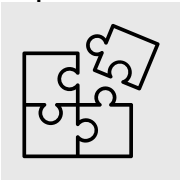





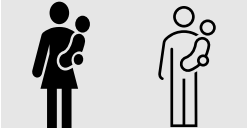
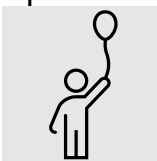




Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA)

2025-2026

The assessment and prediction of childcare places

<p>In Suffolk there are 595 providers offering 14,496 full time equivalent (FTE) places.</p> 	<p>Between 2024 – 2025, £1,504,658.21 was spent from the wraparound grant, creating 1,754 places for five to 11 year olds.</p> 	 <p>A government target of 5,167 homes are to be built in Suffolk annually. This would mean 586 FTE places need to be developed to meet this.</p>	<p>30 new childminders registered in 2025, 17 with Ofsted and 13 with a childminder agency.</p> 	 <p>Ten new preschool and nursery settings and six new nurseries in primary schools opened in 2025.</p>
 <p>There is a deficit of -1,760 places (without migration) across the whole of Suffolk.</p>	 <p>2,633 babies (under 2) took up their funded place.</p>	<p>68.1% of two year olds funded as receiving additional forms of support took up their funded places.</p> 	 <p>92.1% of three and four year olds took up their funded universal place.</p>	<p>97% of inspected providers in Suffolk are judged by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding.</p> 

Suffolk County Council

Early Years and Childcare Service



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1 Overall assessment and summary

1a Introduction

This document reports on data and information about Suffolk in 2025. This information is used to give predictions of the numbers of childcare places likely to be available in 2026 and this document details these place predictions. From September 2025, all eligible working families became entitled to 30 hours of childcare for 38 weeks of the year (total 1,140 per year) for babies and children aged from nine months to starting school in their reception year. Sufficiency information changes frequently and is regularly updated and monitored.

As stated in [Early education and childcare - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/early-education-and-childcare) sections B1 and B2 we:

Secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 to 14 or up to 18 for disabled children.

We do this by considering:

- the local childcare market, including wraparound provision and demand for specific types of providers in a particular locality and the amount and type of supply that currently exists.
- the local labour market including the sufficiency of the local childcare workforce.
- the quality and capacity of Ofsted registered childcare providers and childminders and childminders registered with a childminder agency, including their funding, staff, premises, experience and expertise.

We also:

- encourage schools, and other childcare providers in their area, to offer childcare from 8.00am until 6.00pm and in school holidays.
- aim to identify and remove barriers that prevent existing providers from expanding their provision as well as new providers entering the local childcare market if needed.
- encourage providers to take a sustainable business approach to planning and signpost providers to resources to support them.
- advise providers to consider the suitability of existing wraparound provision and the needs of parents.
- ensure that provision is inclusive and has considered the needs of all children, including those with SEND and additional needs.

Suffolk County Council (SCC) is also required by law to ‘report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and make this report available and accessible to parents’.

SCC also uses this data to respond to housing development enquiries in order to secure provider contributions for the development of early years and childcare places.

The government promotes an offer of free childcare to parents. After listening to the views of the providers in Suffolk, a decision was taken for SCC to refer to this as ‘funded early years childcare or education’. This is reflected throughout this document.

1b Overall assessment and prediction of childcare places

Places available and Shortfall or Surplus Suffolk								
Places for Under 2s	Shortfall or Surplus for Under 2s	Shortfall or Surplus with migration considered Under 2s	Places for 2yr olds	Shortfall or Surplus for 2yr olds	Shortfall or Surplus with migration considered 2yr olds	Places for 3&4yr olds	Shortfall or Surplus for 3&4yr olds	Shortfall or Surplus with migration considered 3&4yr olds
2296	-1521	-1622	4091	30	-48	8144	-269	-438

Currently overall in Suffolk the predictions of childcare places by age for September 2026 are shown in the grid below

Suffolk overall is not currently predicted to have enough places with a shortage of 1,760 places. Once migration is factored into to the predictions, this drops to 2,108 places. The biggest shortage of places is for babies though there is also a smaller predicted shortage of three and four year old places. The government’s expansion of funded childcare enabled working families with babies (from the term after they become nine months old) and two year olds to become eligible for 15 hours of childcare in 2024. This doubled to 30 hours of childcare per week for 38 weeks of the year (1,140 hours per year) from September 2025 in line with the existing 30 hours entitlement already available for working families with three and four year olds. This expansion has contributed to the increased demand for places, especially for babies and younger children.

This assessment uses data from the Summer term 2025 when children under three of working families who met the criteria were eligible for a maximum of 15 hours of funded childcare.

The biggest predicted shortfall of places in Suffolk is for babies with a deficit of -1521 across the county as a whole and this affects every cluster area as shown in the table below. The overall deficit has reduced by 55 since last year. However, this year we are also able to factor in migration for the first time with this age group and this means the predicted deficit increases further to -1622. As it is likely the expansion of eligibility for funded childcare will take a while to embed, take-up for babies maybe more gradual giving time to develop places. In addition, the birthrate in Suffolk shows a reduction over recent years (see page 18). If the birth rate continues to drop, this will be reflected in the demand data, potentially reducing the need for places. The areas with the greatest predicted deficit for babies are Ipswich West, Forest Heath, Stowmarket, Ipswich North, Ipswich East and Lowestoft North with predicted deficits of over 100 places. Migration is factored into these calculations. Migration shows a large increase in the deficit of under twos places in Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich East after migration. However, the deficit is reduced after migration in Ipswich West as families in this ward migrate to Ipswich East for their childcare. A government capital grant has been distributed to providers who have developed places for younger children and babies via a Suffolk County Council expression of interest application process (see page 14).

Overall, there is a small predicted surplus of places for two year olds of 30. After migration, this figure does drop to a small deficit of - 48. Nine cluster areas show a predicted surplus of places and eight show a predicted deficit. The greatest predicted deficit is in the Ipswich West cluster, though Lowestoft North also shows a comparatively large predicted deficit of places in this age group. The greatest predicted surpluses are in Sudbury, South Suffolk and Haverhill.

There is a predicted deficit across the county of - 269 places for three-and four-year-olds and after migration this drops to - 438. This is an improvement on last year with the predicted deficit after migration reducing by 125 places. Seven cluster areas are predicted enough or a surplus of places with Framlingham Leiston, Woodbridge Kesgrave and Waveney Blyth showing the largest surplus. Ten cluster areas are predicted a deficit with Stowmarket and Ipswich North showing the largest for this age group. The Department of Education (DfE) has awarded grants to four schools to open new school based nurseries which has assisted in reducing the deficit. This was following an application process. A further round of applications was submitted in December 2025 and a third round is expected later in 2026.

Insufficiencies in some wards are offset by surplus places in neighbouring wards as families often migrate to childcare out of the home ward, either by choice or to meet families' needs. This can be seen in the grid below, particularly between neighbouring clusters. A large migration can also move the deficit of places from one area to another, masking the source of the problem. Migration also occurs into and from other counties. In the Summer term 2025, 391 children migrated out of Suffolk and into neighbouring counties. 101 children went to Norfolk, 110 went to Cambridgeshire and 180 to Essex. In the Summer term 2025, 827 children migrated into the Suffolk provision from neighbouring counties. 297 children came from Norfolk, 251 children from Cambridgeshire, 274 from Essex and 5 from other counties. The majority of

these children claimed funding in Forest Heath, South Suffolk, Haverhill, Sudbury, and Waveney Blyth clusters. Suffolk therefore gains more children from other counties than it loses, increasing demand for places.

At a local level, providers are encouraged to consider adjusting how they configure their places for each age group of children to offset a shortfall in one age group from a surplus of places in another age group. Providers may consider working together to achieve this. Settings in areas of deficit are encouraged to consider lowering the age range if space and staffing allow, to provide more places for babies.

Two recent national strategies will impact childcare provision and sufficiency planning in Suffolk. The Best Start in Life strategy will strengthen early childhood outcomes by improving access to funded childcare, unifying parental information through the national Best Start in Life digital platform, and expanding early help via Family Hubs, with a renewed emphasis on early development and school readiness.

In parallel, the Free Breakfast Clubs Early Adopter Programme will further expand Suffolk's wraparound childcare capacity, with 15 local schools involved in the initial pilot and more schools planned to join the programme in 2026. This has increased universal early morning access to support attendance, punctuality and readiness to learn. This work sits alongside the wider national wraparound childcare agenda, which aims for all parents of primary aged children to have access to high-quality, affordable childcare from 8am–6pm, creating new expectations for local authorities to foster sustainable provision before and after school.

The deficit for wraparound places has decreased by 1,754 places since the 2024-2025 sufficiency assessment. There is still a predicted deficit for both before school and after school care for children aged five to eleven. For care for this age group, there are different requirements around qualified staff and ratios. Schools who provide the majority of wraparound care can develop wraparound places comparatively quickly under their existing Ofsted registration. Difficulties with staff recruitment can negatively impact the speed at which new provision can offer places. Provision has also been supported by the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme, which offers funded holiday care and enrichment for eligible children during Easter, summer and winter breaks. As a combined policy environment, these initiatives expand demand for reliable childcare across term time and holidays, reinforcing expectations on local authorities to secure sustainable, high-quality and integrated childcare for children aged 0–11. The expansion of childcare programme for working families of young children is also predicted to increase demand for wraparound care as working families become used to accessing more hours of childcare.

We divide the county into 17 cluster areas. Please see Appendix A at the end of this report for which wards fall within each cluster. This sufficiency assessment will give information throughout the grids in the document of both Suffolk as a whole and for each of the 17 clusters.

A further breakdown showing the predictions of childcare places for September 2026 by age and cluster area are shown below

Places available and Shortfall or Surplus Suffolk									
Cluster	Places for Under 2s	Shortfall or Surplus for Under 2s	Shortfall or Surplus with migration considered Under 2s	Places for 2yr olds	Shortfall or Surplus for 2yr olds	Shortfall or Surplus with migration considered 2yr olds	Places for 3&4yr olds	Shortfall or Surplus for 3&4yr olds	Shortfall or Surplus with migration considered 3&4yr olds
Bury St Edmunds	253	-19	-96	367	97	34	666	123	22
Felixstowe	64	-66	-46	153	-9	7	238	-94	-76
Forest Heath	179	-145	-169	381	37	14	728	17	-9
Framlingham/Leiston	96	-51	-74	177	16	4	398	70	65
Haverhill	194	-61	-75	317	48	38	548	30	-5
High Suffolk	71	-61	-53	122	-19	-11	289	-25	0
Ipswich East	249	-12	-111	287	23	-24	638	61	-54
Ipswich North	124	-134	-117	253	-14	-41	561	-35	-109
Ipswich West	177	-239	-181	288	-186	-123	655	-237	-93
Lowestoft North	78	-87	-103	168	-48	-79	431	7	-46
Lowestoft South	46	-83	-57	97	-44	-7	246	-92	-41
South Suffolk	153	-37	-62	238	63	49	444	43	16
Stowmarket	121	-160	-144	293	27	30	424	-126	-146
Sudbury	126	-111	-94	327	71	87	536	-20	17
Thurston	125	-107	-66	201	-56	-27	349	-136	-66
Waveney & Blyth	46	-105	-97	157	0	-4	382	53	38
Woodbridge/Kesgrave	192	-41	-75	266	24	5	605	84	40
Total	2296	-1521	-1622	4091	30	-48	8137	-276	-445

A brief summary of further information pertinent to the sufficiency of childcare places is shown for each cluster area below

Bury St. Edmunds

The Bury St Edmunds cluster comprises both urban and rural wards. It has high numbers of a range of providers, including a fully outdoor provision and many childminders. A high number of baby places are offered, though not across all wards, leading to migration, often into the town centre. Both local knowledge and prediction data shows further baby places are required to meet demand.

West Suffolk Hospital is a large employer resulting in demand for full daycare in the town centre. United States Airforce families often migrate to the town centre for baby provision, despite provision on base, as airbase parental leave is for 6 weeks.

Currently data shows a predicted surplus in the cluster for two year-old places. However, with high demand for baby places, this could impact on the surplus when babies turn two.

There is also a predicted surplus of three and four year-old places. Take up was comparatively low in 2025 for this age group in this area. With direct train links for commuting parents as well as new housing, families from Cambridge and London are relocating to the area. This is impacting on the sufficiency of childcare places.

Felixstowe

Felixstowe is a small cluster with the fewest providers in the county which had only one school nursery. Consequently the cluster has the fewest three and four year old places supplied. A second school nursery opened in 2025 providing a further eight places for three and four year olds. Felixstowe is a port town and the Docks are a large employer so parents may migrate or live in this area due to the employment opportunities it offers. It is also a tourist town and so provides seasonal employment which may result in variable demand for childcare.

There are several large housing developments at different stages in the cluster and so demand is likely to grow, albeit gradually.

There is a predicted deficit of places for under twos and for three and four year olds.

Forest Heath

Forest Heath has the most providers, including the most childminders, in the county. Despite this, some areas such as Brandon need more full daycare, especially for babies and wraparound provision to support working families. Take up of baby places is the lowest in Suffolk which may be because parents cannot access the hours and location they need for their babies. Some settings are considering creating more baby places in the Icen ward.

In addition, there are two American airbases offering childcare places for children of American military personnel, thus freeing up spaces in community settings. Some Newmarket providers offer early starts to support the horse racing community in the town.

There is also much migration, both across Suffolk wards and county borders, usually for parents to access their funded hours, which not all providers offer from nine months. There is a large predicted deficit of places for babies, a smaller deficit projected for three and four year old places and a surplus of two year old places. Planned housing expansion both in the cluster and in nearby Cambridgeshire is likely to impact on the predicted deficit of places.

Framlingham Leiston

The cluster comprises a large rural area with four small towns. Providers report that families without transport find it challenging to access the provision due to the many rural roads and lack of public transport in the area.

Currently, demand for places for older children is generally met with the existing childcare providers. However, data predicts a deficit of baby places. Where demand is high for baby places providers are proactively increasing these with one provider in Framlingham increasing their under three year old provision by ten places in 2025 and another planning to increase in 2026. Take up is high across all ages and types of funding eligibility with take up of baby places is the second highest in Suffolk. As the workforce increases in the development of Sizewell C power station, it is likely to increase the demand for funded childcare across much of the cluster and in neighbouring clusters.

Haverhill

Providers in Haverhill town are both close together and reasonably accessible. Parents employed at Addenbrooke's Hospital and Highpoint Prison often require full day care for their children to cover shift patterns. Local knowledge shows a mix regarding demand with many settings very busy, whilst others report spaces. All providers outside of the town, including a fully outdoor setting, are located in the same rural ward; Clare, Hundon & Kedington. Overall the cluster provides a good range of places for all ages, partly due to newly opened provision. Two new settings opened on school sites in Haverhill in 2025, one providing 37 places for 0-5 year olds and the other 26 places for three and four year olds. Continuing housing development will further impact on Haverhill sufficiency. There is though a predicted deficit of baby places and a small deficit predicted for three and four year-olds places. There is a predicted surplus of two year olds places. Take up of baby places and take up of universal funding and funding for working families was low in Haverhill in 2025. Migration from other counties is likely to contribute to demand for spaces.

High Suffolk

High Suffolk cluster is predominantly rural with small settings and childminders available in most wards with some larger full daycare. Despite this, along with Felixstowe the cluster has the fewest private/voluntary settings and childminders. It does though have one of the highest amounts of school nurseries. Child populations are comparatively small and the rural roads and limited public transport makes accessing provision more difficult. Consequently, rural providers tend towards lower occupancy. There is a deficit of baby and two year-old places. Families requiring provision for under twos migrate out of cluster. Children also migrate in from Norfolk. Usually, demand for three and four year-olds is met in the cluster. There is ongoing housing development in several wards which may increase future demand.

Ipswich East

East Ipswich is an urban cluster with good travel links and networks, and a range of provider types. New provision now offers a full time Forest School for three to four year olds. The area supplies a comparatively high amount of baby places and there is a predicted deficit for this age group. Many nationalities and cultures have settled in Ipswich East and use childcare and many settings have multi ethnicities. As different cultures tend to have different preferences as to when to start formal childcare, this may impact local take up of baby places in the area. There is limited space for housing expansion so demand is unlikely to grow as much as in other areas. However, despite the initially predicted surplus of two, three and four year-old places factoring in migration leads to deficits being predicted. This migration is from neighbouring Ipswich clusters where settings are full. Local knowledge also indicates that staff travel in to work at Ipswich Hospital using childcare close to work and impacting further on migration. There is limited wraparound provision for older children.

Ipswich North

This is a mostly urban cluster, but which also covers some villages north of Ipswich. There are a number of wards which fall within the 10% most deprived nationally, including Whitton, one of the most deprived wards in Suffolk. Provision comprises a range of sessional, full day care, school nurseries and good numbers of childminders. There is a deficit of places predicted for all age groups and this is compounded by migration from other areas in Ipswich so more provision would be welcomed. There has been both expansion and setting closure in this cluster in 2025 and much of the place gain has been offset by place loss. Many settings have multi ethnicities and as different cultures tend to have different preferences as to when to start formal childcare this may impact on local take up of baby places in the area. There is limited wraparound provision for older children.

Ipswich West

This cluster contains a few villages but is mostly urban. It has four wards which fall within the 10% most deprived nationally. Families use reliable public transport to access the good range of provision. The cluster consistently has some of the highest predicted deficits of places across all age groups.

Ipswich West has a low take up of children eligible for places under working families' criteria and of those eligible as in receipt of additional support. Many settings have multi ethnicities attending, particularly in central Ipswich where many of whom have English as an additional language. Different cultures tend to have different preferences as to when to start formal childcare for the youngest children and this is likely to be a factor in the low take up in the area. Families not being able to find a place locally that suits them is also likely to contribute to low take up. However, some settings report spaces and some families migrate to other areas of Ipswich for their childcare. This may be to access the hours they need.

Lowestoft North

This cluster comprises several providers in the town of Lowestoft and others in villages and the Broads area to the west and north of the town. Lowestoft town has several wards which are in the 10% most deprived nationally. Lowestoft North has a greater range of providers than Lowestoft South with several sessional and several full daycare providers, several childminders and the highest amount of school nurseries in Suffolk.

There is a predicted deficit of places across all ages and a shortage of wrap around care. Across the cluster a few providers are looking at the possibility of offering or extending their current out-of-school provision. Local knowledge suggests families are beginning to cross the town bridges to access childcare to meet individual family requirements.

Lowestoft South

Lowestoft town has several wards which are in the 10% most deprived nationally. Childcare comprises pre-schools, a large amount of childminders, only one full daycare provider and several school nurseries including one which opened in 2025. This cluster has some of the lowest amounts of places for all age groups in the county. Families needing full-time care and care for babies therefore have limited options so often migrate out of ward or out of county to Norfolk. Families also often access childcare in the Waveney Blyth cluster. Local knowledge suggests families are beginning to cross the town bridges to access childcare to meet individual family requirements.

In 2025, take up of funded places for working families was high within the cluster which is a change from 2024. However, there is a predicted deficit of places across all ages. There is a shortage of wrap around care. Some providers are considering offering or extending their current out-of-school provision.

South Suffolk

A predominantly rural cluster, covering from the Shotley peninsula just beyond Hadleigh and down to the Constable Country, with a mix of childcare provider types. Public transport can be limited, affecting access to provision for some families. Take up is comparatively low for three and four year-olds of working families in 2025 which is a change from last year. Take up is better for two year-olds of working families which could be as a result of some settings increasing their two year-olds places in 2025. There is a predicted deficit of places for babies and a predicted surplus of places for two, three and four year-olds in the cluster. New provision opened in 2025, providing places for two to four year olds.

In the town of Hadleigh, there is housing for 170 military houses families. Military families tend to be more transient therefore demand for provision can be variable in this area. There is much cross county migration into Essex.

Stowmarket

The Stowmarket cluster comprises the town of Stowmarket and several villages. Provision is predominantly sessional and full daycare with a few childminders and only two school nurseries. Full daycare settings in the area are situated mostly in urban areas and report very high occupancy, whereas occupancy varies in sessional provision which tends to be rural with limited public transport. Local knowledge suggests that families requiring baby provision travel into Stowmarket town to access providers increasing demand here. Take up is high for two, three and four year olds in receipt of funding under working families criteria. A full day care provider expanded its baby places which has helped in reducing the deficit in places for this age group though further places are needed. An independent school nursery increased its places for 3-4 year olds and reduced its age to take 2 year olds which has helped decrease the deficit. However the data predicts a large deficit of places for both under twos and for three and four year olds in the cluster.

In the cluster is a UK military airbase with 250 military houses and childcare provision. Military families are often transient and therefore demand for provision in this area changes. Multiple housing developments are ongoing throughout the cluster in both urban and rural areas, which is likely to result in an increased demand for funded childcare in the cluster. The new Gateway 14 logistics park has not currently impacted on demand for childcare spaces. However, as the park expands it may do so.

Sudbury

The range of provision in this cluster comprises of group provision plus a few childminders who operate in urban areas. Approximately 45% of providers within the cluster are in rural locations.

Only 2 of these rural settings offer baby places with one being open all year round. Working parents seeking childcare for younger children within many villages therefore travel elsewhere, creating pressure on the full daycare places available in Sudbury town centre, especially for babies where there is also a predicted deficit of places for 2026. The area does though supply a comparatively large amount of two, three and four year old places compared to other areas in Suffolk. There is also migration into Essex to access full daycare provision.

Significant housing development in Sudbury and Long Melford could impact further on demand.

However, childminders currently report a lack of demand and several school nurseries report low numbers of three and four year-olds. This indicates a current preference for all-year-round care in a group setting in the cluster.

Thurston

The Thurston cluster covers a large rural area, resulting in a spread of smaller early years settings available in most wards. Provision comprises sessional and full day care with some school nurseries and many childminders. Occupancy levels vary in sessional provision. All-year-round settings report high occupancy, especially for under twos. There is a predicted deficit for all age groups in this cluster. A UK military airbase provides 364 houses for military families who are often transient and therefore demand for provision in this area changes. Another setting plans to expand by 30 places this will be completed by the end of 2026.

Waveney Blyth

The cluster comprises a large rural area with three small towns. The area has many rural roads and limited public transport links impacting on access to childcare for some families. There is a range of provider types with similar numbers of childminders to private/ voluntary group settings and several school nurseries. New provision opened in 2025 proving places for two to four year olds. However, several wards would benefit from more provision for children under two years of age. There are two independent schools which also provide funded places. There is a predicted deficit for babies and two year-olds.

Take up for two year-olds is low both for families receiving additional forms of support and for those eligible under working families criteria with two year olds comparatively low. Take up is slightly better for three and four year olds. There is also a need for wraparound places and across the cluster some providers are considering offering or extending their current out-of-school provision.

Woodbridge Kesgrave

Woodbridge Kesgrave has a good range of providers in the cluster with the addition of a new setting offering full day care. A full day care provider expanded its baby places which has helped to reduce the deficit for this age group. A comparatively high number of school nurseries in the area provides a large amount of three and four year old places compared to other areas in Suffolk. Take up is good for all ages with take up of baby places the highest in Suffolk. The main arterial A12 runs through the cluster making access to several providers in this location easier, especially for parents migrating in for childcare in this area. There is a large industrial estate and some large employers in the area (BT, police headquarters and Sutton Heath military base). However, other providers in the cluster are in rural areas and there are barriers to transportation here. This can cause these providers to have many places unused. Despite the migration into the cluster, there are enough places predicted for two, three and four year-olds though a deficit of baby places is predicted. There is a large housing development which will impact childcare as housing becomes available. There has been some additional wraparound places made available through DFE funding.

1c What we have done to support childcare sufficiency since the last assessment.

- The wraparound working group has continued to research and support the development of wraparound provision for primary school children aged from five to eleven. To date, we have spent £1,504,658.21 to expand and develop wraparound provision for five to 11 year olds. To date, we have approved 49 wraparound care applications including both new wraparound places and expanding places at existing provision. This has provided 744 new breakfast places and 1,030 after-school places, providing a total of 1,754 new places across Suffolk.
- We have supported 15 schools under the Free Breakfast Clubs Early Adopter Programme to set up a 30 minute breakfast club providing a free nutritious meal.
- Bespoke training has been developed and delivered to support providers with the practicalities of setting up wraparound care.
- We created an online resource to signpost to further information for wraparound care providers to access.
- We have utilised the Early Years Expansion Capital Grant to create 302 places for under two year olds as part of 22 projects across the county. To date we have spent £763,369.05. For detail of how we have used this, see the chart below.
- We have redeveloped a suite of business tools for settings to support sustainability and published these on Suffolk Learning.
- We have published newly developed resources for potential childminders and existing childminders wishing to take on assistants, register under an existing or new type of registration or to expand on Suffolk Learning.
- Support materials continue to be available on Suffolk Learning to support with developing baby provision.
- Local knowledge indicates providers are more able to recruit appropriate candidates in many areas of the county than in the last few years. Recruitment is still an ongoing challenge for some providers.
- We continued to work with relevant stakeholders and colleges to support early years recruitment, retention and the development of qualifications. We have worked with two training providers to bring early years bootcamps to Suffolk and take up from the county has been high following promotion of these. We have also worked with the University of Suffolk supporting them with their tender for the new early years degree apprenticeship incorporating Early Years Initial Teacher Training (EYITT) which is hoped to be available from September 2026.
- We have continued to work with Suffolk Job Centre Plus to support recruitment. We liaised regularly with staff from the various job centres around the county and attended job fairs county wide to promote working in the sector including raising awareness of the benefits and range of early years roles and the qualification options.
- We have worked with Suffolk County Council School Infrastructure and Planning departments to provide an appropriate yield prediction for each age group who may need a funded early education place. This is used to inform planning applications to secure developer contributions to build, extend or improve early years provision to help provide enough childcare places arising from new developments.
- We have maximised developer contributions available to us across Suffolk to build, extend or improve early years provision. For details of how we have used this, see the chart below.

Developer contributions have been spent on settings to provide more childcare or to enhance provision

Cluster Area	Amount of developer contributions assigned and spent in 2025	What developer contribution was used for
Bury St Edmunds	£202,909.25	The Early Years and Childcare Service (EYCS) secured developer contributions to expand provision in Bury St Edmunds reconfiguring a setting for more effective provision and creating a further 15 places including seven places for under twos.
Woodbridge Kesgrave	£ 275,601.14	The school secured Community Infrastructure Levy (Cil) funding to develop a new school nursery, creating 30 spaces for three and four year olds due to open in 2026.

Early Years Expansion Capital Grant has been spent on settings to provide more childcare for under twos

Cluster Area	Amount of capital grant assigned and spent in 2025	What the grant was used for
Forest Heath	£8,000.00	To develop 4 under two and 6 two year old places
South Suffolk	£149,495.36	To develop 3 under two and 5 two year old places
Ipswich North	£2,000.00	To develop 6 under two and 2 two year old places
Bury St Edmunds	£40,000.00	To develop 15 under two and 5 two year old places
Bury St Edmunds	£1,000.00	To develop 6 under two places
Thurston	£37,000.00	To develop 5 two year old places
Thurston	£15,550.00	To develop 14 two year old places
Sudbury	£2,000.00	To develop 6 under two places
Ipswich East	£73,773.77	To develop 15 under two and 16 two year old places
Woodbridge Kesgrave	£4,900.00	To develop 3 under two places
Ipswich East	£35,220.00	To develop 6 under two and 5 two year old places
Stowmarket	£5,000.00	To develop 3 under two places
Framlingham Leiston	£22,000.00	To develop 6 under two and 4 two year old places
Woodbridge Kesgrave	£10,000.00	To develop 3 under two places
Stowmarket	£20,000.00	To develop 16 under two and 12 two year old places
Lowestoft North	£5,114.28	To develop 14 under two places

1d Our plans to support childcare sufficiency in 2026

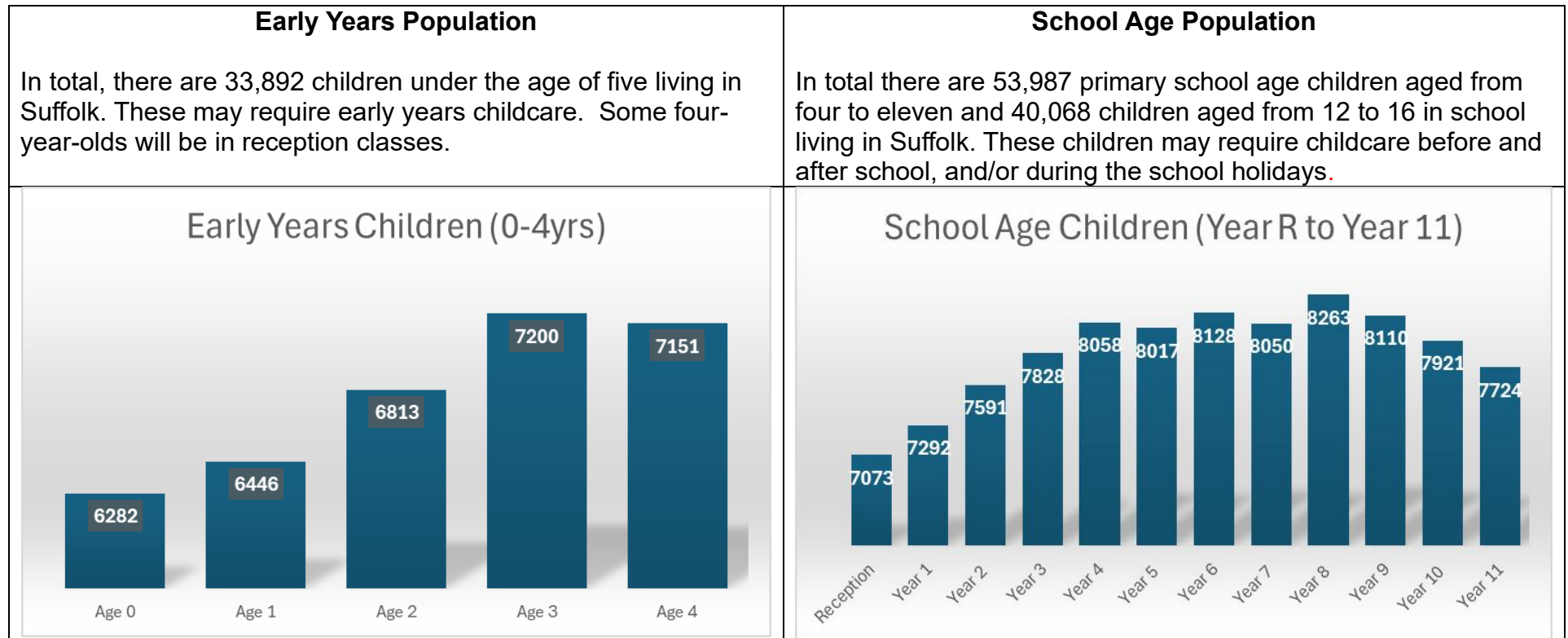
- To support providers in areas of the greatest need to increase the numbers of their places for under two year olds using the capital grant for early years expansion. The key areas of focus are: Ipswich West, Lowestoft North, Forest Heath, Bury St Edmunds, Felixstowe, Ipswich North.
- We will support current agreed projects in receipt of the wrap around and expansion grants to fulfil their aim to open successfully.
- We will provide information and advice to support the long-term sustainability of wraparound provision, updating our online resource as new information becomes available.
- A one-year membership of the Out of School Alliance (OOSA) is being offered to providers who have received wraparound funding from the EYCS.
- Further bespoke wraparound training has been commissioned and will be offered during the Spring term 2026 as part of the training offer for Suffolk Providers.
- To continue to work with Job Centre Plus to raise awareness of the need for staff in early years and the skills and attributes needed, particularly with regard to childminders.
- To continue to promote the Early Years Professional Skills Bootcamp and to continue to liaise with and support training providers YMCA and Realise who deliver this.
- To work with the University of Suffolk with the validation and promotion of the new early years degree apprenticeship which should be available from September 2026.
- To improve our Suffolk County Council early years careers webpage, making it clearer to find information on childminding and wraparound career information.
- To devise, promote and deliver a 'Pathway into Childminding' course to support potential childminders with registration, set up and training.
- To continue to work with colleagues in Schools Infrastructure and Strategic Planning to ensure best use of developer contributions which will meet the needs of families from the development.
- To share our sufficiency knowledge with existing and potential providers so that new provision is developed where there is a demand, for example to support with applications for school based nursery grants.
- To initiate discussions with providers where we identify a deficit of provision in an area, and to encourage them to review their offer and explore ways to create more places.
- To support providers when necessary to address their sustainability issues by reviewing their current offer and suggesting changes which would better meet the needs of families.
- To closely monitor take up of places, particularly in light of the expansion of funded places, and how this impacts on supply and demand.
- To make best use of SCC properties and other public sector assets.

- To maximise developer contributions to extend existing provision or to create new provision.
- To review lease agreements with providers in SCC buildings in order to encourage providers, where appropriate, to extend their opening hours to become 'full daycare' i.e. 8am to 6pm all year round and to move away from sessional term time practices.
- To take advantage of projects made available by the DfE to create additional places.
- To continue to liaise with relevant parties around the development and construction of Sizewell C to monitor the likely impact on the demand for childcare as the workforce develops in this area and to access funding for creating more places to meet increased demand.

2 Demand for Childcare

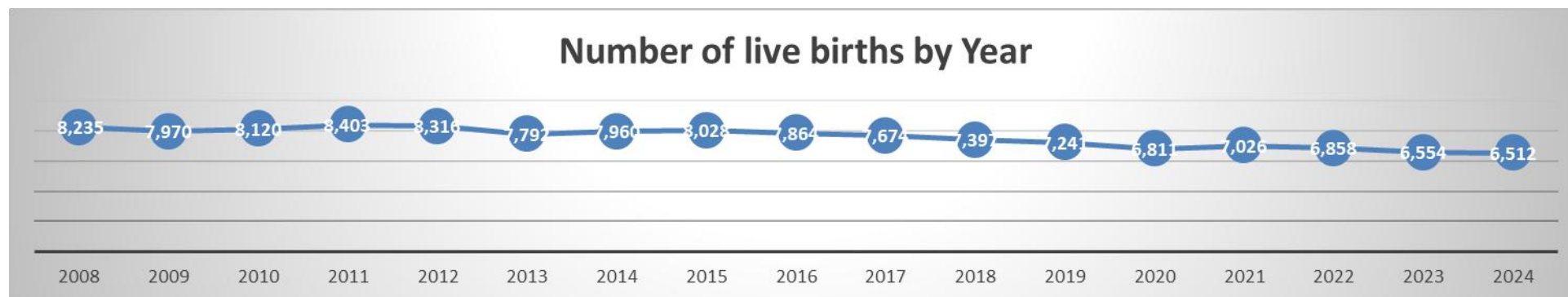
2a Child population in Suffolk

We use GP Registration data throughout our Early Years Sufficiency model. This is the same baseline data used by the DfE and an accurate data source for predicting the number of children aged 0-5 to which we apply various eligibility criteria based on age and the take up of additional hours for 3 and 4yr olds. For school age children we use data from the school census. This is all children in Suffolk schools and forms the basis for predicting the need for wraparound care.



Population change published data for Suffolk

The office for National Statistics publishes live births by County each year. In Suffolk the number of live births per year has declined. In 2008 there were 8,235 live births and in 2024 there were 6,512.



2b Future demand

A significant impact on demand for places in Suffolk is likely over the next few years. The development of Leiston based Sizewell C will bring many people to the area during the construction phase. The construction workforce is predicted to be 7,900 workers at its peak with an expected 2,600 worked from East Anglia and 500 jobs for people from the Lowestoft and Ipswich areas. The permanent workforce will also grow as Sizewell C is built and relocation to the area of the workforce and their families is likely to increase the demand for childcare substantially. In 2025, the EYCS funded two near by primary schools to set up wraparound childcare which will help support this development. Funding for a local nursery was also sourced by the EYCS to develop nursery places.

Source: Sizewell [New Sizewell C charter aims to leave a legacy of skills for the East of England - Sizewell C](#) .

2c Number of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) are entitled to support with childcare up to the age of 18.

Children's needs change over time and are identified at different ages. Among the youngest children, SEND may only be identified when they start in childcare or school, and it can take some time from concerns being identified to an Education, Health and Care plan being issued. If using only the number of children with an EHCP to ascertain numbers of children with SEND for those aged 0-4, it is inevitable this will produce an underestimate. The majority of children receiving support for SEND do not have an EHC plan as their needs are met without the need for one. The second chart below shows the number of children accessing each of the SEND funding strands to give a more accurate estimate of the number of children with SEND in early years settings. Please note, some children could access the Disability Access Fund at the same time as High Needs Funding.

Children with an EHC plan - Suffolk Summer term 2025	
Early years children 0-4	311
Primary school (reception to year six)	3625

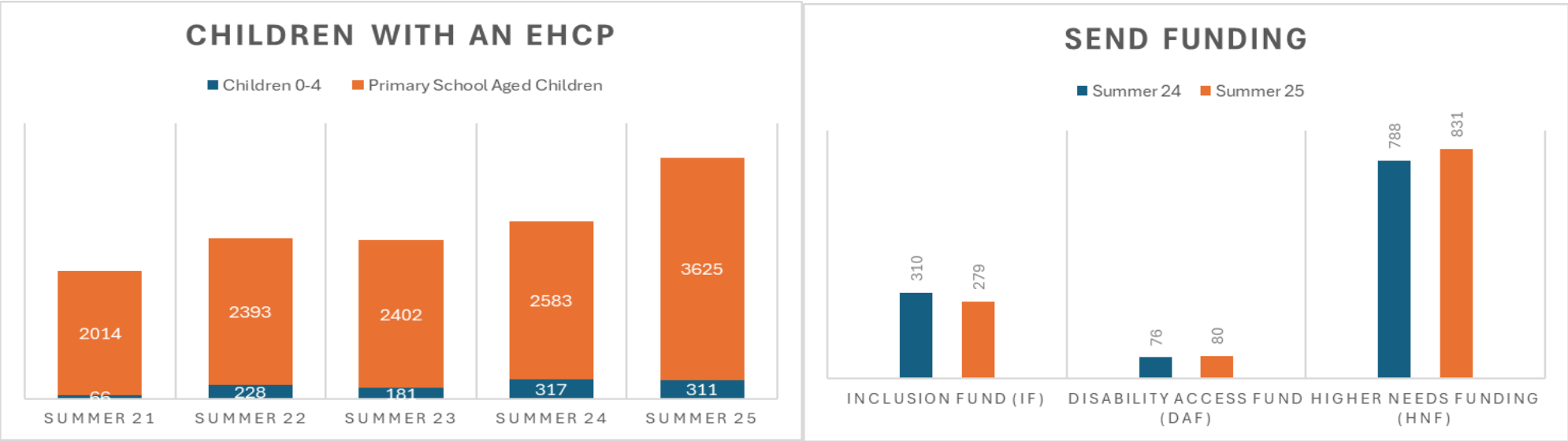
Children accessing SEND funding – Summer Term 2025 (01/04/2025 – 31/08/2025)

Age	Inclusion Fund (IF)	High Needs Funding (HNF)	Disability Access Fund (DAF)
9 to 23 months	6	10	0
Two year olds	107	135	8
Three year olds	137	376	31
Four year olds	39	310	41
Total	289	831	80

Members of the List of Providers (LoP) can apply for SEND funding strands for any eligible children accessing any part of their early education funding with them. This can be prior to a child receiving an EHCP. This funding is a contribution to the provider's total resource to support them to meet the needs of the child and to enable the child to be effectively included:

- Inclusion funding (IF): this fund is to support the provider to meet the emerging needs of children aged from nine months to four years. This payment is paid for two terms.
- Early Years High Needs (HN) funding: this funding is for eligible children aged from nine months to four years, whose special educational needs are significant and complex. HN funding payments are made directly to the provider and equate to the number of hours the child attends the provision.
- Disability Access Fund (DAF): this funding is for eligible children aged from nine months to four years (not in reception) in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA).

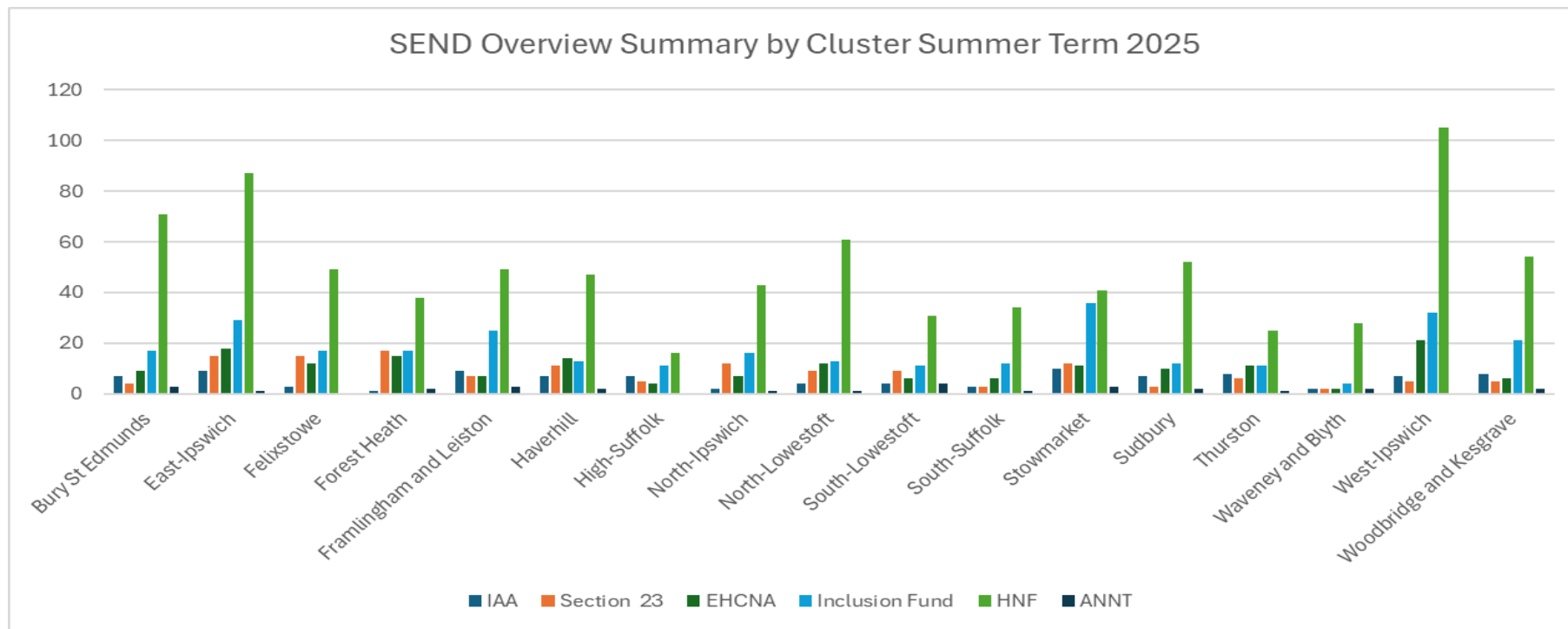
SEND Trends



The numbers of children with an EHCP have increased substantially from 2021 for children of all ages. This could be due to a range of factors including better practitioner / teacher recognition of SEND, an increase in support needs for children and earlier access to childcare which will support earlier assessment of need.

Settings can apply for either IF or HN funding for children for whom they need additional support funding. The amount of children accessing the various early years SEND funding strands are a helpful indicator of SEND numbers in early years settings. HN funding shows an increase from last year. This coupled with the decrease in IF funding indicates more children with a greater level of need than last year as settings are choosing to apply for HN funding instead of IF, indicating a great number of children with significant and complex needs.

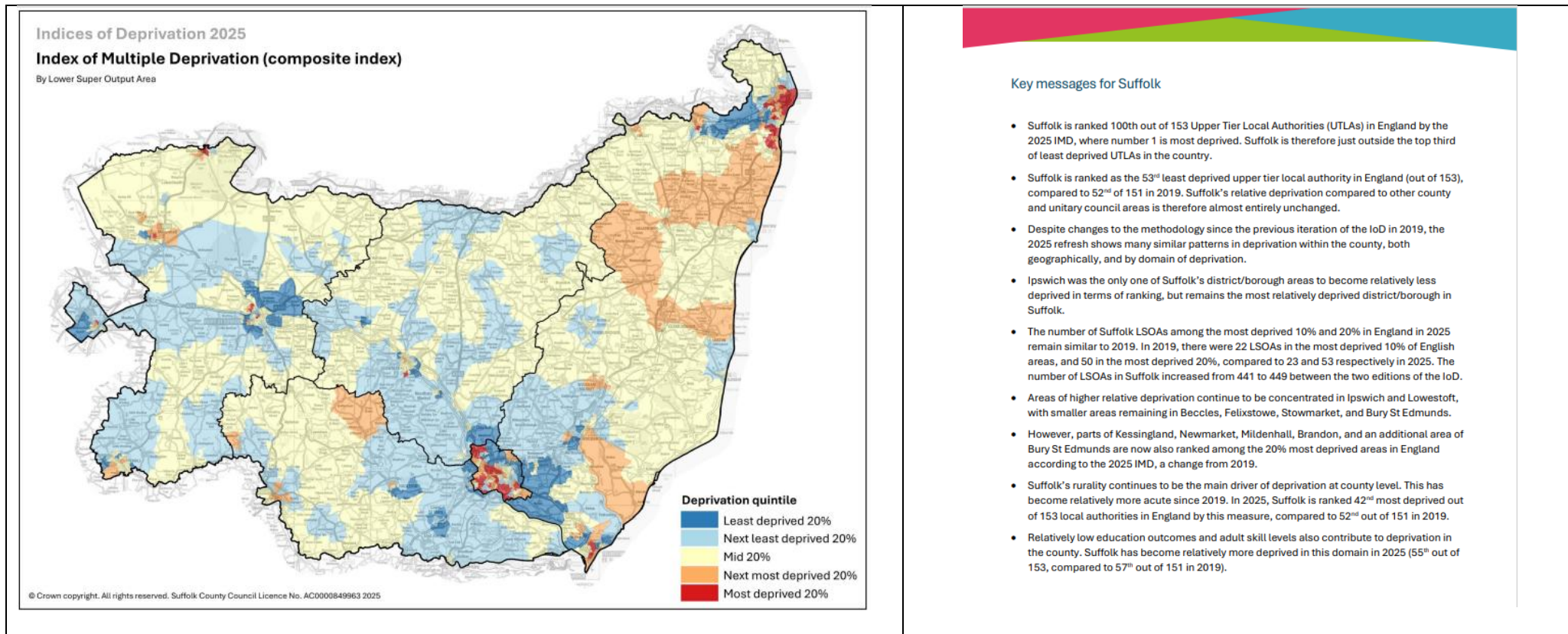
SEND Overview by Cluster



SCC strategically plans support for children with SEND in order to meet the needs of all children as required by SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (January 2015). We do this by:

- Ensuring providers offer an inclusive environment and enable all children with SEND to access their provision and the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- SCC challenges providers not meeting their duties under the Equality Act 2010. Childcare providers in receipt of early education funding agree to the following terms and conditions under the LoP. As set out in Section G – Equality and Inclusion. SCC will promote equality and inclusion, particularly for disadvantaged families, children in care, children in need, children with disabilities and children with special educational. As set out in Section F – Removal from the LoP. SCC will remove the provider from the LoP if they fail to comply with its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- SCC invites all members of the LoP to apply for the following SEND funding strands for any eligible children accessing any part of their early education funding with them: IF, HNF, DAF. This funding is a contribution to the provider's total resource to support them to meet the needs of the child and to enable the child to be effectively included.
- SCC delivers a range of training to support providers to deliver inclusive practice.
- Supporting parents to find childcare provision to meet their child's needs. To assist with this the Suffolk InfoLink website has a Local Offer section for every provider. This provides clear, accessible, and accurate information about the services available for children and young people with SEND.
- Working with parents/carers and providers to remove barriers of access to early education and to support all children to fulfil their potential. Under the Equality Act 2010, admission to a provision cannot be denied or a child excluded due to a child's health or developmental needs. They must provide an inclusive environment which reflects their duty to promote equality and their obligations as outlined in the Act.

2d Deprivation



Disadvantaged Children National Data - Suffolk 2025

Basis for funding	Economic reasons	High level SEND	Looked after/adopted from care	Multiple reasons	Total
Funded Children	3071	16	87	6	3180
Universal	96.62%	0.5%	2.7%	0.2%	100%

The grid above includes children in receipt of two year old funding under additional forms of support, Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) funding and children under five in Reception who qualify for free school meals and work

3 Supply of Childcare

3a Overall information

The majority of childcare providers in Suffolk operate Monday to Friday with 32% operating for at least 49 weeks of the year. These providers typically operate between the hours of 8am to 6pm with 31% of providers being open for at least 50 hours a week.

50% of the childcare providers in Suffolk operate for 38 weeks of the year or less. 25% are only open for between 10 to 30 hours per week.

32% of providers are situated on school sites. Of these providers, 56% are run directly by the school with the other 44% being run by private, voluntary or independent providers.

Some providers may open for more atypical hours with 18% Suffolk providers being open for more than 50 hours per week. Some childminders will offer overnight care or significantly atypical hours to fit in with local industry. For example, this occurs in Newmarket to accommodate the racing industry families and near the county hospitals to accommodate medical shift work patterns.

Further childcare provision is provided for American military families near the bases at Mildenhall in Forest Heath but this provision is not included in the data in this assessment. This is because only children from American military families attend. American military personnel and their families do not register with Suffolk GPs so are not included in the population data. However, some of the children of American base personnel do chose to access the Suffolk settings in the area not on the base and this increases the demand and is hard to predict as they are not in our population data.

Currently, local knowledge indicates many providers have high demand for babies following the roll out of the expansion of childcare with many operating waiting lists. Some providers are working with us to consider how they can expand to increase supply to meet the demand. We continue to work with providers to distribute the capital grant for early years expansion for children aged two and under, especially in the areas of greatest need: Ipswich West, Forest Heath, Stowmarket, Ipswich North, Ipswich East and Lowestoft North to improve supply for babies and younger children.

Data suggested there is still a need for more wraparound provision in many areas of Suffolk assuming those families who took up their 30 hour funded places will want childcare around school hours. However, in some areas, providers report that parental demand is lower therefore fewer places may actually be needed. The EYCS will continue to support newly set up wraparound provision to assist with sustainability.

3b The numbers and types of provider and the number of places offered

Early Education - the number of providers by type and the places they offer by age in Suffolk overall

Provider Type	Number of providers	Number of 0-2s places (FTE)	Number of 2-3s places (FTE)	Number of 3-4s places (FTE)
Childminder	231	288	287	282
Full Day Care	128	1855	2441	3465
School Nursery	109	16	220	2338
Sessional Pre-school	128	134	1135	2036
Total	596	2293	4083	8120

* Childminder numbers include agency childminders
 * School nursery numbers include both LA & academy schools

In addition to the providers in the chart above, Suffolk also has 40 non LoP childminders who do not offer funded places but may provide care for a charge for early years children and for wraparound and holiday care for children of school age.

Early Education The number of providers by type and the places they offer by age in each Cluster Area

Bury St Edmunds

Provider Type	Number of providers	Number of 0-2s places (FTE)	Number of 2-3s places (FTE)	Number of 3-4s places (FTE)
Childminder	18	21	21	21
Full Day Care	13	222	248	327
School Nursery	7	10	36	171
Sessional Pre-school	6	0	62	147
Total	44	253	367	666

Felixstowe

Provider Type	Number of providers	Number of 0-2s places (FTE)	Number of 2-3s places (FTE)	Number of 3-4s places (FTE)
Childminder	10	9	9	8
Full Day Care	2	38	38	45
School Nursery	2	0	0	34
Sessional Pre-school	10	18	107	151
Total	24	64	153	238

Forest Heath

Provider Type	Number of providers	Number of 0-2s places (FTE)	Number of 2-3s places (FTE)	Number of 3-4s places (FTE)
Childminder	24	34	33	33
Full Day Care	12	136	221	321
School Nursery	6	0	20	195
Sessional Pre-school	11	9	106	179
Total	53	179	381	728

Framlingham/Leiston

Provider Type	Number of providers	Number of 0-2s places (FTE)	Number of 2-3s places (FTE)	Number of 3-4s places (FTE)
Childminder	14	18	18	18
Full Day Care	7	69	126	201
School Nursery	6	0	5	117
Sessional Pre-school	5	8	27	62
Total	32	96	177	398

Haverhill

Provider Type	Number of providers	Number of 0-2s places (FTE)	Number of 2-3s places (FTE)	Number of 3-4s places (FTE)
Childminder	11	14	13	14
Full Day Care	9	180	222	237
School Nursery	6	0	10	157
Sessional Pre-school	9	0	72	141
Total	35	194	317	548

High Suffolk

Provider Type	Number of providers	Number of 0-2s places (FTE)	Number of 2-3s places (FTE)	Number of 3-4s places (FTE)
Childminder	5	6	6	6
Full Day Care	5	56	75	112
School Nursery	9	0	4	95
Sessional Pre-school	5	10	37	76
Total	24	71	122	289

Ipswich East

Provider Type	Number of providers	Number of 0-2s places (FTE)	Number of 2-3s places (FTE)	Number of 3-4s places (FTE)
Childminder	11	11	11	11
Full Day Care	10	226	215	320
School Nursery	7	0	0	147
Sessional Pre-school	6	8	53	135
Total	34	246	279	614

Ipswich North

Provider Type	Number of providers	Number of 0-2s places (FTE)	Number of 2-3s places (FTE)	Number of 3-4s places (FTE)
Childminder	14	16	16	16
Full Day Care	9	103	163	218
School Nursery	7	0	26	209
Sessional Pre-school	6	6	48	119
Total	36	124	253	561

Ipswich West

Provider Type	Number of providers	Number of 0-2s places (FTE)	Number of 2-3s places (FTE)	Number of 3-4s places (FTE)
Childminder	11	15	16	14
Full Day Care	10	162	213	357
School Nursery	8	0	5	156
Sessional Pre-school	7	0	54	128
Total	36	177	288	655

Lowestoft North

Provider Type	Number of providers	Number of 0-2s places (FTE)	Number of 2-3s places (FTE)	Number of 3-4s places (FTE)
Childminder	18	20	20	20
Full Day Care	5	49	91	133
School Nursery	10	0	15	249
Sessional Pre-school	4	9	42	36
Total	37	78	168	438

Lowestoft South

Provider Type	Number of providers	Number of 0-2s places (FTE)	Number of 2-3s places (FTE)	Number of 3-4s places (FTE)
Childminder	21	29	29	29
Full Day Care	1	15	19	29
School Nursery	6	0	12	107
Sessional Pre-school	6	3	37	81
Total	34	46	97	246

South Suffolk

Provider Type	Number of providers	Number of 0-2s places (FTE)	Number of 2-3s places (FTE)	Number of 3-4s places (FTE)
Childminder	12	15	15	15
Full Day Care	8	113	156	192
School Nursery	5	0	0	88
Sessional Pre-school	7	26	67	149
Total	32	153	238	444

Stowmarket

Provider Type	Number of providers	Number of 0-2s places (FTE)	Number of 2-3s places (FTE)	Number of 3-4s places (FTE)
Childminder	9	12	12	12
Full Day Care	8	88	165	210
School Nursery	2	6	15	24
Sessional Pre-school	13	15	102	179
Total	32	121	293	424

Sudbury

Provider Type	Number of providers	Number of 0-2s places (FTE)	Number of 2-3s places (FTE)	Number of 3-4s places (FTE)
Childminder	8	12	12	12
Full Day Care	6	108	155	201
School Nursery	7	0	35	161
Sessional Pre-school	12	6	124	162
Total	33	126	327	536

Thurston

Provider Type	Number of providers	Number of 0-2s places (FTE)	Number of 2-3s places (FTE)	Number of 3-4s places (FTE)
Childminder	17	20	20	19
Full Day Care	9	105	107	202
School Nursery	4	0	14	50
Sessional Pre-school	5	0	60	79
Total	35	125	201	349

Waveney & Blyth

Provider Type	Number of providers	Number of 0-2s places (FTE)	Number of 2-3s places (FTE)	Number of 3-4s places (FTE)
Childminder	14	20	20	20
Full Day Care	4	26	57	95
School Nursery	8	0	17	161
Sessional Pre-school	9	0	63	106
Total	35	46	157	382

Woodbridge/Kesgrave

Provider Type	Number of providers	Number of 0-2s places (FTE)	Number of 2-3s places (FTE)	Number of 3-4s places (FTE)
Childminder	14	16	16	15
Full Day Care	10	160	170	266
School Nursery	9	0	6	218
Sessional Pre-school	7	16	75	107
Total	40	192	266	605

Wraparound Care. The number of providers and the places they offer for school age children in Suffolk Overall

Wraparound Care - Places available			
Before School - Number of providers	Before School - Number of Places available	After School - Number of providers	After School - Number of Places available
1046	16742	523	15826

Wraparound Care. The number of providers and the places they offer for school age children in each Cluster

Wraparound Care - Places available				
Cluster	Before School - Number of providers	Before School - Number of Places available	After School - Number of providers	After School - Number of Places available
▲				
Bury St Edmunds	41	577	41	586
Felixstowe	21	372	21	295
Forest Heath	49	809	49	733
Framlingham/Leiston	25	314	25	339
Haverhill	28	369	28	328
High Suffolk	28	529	28	480
Ipswich East	24	404	24	418
Ipswich North	26	490	26	554
Ipswich West	29	609	29	445
Lowestoft North	29	566	29	472
Lowestoft South	23	287	23	311
South Suffolk	33	383	33	356
Stowmarket	28	516	28	510
Sudbury	31	543	31	508
Thurston	38	450	38	483
Waveney & Blyth	32	455	32	374
Woodbridge/Kesgrave	38	698	38	721

4 Funded Early Education

4a Eligibility

Some children are entitled to childcare funded by the government. These entitlements are for 38 weeks per year. It is the local authority's duty to administer this funding and make the payments to the providers each term.

- Eligible children, from the term after they become 9 months old, are entitled to up to 30 hours of funded education per week for 38 weeks of the year (1,140 hours per year).
- Eligible two year olds from families in receipt of additional support (FRAS) are entitled to up to 15 hours of funded education per week for 38 weeks of the year (570 hours per year). Eligibility begins the term after the child's second birthday.
- All children from the term after their third birthday are entitled to up to 15 hours of funded education per week for 38 weeks of the year (570 hours per year).

To see if your child is eligible visit [Best Start in Life - Best Start in Life](#)

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. This is known as a stretched offer.

Parents may choose to pay for additional hours on top of the funded entitlement.

4b Suffolk Overall take up of funded early education

Take up Data for Under 2s

Some babies and children under two can get 30 hours of funding under the eligibility criteria of the Working Families Entitlement.

National data

- 371 nine to 11 month olds claiming
- 2,262 one year olds claiming

Suffolk data (Summer term 2025)

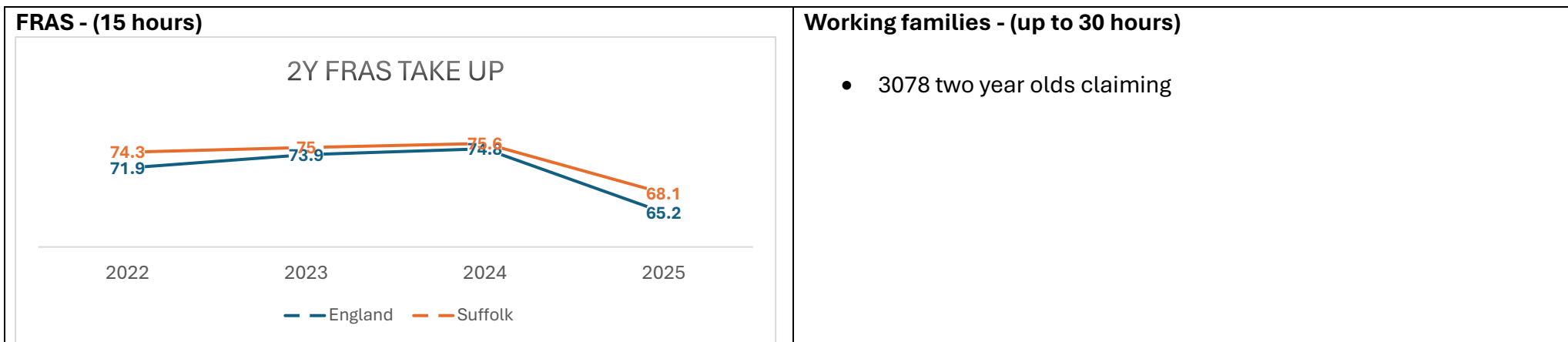
Under 2s - 72%

Take up for two-year-olds

Some two-year-olds can get 15 hours of funding under the eligibility criteria of being a Family in Receipt of Additional Support (FRAS)

Some two-year-olds can get 30 hours of funding under the eligibility criteria of the Working Families Entitlement

National data



Suffolk data (Summer term 2025)

FRAS – 74%

Working parents – 95.8%

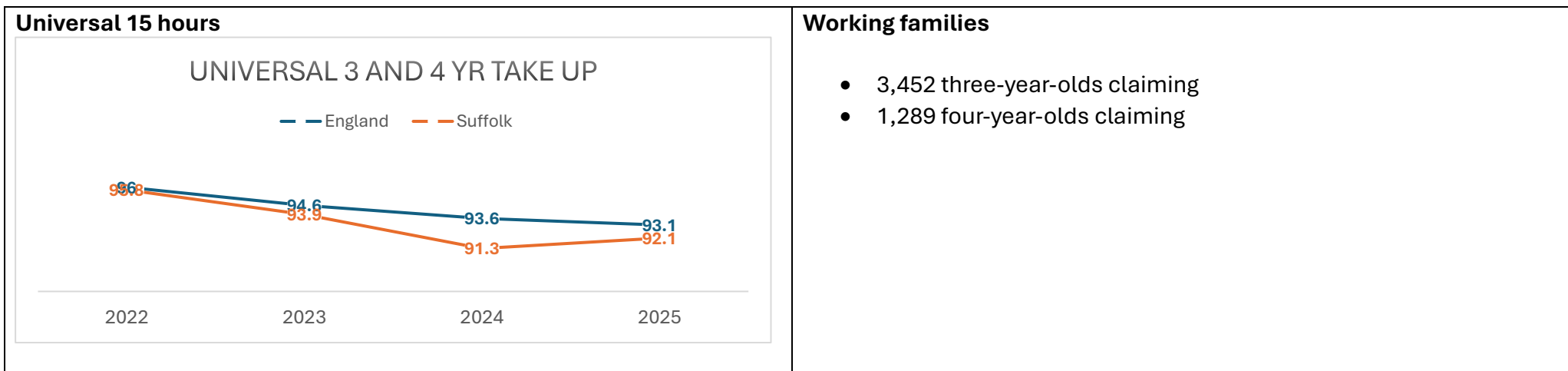
FRAS take up has dropped in Suffolk and across England. This could be due to the benefit of the expansion of childcare funding to working families. As working families are eligible for funding from nine months, these families may access two year old places first, so families eligible under FRAS do not have the same choice of places available to them. A small number of families are eligible for both entitlements. It maybe these families chose to claim only under the working families eligibility criteria which would also contribute to a reduction of FRAS claims.

Take up for three- and four-year-olds

All three and four year olds are entitled to 15 hours of universal funding

Some three and four year olds can get 30 hours of funding under the eligibility criteria of the Working Families Entitlement

National data



Suffolk data (Summer term 2025)

Universal Entitlement – 95.2%

Working parents – 95.5% (this includes all children claiming 16 plus hours)

A further breakdown showing the take up of early education funding in the Summer term 2025 by age and cluster area

Take up data by Cluster					
Cluster	% of Working family Under 2s	% FRAS 2yr olds	% of Working family 2yr olds	% Universal entitlement for 3&4yr olds	% Extended hours working family 3&4yr olds
Bury St Edmunds	70%	74%	93%	94%	91%
East Ipswich	62%	42%	84%	92%	93%
Felixstowe	65%	75%	95%	98%	108%
Forest Heath	57%	57%	91%	95%	97%
Framlingham/Leiston	86%	77%	108%	95%	98%
Haverhill	59%	88%	71%	86%	94%
High Suffolk	77%	88%	104%	84%	91%
North Ipswich	67%	78%	89%	87%	92%
North Lowestoft	59%	79%	99%	93%	93%
South Lowestoft	69%	70%	101%	89%	102%
South Suffolk	73%	68%	92%	87%	88%
Stowmarket	65%	87%	107%	94%	100%
Sudbury	69%	91%	92%	90%	97%
Thurston	72%	86%	95%	94%	98%
Waveney & Blyth	59%	91%	79%	89%	93%
West Ipswich	59%	54%	77%	91%	92%
Woodbridge/Kesgrave	88%	82%	93%	95%	100%

Data sources: SCC Claims data

DWP Baseline for two year olds funded under families receiving additional forms of support (FRAS two year olds) Summer Term 2025

GP Registrations for the number of two, three and four year olds Oct 2025

5 of three and four year olds claiming over 15 hors (three year average) used as a proxy for working parents

Some data shows over 100% because the number of children claim was higher than the calculated baseline

For overall Suffolk take up we use FRAS baselines and the baselines from DfE in published stats and the data for three and four year olds includes four year olds in YR

5 Costs

Suffolk receives funding from the government. The amount is determined by the National Funding Formula. This is distributed to providers based on their termly claims. The funding comprises of an hourly rate plus deprivation funding and inclusion funding for eligible children. Providers also receive Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP), Inclusion Funding (IF), High Needs Funding (HNF) and the Disability Access Fund (DAF) funding for eligible babies and children aged from nine months until starting school reception year.

Suffolk County Council early education funding rates		
Age	From April 2025	From April 2026
	For childminders, group settings and school nurseries	For childminders, group settings and school nurseries
eligible babies from 9 month olds	£10.32	£10.81
eligible two year olds	£7.57	£7.95
three and four year olds	£5.40	£5.74

Age	Average fees per hour outside of the funded hours (2026)		
	Childminders	Group setting	School nursery
eligible babies from 9 month olds	£6.00	£5.50	n/a
eligible two year olds	£6.63	£7.65	n/a
three and four year olds	£6.00	£7.00	n/a

Data Source: SCC data from providers

*please note not all providers supply this information so this is only accurate for the providers who have.

*There may be variations to rates e.g. discounts for sibling groups. There may be additional rates for additional services, for example, lunch and other meals.

6 Quality

Early years group providers must register with Ofsted on the Early Years Register. These providers are inspected by Ofsted, who give them an overall grade for the quality of their provision.

Childminders can register with Ofsted or with a Childminder Agency.

Schools and standalone maintained nursery schools are on the Schools' register. The grades for both registers are equivalent.

Schools with nurseries have an overall inspection for the whole school and these providers are excluded from our calculation.

Until November 2025, early years providers were judged under four possible Ofsted grades: 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate'. Ofsted then replaced the old single-word overall grades but as the new style reports were not published before writing of his document, they are not included in this CSA's quality data.

Providers still awaiting their first full inspection will not yet have a grade. In this reporting period, a first full inspection could be up to 30 months from registration.

Providers on the Early Years Register who are inspected when no early years children are present can only be graded as Met or Not Met.

There are two childminder agencies who currently have childminders based in Suffolk registered with their agency. Both agencies have been graded as effective by Ofsted. The agencies are responsible for inspecting their childminders to ensure suitable quality of their provision, care and education.

Ofsted Statistics for Suffolk

Childcare providers and inspections as of 31 August 2025 showing the inspection grades of those who have been inspected.

	Number of providers						Percentage of inspected providers			
	EYR providers	Total number inspected	Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate	Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate
Suffolk	533	416	66	337	10	3	16	81	2	1

A further breakdown showing the amount of Ofsted judged good and outstanding providers in Suffolk by cluster as of January 2026

Group settings

CLUSTER	Group Settings % Good and Outstanding				
	Provider count	Number Inspected	Number Graded Good	Number Graded Outstanding	Good and Outstanding %
Bury St Edmunds	20	17	13	4	100.0%
East Ipswich	17	14	12	2	100.0%
Felixstowe	11	7	7		100.0%
Forest Heath	22	22	19	2	95.5%
Framlingham/Leiston	11	9	7	2	100.0%
Haverhill	17	15	10	4	93.3%
High Suffolk	10	8	8		100.0%
North Ipswich	15	15	10	4	93.3%
North Lowestoft	9	9	9		100.0%
South Lowestoft	7	7	5	1	85.7%
South Suffolk	16	14	12	2	100.0%
Stowmarket	19	18	17		94.4%
Sudbury	18	15	12	3	100.0%
Thurston	15	13	10	2	92.3%
Waveney & Blyth	13	10	8	2	100.0%
West Ipswich	17	15	10	5	100.0%
Woodbridge/Kesgrave	17	15	12	3	100.0%

In the grid above where a provider is judged as Met, we have included them in the Good calculation. At the time of writing, no providers had a judgement of Not Met in Suffolk.

Independent schools with children over two are not inspected by Ofsted so are not included in the grid above.

Group settings in the grid above comprise day nurseries and preschools.

Ofsted registered childminders

CLUSTER	Childminders % Good and Outstanding				
	Provider count	Number Inspected	Number Graded Good	Number Graded Outstanding	Good and Outstanding %
Bury St Edmunds	20	20	19	1	100.0%
East Ipswich	11	10	9	1	100.0%
Felixstowe	10	10	8	2	100.0%
Forest Heath	28	21	18	1	90.5%
Framlingham/Leiston	13	12	9	3	100.0%
Haverhill	13	9	7	2	100.0%
High Suffolk	5	4	4		100.0%
Lowestoft North	1	0			
North Ipswich	12	12	10	2	100.0%
North Lowestoft	17	13	11	2	100.0%
South Lowestoft	17	13	12	1	100.0%
South Suffolk	9	8	5	3	100.0%
Stowmarket	6	6	5	1	100.0%
Sudbury	7	5	5		100.0%
Thurston	18	15	14	1	100.0%
Waveney & Blyth	16	12	11	1	100.0%
West Ipswich	12	12	10		83.3%
Woodbridge/Kesgrave	11	9	7	2	100.0%

In the grid above where a provider is judged as Met, we have included them in the Good calculation. At the time of writing, no providers had a judgement of Not Met in Suffolk.

Childminders registered with agencies not inspected by Ofsted so are not included in the grid above.

7 Methodology

Data sources

- Number of children: The data for children under five comes from the GP Registration data for children 0-5 and the school age children data comes from the school census within the local authority.
- Children with EHC plans and other SEND funding: based on data held by Suffolk local authority.
- Supply of childcare: based on data provided to SCC by Ofsted, who regulate early years provision in schools and childcare provision. In some cases, we have supplemented this with local intelligence where providers are not registered with Ofsted.
- Data on take up, deprivation children and SEND children: is based on the Early Years and Schools Censuses, which are taken every January and published by the Department for Education in the statistical collection *Education provision: children under five years of age*. SCC data has been used to supplement the take up picture. This is based on claims in Summer Term 2025 and agreed baselines.
- Ofsted data Childcare providers and inspections as of 31 August 2025.
- SCC information held on Ofsted inspections as of January 2026.
- Price of childcare: This is an average based on the prices that responding childcare providers have told us they charge.
- IMD data 2025 has been used for Deprivation.
- Number of providers and places available from providers- SCC data, This was accurate on 19/01/2026

Cluster level data

All data used for sufficiency within the local authority is based on the summer term. This is because SCC is aware that this will be the busiest term for childcare providers when most four year olds will be in a setting as many move to school in the Autumn term.

Sufficiency Methodology

The Sufficiency model in Suffolk is based on: DEMAND (how many spaces we may need) vs SUPPLY (how many spaces are provided by settings). Here is a methodology for how this is calculated:

Demand

1. Numbers of children requiring provision

In Suffolk we have decided to use 30hr take up for 3 and 4yr olds (3yr average) as a determinant for the demand from working parents.

Age	Population	Eligible Children	Entitlement
0-2yrs	25% of children aged 0-1yrs* 100% of children 1-2 yrs	Take up % of 3 and 4yr olds claiming additional hours*	30 hrs
2yr olds (under the economic criteria)	n/a	Children eligible from Summer term list	15 hrs
2yr olds (working parents)	100% of 2yr olds	Take up % of 3 and 4yr olds claiming additional hours (30 hrs)	30hrs
3yr olds	100% of population	All Take up % of 3 and 4yr olds claiming additional hours	15hrs 30 hrs
4yr olds	58% of population (to account for 4yr olds in school)	All Take up % of 3 and 4yr olds claiming additional hours	15 hrs 30 hrs

*Eligible for childcare from 9 months

Data Sources: GP Registration data (number of children), Vulnerable 2yr olds provided by DWP (number of vulnerable 2yr olds), SCC funding data for 30hr take up (number of children in working households)

Number of full-time places needed (FTE) - Using the table above a Total FTE required is calculated.

2. Supply

Number of FTE places provided by settings

Maximum number of children at one time	Maximum number of FTE places	Max number of FTE places provided with stretch
This is the maximum number of children aged 0-4 that the setting can have	This is how many FTE places the setting can provide for the children (based on how many weeks and hours they are open)	This is then stretched for those settings open for longer than term time only This is the total Supply figure

Data source: Early Years team

Surplus or Deficit

FTE demand – FTE supply = Surplus or Deficit

Migration adjustment - Movement of children

As children do not always take up their place where they live, we account for migration

We look at children moving IN and OUT of each ward.

IN:	OUT:	Children IN- Children OUT
Number of children coming into settings in the ward that live outside of it	Number of children attending settings outside of the ward	More children coming in will add children More children going out will reduce children

Data Source: SCC funding claims

Take up data at cluster level

- SCC uses all funding claims received and removes duplicates.
- Out of county children are included in this report. This decision is based on the likelihood that for every child funded in Suffolk who lives out of county, there will be a Suffolk child who attends a setting in a neighbouring county and is therefore funded by them.
- SCC calculates a child's date of birth based on the last data of the previous term. For summer 2021 data 31/03/2021 was used.
- Please see page 34 for details on baselines.

8 References

Education provision: children under 5 years of age January 2025 *Department for Education*

Funded early education and childcare, Reporting year 2025 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK

Childcare providers and inspections as at 31 August 2025

Childcare providers and inspections as at 31 August 2025 - GOV.UK

Indices of Deprivation 2025 Summary Public Health Suffolk

<https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/asset-library/JSNA/Indices-of-Deprivation-2025-Suffolk-summary.pdf>

9 Appendices

Appendix 1 – wards within clusters

<p>Bury St Edmunds Abbeygate Barrow Chedburgh & Chevington Eastgate Horringer Minden Moreton Hall Risby Southgate St Olaves Tollgate Westgate</p>	<p>Felixstowe Eastern Felixstowe Orwell & Villages Western Felixstowe</p>	<p>Forest Heath Brandon Central Brandon East Brandon West Exning Iceni Kentford and Moulton Lakenheath Manor Mildenhall Great Heath Mildenhall Kingsway and Market Mildenhall Queensway Newmarket East Newmarket North Newmarket West The Rows</p>	<p>Framlingham/ Leiston Aldeburgh & Leiston Framlingham Kelsale & Yoxford Saxmundham Wickham Market</p>
<p>Haverhill Clare, Hundon and Kedington Haverhill Central Haverhill East Haverhill North Haverhill South Haverhill South East Haverhill West Whepstead & Wickhambrook Withersfield</p>	<p>High Suffolk Debenham Eye Fressingfield Gislingham Hoxne & Worlingworth Mendlesham Needham Market Palgrave Stonham Stradbroke & Laxfield</p>	<p>Ipswich East Bixley Gainsborough Holywells Priory Heath Rushmere St Andrew St Johns</p>	<p>Ipswich North Alexandra Castle Hill Claydon & Barham Rushmere St Margarets (Ipswich) Whitton (Ipswich)</p>

<p>Ipswich West Blakenham Bramford Bridge Gipping Sprites Sproughton & Pinewood Stoke Park Westgate (Ipswich) Whitehouse</p>	<p>Lowestoft North Gunton & St Margarets Harbour & Normanston Lothingland Oulton Broad</p>	<p>South Suffolk Brantham Brett Vale Capel St. Mary Copdock & Washbrook East Bergholt Ganges Hadleigh North Hadleigh South Orwell South East Cosford Stour</p>	<p>Stowmarket Bacton Battisford & Ringshall Chilton Combs Ford Haughley, Stowupland & Wetherden North West Cosford Onehouse Rattlesden St Peter's Stow Thorney</p>
<p>Sudbury Assington Box Vale Bures St Mary & Nayland Chadacre Great Cornard Lavenham Long Melford Sudbury North East Sudbury North West Sudbury South East Sudbury South West</p>	<p>Thurston Bardwell Emswell and Woolpit Ixworth The Forhams and Great Barton Pakenham and Troston Rickingham Rougham Stanton Thurston Walshall-le-Willows</p>	<p>Waveney Blyth Beccles & Worlingham Bungay & Wainford Halesworth & Blything Southwold Wrentham, Wangford & Westleton</p>	<p>Woodbridge/ Kesgrave Carlford & Fynn Valley Deben Kesgrave Martlesham & Purdis Farm Melton Rendlesham & Orford Woodbridge</p>