

2023



# Brent Childcare Sufficiency

2023 UPDATE  
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## Context

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment provides an opportunity to examine current patterns of supply and demand for childcare in order to assess progress. Data gathering for this update uses take-up figures from Autumn 2023 headcount. The headcount indicates numbers of children who are taking up their entitlements to free early education at Brent private, voluntary and independent (PVI), childminder and school settings. Figures for children with special educational needs and disabilities are provided for the end of academic year ending July 2023.

In Spring 2023 the Chancellor announced an expansion to the entitlements to free childcare for working families. The expansion will be introduced in a phased way with 15 hours of childcare for working families of 2 year olds in April 2024, 15 hours of childcare for working families of children 9+ months in September 2024 and then 30 hours for working families of children 9+ months to school age in September 2025. This will have a significant impact on supply and demand for childcare places and a further update of this document will be provided to reflect these changes.

## Summary

### [Childcare supply in Brent 2023 – an overview](#)

There is under-fives provision across all ward areas offering childcare places for 0-5s. There are variances across ward areas in registered place capacity with a difference of 619 registered places between the ward with the greatest (Stonebridge) and fewest (Sudbury) places. There is a balance of free entitlement places being delivered across different setting types. Overall quality of provision has reduced with 93% of active providers across the PVI and childminder sector now judged as good or outstanding by Ofsted.

Registered childcare for school aged children is less consistently available across the borough with 4 ward areas having no before school provision, 3 having no after school provision and more than half of ward areas having no holiday provision.

### [Demand for childcare in Brent in 2023 – an overview](#)

Brent council has a duty to ensure there is sufficient childcare to meet demand from families. Currently there appears to be sufficient provision to meet parental need as evidenced by vacancies in all areas across the borough. There are not, however, vacancies in all sector types (i.e., private, voluntary and independent providers, schools and childminders) in all ward areas. It is likely that some parents cannot access either the specific provision they want, at the times they want or at the right price to suit their budget. This update does not include a parental survey however demand mapping will form an integral part of planning for the new entitlements.

Take up of (demand for) the free entitlements to childcare for 2, 3, and 4 year olds has improved. Figures on take up are provided to local authorities by the Department for Education (DfE) on an annual basis in the summer of each year based on January census returns. The last release of these figures (June 2023) indicated take up in Brent as of January 2023 was 79.3% for 3 and 4 year olds, an increase of 2% on the previous year. After an increase to 64% take up for 2 year olds in 2019 this had declined in 2021 to 49% and has now increased to 65.4%. Childcare places delivered

for under 2s and over 2s not claiming free entitlements are not captured in headcount information nor is this information currently collected from providers. Some providers have reported reduced demand for places and particularly for those places outside the free entitlements.

### Plans for childcare in Brent in 2024

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

It is anticipated that there will be significant change to the supply of and demand for childcare in 2024 and 2025 in light of the expansion of free entitlements to childcare for working families. This will initially include a 15 hour entitlement for 2 year olds in working families in April 2024, expanding to children from 9+ months from September 2024 and further expanding to a 30 hour entitlement for working families from September 2025. The criteria for working families will mirror that currently in place for the 30 hour entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds. Alongside this by 2026, all parents and carers of primary school-aged children who need it will be able to access term time childcare in their local area from 8am-6pm so that parents can access employment. This childcare will continue to be paid for by parents.

In preparation for the above, sufficiency mapping exercises have already taken place to measure provider interest in delivery of the expanded early years entitlements. A further refresh will take place once funding rates for these entitlements are confirmed. It is anticipated that initially many 2 year olds in working families will be 'converters' ie. they are already in childcare settings but this childcare will now be paid for in a different way. As demand for the new entitlements builds, it may be necessary to increase capacity (particularly for September 2025) and capital funding will be used to incentivise providers to expand to meet this capacity. Similarly central government funding will be used to expand the supply of and demand for wraparound provision.

The Brent Childcare action plan will be refreshed in 2024 encompassing the expanded entitlements and wraparound provision. Alongside this sits the Family Hubs and Start for Life offer which focuses on developing an integrated pathway for early years. This includes involvement from early years providers, health providers, voluntary sector and local authority services. This offer provides a commitment to families that staff across agencies will know the pathway and can signpost accordingly. Irrespective of which agency the contact is from, staff will be aware of key milestones and can refer to these providing multiple points for families to access information and support. A partnership involving local authority teams including Family Wellbeing Centres, health teams, Job Centre Plus, voluntary sector and parent representatives to set a borough wide ambition for early years is in place and this group will report to the Early Help and Prevention board. This partnership will also be key in addressing issues of demand management in the early years sector by supporting all families to take up their entitlement to early years provision.

## Brent context

### Characteristics of children and families

Census 2021 figures indicate that there are approximately 20,000 0-4 year olds, 19,800 children aged 5-9, and 20,900 children aged 10-14 living in Brent. These children may require childcare

before and after school, and/or during the school holidays. For purposes of this sufficiency analysis the 2021 census has been used for ward population estimates.

The 2021 Census recorded that 65.4% of the total population of Brent is Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME). This is the second highest proportion in England and Wales. There are 149 languages spoken in Brent with 66.3% of the population speaking English as their home language. In 1 in 5 households nobody speaks English as their home language (the highest rate in the UK). Other than English, Gujarati, Romanian, Arabic, Portuguese and Polish are the most frequently spoken languages. Numbers of Romanian speakers have trebled since the last census with reductions in the number of Polish speakers. 75.6% of babies born in Brent were to mothers born outside the UK.

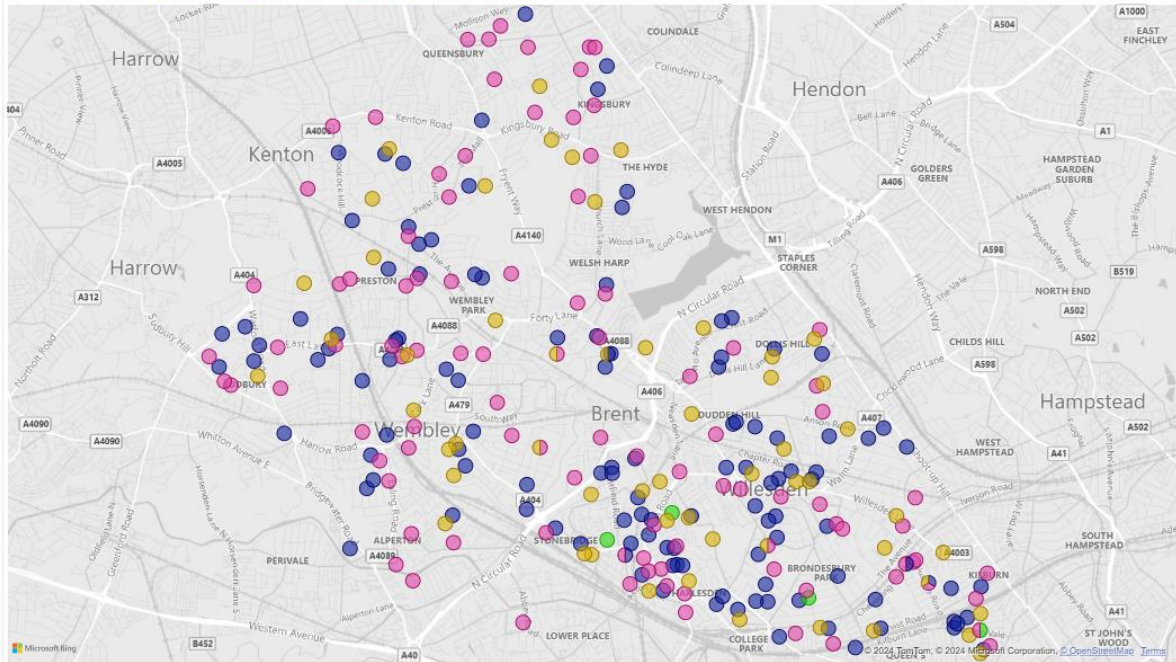
## Supply of childcare in Brent

Figures 1-3 below illustrate the spread of provision by type across the borough and the varying registered 0-5 places across ward areas. While some families are willing to travel to access their preferred provider, for many parents location is a key determinant of preferred provision. To that end, a spread of provision across the borough so that families in all ward areas can make use of provision locally is a priority. There is childcare provision for under-fives in all provider types in the vast majority of ward areas in the borough. There is PVI, childminder and school provision in all ward areas with the exception of Wembley Park which has only PVI providers, Wembley Central and Northwick Park where there is no school based early years provision. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate that the largest number of 0-5 registered places are found in Stonebridge ward (808) of which the majority (62%) of these places are being offered in the PVI sector. Roundwood (731) and Harlesden and Kensal Green (651) wards have the second and third largest number of places (719 and 681 respectively). The smallest number of registered places are found in Sudbury (100) followed by Wembley Park (191).

**Figure 1: 0-5 childcare providers in Brent**

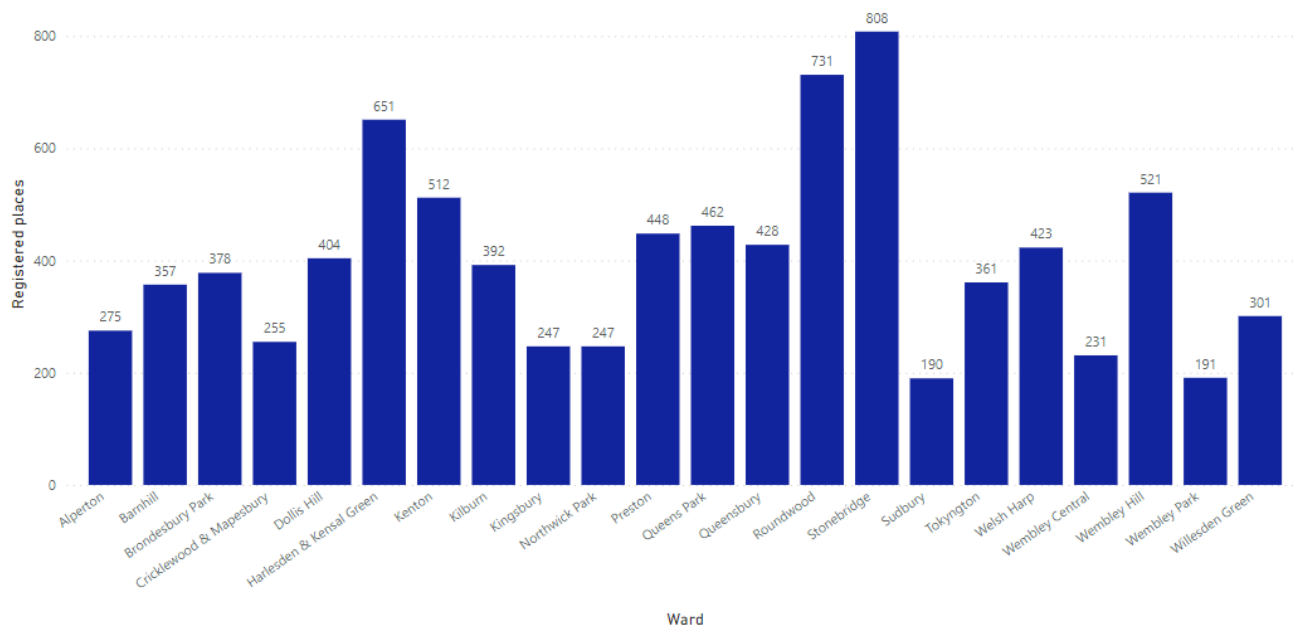
Brent providers Dec 2023

Type of Establishment ● Childminder ● Nursery School ● PVI ● School



**Figure 2: Distribution of childcare places in Brent**

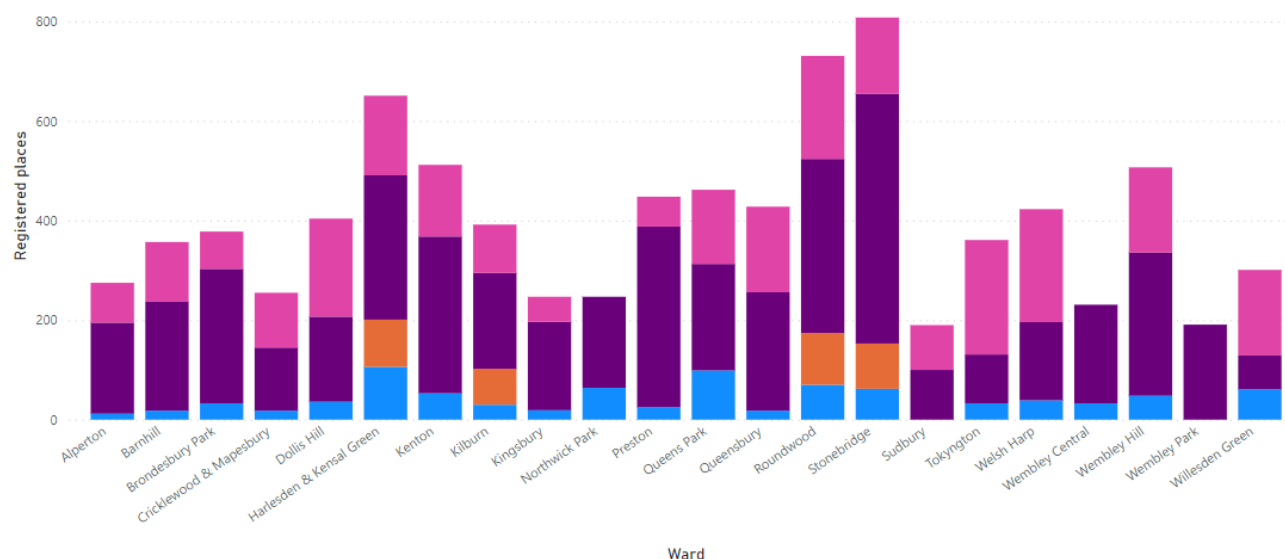
Registered places by ward - all providers Dec 2023



**Figure 3: Registered places by provider type Dec 2023**

Registered places by ward - all providers Dec 2023

Type of Establishment ● Childminder ● Nursery School ● PVI ● School



### Changes in supply

As illustrated in Figure 4, the decrease in the number of childminder providers in the borough has slowed this year with a reduction of 3 providers. This figure continues to mask the number of childminders that may no longer be operating as they are in the process of closing (ie have notified Ofsted but this notification has not yet been processed) and anecdotal evidence suggests that genuinely available places may be lower than the figure given.

3 group based PVI providers have closed in the period Jan - November 2023. One provider who previously operated 2 sites closed one site with the majority of children moving to the remaining site. In addition there were a number of providers who changed registration or ownership resulting in newly registered provision on the same or new sites without major changes to provision delivery.

**Figure 4: Trends in provision by type - December 2023**

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>2023 Number of providers</i>	<i>2023 Number of registered 0-5 places</i>	<i>2022 Number of providers</i>	<i>2022 Number of registered places</i>	<i>2021 Number of providers</i>	<i>2021 Number of registered places</i>
<b>Childminders</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>791*</b>	151	888*
<b>Nursery classes in schools</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>2664</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>2664</b>	51	2689
<b>Maintained nursery schools</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>362</b>	4	362
<b>Private, voluntary and independent nurseries</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>5037</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>5051</b>	111	4956
<b>Total **</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>8812</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>8868*</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>9876 *</b>

\*Inclusive of all childminder registrations

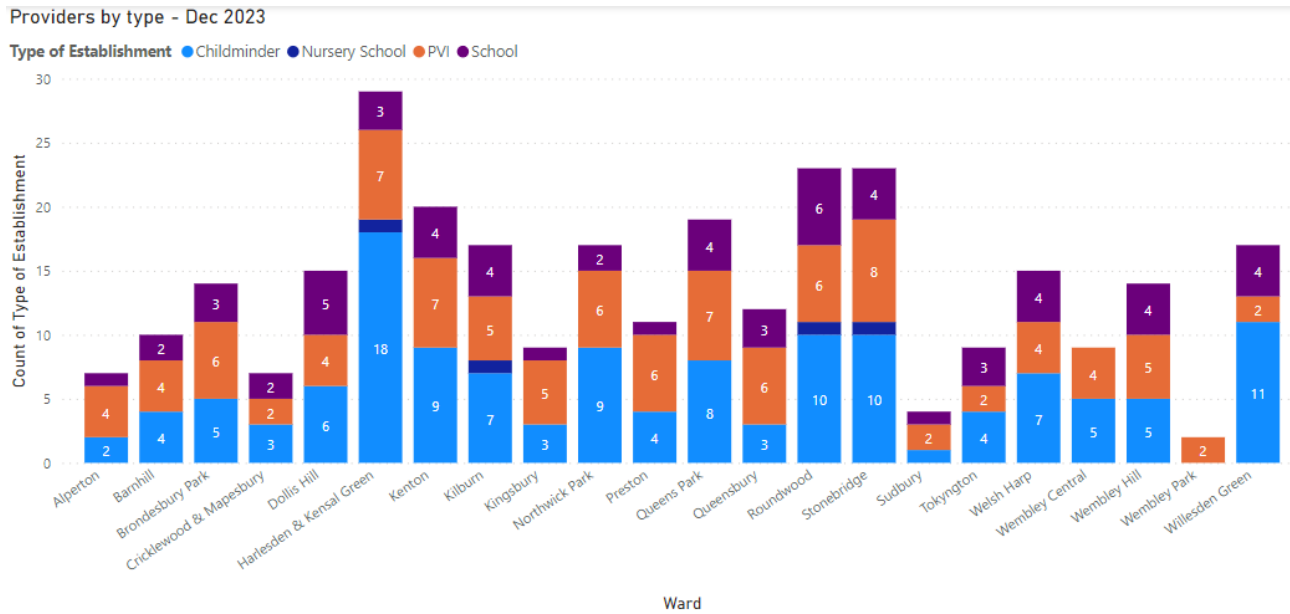
\*\*For private, voluntary and independent nurseries and childminders, the number of registered places represents the maximum number of children who can be on the premises at any given time. In practice, many providers choose to operate below their number of registered places. Children may attend childcare full time or part time. This table records number of places for which a provider is registered. In some cases, two or more children attending part time may use one full time equivalent place. For example, one child may attend in the morning and one child may attend in the afternoon.



## Supply of free entitlement provision for 2, 3, 4 year olds

An overview of the entitlements to free childcare for 2, 3, 4 year olds is provided as Appendix A of this document. As noted above, these entitlements are changing in 2024 and this will continue to impact sufficiency.

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



The wards with the highest number of free entitlement providers are:

- Harlesden & Kensal Green - 29
- Stonebridge - 23
- Roundwood - 23

The 3 wards with the lowest number of free entitlement providers are;

- Wembley Park – 2
- Sudbury - 4
- Alperton and Cricklewood & Mapesbury – 7

## Quality of childcare

Overall quality of provision has reduced by 3% with 93% of active providers across the PVI and childminder sector now judged as good or outstanding by Ofsted. This is reflective of a nationwide trend with August 2023 figures from Ofsted indicating that the proportion of providers judged outstanding has decreased from 20% to 14% since 2019<sup>1</sup>. The early years quality improvement and early years inclusion support teams continue to work with settings to ensure that they are supported to reflect on and improve the quality of their delivery of the early years foundation stage requirements. It a borough aspiration that all Brent children will have access to good and outstanding provision. Providers report continuing issues around retaining high levels of quality with rising costs of supplies and staffing. The Government has indicated that rates provided for funded hours will increase in the new financial year.

**Some providers have reported that they are facing difficulties in recruiting staff (both qualified and un-qualified). The borough is continuing to work with providers to support them with recruitment through advertising vacancies on the council pages and a nationwide recruitment campaign to support new entrants into the sector is planned for 2024.**

**Figure 6: Ofsted Inspection results for early years providers in Brent - December 2023**

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Total number of providers</i>	<i>Providers who have a current Ofsted judgement**</i>	<i>% achieving good or outstanding</i>
Childminders	129	79	98%
Nursery classes in schools	51	49	95% ***
Maintained nursery schools	4	4	100%
Private and voluntary nurseries	110	93	89%
<i>Total</i>	298	223	

\*\* providers who are newly registered, inspected by ISI or who have received met/not met are not included in this figure<sup>2</sup>

\*\*\* Whole school inspection result

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<sup>1</sup> [Main findings: Childcare providers and inspections as at 31 August 2023](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/main-findings-childcare-providers-and-inspections-as-at-31-august-2023) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

<sup>2</sup> **Providers with met/not met grade**

When providers do not have any children on site at the time of their inspection, they are given an Ofsted grade of 'met' or 'not met'. There are **28** providers with a 'met' grade across PVI and childminder settings. There are **2** providers with a 'not met' grade. These providers have not been included in the percentages above and below.

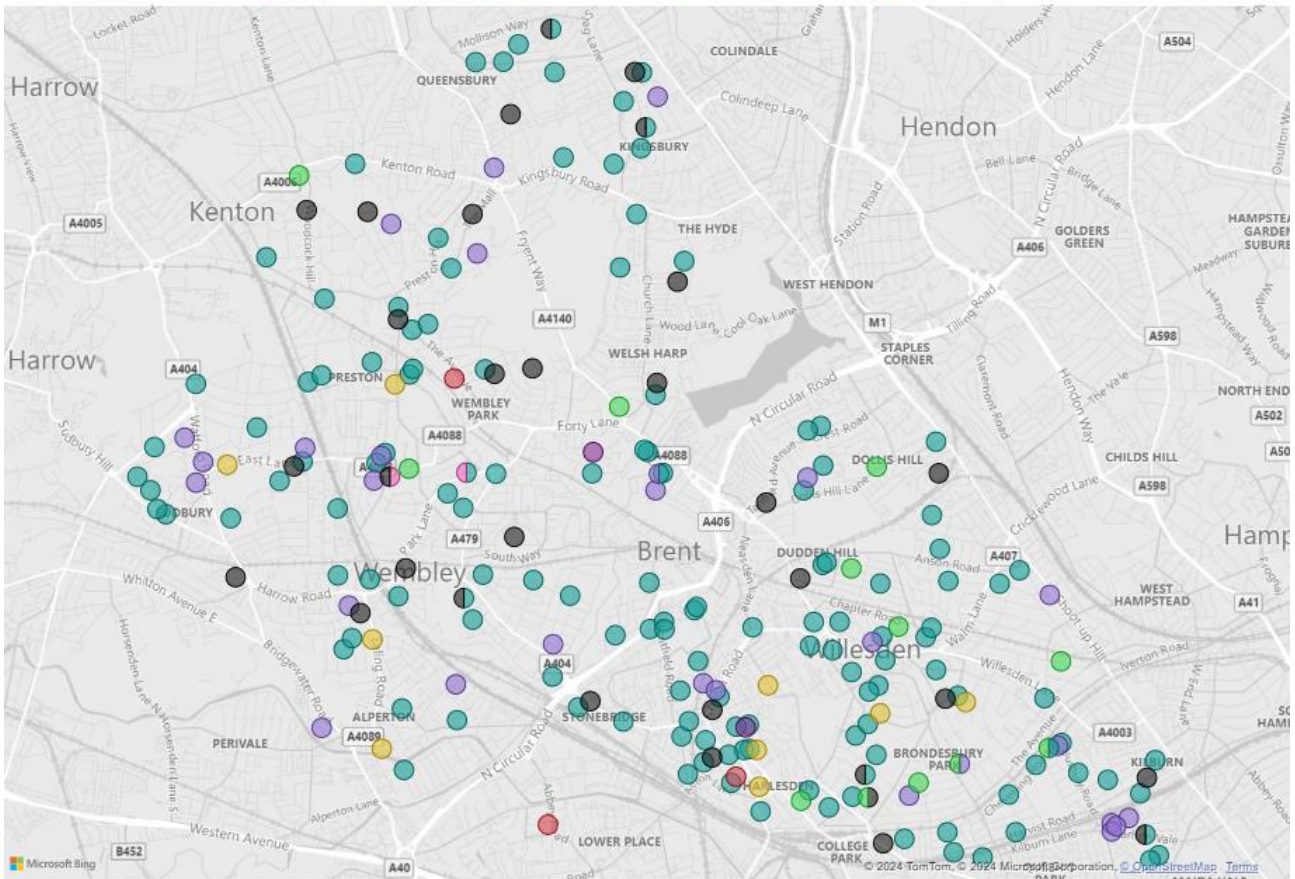
**Figure 7: Comparing inspection grades over time**

% of providers 'good' or 'outstanding'	Year 2023	Year 2022	Year 2021	Year 2018
Childminders	98%	98%	98%	96%
State school nurseries	95%	96%	96%	98%
Maintained nursery schools	100%	100%	100%	100%
Private and voluntary nurseries	89%	95%	98%	88.63%

**Figure 8: Ofsted inspection results for PVI and childminder settings - December 2023**

Ofsted results PVI and CM settings - Dec 2023

Overall effectiveness ● Good ● Inadequate ● ISI Inspection ● Met ● New Provider ● Not Met ● Outstanding ● Requires Improvement



## Demand

Driving up demand for free entitlement places continues to be a borough priority with take up rates below regional and national averages. Figure 9 illustrates an improving picture regarding percentages of children taking up all entitlements (based on DfE statistical release June 2023).

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

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

*The data based on Department for Education data release June 2022 based on January 2022 Census.*

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

Entitlement	Autumn 2 Headcount 2023	Autumn 2 Headcount 2022	Autumn 2 Headcount 2021	Autumn 2 Headcount 2019
15 free entitlement for eligible 2 year olds	921 (of which 0 in schools, 875 in PVI's and 46 in childminders)	1059 (of which 1 in schools, 1014 in PVI's and 44 in childminders)	1208 (of which 13 in schools, 1153 in PVI's, and 42 in childminders)	1293 (of which 1 in schools, 1230 in PVI's and 62 in childminders)
Universal 15 hour entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds	3934 (of which 1967 in schools, 1922 in PVI's and 45 in childminders)	3653 (of which 1823 in schools, 1776 in PVI's and 54 in childminders)	3763 (of which 1789 in schools, 1939 in PVI's and 35 in childminders)	4166 (of which 2048 in schools and 2118 in PVI's and childminders)
Extended 30 hour entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds	994 (of which 302 in schools, 644 in PVI's and 48 in childminders)	910 (of which 306 school 604 PVI and CM)	1017 (of which 294 school based and 732 PVI and CM based)	

\*Based on total headcount claims in the specified period. Note that there was no headcount in Autumn 2020

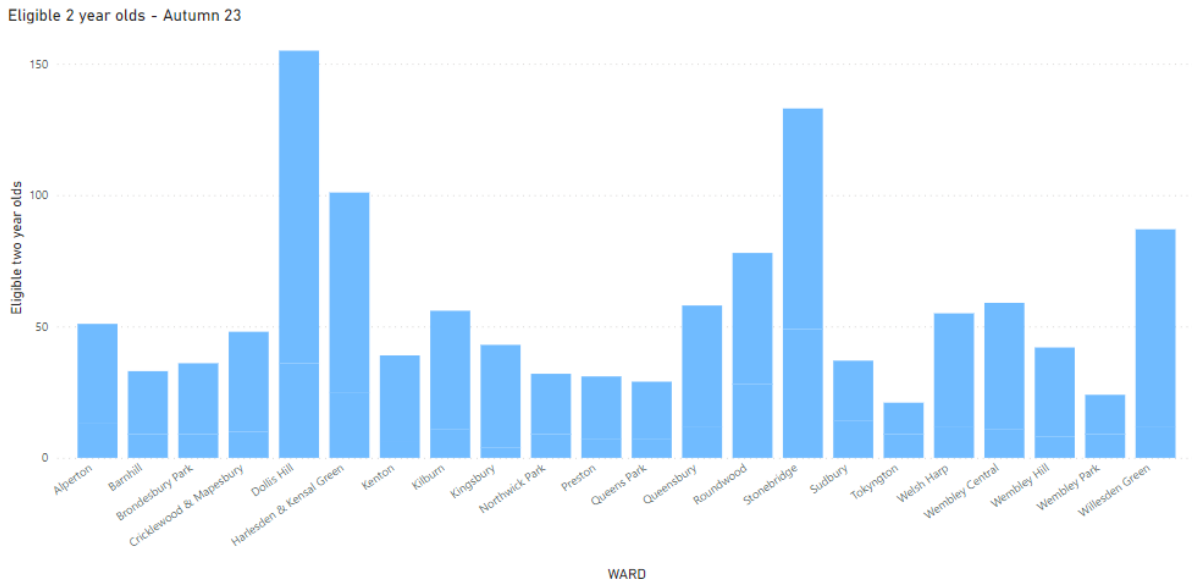
### Take up of two year old entitlements

Take up in Brent went into sharp decline during the height of the pandemic and is now recovering. For the first time take up of the two year olds exceeds the London average. In the 2022 CSA

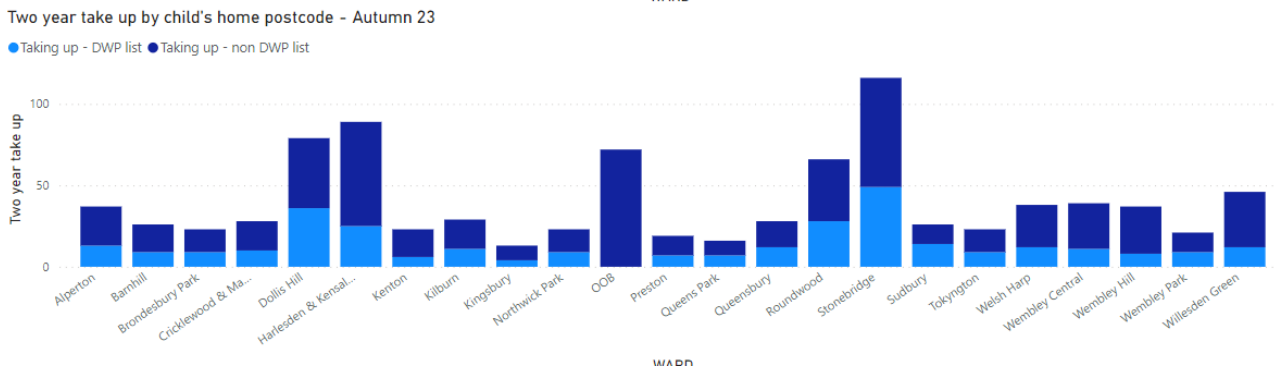
update it was explained that since September 2022 the local authority has been provided with improved contact information for families including telephone and email information and is likely that this has increased awareness.

Figures 11 and 12 provide analysis of both eligible families and the take up of the two year old entitlements. The four wards with the highest number of DWP eligible families are also those with the highest take up. It should be noted that this take up is largely comprised of families who do not appear DWP eligible list but are still largely eligible based on financial criteria. The national income threshold for eligibility has not been reviewed for several years and this means there are fewer families nationally who are entitled to funded childcare for their two year old. Autumn headcount figures above indicate that overall take up at this point in year has reduced.

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



**Figure 12: 2 year olds taking up free entitlements**



### Take up of three and four year old entitlements

Following Autumn 2 headcount 2023, 50% of children are taking up their universal entitlement place with a PVI/childminder and 50% children with a school (including maintained infant and primary, nursery and academy settings) indicating a balance of delivery across different providers within the sector. Figure 13 identifies the patterns of take up within each ward area and numbers of children taking up provision in reception class. Children who take up a funded place in an out of borough setting are not captured in this analysis. Wembley Park and Wembley Hill wards have the highest proportion of children taking up their free entitlement or in a reception class, with over 100% of the 3 and 4 years olds from the ward accessing a place. This may be partly explained by the movement in population since the 2021 estimates. Cricklewood and Mapesbury has the lowest number of children taking up their free entitlement with 51% of 3 and 4 year olds from the ward taking up a place. This could be partly explained by the fact that children taking up a free entitlement place out of borough will not appear in this data set. Work continues to implement processes to share information across borders to identify trends regarding net import/export of childcare places.

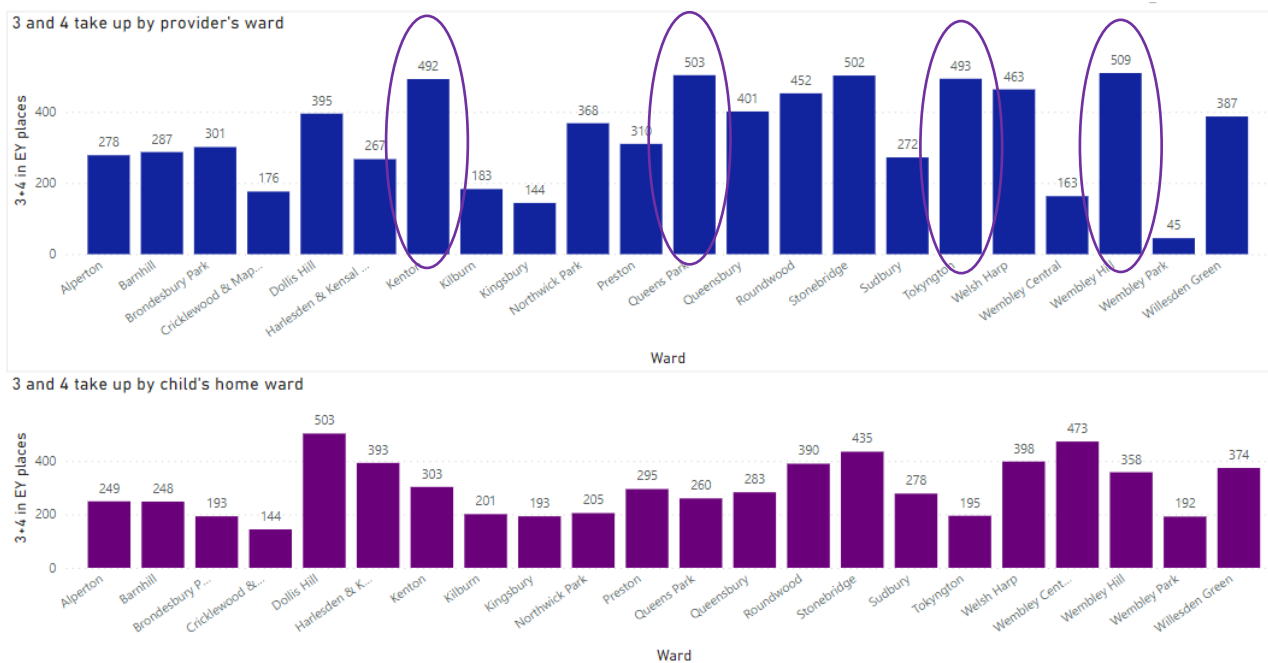
**Figure 13: 3 and 4 Take-up by ward based on Autumn 2 headcount December 2023**

3+4 year old take up by child's home postcode					
Ward	3+4 population	Sum of Total 3+4 in places	3+4 Total in EY settings	4 year olds in reception as at Aug 2023	Sum of % take up by home postcode
Alperton	380	249	152	97	65.53%
Barnhill	271	248	124	124	91.51%
Brondesbury Park	244	193	99	94	79.10%
Cricklewood & Mapesbury	283	144	57	87	50.88%
Dollis Hill	560	503	242	261	89.82%
Harlesden & Kensal Green	504	393	234	159	77.98%
Kenton	383	303	144	159	79.11%
Kilburn	354	201	99	102	56.78%
Kingsbury	247	193	88	105	78.14%
Northwick Park	237	205	98	107	86.50%
Preston	328	295	140	155	89.94%
Queens Park	464	260	146	114	56.03%
Queensbury	395	283	153	130	71.65%
Roundwood	423	390	201	189	92.20%
Stonebridge	536	435	236	199	81.16%
Sudbury	408	278	134	144	68.14%
Tokynghon	188	195	104	91	103.72%
Welsh Harp	430	398	194	204	92.56%
Wembley Central	414	473	253	220	114.25%
Wembley Hill	312	358	204	154	114.74%
Wembley Park	131	192	107	85	146.56%
Willesden Green	430	374	209	165	86.98%

For purposes of the above analysis all 4 year olds in reception as at August 2023 have been included as taking up. Some children will have turned 5 during the Aug-Dec 2023 period and therefore these figures reflect a fixed point only.

As of December 2023 the proportion of free entitlement for 3 and 4 year old places being taken up in the school sector has increased with 50% of free entitlement places for 3 and 4 year olds being delivered in school settings (including both maintained settings and academies) and the remainder being delivered across a mixture of PVI and childminding settings. 65% of 30 hour extended entitlement places are taken up in PVI group provision (mirroring proportionate take up in 2022). This indicates that some working parents require more hours than the standard school day delivers and are therefore choosing private providers for their entitlement. As at December 2023 46 two year old places and 45 universal 3 and 4 year old entitlement places were delivered in childminding settings despite large numbers of childminders being willing to offer spaces.

**Figure 14: Comparison of take by Provider Ward and Child's home postcode**



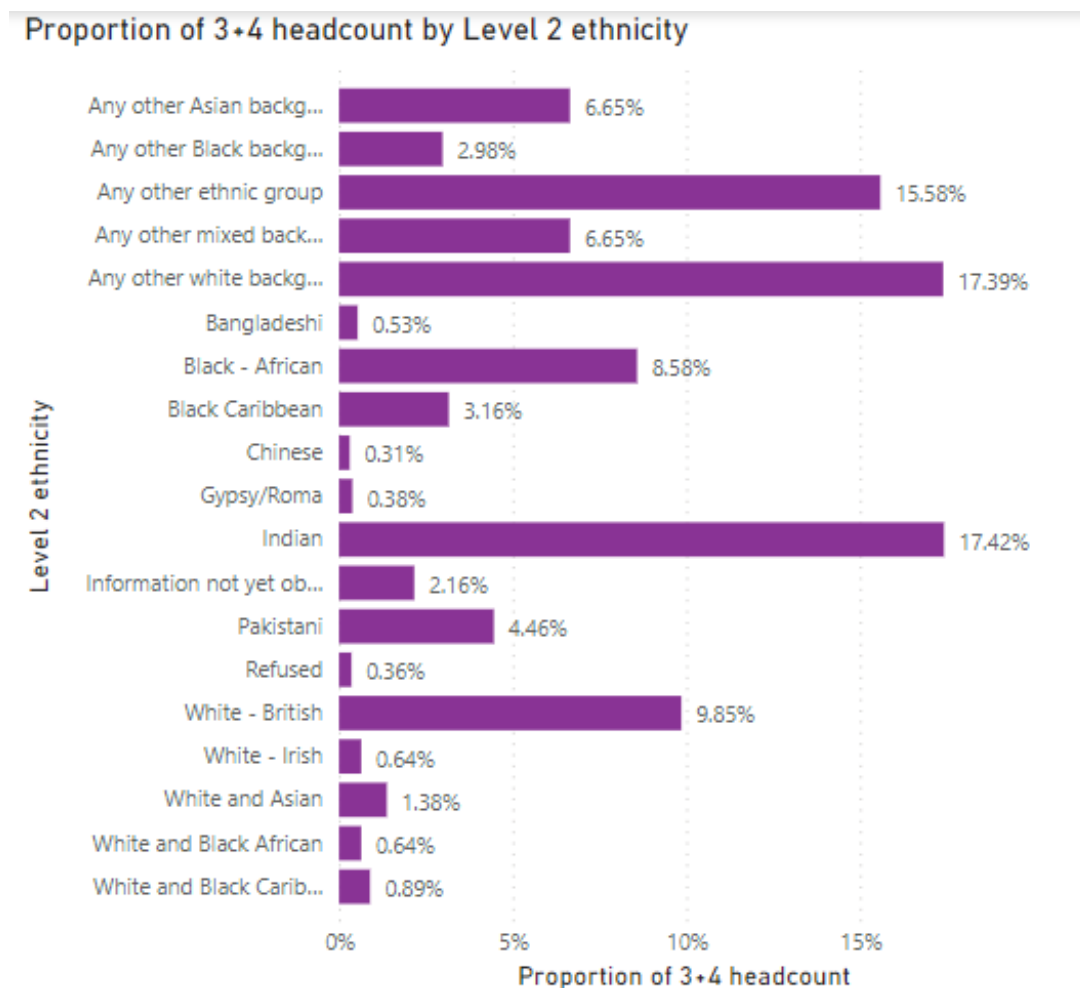
As illustrated in Figure 14 there are several ward areas (highlighted) in which providers are net importers of children – ie take up in these ward areas is high but this is not reflective of high levels of take up from children resident in the ward. Conversely there are ward areas (eg. Wembley Central) where high proportions of children take up entitlements, but they do so outside of their ward area. This information can be usefully shared with providers in supporting of understanding their take up patterns and forming marketing plans.

Figure 15 provides detail of the Autumn 2023 3 and 4 headcount by ethnicity. Wider school ethnicity data obtained through January 2023 census has been used as a proxy against which proportional take up of the universal 3 and 4 year old entitlement (based on Autumn 2023 headcount) has been measured. For example, the high proportion of children identified as being of Indian heritage in EY settings is broadly in line with the 18% proportion in the wider school



population whereas the approximately 30% of children identifying as White reflects an overrepresentation of this cohort compared with wider school proportions (approximately 26%). Ethnicity information has not been obtained for approximately 3% of children in EY settings. This is a reduction on the 8% of the previous year indicating that settings are now obtaining this information more systematically.

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





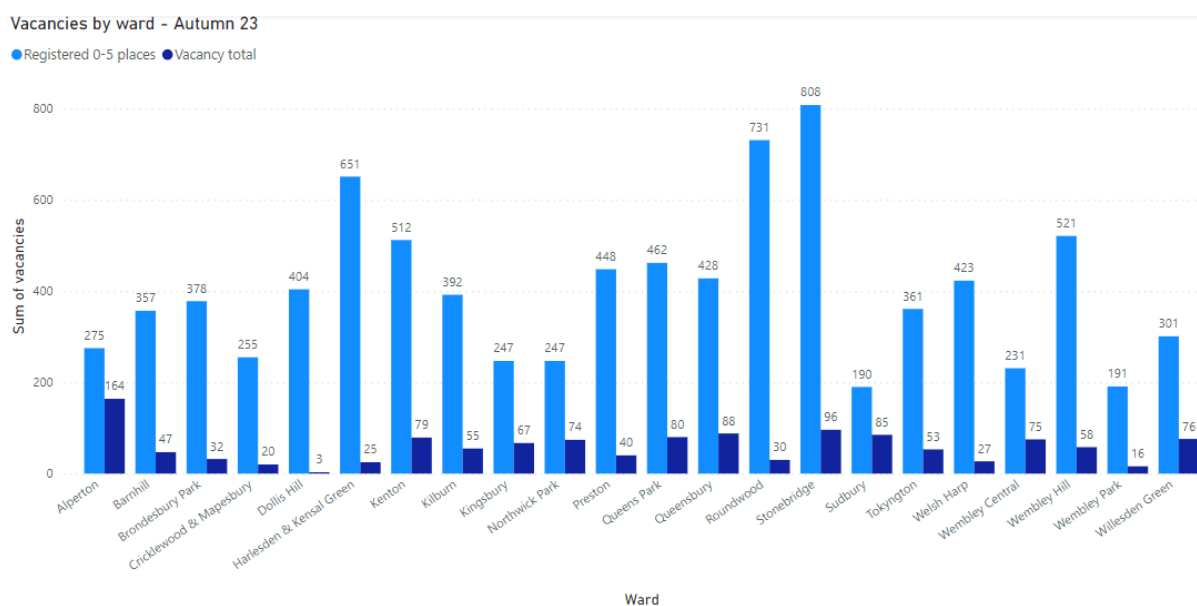
## Vacancies

There are vacancies across all parts of the early years sector with the highest numbers of vacancy reported in Alperton and Stonebridge. It should be noted that vacancy rates reflect a fixed point in time and that the Autumn term is often when providers have their highest rates of vacancy. There is significant variance in vacancy by provider with some providers including their total physical capacity rather than current staffing. Rates of vacancy vary substantially between wards with Alperton showing a 70% rate (as a proportion of total registered places) and Dollis Hill having just .7% vacancies. For example, a provider may be able to offer 20+ additional places based on physical capacity but currently only has staffing for a percentage of this number. There is similar variance in school provision with some school providers carrying over 10 vacancies while 17 schools reported 0 vacancies.

**Figure 16: 0-5s vacancies by sector**

Provider type	Number of vacancies as at Autumn 23
Childminder	160
PVI Setting	943
School setting	154

**Figure 17: Vacancies and registered places comparison**



## Costs of childcare

For early years childcare outside the funded entitlements, the analysis below identifies average prices per hour, reported to the local authority by settings.<sup>3</sup> There may be variations to prices based on the number of hours a family uses, with reductions for longer hours, or discounts for sibling groups. There may be additional payments for lunch and other meals which are not included in these prices. It should be noted that not all providers supply their costing information. The averages provided below are indicative. This means that the weekly cost for a part time (25 hour) place for an under two year old in Brent is £226.75 in a PVI setting – this is a reduction on the previous year. Average costs for a childminder were £194 – an increase of approx. £15 on the 2021 figure. This is considerably higher than outer London averages provided by the Coram 4 being £155.19 and £148.51 respectively. Likewise the average price for a two year old to attend a setting for 25 hours is £211.75 in a PVI setting and £191.5 in a childminding setting, considerably higher than the reported outer London average of 178.93 in PVI and childminding settings. The costs of childcare for 3 and 4 year olds are reflected in Figure 15 on the following page illustrating the variance in fees across the borough. These costs do not include free entitlements or support that parents may be receiving with the costs of childcare (e.g. Tax-free childcare).

**Figure 18: Costings**

Average price per hour	Private, voluntary and independent nurseries	School and maintained nursery schools which make charges to parents	Childminders
0 and 1 year olds	£9.07	N/A	£8.78
2 year olds	£8.75	£6.44	£8.56
3 and 4 year olds	£8.35	£6.72	£8.41

## Out of school provision

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

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

<sup>4</sup> [Coram Family & Childcare Survey 2023 - Coram Group : Coram Group](#)

**Figure 19: Out of school provision by type**

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

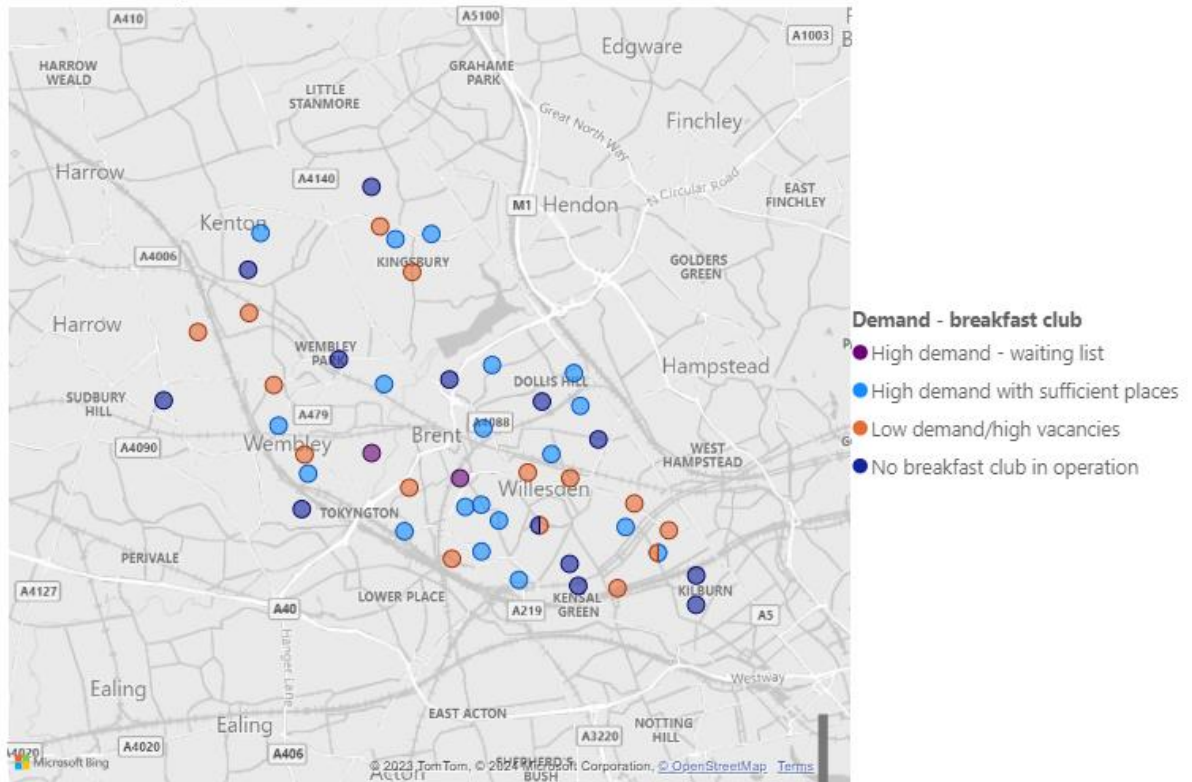
Tracking supply of childcare for school age children is difficult because not all of this type of provision is registered with Ofsted. It is possible that provision of breakfast and afterschool clubs and holiday clubs exceeds the supply outlined here.

The distribution of out of school providers is shown in figures 20 and 21. In addition to this provision, parents may also use provision which is not considered 'childcare', for example sports or arts clubs after school or in the holidays. Many schools offer a programme of after school clubs and whilst these are not registered with Ofsted, parents use a combination of these clubs to meet their childcare needs. Figures included in the assessment are reflective both of out of school provision run by school governing bodies and those that run privately. For provision delivered by and in schools, there is not always a registered number of places offered and this is determined by demand at a local level. Anecdotally, schools report that they can increase numbers based on demand and do not have a set maximum number of places. In practice this means that depending on the school a child attends the family will or will not have access to provision. Currently only 12 schools indicate they deliver holiday provision. Out of hours provision for children with SEND is limited. Of the five special schools in the borough, none report running out of school provision during term time. One school (an all through provision) offer holiday schemes on site from a private provider.

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

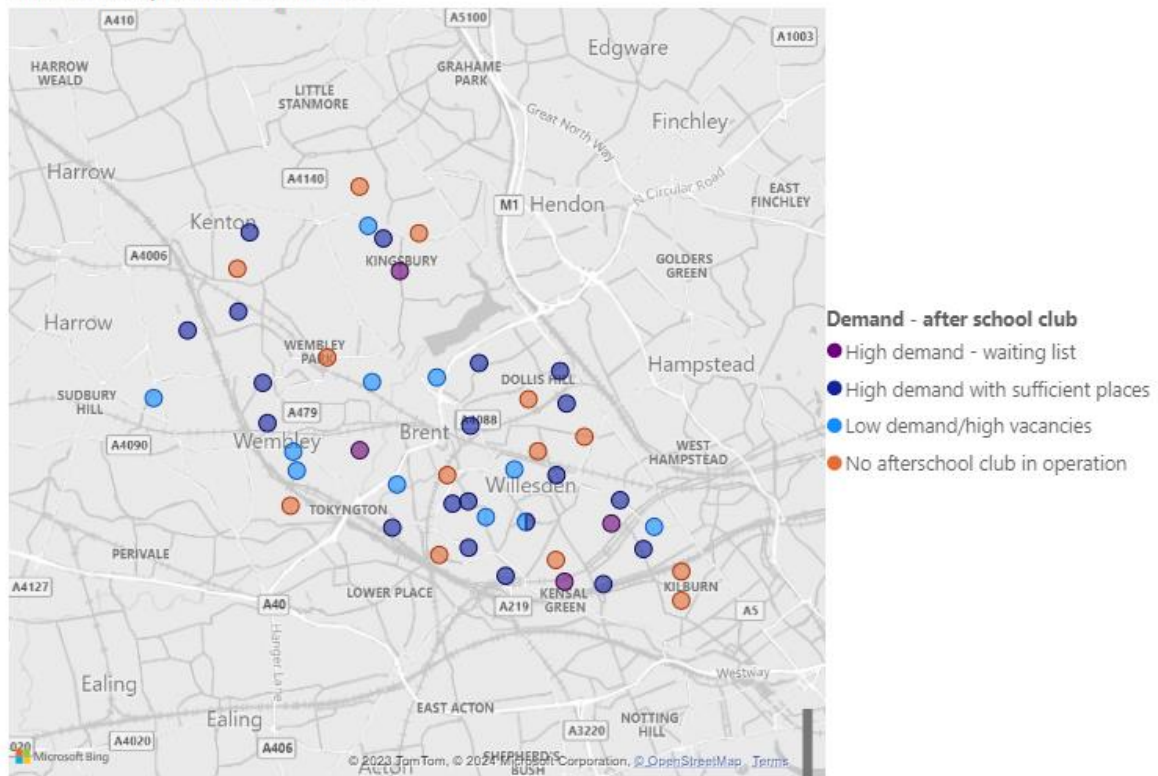
**Figure 20: Breakfast club provision**

Breakfast club provision Autumn 23



**Figure 21: After school provision**

After school provision Autumn 23



**Figure 22: Out of school provision costings**

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

The Coram Childcare Survey<sup>5</sup> indicates that the national average of cost for holiday provision is £157 significantly higher than the Brent average. Many Brent providers offer places through the Holiday Activity and Food Programme where children entitled to benefits related free school meals can access childcare and food provision during Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays. Brent has the flexibility to allocate additional places to children deemed to be vulnerable based on local criteria.

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

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

All children aged 3 and 4 are entitled to 15 hours per week until they start reception class in school

- Children aged 3 and 4 where both parents are working, or from lone parent families where that parent is working, are entitled to 30 hours per week until they start reception class in school<sup>6</sup>. Families are eligible where each parent is earning the equivalent of 16 hours per week at minimum or living wage and earns under £100,000 per year. Families also qualify where one parent is on maternity leave, on Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance, Carer's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance and the other parent is working. Parents who think they are entitled to a 30 hour extended hours place apply for this online through the Government's Childcare Support website. The same website is used to apply for tax free childcare and parents can apply for either or both. If a parent is eligible, the system creates a code which they can use with their chosen childcare provider. If they are ineligible, they will still be entitled to the universal 15 hours of childcare.
- Children aged 2 whose families receive certain benefits (including in-work benefits with an income of less than £16,190 or £15,400 after tax if accessing universal credit), or who have a disability, or who are looked after by the local authority, are entitled to 15 hours per week. Families may also be entitled based on the identified special education needs of a child or vulnerabilities based on local criteria. In Brent for example those families meeting the Supporting Families (formerly Troubled Families) criteria are entitled.
- Parents do not have to use all the hours of their funded entitlement. They may choose to split them between providers. With the agreement of their provider, parents may also spread them across the year – for example, rather than taking 15 hours for 38 weeks a year they could take just under 12 hours for 48 weeks a year.
- Providers are paid directly by government for delivering funded early education and this funding is administered by Brent council. Childcare providers are not required to offer free entitlement places to parents, but parents may choose to use a different provider if they do not. Some providers offer a restricted number of free entitlement funded places.

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