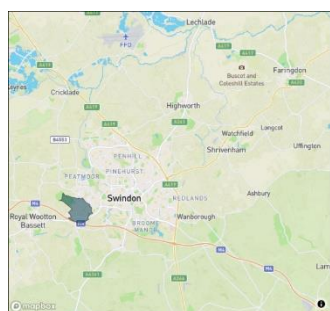
Currently an additional 25 places are provided by Childminders in this ward who have 6 vacancies for Early Years children.

Early Years Childcare group providers told us that they currently have 0 vacancies for children aged 9-24 months and 2 vacancies for children aged 2 in this ward. This indicates a need to increase places for children aged 9-24 months and 2 years old in this ward.

### Lydiard and Freshbrook, Early Years Childcare March 2025

Full Day Care	Pre School	Childminder	School Nursery Class	Total
1	3	8	1	13

Age range	Living in ward	Taking up funded hours	Places offered by group providers:	Vacancies
9-24 months	135	40 (30%)	27	4
2 years	105	68 (65%)	44	9
3-4 years	160	152 (95%)	133	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>260 (65%)</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>33</b>



Currently an additional 24 places are provided by Childminders in this ward who have 3 vacancies for Early Years children.

Early Years Childcare group providers told us that they currently have 4 vacancies for children aged 9-24 months. This indicates a need to increase places for children aged 9-24 months in this ward.

### Mannington and Western, Early Years Childcare March 2025

Full Day Care	Pre School	Childminder	School Nursery Class	Total
4	0	10	2	16

Age range	Living in ward	Taking up funded hours	Places offered by group providers:	Vacancies
9-24 months	174	54 (31%)	25	12
2 years	144	77 (53%)	59	10
3-4 years	198	189 (95%)	117	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>320 (62%)</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>39</b>



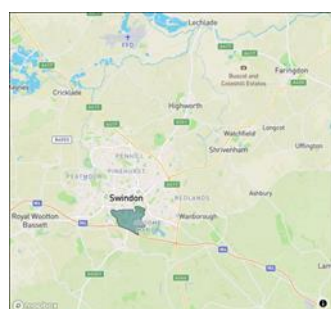
Currently an additional 41 places are provided by Childminders in this ward who have 2 vacancies for Early Years children, which indicates this is a popular type of provision for families and a possible focus for expansion.

95% of children aged 3-4 years old take up funded hours which indicates a high level of demand.

**Old Town, Early Years Childcare March 2025**

Full Day Care	Pre School	Childminder	School Nursery Class	Total
1	1	6	1	9

Age range	Living in ward	Taking up funded hours	Places offered by group providers:	Vacancies
9-24 months	133	46 (35%)	24	11
2 years	125	60 (48%)	43	7
3-4 years	173	158 (91%)	123	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>264 (61%)</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>54</b>



Currently an additional 17 places are provided by Childminders in this ward who have 3 vacancies for Early Years children.

Early Years Childcare group providers told us that their lowest current number of vacancies is for children age 2. This indicates a need to increase places for children aged 2 in this ward.

**Penhill and Upper Stratton, Early Years Childcare March 2025**

Full Day Care	Pre School	Childminder	School Nursery Class	Total
2	3	6	2	13

Age range	Living in ward	Taking up funded hours	Places offered by group providers:	Vacancies
9-24 months	167	32 (19%)	2	1
2 years	141	98 (70%)	23	4
3-4 years	235	218 (93%)	131	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>348 (64%)</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>27</b>



Currently an additional 21 places are provided by Childminders in this ward who have 4 vacancies for Early Years children.

Early Years Childcare group providers told us that there is currently 1 vacancy for children aged 9-24 months and 4 vacancies for children age 2 in this ward. This indicates a need to increase places for children aged 9-24 months and 2 years old in this ward.

### Prory Vale, Early Years Childcare March 2025

Full Day Care	Pre School	Childminder	School Nursery Class	Total
0	0	13	3	16

Age range	Living in ward	Taking up funded hours	Places offered by group providers:	Vacancies
9-24 months	174	74 (43%)	0	0
2 years	138	70 (51%)	0	0
3-4 years	214	177 (83%)	71	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>321 (61%)</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>7</b>



Currently an additional 44 places are provided by Childminders in this ward who have 4 vacancies for Early Years children.

Currently no group providers in this ward offer places for children aged 9-24 months or age 2. This is an area of focus as it indicates that the children who cannot access provision with one of the 13 Childminders in the ward have to travel out of the ward to access their funded entitlement.

### Ridgeway, Early Years Childcare March 2025

Full Day Care	Pre School	Childminder	School Nursery Class	Total
3	0	0	0	3

Age range	Living in ward	Taking up funded hours	Places offered by group providers:	Vacancies
9-24 months	44	20 (45%)	62	3
2 years	41	21 (51%)	78	2
3-4 years	51	41 (80%)	91	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>82 (60%)</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>5</b>

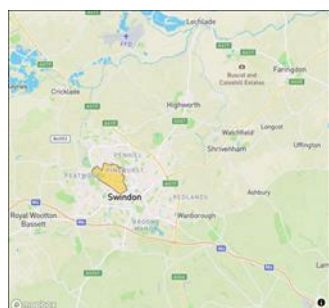


There are no Childminders in the Ridgeway ward. The only Early Years Childcare provider type in the ward is Full Day Care. 231 places are offered but only 136 Early Years children live in the ward, of those only 60% take up their funded hours. This is because many families travel out of town to take their children to the Full Day Care providers in Ridgeway ward. Occupancy levels are high as providers have told us there are currently only 5 vacancies and 0 vacancies for children aged 3-4.

**Rodbourne Cheney, Early Years Childcare March 2025**

Full Day Care	Pre School	Childminder	School Nursery Class	Total
4	1	4	4	13

Age range	Living in ward	Taking up funded hours	Places offered by group providers:	Vacancies
9-24 months	154	51 (33%)	93	6
2 years	131	75 (57%)	137	20
3-4 years	201	176 (88%)	242	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>302 (62%)</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>62</b>



Currently an additional 16 places are provided by Childminders in this ward who have 1 vacancy for Early Years children, this indicates this is a popular provider type in the ward and an area of possible expansion.

Early Years Childcare group providers offer a high number of places for children aged 9-24 months and age 2 in this ward. Despite this, there are only 6 vacancies for children aged 9-24 months indicating a need to increase places for children of this age.

**Shaw, Early Years Childcare March 2025**

Full Day Care	Pre School	Childminder	School Nursery Class	Total
1	1	6	2	10

Age range	Living in ward	Taking up funded hours	Places offered by group providers:	Vacancies
9-24 months	149	66 (44%)	27	11
2 years	102	51 (50%)	29	12
3-4 years	187	170 (91%)	117	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>287 (65%)</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>39</b>



Currently an additional 18 places are provided by Childminders in this ward who have 1 vacancy for Early Years children.

This indicates that Childminders are popular provider type in the ward and an area of possible expansion.

### St Andrews, Early Years Childcare March 2025

Full Day Care	Pre School	Childminder	School Nursery Class	Total
1	1	14	6	22

Age range	Living in ward	Taking up funded hours	Places offered by group providers:	Vacancies
9-24 months	304	152 (50%)	30	23
2 years	245	147 (60%)	33	26
3-4 years	368	333 (90%)	237	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>917</b>	<b>632 (69%)</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>109</b>



Currently an additional 53 places are provided by Childminders in this ward with 6 vacancies for Early Years children. This indicates that Childminders are popular provider type in the ward and an area of possible expansion.

Although vacancy numbers look relatively healthy, this is a focus ward as the highest number of Early Years children live there compared to all other wards. In Autumn 2024 a large number of parents gained a code to access their Early Years entitlement but did not have their code validated. A Parent Survey was distributed to find out the reasons for this. We received 83 responses

outlining a variety of reasons, including that family members were now providing childcare, but also that term time only childcare did not meet the needs of working parents. There is only one full day care provider in the ward indicating a need for more Full Day Care provision in St Andrews.

### St Margaret and South Marston, Early Years Childcare March 2025

Full Day Care	Pre School	Childminder	School Nursery Class	Total
3	3	3	0	9

Age range	Living in ward	Taking up funded hours	Places offered by group providers:	Vacancies
9-24 months	162	75 (46%)	34	21
2 years	133	93 (70%)	32	11
3-4 years	173	158 (91%)	72	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>326 (70%)</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>51</b>



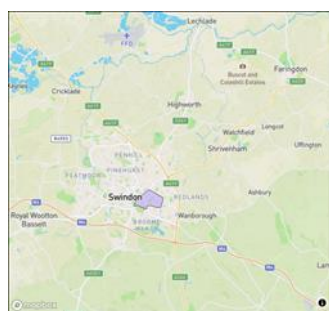
Currently an additional 18 places are provided by Childminders in this ward who have 1 vacancy for Early Years children.

This indicates that Childminders are popular provider type in the ward and an area of possible expansion.

### Walcot and Park North, Early Years Childcare March 2025

Full Day Care	Pre School	Childminder	School Nursery Class	Total
2	0	6	4	12

Age range	Living in ward	Taking up funded hours	Places offered by group providers:	Vacancies
9-24 months	180	27 (15%)	23	4
2 years	153	89 (58%)	71	8
3-4 years	222	195 (88%)	153	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>311 (56%)</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>37</b>



Currently an additional 21 places are provided by Childminders in this ward who have 1 vacancy for Early Years children. This indicates that Childminders are popular provider type in the ward and an area of possible expansion.

The number of children aged 9-24 months taking up funded hours is low in this ward. We need to establish if this is due to lack of demand, because parents are not aware of the funded offer or because the offer does not meet the needs of parents.

### Wroughton and Wichelstowe, Early Years Childcare March 2025

Full Day Care	Pre School	Childminder	School Nursery Class	Total
1	1	4	1	7

Age range	Living in ward	Taking up funded hours	Places offered by group providers:	Vacancies
9-24 months	105	37 (35%)	15	3
2 years	83	56 (67%)	34	5
3-4 years	118	114 (97%)	67	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>207 (67%)</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>24</b>



Currently, an additional 12 places are provided by Childminders in this ward who have 1 vacancy for Early Years children.

This indicates that Childminders are popular provider type in the ward and an area of possible expansion.

## Recommendations

The recommendations have been made below to ensure the Local Authority meets the statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare available, so far as is reasonably practicable, to meet the needs of all children including: children with special educational needs and/or disabilities children from families in receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit, children with parents who work irregular hours, children taking up free early education and childcare places, school age children, and children needing holiday care.

### Place creation

- Continue to encourage take up of the capital expansion grant to increase early years childcare places for children age 9-24 Months and 2 years.
- Continue to encourage take up of the Wraparound grant to increase places available.
- The Early Years and Childcare Team to take an active role in discussions regarding planned housing development to ensure the early years childcare needs of families are fully met.

### Communication

- Consider how to improve the communication regarding Free Early Education Entitlements (FEEE) to parents, particularly in wards where take up is low.
- Complete a Childcare Sufficiency Duty Parental Survey in 2026 to improve understanding of the current childcare needs of parents.

### Capacity and recruitment

- Monitor the risk of staff recruitment and retention challenges to a sustainable local childcare market in Swindon and identify the wards where this risk is high.
- Continue to work with local colleges to improve the alignment of their training offer to the needs of the childcare market.

### Supply and Demand

- Continue to monitor the take up of childcare and to support childcare providers to maximise their occupancy and remain sustainable.
- Fully review the supply of both overall holiday childcare and of Wraparound Childcare (term time only, from 8am to 6pm for children in Reception Classes to Year 6). The findings of this to be included in the next Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.
- Engage with providers to improve their completion of the Sufficiency Task (85% completion in Spring 2025) and the annual Provider Survey (49% completion in Spring 2025) and consult with providers in order to reduce the bureaucratic burden caused by these data collecting activities.

## Notes on methodology

This assessment has been informed by information from the census completed by providers, the early years Childcare Sufficiency Task that providers complete three times per year and from a Provider Survey completed once per year to add to the information already held by the local authority. We use this information to understand the early years childcare offer in Swindon. In Autumn 2024 the early years sufficiency task was completed by 100% of current providers. This task is completed by providers three times per year and requires providers to inform the local authority about the number of places they provide for each age group and the number of vacancies they have.

Given the high response, the Autumn data would appear to be a reliable data set to use to inform this assessment. However, it became clear that a number of providers had completed it based on the number of places they had registered to provide with Ofsted, instead of basing their response upon the number of places they were actually able to provide at that time. Providers may find themselves unable to offer the places they are registered to provide for a number of reasons, such as difficulty in recruiting suitably qualified staff or having to close rooms due to water leaks etc. The number of places they can actually offer is referred to in this assessment as '**operational capacity**'.

As a result, the Spring 2025 sufficiency task was updated to ask providers to only enter the number of places offered and the vacancies they have based upon their operational capacity. When the task closed in March 2025, 85% of current providers had completed it. For the purpose of this assessment, the average number of places offered and vacancies available was applied to the remaining 15% of providers.

The outcome of this assessment was that providers reported:

<b>Operational Capacity</b>	<b>4478 places</b>
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This is **549 places** less than the **5027** places registered with Ofsted. This contributes to our assessment that we do not have sufficient places in all wards.

Two important notes:

1. Not all of the 6067 children taking up a funded place will be accessing the full number of hours they are entitled to. For example, a parent of a child that is entitled to 30 hours of childcare or early education for 38 weeks per year may choose to only take up 15 hours per week for 38 weeks per year.
2. Providers offer a wide range of hours available per week and offer these flexibly, for example offering up to 50 hours per week over 50 weeks of the year.

This goes some way to explain how we can have 6067 children accessing all or some of their funded entitlement when only 4478 places are available.