

Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency Plan

2022 - 2024

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1. Introduction

The statutory guidance for Early Education and Childcare places a duty with Local Authorities to secure sufficient childcare places in its area. In order to do this Local Authorities **are required** by legislation to:

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

To secure sufficient childcare places, local authorities **should** take into account what is reasonably practicable when assessing what sufficient childcare means in their area and:

- the state of the local childcare market, including the demand for specific types of providers in a particular locality and the amount and type of supply that currently exists.
- the state of the labour market.
- the quality and capacity of childcare providers and childminders registered with a childminder agency, including their funding, staff, premises, experience and expertise.
- encourage schools in their area to offer out of hours childcare from 8.00 am and 6.00 pm;
- encourage existing providers to expand their provision and new providers to enter the local childcare market.

Local authorities are **required** 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.

Local Authorities are responsible for determining the appropriate level of detail in their report, geographical division and date of publication. The report should include:

- a specific reference to how they are ensuring there is sufficient childcare available to meet the needs of: disabled children; children from families in receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit; children with parents who work irregular hours; children aged two, three and four taking up funded places; school age children and children needing holiday care.
- information about the supply and demand of childcare for particular age ranges of children, and the affordability, accessibility and quality of provision; and
- details of how any gaps in childcare provision will be addressed.

2. Aims of the Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency Plan

This plan provides baseline data to assist Solihull Council in its duty to understand the early education and childcare market in the Borough, which can be used to provide support and facilitate changes in the childcare marketplace and to assist current/prospective providers to plan.

The aim of the report is:

- To present a summary of early education and childcare sufficiency in Solihull.
- Consider the take up of 2, 3 and 4 year old and 30 hours funded places.
- Identify gaps in provision and places, where possible by Ward or locality.
- Develop an early years and childcare action plan to address any identified sufficiency issues.

3 Early years' entitlements

Section 7 of the Act requires the local authority to secure and fund early year's provision which is free of charge to parents. This provision is for children aged 2, 3 and 4 years old.

Universal entitlement - All children aged 3 and 4 years old are entitled to a universal offer of 15 hours each week the term after their third birthday (to a maximum of 570 hours per year).

2 year old entitlement - Since September 2013, 2 year old funding has been made available to the least advantaged 2 year olds. 2 year olds are eligible for 15 hours of free early years' provision if the parent(s) are: in low income employment or in receipt of specific benefits including out of work benefits and low income support, where the child has a statement of Special Educational Needs or is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, is Looked After by the local authority or is no longer Looked After as a result of an Adoption Order, Special Guardianship or a Child Arrangement Order.

Local authorities are provided with a list of potentially eligible children by the Department of Work and Pensions seven times a year and the Department for Education provides a mechanism for local authorities to verify whether children meet the eligibility criteria based on parental receipt of benefits, via the Eligibility Checking System (ECS).

30 hours childcare - Since September 2017, 3 and 4 year olds of working parents, who meet national criteria, can access an additional 15 hours each week, generally known as '30 hours free childcare'. This is an extended early years' entitlement which includes the 15 hours universal early years' entitlement and an additional 15 hours (per week up to a maximum of 38 weeks, or 570 hours stretched across more weeks of the year), totalling 1,140 hours. Eligibility for 30 hours childcare is based on both parents working in a couple household, or a single parent working in a lone-parent household, with minimum and maximum income thresholds applied. Parents apply to HMRC, and if eligible, are given a code which their chosen childcare provider validates with the local authority before a place is taken up.

Information, advice and assistance - Section 12 of the Childcare Act places a duty on local authorities to provide information, advice and assistance to parents and prospective parents relating to the provision of childcare, services or facilities that may be of benefit to parents and prospective parents, children and young people, something that was strengthened in the Childcare Act (2016). In Solihull, this duty is delivered through the Solihull Family Information Service.

4. Methodology

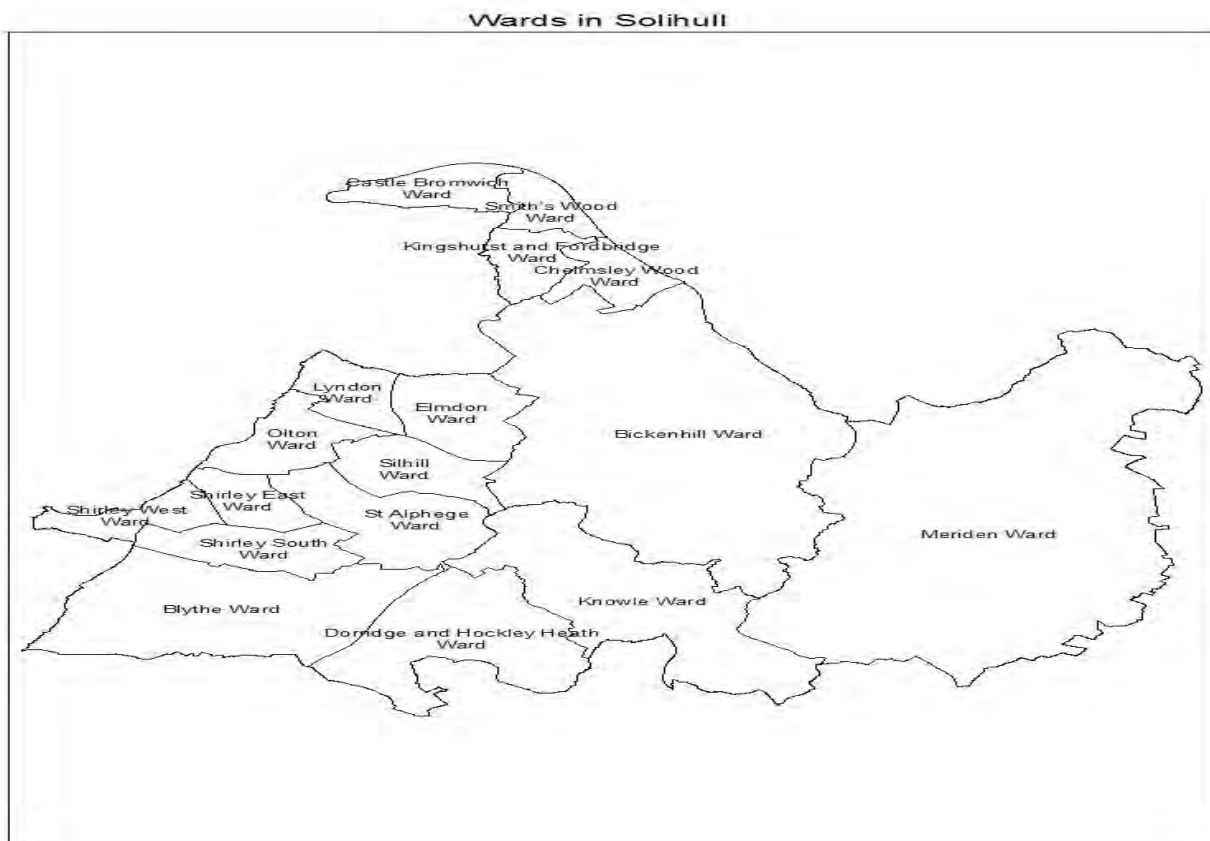
The Solihull Early Education and Childcare Sufficiency Plan has been developed through a mixed methods approach including:

- Desk research to establish a local context for the supply of childcare and early year's services, and the possible indicators of demand.
- The collation and analysis of data from the Solihull Family Information Service.
- An analysis of current Ofsted registered childcare provision.
- An assessment of the local delivery of universal and targeted early years' entitlements for 2, 3 and 4 year olds; including the delivery of 30 hours childcare.
- A survey of parents and carers to explore their experiences of using childcare in Solihull, in particular around barriers to accessing early education and childcare in Solihull.

5. Borough Wide Demography

The demographic data used to compile this report has been collated from a number of sources including the Solihull Observatory, Solihull Family Information Service, Ofsted, Local Health Authority and National statistics. The data source used is indicated throughout the document.

Where possible the data is modelled by Ward, which will help inform future decisions on the early learning and childcare places requirements by locality area.



The Solihull mid-year population estimates 2020 show that Solihull's resident population was 217,487, increasing by 1,113 individuals (0.5%) compared with 2019. The population grew by a total of 11,158 (5.4%) in the 10 years 2010-2020.

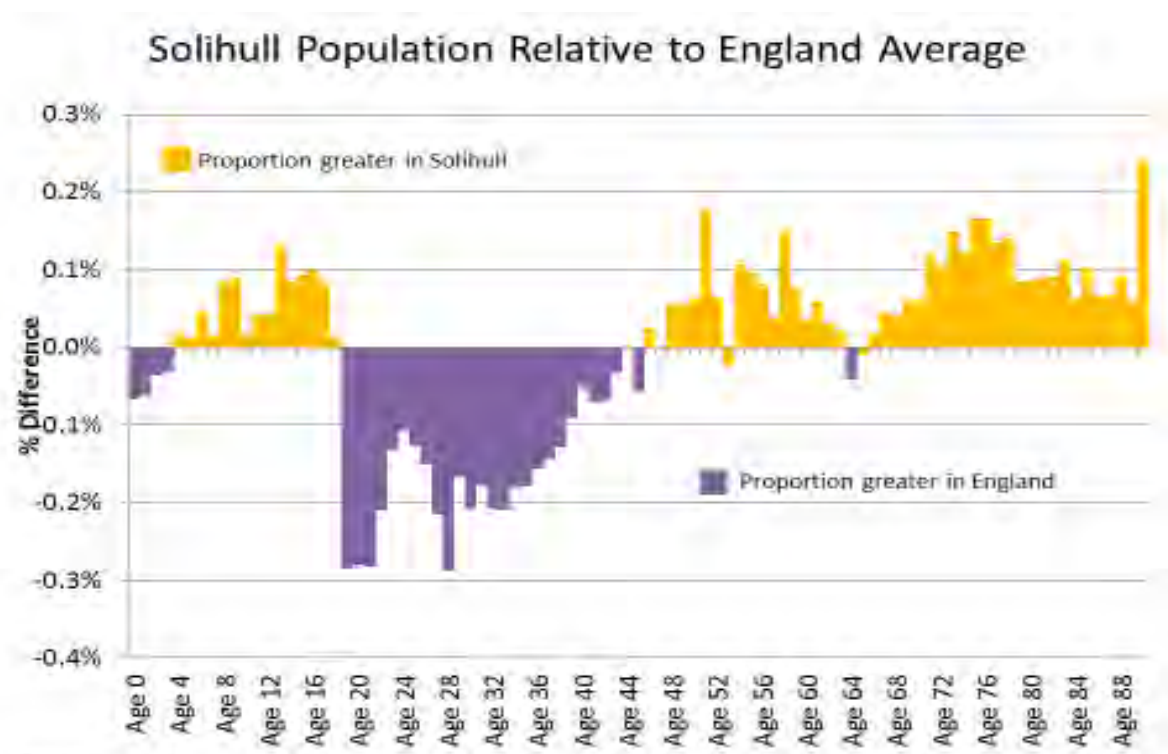
As the table below shows compared with both England and the West Midlands region Solihull has a relatively high proportion of older people aged 65+ (21%). The proportion of children is broadly in line with the average, but the working age population is lower than National and Regional norms.

ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates 2020

	Solihull		England	West Midlands
	Count	% Total	% Total	% Total
Aged 0-15	42,775	19.7%	19.2%	19.6%
Aged 16-64	129,091	59.4%	62.3%	61.7%
Aged 65+	45,621	21%	18.5%	18.7%
All people	217,487			

Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates 2020

The chart below shows Solihull population relative to the England average by single year.



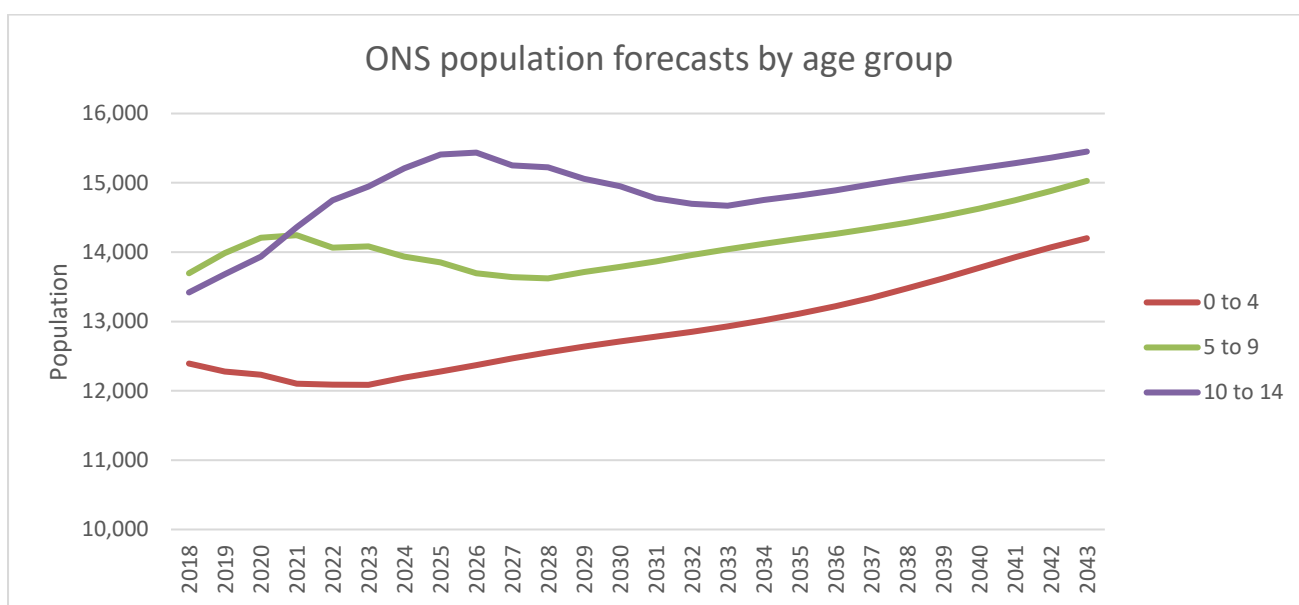
Source: ONS, mid-2020 population estimates

- Solihull has a below England average population among those aged 0-3 years and from the ages 19 through to 45.
- These population deficits are particularly evident among those aged 19-22 years (students) and among those in their late 20s/early 30s.
- Solihull has an above average population among almost all years from 45 onwards, with notable peaks among those in their 50s and 70s.
- The relatively high number of parents in their late 40s/early 50s is the most likely explanation for Solihull's above average proportion of children aged 13 to 17 years.

Appendix A shows the mid 2020 population estimates by 5-year age bands for 0-14 population by ward. The table shows that three Wards in North Solihull have the highest numbers of 0 to 4 and 5 to 9 year olds in the Borough. However, although this continues for two north wards for 10 to 14 years olds, St Alphege Ward has the third highest 10 to 14 year old pupil population in the Borough, closely followed by Shirley East.

Population Growth

Based on existing trends, the ONS produce projections for each 5 year age range up to the year 2043. The projections for the 0 to 14 age range in Solihull is shown in the chart below.



(Source ONS 2018 based subnational population projection)

0 to 4 Forecast

The projections show a declining population until 2023 when there is expected to be an increase of 17% in the 0 to 4 population in the Borough. However, it is important to note that the growth up to 2026 is forecast to be 2.2%.

The forecast for the 0-4 population will need careful monitoring. The latest local data on births suggest that there has been a significant drop in the birth rate in Solihull since 2020. This local

data would suggest that the decline in the 0-4 population may continue longer than these forecasts suggest.

4 to 9 Forecast

The 4 to 9 projection reflects the expectation that primary school rolls will fall over the coming years as a lower birth rate feeds into smaller intakes at Reception. The projections show an increase from 2028 onwards.

10 to 14 Forecast

The forecast for the 10 to 14 population shows significant growth over the next 5 years. This reflects the larger cohort that will be leaving primary schools and entering the secondary phase.

Solihull is experiencing a significant change in demography due to overseas migration, in particular from Hong Kong. This trend will not yet be reflected in the ONS data and may impact on demand for early years and childcare places required in Solihull.

Solihull Local Plan

Solihull Council is currently undertaking a review of its Local Plan. The draft Solihull Local Plan seeks to make provision for some 15,000 new dwellings over the plan period 2020-2036. Taking into account existing supply and that from windfall developments the plan identifies 19 residential led sites to accommodate around 5,300 new dwellings.

The level of housing development expected in the reviewed plan will significantly impact on the demographic profile of the area, in particular in Knowle, Meriden, Blythe and Bickenhill Wards where strategic housing sites are proposed. New primary schools are being planned to meet the needs of the new housing developments. Where new primary schools are required, the Council will seek to ensure that additional early years provision will be included.

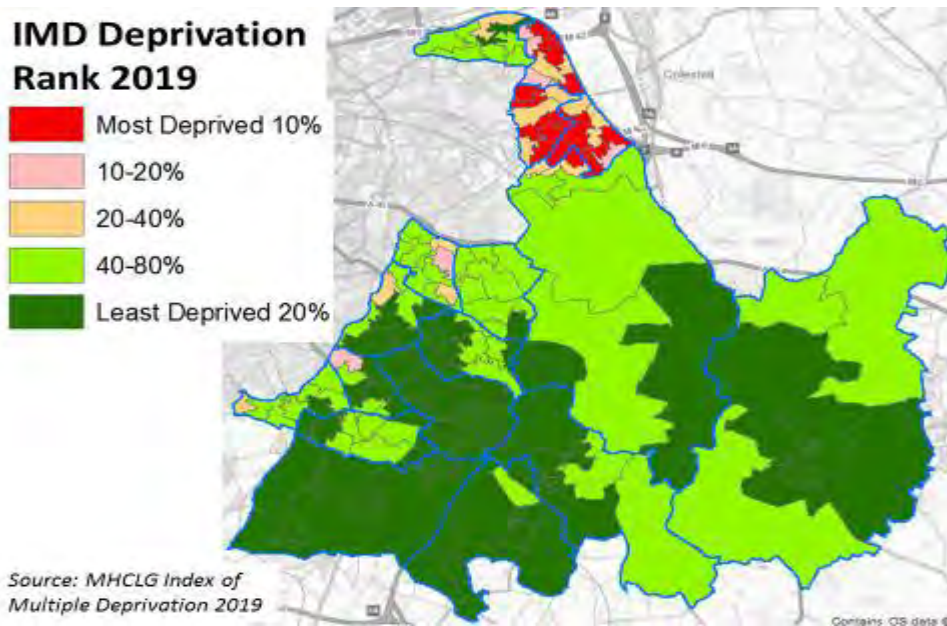
Once the draft Solihull Local Plan is approved, a more detailed analysis of the impact of the housing on early years provision will be required.

Ethnicity

At the time of the 2011 Census 10.9% of the population were from a Black or Minority Ethnic (BAME) background, slightly lower than the England (14.6%) or West Midlands (17.3%) averages. 60% of the Solihull BAME population are from an Asian/Asian British background, 20% are Mixed Race, 14% Black/Black British and 5% from an Other Ethnic Group.

Just over 50% of Solihull residents from a BAME background were under the age of 30, including 30% aged 0-15 years. At a locality level the BAME Population is proportionally highest in West Solihull, where 13.9% of residents are from a BAME background, compared to 8.5% in North Solihull and 5.7% in East Solihull.

Deprivation



The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 shows that Solihull is the least deprived upper tier Local Authority in the West Midlands and is ranked in the 2nd top quintile nationally. This has remained unchanged from 2007 through to 2019. However, Solihull is polarised with a high concentration of Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) neighbourhoods in the most deprived in England.

Over half of the North Solihull population live in the most deprived 10% of LSOA neighbourhoods in England, including one in five living in the most deprived 5%. Deprivation is very limited in the rest of the borough, with just two neighbourhoods in the most deprived 15% in England, Green Hill (Shirley East ward, 14th percentile) and Hobs Moat North (Lyndon, 13th percentile).

Solihull has 20 LSOA in the bottom 10% nationally in respect of Income Deprivation Affecting Children, with 9 in the most deprived 5% of neighbourhoods. Hobs Moat North (Lyndon ward) is the only Solihull LSOA outside of the North Solihull regeneration area in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods in the country on this measure.

6 The Solihull Economy

According to the ONS 2020 Business Register and Employment Survey there were 142,000 employees in Solihull in 2020 and a further 2,000 working owners. Solihull's total employment of 144,000 equates to a job density of 1.17, 39% higher than the Great Britain average (0.84). Solihull has the highest jobs density of any upper tier Local Authority in the West Midlands.

The private sector accounts for 90% of Solihull total employment (129,020) compared with the Great Britain average of 83%.

Sectors - Solihull's largest employment sectors are business administration & support services (40,000), manufacturing & the professional, scientific & technical sector (both 12,000), retail and accommodation & food services (both 10,000).

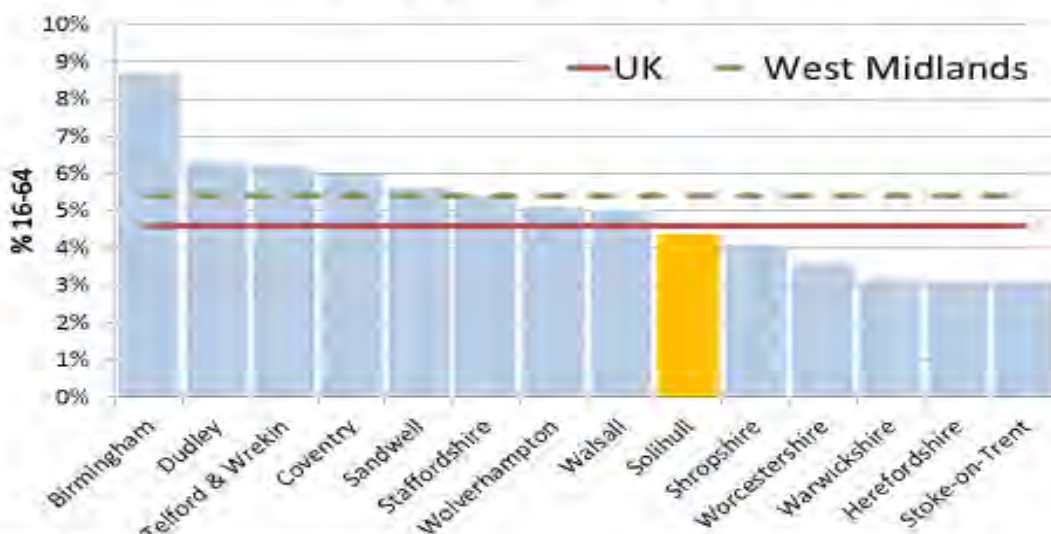
Employment - As at March 2022 there were 97,600 working age Solihull residents in employment, equating to an employment rate of 77.0%. This is higher than the UK (75.1%) and West Midlands averages (73.7%), where Local Authority rates range from 66.2% in Birmingham to nearly 81.0% in Warwickshire.

The occupational profile of Solihull residents in employment is similar to the UK, with just over half of working age residents working in higher skilled management and professional positions and just 16% working in labour intensive jobs.

Total employment in Solihull has increased in six out of the last ten years and by an annual average of 0.7% per year over this period (+6,600 jobs over the entire period). This is lower than the annual average increase recorded across the UK (+0.9%) and the West Midlands (+1.2%) for that period.

Unemployment - In March 2022 there were 5,000 working age Solihull residents classified as being unemployed, equating to an unemployment rate of 4.9%. This is higher than the UK (4.2%) but the same as the West Midlands average (4.9%), where the rate ranges from 7.7% in Birmingham to 2.1% in Warwickshire.

Working Age Unemployment Rates – December 2020



Source: ONS Annual Population Survey

Economic Inactivity - As at March 2022 there were 24,100 working age Solihull residents economically inactive, equating to an economic inactivity rate of 19.0%. This is lower than the UK (21.6%) and West Midlands averages (22.5%), where Local Authority rates range from 28.3% in Birmingham to 17.2% in Warwickshire.

Nearly 85% of Solihull residents who are economically inactive do not want a job (87% male, 84% female) compared to the UK average of 82%. The most common reasons for economic inactivity in Solihull are because they are a student (38% of all those economically inactive), they are long-term sick (18%), the individual is retired (17%) or they are looking after the family or home (16%). Compared with the UK as a whole, student (38% vs 18%) and early retirement (17% vs 14%) is common but looking after family/home (16% vs 20%) and long-term sickness (18% vs 25%) are less common.

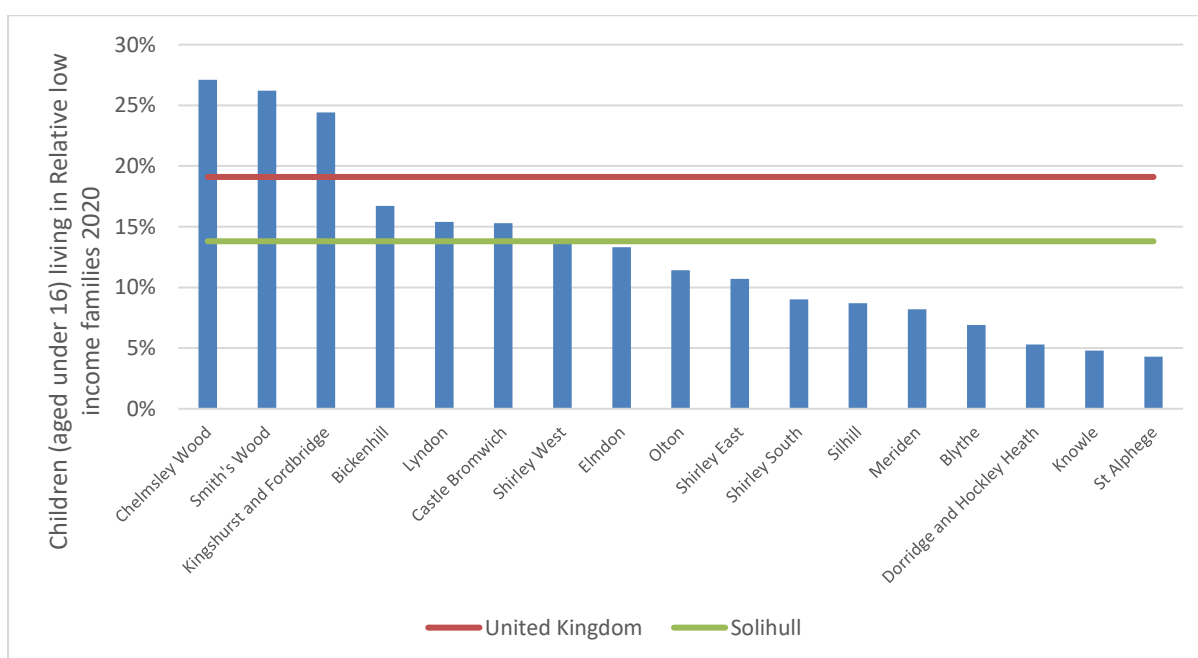
Wages

On average Solihull residents in employment earn 13% more than the UK average and 18% more than that for the West Midlands. Solihull residents have the highest average wage among upper tier West Midlands Local Authorities.

Average wages for Solihull residents increased by 21% in nominal terms (+£5,054) between 2010 and 2020, in-line with the increase across the UK as a whole (+22%). Over this period wages have been falling in real terms across the UK and the average Solihull resident received 9% less pay in 2020 than in 2010, a fall of just over £2,100 in real terms.

7 Children and Families

Children living in relative low-income families 2020



<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics>

Relative low income is defined as a family in low income Before Housing Costs. A family must have claimed Child Benefit and at least one other household benefit (Universal Credit, tax credits or Housing Benefit) at any point in the year to be classed as low income in these statistics.

In the financial year ending 2021 13.2% of children under the age of 16 living in Solihull were in relative low-income families compared with 18.7% nationally. However, at 24.0% the percentage is far higher in the three North Solihull Wards.

Latest fuel poverty data for 2020 is below average and stable in Solihull (12.5% of households compared to 13.2% England), with fuel poor households dispersed across the borough. This data will not reflect the current pressures on cost of living and the fuel price increases.

Children with a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND)

Data gathered from the January 2022 SEN 2 pupil census gives a picture of the number of children living in Solihull with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP).

The table below shows that 2,023 children and young people living in Solihull require a Statement or Educational Health Childcare Plan to help support them through education.

Age Range	Number of children and Young People
Under age 5	110
Aged 5 to 10	607
Aged 11 to 15	779
Aged 16 to 19	441
Aged 20 to 25	86
Total	2,023

(Source Jan 2022 SEN2)

Over the last 5 years there has been a 162% growth in the number of under 5s and a 33% growth in 5 to 15 year olds, with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Appendix B breaks this data down by individual ward area.

The data shows that Chelmsley Wood, Kingshurst & Fordbridge and Smith's Wood Wards have the highest number of pupils with an EHCP, as well as the highest number of children under 5 with an EHCP. All three wards are located in North Solihull.

Feedback from Schools and other Early Years providers is that more children are presenting with additional needs in Early Year, and that on the whole needs are more complex.

8 Early Education and Childcare Supply and Demand in Solihull

In January 2022, there were 373 providers in Solihull a net decrease of 14 providers since Jan 2021. The biggest decrease in providers is the number of childminders, but there has been an increase in the number of day nurseries.

Providers by Ward at January 2022

Bickenhill	Blythe	Castle Bromwich	Chelmsley Wood	Dorridge & Hockley Heath	Elmdon	Kingshurst and	Knowle	Lyndon	Meriden	Olton	Shirley East	Shirley South	Shirley West	Silhill	Smith's Wood	St Alphege	Total Providers
20	30	18	16	24	15	20	18	20	28	27	19	31	32	18	21	16	373

Castle Bromwich Ward has seen the biggest drop in the number of providers, since Jan 2021, this decrease is all childminders. Bickenhill Ward has lost 6 providers in the last 12 months across a wider range of provision, including holiday schemes, wrap around and out of school provision.

Childcare places by Ward

Providers in Solihull provide a total of 9,631 registered childcare places. This is a decrease of 453 (4%) places since January 2021.

Appendix C shows the breakdown of places by Ward. Bickenhill Ward has seen the largest drop in places since Jan 2021. The drop in places is across nearly all types of place but in particular it appears to be a reduction in school-based provision including Ofsted registered Holiday Schemes, Out of School and Wrap around places.

The largest reduction in type of places available in Jan 2022 are in Ofsted registered Holiday Schemes, a net reduction of 164 places (9%). This overarching figure is masking an actual reduction of 232 places across 4 Wards, with 68 places being created in 3 Wards. Smith's Wood Ward is the only ward that does not offer a holiday scheme.

Further analysis is required to understand whether demand is being met for Holiday Schemes and whether demand from Smith's Wood Ward is being catered for by another area or there is insufficient demand to sustain a scheme.

Vacancies

As part of the January 2022 provider survey the Family Information Service collected a snapshot of information identifying vacancies and waiting lists by ward. This data can help determine whether the reduction in places between 2021 and 2022 has impacted on supply of places or has removed surplus places.

	Childminder	Day Nursery	Holiday Scheme	Out of School	Pre-School	Wrap around	Total	% Total Places
Total spaces	243	480	199	78	17	74	1,111	11.5%
Total Waiting List	13	50	0	17	4	1	96	
% of places by provider	28%	13%	11%	4%	4%	5%	11.5%	

(Source Family Information Service Provider Sufficiency Survey Jan 2022)

Appendix D provides a breakdown of waiting lists and vacancies by Ward. The overall data suggests that there is over supply of childcare places in the Borough. In some Wards waiting lists are showing but vacancies are also available, this will be reflecting parental preference for a particular provider or a miss match in the hours or days of childcare on offer to what is required.

The data suggests that the removal of over 400 places in Bickenhill Ward does not appear to have impacted on supply of places, with little or no waiting list for places. The lack of a Holiday Scheme in Smith's Wood Ward is not generating unmet demand showing in waiting lists at either of the two neighbouring wards, however these two wards are not showing vacancies either, so this needs further consideration.

Vacancies are limited in Dorridge & Hockley Heath, Elmdon, Olton and St Alphege Wards, all operating with less than 5% empty places.

Three Wards have waiting lists of 10 or more children for places with no vacancies. Knowle and St Alphege are showing as needing additional spaces in Day Nurseries and Lyndon Ward is showing over subscription for Pre-school places. Lyndon and Knowle do have sufficient childcare vacancies with other providers in the Ward, but St Alphege Ward does appear to be showing a small under supply of places that needs further investigation.

Childcare places available outside of normal full day care hours

Ward	Before 7.30 am	After 6 pm
Bickenhill	73	12
Blythe	6	6
Castle Bromwich	114	68
Chelmsley Wood	50	50
Dorridge & Hockley Heath	0	6
Elmdon	119	0
Kingshurst & Fordbridge	12	0
Knowle	12	6

Lyndon	6	52
Meriden	0	0
Olton	0	192
Shirley East	30	6
Shirley South	58	78
Shirley West	6	24
Silhill	0	45
Smith's Wood	0	0
St Alphege	0	0
Total	486	545

(Source Family Information Service Sufficiency Survey Jan 2022)

The data shows that the availability of places outside of normal childcare hours is patchy across individual wards.

Further assessment of demand for out of hours care is required for the wards with little or no provision, to ascertain if the lack of provision is a gap in the childcare market or due to lack of demand from parents.

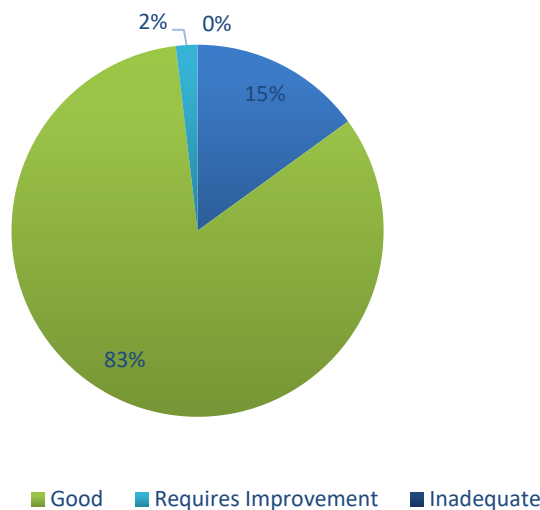
Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme

School holidays can be a difficult time for some families because of increased costs such as food and childcare. HAF activities are available for school age children from Reception to year 11 who are in full-time education and receive benefits-related free school meals. The scheme offers a healthy meal and enriching activities for children whose family meet the eligibility criteria. These are free of charge to the parent/carer of eligible children.

Standards

Ofsted are responsible for rating the quality of early education but the Council offers support to providers in the area.

Ofsted Judgements for Early Year Providers at March 2022



www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childcare-providers-and-inspections-as-at-31-march-2022

Of the 160 providers that have been inspected by March 2022 in Solihull, 98% are considered to be Outstanding or Good by Ofsted. No providers are considered Inadequate and 2% require improvement. There were 26% of providers without a graded Ofsted inspection.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework is mandatory for all schools that provide early years provision [0-5 years] and Ofsted-registered early years providers in England. The EYFS sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.

Ofsted are the sole arbiter of quality for all free entitlements and Ofsted and inspectorates of independent schools have regard to the EYFS in carrying out inspections and report on the quality and standards of provision.

Local authorities have a legal duty to provide information, advice and training on meeting the requirements of the EYFS, meeting the needs of children with SEND and on effective safeguarding and child protection for providers who are rated less than 'Good' by Ofsted or newly registered providers.

The Local Authority will support setting improvement and promote high standards by:

- Supporting settings' self-evaluation and improvement
- Monitoring and evaluating the performance of settings
- Providing information, advice and training to childcare providers proportionate to need. Prioritizing settings where the need is greatest; for example, when they are in an Ofsted category where they are graded less than 'good'.
- Facilitating the sharing of best practice between settings

When considering any expansion of childcare places, the Council will seek to provide these additional places in good or outstanding providers.

Childcare for Children with Special Educational Need or Disability

It is important that children with a special educational need or disability are able to participate in the same kind of early education and childcare as their peers. Providers must have arrangements in place to support children with SEN or disabilities as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance and legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. In Solihull, enhanced funding (Early Years Inclusion Fund) is available to support settings to provide for children with Special Educational Needs. Advice and guidance is also available from the Council's Early Years Team and Specialist Inclusion Support Teams.

In Solihull, the Council supports providers across the Borough to meet the needs of children with Special Educational Needs through enhanced funding. This should mean that all providers can meet the additional needs of specific children identified through the Council's Specialist Inclusion Support Team.

In addition, the Council has specialist early years provision linked to Merstone Special School that can meet the needs 2 & 3 year olds with more complex needs in North Solihull and at Reynolds Cross Special School in South Solihull. Each of these provisions can offer 12 part time places.

Further information on childcare providers is available on the Family Information Service Directory at <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/children-and-family-support>.

Dingley's Comic Relief Early Years Inclusion Project

Dingley's Promise is a charity and specialist nursery provider whose aims are to transform the early years for children with SEND. One of the aims of the Comic Relief project are to improve the sufficiency of childcare places for young children in the early years with SEND.

Solihull is one of ten Local Authorities participating from Year 1 of the 5 year project. The Comic Relief project has been designed to support the duties and requirements of the Childcare Act for LAs to secure sufficient childcare. The duties specify that provision for children with SEND should be secured for children up to the age of 18.

There are complexities in relation to assessing the sufficiency of places for children with SEND. Separating perceived needs (demand), from actual needs is extremely difficult as is assessing perceived and actual supply. As part of the work with Dingley's Promise, the ten Local Authorities are working together to agree a process to assess supply and demand of early years provision for children with additional needs.

The SEN2 data is showing a dramatic increase in the numbers of children under 5 receiving an EHCP. Schools and providers are indicating that there are more children, with more complex needs at an earlier age. The SEND School Place Commissioning Strategy has also identified the development of services and provision for children in early years as a key priority and key to providing early intervention.

Developing and undertaking an annual review of the supply and demand of early years places for children with additional needs, using the findings of the Dingley’s Promise Project will be a key action of this overarching sufficiency assessment plan. In addition, a review of early years places and the model of provision in Solihull will be undertaken with providers and schools.

Affordability

Tax-Free Childcare is a government-backed scheme which helps parents with the cost of childcare. The scheme, which launched in 2017, gives eligible families an extra 20% towards childcare costs. It’s slowly replacing the outgoing Childcare Vouchers scheme, which closed to new entrants in October 2018.

Universal credit – Working families who qualify for Universal Credit can get back up to 85% of their childcare costs, to a maximum of £646.35 a month for one child, and a maximum of £1,108.40 monthly for two or more children.

Number of Households in Solihull receiving the childcare element of Universal Credit

May 2019	May 2020	May 2021	May 2022
242	100	360	538

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables>

The data shows that the number of households claiming the childcare element of Universal Credit has increased by 122% in the last 3 years, following a dip in 2020 which is assumed to be due to the pandemic. The largest increase where in the Lyndon and Shirley West Wards.

Cost of Childcare in Solihull

The cost of childcare differs depending on the structure of the childcare provider and the session length provided.

What is evident from the data collected by the Family Information Service is that childcare costs vary considerably from ward to ward with a difference of up to £1.33 per hour for childminders and £4.60 per hour for under 2’s provision in day nurseries. However, this information does not specify what is included in the hourly rate and therefore the cost difference may be due to a difference in the offer e.g., meals and supplies including nappies.

9. Government Funded Early Learning for 2 Year Olds

Early Learning for some 2 year olds is free from the term after their second birthday, where their parents are eligible for certain benefits. It is for 15 hours per week for 38 weeks.

From September 2013, 20% of all 2 year olds were eligible for funded early learning places. This is intended to improve the attainment and life chances of some of the most disadvantaged children and provide support for working parents. From September 2014, the eligibility criteria for 2 year old places widened and increased the number of 2 year olds eligible for a place to 40%.

At April 2022, 783 children were approved for funded 2 year old places of which 649 (83%) live in Solihull and 134 (17%) live out of the Borough. 614 children (78%) booked a place with a

registered provider. Of the 169 children still to have places booked only 43 (25%) are actively seeking a place. Of these, 30 are on waiting lists for a particular setting and 13 are newly approved and are still in process. The remaining 126 have decided not to seek a funded 2 year old place or have chosen a setting outside of Solihull. Further work is required to understand why parents who have had funding approved then decide not to take up a place.

On a Borough level it would appear that overall, there are sufficient funded 2 year old places, however to really identify any gaps in sufficiency of places the data needs to be analysed by ward.

Appendix E shows the breakdown by Ward of the actual supply and demand for funded 2 year old places in the Borough in April 2022.

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) provides a list of eligible Solihull 2 year olds every half-term. At April 2022, 104% of the DWP 2 year olds had been approved for a place and 83% had a place booked. 4% were on waiting lists for a place.

Of the 36 Solihull children that were actively seeking a place, 11 (31%) had only just been approved so were still being processed, 21 (60%) were on a waiting list for a specific setting of their choice and 4 (11%) were unable to find a local place. These 4 children were across 4 separate Wards.

The DfE published data for 2022 shows that Solihull is offering 93% of eligible 2 year olds a place, compared to 72% Nationally and 67% regionally.

The birth data has shown that Solihull is experiencing a falling birth rate so the number of eligible 2 year olds is forecast to reduce over the coming years. The data suggests that, on the whole there are sufficient funded 2 year old places to meet demand, although fluctuations in demand in individual Ward areas will need close monitoring to ensure that the geographical supply of places meets localised demand.

10. Free Early Learning for 3 & 4 Year Olds (universal offer 15 hours)

All 3 & 4 year olds are entitled to 15 hours per week for 38 weeks, government funded early learning, from the term following their 3rd birthday until they start in Reception Class which is normally the September following their 4th birthday. A small number of parents choose to defer their child's start in Reception until they become statutory school age (the term following their 5th birthday). Some children will access up to 5 terms of free early education.

The DfE published data for 2022 shows that Solihull is offering 103% of eligible 3 & 4 year olds a place, compared to 92% Nationally and 93% regionally.

Appendix F shows the breakdown by Ward of the demand for funded 3 & 4 year old places in the Borough at the Summer Term 2022. The data includes all PVI and school nursery settings within the Borough. The data shows that the supply of 3 & 4 year old places across the maintained sector and PVI sector is split, as parents seek to find places that best meet their working needs.

192 PVI settings are registered to offer funded 3 & 4 year old places, 60% of those registered made a claim for universal funded hours in Summer 2022. In addition, all schools in Solihull that have a school nursery class attached, are registered to offer funded 3 & 4 year old places.

A snapshot of vacancies shows that 85 providers (both school and PVI) were showing 743 vacancies.

Supply and demand of places required for Summer 2023

Using Heath data of births in Solihull, the number of children needing 3 & 4 year old universal 15 hour places is calculated to be 3,633 at Summer 2023. Based on the number of places available in Summer 2022, working capacity of 4,012, This assumes 100% take up of places by Solihull children which will not be the case, as some families will use settings outside of Solihull, many use family or choose not to use a setting at all. As with Summer 2022, a proportion of places in Solihull settings will be used by families from outside of Solihull.

11. Extended offer of funded 30 hours for Eligible 3 & 4 Year Olds

From September 2017, local authorities were required by legislation to secure an additional 570 funded hours a year over no fewer than 38 weeks (30 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year) of the year for qualifying children in their area for the term following a child's 3rd birthday.

Eligibility for the additional funded hours has been determined by HMRC. A child qualifies for free childcare if they are resident in England and under compulsory school age:

- Both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family), and each parent earns on average:
- A weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage or national living way; and
- Less than £100,000 per year.

Number of Solihull 3 & 4 Year Olds taking up extended offer of 30 hours – Spring Census

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1500	1643	1827	1682	1795

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables - spring 2022>

The DfE data is based on Spring census. The data shows a dip in demand for 2021 but that demand in 2022 is nearly back to levels seen in spring 2020 before the pandemic. However, this is set in a context of a lower birth rate which suggests higher levels of eligibility.

Extended offer Summer 2022

Appendix G shows a breakdown by the ward of the number of 30 hour places offered at the Summer Term 2022 based on Family Information Service data. The Summer Term has been used as this is the term in which the largest number of children are eligible for funded 30 hour places. The data shows the ward in which places are located and includes families living outside of Solihull that take up a place at a setting in Solihull.

Blythe and Shirley South wards have the highest take up of 30 hour extended offer places in Solihull. Children resident outside of Solihull take up 20% of all extended offer places in Solihull.

The Solihull pupil number is slightly higher than the DfE data as it is based on Summer 2022 which is the term where there is the highest number of children that are eligible for a place.

Supply and demand of funded extended offer places required for Summer 2023

The total number of eligible 3 & 4 year olds in Summer 2022 was 3,776. Of these 1,654 took up a 30 hour extended offer place; this equates to 44%. The total number of eligible 3 & 4 year olds for Summer 2023 is 3,633. Assuming the same level of take up of places this would equate to 1,598. This shows that with a working capacity of 2,081 there are sufficient places across the Borough as a whole.

12. Parent Carer Survey 2022

In March 2022, a survey of parents was undertaken to seek views about early years and childcare provision in Solihull. The survey was open for 8 weeks and advertised widely through schools, providers and parent's groups. A total of 543 responses were received. Families of more than one child had to complete the survey for each child.

Question 1 of the survey enabled parents to provide part of their home postcode. This information will enable further analysis of answers, by geographical area, where an issue has been identified for follow up action.

Attached at Appendix H is a detailed summary of the responses to the survey. Where comments have been made, a summary of the key answers have been provided apart from the last question where comments have been provided in full but with references to specific children and providers removed.

Key Findings (based on the responses received)

- After school clubs are the most used childcare provision (26.5%), followed by family and friends (21%) and day nurseries (21%)
- After school provision and holiday schemes are identified as the most needed provision for parents not currently using childcare provision. In particular, for families with children with additional needs which parents have identified as a specific gap.
- A majority of parents indicated that they did not need more childcare, but for those that do, a more flexible offer of hours and more hours at the current provider were the highest responses. In addition, a number of the comments indicated that they would like special schools to provide holiday schemes, after school and wrap around provision.
- Although only a small number of respondents had accessed a HAF place, the comments reflected that parents welcomed the provision. Comments referred to the need for schemes to support children with additional needs. A large number of responses had not heard of the HAF scheme, so consideration needs to be given to how the schemes are advertised.
- Cost of provision was clearly identified as the biggest barrier for parents wanting to access childcare provision, followed by the hours and times available. The comments identified

two further barriers, the need for provision to be available for children with additional needs and the age range of the offer, in particular for older children.

- The majority of parents (59%) indicated that the pandemic had not impacted on their childcare requirements. For those that commented on the question, working at home and reduced hours due to work arrangements were identified.
- Cost of childcare has been identified as a key barrier, 37% of parents responded that they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the cost of their childcare but a similar number (35%) indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their childcare costs.
- 68% of responses indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of their childcare provider. 4.5% indicated that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- The responses show that location to home and Ofsted category are really important when choosing childcare. However, the comments overwhelmingly showed the importance of the staff at the provision as well as the ethos and environment.
- The main reason for using childcare is to support working arrangements.
- 68% of responses indicated that they had found it easy to find the childcare that they needed in their local area.
- 14% of parents indicated that they had concerns about childcare meeting the needs of their child with additional needs.
- 24% of families would change their childcare if they could but 49% would not.

13. Recommendations for further action

In order to ensure that sufficient childcare and early education funded places are available for parents the following recommendations for action have been identified.

	Action	Year 1	Year 2
1	Continue to support childcare providers to deliver high quality, sustainable provision.	Ongoing	Ongoing
2	Aim to improve the quality of providers which are judged by Ofsted as Requires improvement/Inadequate.	Ongoing	Ongoing
3	Review the provision of Ofsted registered holiday schemes across Solihull, considering the parent/carer survey 2022, and assess whether one is required in the Smith's Wood Ward.	Review of data by locality	Implement findings
4	Review the level of after school places in each ward and whether there is unmet demand as highlighted in the parent/carer survey 2022.	Review of data by locality	Implement findings
5	Review the level of places in the St Alphege Ward	Review of data by locality	Implement findings
6	Review the out of hours, over night and weekend care that is currently on offer in the borough and identify whether there is unmet demand.	Review of data by locality	Implement findings
7	Develop an assessment tool for calculating future demand for early years places for children with additional needs in line with the Dingley's Promise project and undertake an assessment of the supply of places.	Model development	Testing & validation of forecasts
8	Work with special schools to understand if out of school provision can be developed.	Discussions with schools and data analysis	Outcomes & implement Years 2 & 3

9	Review the model of early years provision and services for children with additional needs.	Discussions with schools and data analysis	Outcomes & implement Years 2 & 3
10	Identify why parents that have been approved for funded 2 year old provision then choose not to take up a place.	Ongoing	Ongoing
11	Develop a forecasting model for funded early years places to assess demand for places more accurately.	Model development	Testing & validation of forecasts

Mid 2020 population estimates by 5-year age bands for 0-14 population by ward.

Ward	0 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 14
Bickenhill	675	797	763
Blythe	879	912	876
Castle Bromwich	511	570	569
Chelmsley Wood	1,121	1,077	881
Dorridge & Hockley Heath	514	799	852
Elmdon	697	827	728
Kingshurst & Fordbridge	1,032	1,084	1,049
Knowle	457	687	731
Lyndon	850	903	872
Meriden	552	771	729
Olton	608	734	711
St Alphege	504	705	983
Shirley East	613	842	916
Shirley South	676	831	695
Shirley West	796	869	756
Silhill	635	759	754
Smith's Wood	949	978	1,042
Total	12,069	14,145	13,907

Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates 2020

Children with an EHCP by Ward at January 2022 SEN2

Ward	Under 5	Aged 5 to 10	Aged 11 to 15	Aged 16 to 19	Aged 20 to 25	Total	%
Bickenhill	6	42	52	28	5	133	7%
Blythe	6	34	49	22	7	118	6%
Castle Bromwich	6	26	29	22	2	85	4%
Chelmsley Wood	13	52	81	44	6	196	10%
Dorridge & Hockley Heath	2	12	25	26	4	69	3%
Elmdon	3	25	39	21	4	92	4%
Kingshurst & Fordbridge	12	63	74	41	5	195	10%
Knowle	2	22	21	11	4	60	3%
Lyndon	2	46	56	30	4	138	7%
Meriden	9	26	42	30	11	118	6%
Olton	5	32	31	23	5	96	5%
Other	3	9	9	10	3	34	2%
Shirley East	3	35	42	18	7	105	5%
Shirley South	7	41	34	27	2	111	5%
Shirley West	8	33	46	19	5	111	5%
Silhill	6	29	31	12	2	80	4%
Smith's Wood	14	60	86	46	5	211	10%
St Alphege	3	20	32	16	5	76	4%
Total	110	607	779	441	86	2023	
	5%	30%	39%	22%	4%		

(Source Jan 2022 SEN2)

Childcare provision by Ward at January 2022

Ward	Child minder	Day Nursery	Holiday Scheme	Out of School	Pre-School	Wrap around	Total 2022	Total 2021	Diff
Bickenhill	36	295	104	134	24	70	663	1105	-442
Blythe	48	362	92	182	66	142	892	930	-38
Castle Bromwich	72	24	48	48	0	48	240	280	-40
Chelmsley Wood	30	200	130	70	0	70	500	416	84
Dorridge & Hockley Heath	54	146	24	64	40	40	368	374	-6
Elmdon	35	139	24	24	0	24	246	276	-30
Kingshurst & Fordbridge	24	328	126	286	0	236	1000	960	40
Knowle	78	51	80	50	30	50	339	345	-6
Lyndon	55	227	32	64	30	48	456	482	-26
Meriden	49	218	138	161	38	101	705	685	20
Olton	36	272	126	148	0	144	726	726	0
Shirley East	68	188	114	114	0	114	598	590	8
Shirley South	72	262	128	95	69	120	746	749	-3
Shirley West	93	349	76	115	0	63	696	660	36
Silhill	12	176	140	126	37	96	587	674	-87
Smith's Wood	78	237	0	40	40	0	395	358	37
St Alphege	18	125	195	80	26	30	474	474	0
Total 2022	858	3,599	1,577	1,801	400	1,396	9,631	10,084	-453
% of places	9%	37%	16%	19%	4%	14%			(4%)
Total 2021	934	3535	1741	1905	420	1549	10,084		
Net Difference 2021 to 2022	-76	64	-164	-104	-20	-153	-453		

(Source Family Information Service Sufficiency Survey Jan 2022)

Vacancies and Waiting Lists by Ward at Jan 2022

Ward		Childminder	Day Nursery	Holiday Scheme	Out of School	Pre-School	Wrap around	Total	% Total ward places
Bickenhill	Vacancies	10	33	0	0	0	2	45	7%
	Waiting Lists	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	
Blythe	Vacancies	14	17	0	13	5	0	49	5%
	Waiting Lists	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Castle Bromwich	Vacancies	10	0	18	4	0	0	32	13%
	Waiting Lists	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Chelmsley Wood	Vacancies	17	88	0	0	0	0	105	21%
	Waiting Lists	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Dorridge & Hockley Heath	Vacancies	4	0	0	0	0	0	5	1%
	Waiting Lists	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Elmdon	Vacancies	7	0	0	0	0	0	7	3%
	Waiting Lists	1	0	0	4	0	1	6	
Kingshurst & Fordbridge	Vacancies	19	67	0	0	0	0	86	35%
	Waiting Lists	0	5	0	0	0	0	5	
Knowle	Vacancies	25	0	0	0	2	5	32	9%
	Waiting lists	0	10	0	0	0	0	10	
Lyndon	Vacancies	16	33	32	0	0	16	97	21%
	Waiting Lists	0	10	0	0	11	0	21	
Meriden	Vacancies	20	24	23	9	0	5	91	13%
	Waiting Lists	4	0	0	0	0	0	4	
Olton	Vacancies	18	0	0	0	0	0	18	2%
	Waiting Lists	1	0	0	6	0	0	7	
	Vacancies	18	21	0	0	0	0	39	7%

Shirley East	Waiting Lists	4	6	0	0	0	0	10	
Shirley South	Vacancies	15	43	16	20	10	20	134	18%
	Waiting Lists	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Shirley West	Vacancies	27	26	40	24	0	24	140	20%
	Waiting Lists	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Silhill	Vacancies	7	16	70	8	0	2	103	18%
	Waiting Lists	0	4	0	0	0	0	4	
Smith's Wood	Vacancies	14	112	0	0	0	0	126	32%
	Waiting Lists	1	0	0	7	0	0	8	
St Alphege	Vacancies	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0%
	Waiting Lists	0	15	0	0	0	0	15	
Total spaces		243	480	199	78	17	74	1,111	11.5%
Total Waiting List		13	50	0	17	4	1	96	
% of places by provider		28%	13%	11%	4%	4%	5%	11.5%	

(Source Family Information Service Provider Sufficiency Survey Jan 2022)

Appendix E

2 Year Old Places by Ward at April 2022

Ward	Approved Children	Number booked	Still to book	Actively seeking a place
Bickenhill	40	34	6	3
Blythe	40	32	8	3
Castle Bromwich	29	20	9	2
Chelmsley Wood	124	105	19	4
Dorridge & Hockley Heath	4	3	1	0
Elmdon	26	19	7	3
Kingshurst & Fordbridge	118	102	16	2
Knowle	6	4	2	1
Lyndon	34	20	14	4
Meriden	23	19	4	2
Olton	25	12	13	2
Shirley East	16	14	2	0
Shirley South	15	12	3	2
Shirley West	31	21	10	1
Silhill	20	16	4	0
Smith's Wood	95	72	23	7
St Alphege	3	3	0	0
Total Solihull	649	508	141	35

Out of Borough pupils	134	106	28	7
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3 & 4 year old universal 15 hour places in Solihull - Summer Term 2022.






Ward	School Nursery	PVI setting	Total
Bickenhill	112	75	187
Blythe	144	139	283
Castle Bromwich	75	35	110
Chelmsley Wood	145	118	263
Dorridge & Hockley Heath	103	76	179
Elmdon	109	68	177
Kingshurst & Fordbridge	151	112	263
Knowle	77	62	139
Lyndon	101	86	187
Meriden	88	59	147
Olton	76	85	161
Shirley East	83	94	177
Shirley South	110	111	221
Shirley West	123	73	196
Silhill	120	75	195
Smith's Wood	103	111	214
St Alphege	70	96	166
Out of Borough	283	454	737
Total	2,083 (52%)	1,929 (48%)	4,012

Breakdown of extended offer 30 hour places by Ward at Summer 2022







Ward	PVI	School Nursery	Total Places
Bickenhill	77	15	92
Blythe	110	70	180
Castle Bromwich	32	35	67
Chelmsley Wood	64	31	95
Dorridge & Hockley Heath	53	51	104
Elmdon	50	59	109
Kingshurst & Fordbridge	68	23	91
Knowle	42	32	74
Lyndon	59	36	95
Meriden	52	35	87
Olton	69	28	97
Shirley East	66	38	104
Shirley South	91	48	139
Shirley West	66	37	103
Silhill	48	45	93
Smith's Wood	42	24	66
St Alphege	50	8	58
Out of Borough	283	144	427
Total	1,322	759	2,081

Early Education and Childcare Parent/Carer Survey (2022)

2 What age is your child - if your child has special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) please tick SEND as well				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	SEND		19.14%	103
2	Under 2 years		11.34%	61
3	2 years		13.75%	74
4	3-4 years		29.74%	160
5	5-10 years		48.51%	261
6	11-14 years		15.24%	82
7	15-18 years (this age range is only for a child with SEND)		3.16%	17
			answered	538
			skipped	4

3 What childcare are you currently using?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Childminder		9.09%	49
2	Crèche		0.19%	1
3	Day Nursery		20.78%	112
4	Pre School		8.53%	46
5	School Nursery		15.21%	82

3 What childcare are you currently using?








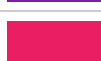


6	Family / Friends		21.34%	115
7	After School		26.53%	143
8	Before School		17.81%	96
9	Holiday Clubs		20.22%	109
10	None of the above		20.22%	109
11	Other (please specify):		3.53%	19

answered 539


Other (please specify):

Key answers included, other family members, working at home and other school clubs









4 What early education and childcare do you need if you are not currently using childcare?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Childminder		3.70%	4
2	Crèche		0.93%	1
3	Day Nursery		2.78%	3
4	Pre School		0.93%	1
5	School Nursery		2.78%	3
6	Family / Friends		12.04%	13
7	After School		23.15%	25
8	Before School		13.89%	15
9	Holiday Clubs		20.37%	22
10	None of the above		53.70%	58

4 What early education and childcare do you need if you are not currently using childcare?

11	Other (please specify):		2.78%	3
			answered	108
			skipped	434
Other (please specify):				
1	Special needs after school and holiday clubs			




5 If you feel that you need more childcare in addition to what you are already using, please tell us your reasons why?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Currently not enough hours		23.24%	76
2	Different type of childcare needed		11.31%	37
3	Require childcare to be more local to home		6.73%	22
4	Require childcare hours to be flexible		23.55%	77
5	Require overnight care		3.98%	13
6	Require weekend childcare		7.65%	25
7	Additional childcare not needed		45.87%	150
8	Other (please specify):		7.95%	26
			answered	327
			skipped	215
Other (please specify):				





5 If you feel that you need more childcare in addition to what you are already using, please tell us your reasons why?

Key reasons included- not eligible for 30 hours, specialist nursery provision is only for 15 hours per week, holiday clubs to cover long summer holiday due to work, holiday clubs able to support children with additional needs. Comments also included concerns about the cost of using additional childcare. Not currently using childcare.

6 Are you accessing any of the following funded places?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	2 year funded early education place		5.05%	27
2	30 hours early education place for 3 and 4 year olds		19.25%	103
3	None of the above		75.70%	405
			answered	535
			skipped	7

7 If you are eligible for benefit related free school meals, have you accessed a free Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) session in the last 12 months?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	I am eligible and I accessed a HAF session		5.67%	30
2	I am eligible but I did not access a HAF session		7.37%	39
3	I am not eligible		77.88%	412
4	Don't know		9.07%	48
			answered	529
			skipped	13

Summary Comments:

7 If you are eligible for benefit related free school meals, have you accessed a free Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) session in the last 12 months?





Comments included: HAF not suitable for children with additional needs, I wasn't aware of HAF, nursery age children do not qualify for HAF, HAF has been really good, HAF has helped cover the school holidays when working.

8 If you know you are eligible for a 2 year old funded early education place and have chosen not to take it, please tell us why?

Summary of Answers provided

Summary of Answers provided			
1	Open-Ended Question		
1	Not eligible		
2	it is not for my child with extra needs		
3	Yes I have – really beneficial, would not have been able to afford without a funded place		
4	No specialist provision available in Solihull or limited places		
6	Thought it best to leave until 3 years old.		
8	Difficulty in finding a place.		
9	Do not know what this is.		

9 Have you experienced any barriers when trying to access the childcare that you require?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	I cannot afford the costs		31.29%	158
2	Places are not available at the times I need them		15.64%	79
3	There are no places locally available		6.34%	32
4	I don't feel the childcare settings available can meet the needs of my child with SEND		8.51%	43

9 Have you experienced any barriers when trying to access the childcare that you require?

5	I don't have my own transport		3.96%	20
6	My preferred provider(s) are full		5.35%	27
7	I am on a waiting list		2.57%	13
8	None of the above		46.73%	236
9	Other (please specify):		8.91%	45
			answered	505
			skipped	37

Other (please specify): 45 comments were received with the top 4 barriers identified as:-

- 1 Cost of provision
- 2 Provision not able to meet the needs of children with additional needs
- 3 Appropriate to age range, in particular teenagers
- 4 Opening hours and flexibility of hours available.

10 In what way have your childcare needs changed as a result of the pandemic?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Childcare hours have reduced		13.28%	70
2	Childcare hours have increased		10.25%	54
3	Changed to a different type of childcare		5.88%	31
4	I no longer use childcare		8.16%	43
5	No change		58.82%	310
6	Other (please specify):		3.61%	19

10 In what way have your childcare needs changed as a result of the pandemic?

answered	527
skipped	15

Other (please specify):

Main comments provided include no longer required, working at home so more flexibility, too costly.

11 Are you satisfied with your childcare costs?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very Dissatisfied		10.96%	58
2	Dissatisfied		26.09%	138
3	No Opinion		27.60%	146
4	Satisfied		24.95%	132
5	Very Satisfied		10.40%	55
			answered	529
			skipped	13

Comments: 143 comments were received to this question, the majority of which highlighted the issue of cost for parents. A number of responses identified that the provision was good value but very expensive. Funding rates for providers was also a concern.

A small number of responses highlighted the use of the 30 hour extended offer and how this has supported with the cost of childcare.

12 Are you satisfied with the quality/OFSTED grade of the childcare that you are using?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very Dissatisfied		1.70%	9

11 Are you satisfied with your childcare costs?

2	Dissatisfied		2.84%	15
3	No Opinion		27.79%	147
4	Satisfied		40.45%	214
5	Very Satisfied		27.22%	144
			answered	529
			skipped	13

Comments included views that Ofsted grade is not the most important criteria, that the provisions being used were good or excellent, staff make the difference with a setting, some concerns were gradings for provision were requires improvement.





13 What was the most important factor when choosing childcare?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Close to home / work / school		39.73%	209
2	Accessible to public transport		0.57%	3
3	Cost		8.37%	44
4	Quality/OFSTED grade		22.62%	119
5	Availability		3.04%	16
6	Childcare that caters for SEND		7.41%	39
7	Personal recommendation		9.13%	48
8	Other (please specify):		9.13%	48
			answered	526
			skipped	16

13 What was the most important factor when choosing childcare?

48 comments were received. A significant majority of comments considered the most important factor to be the staff, the relationship with staff and staff qualifications. Also included in the comments was nurturing environment and ethos and the location of provision to home or school.

14 What is your main reason for using childcare?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Due to my work or study commitments		70.85%	367
2	To support my child's early education		12.74%	66
3	So that my child can mix with other children		11.20%	58
4	Other (please specify):		5.21%	27
			answered	518
			skipped	24

Other comments included to support practicalities of collecting children from other schools/settings including Specialist provision.

Please tick one box that best describes your opinion:

Answer Choices	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Total
15 I have found it easy to get the type of childcare I want in my area	17.84% 94	40.04% 211	17.27% 91	16.89% 89	7.97% 42	527
16 The childcare in my local area meets the needs of my child with SEND	3.84% 18	10.87% 51	71.00% 333	7.04% 33	7.25% 34	469

Please tick one box that best describes your opinion:

17 I would change my childcare if there was another choice	7.50% 39	16.73% 87	27.12% 141	30.19% 157	18.46% 96	520
					answered	532
					skipped	10

18 Please provide any additional feedback that you feel is relevant to this survey

Comments have been edited to remove all references to specific providers and children.

**Response
Percent**

**Response
Total**

100.00%

100

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | <p>I am
Happy with school
Childcare after school clubs</p> <p>It is sometimes harder to get holiday club cover that covers required hours and has the same reviews</p> |
| 2 | <p>I have a baby on the way and self employed child care would be useful but not afford able when baby comes I wish the child care for benefits would be universal that would help with addition socialising and take pressure of working self employed</p> |
| 3 | <p>I'm satisfied with the school before and after childcare which is good and professional. But pre school nurseries in the area are poor.
It's a nationwide problem where the qualifications needed to work in a nursery are poor and it's considered in menial job. Whereas relatives in Denmark have to do a degree to work in a pre-school as they're taught differing pedagogies and have pride in teaching and supporting children in this age group.
The private nurseries have a inadequate staff and a high turnover means I'm struggling to find somewhere for my under 2 year old. From previous experience it's horrible leaving children that young with strangers as the staff change over so regularly. It's not right that the job as seen as so poor and there is no pride in such a job.</p> |
| 4 | <p>My child attended nursery before they started school and used wraparound care up until then pandemic. Now one of us wfh full time we no longer use any childcare but this situation could change in future.</p> |
| 5 | <p>The 30 hours free is only available to working parents that then have to pay for childcare until the child is 3 - this doesn't support families trying to work to provide for their children. I have two children and cannot afford to send them both the private nursery. If we were unemployed or on low income we'd get free places. There should be more support for families trying to work and provide</p> |
| 6 | <p>Great to see the local authority take an interest in Early Years in some way, but I would like to see more available for children across the entire Borough. Parks are unable to be used due to</p> |

18 Please provide any additional feedback that you feel is relevant to this survey

	gangs of teenagers and incompetent dog owners, so there is nowhere for children of any age to play safely.
7	I think something you could take from this survey is the cost of childcare overall, especially for younger parents or single parents who are in education or working trying to better themselves and actually trying to get somewhere by saving for other goals they may have the price of childcare can make this very hard which is why I think more younger adults feel the need to have more children closer together in age
8	I've never used childcare I've always used family. I struggle to get my daughter to school let alone having her spend any longer than she has to in a school environment.
9	Child care has gone up due to price of inflation but funded hours have not gone up. UC can only cover max just a little over £600. If you require more hours for example and work, you end up having no take home pay meaning it is hard to return to work even with the 15hours especially if you are a single parent with no support
10	Lack of good quality wrap around care or holiday clubs in north of Solihull.
11	Please don't just focus on families on benefits, although equally important. There are working families that are willing to pay for good, safe childcare. I don't drive and most of the good places are quite a distance.
12	The local authority has done little to support children with SEND. It has huge implications on us as working parents but also for the child that is missing out on learning valuable social skills. he is not able to access sports clubs or after school/holiday clubs. We can't just leave our child with anyone, we need to know they can meet his needs.
13	My son goes to nursery and it is fantastic!
14	Almost all people using childcare within the area have similar stories. These children are our future. (This comment raised concerns around provision and services in Solihull but has been edited due to the sensitive nature of the information)
15	The cost of childcare prevents me working more hours. I now work around the school hours due to not being able to afford childcare
16	From the ages of 2-5 I only got 15 hours of childcare free for my SEND child and struggled and had to go to tribunal to get her in a special needs school that is within a few miles of my home her current one is one mile away which I walk to
17	Costs of childcare keep going up every year. Childcare costs the same as a mortgage. My pay goes all towards my childcare scrapping it every month.
18	If childcare was more affordable and flexi hours so you pay for the hours you use rather than just a full time rate, that would be perfect
19	My childminder is way more flexible than any nurseries I have experience with regarding drop off/collection times and activities done with the children.

18 Please provide any additional feedback that you feel is relevant to this survey

20	As a self employed person I have found it difficult that my child isn't entitled to 30 hours childcare even though I work 30-40 hours a week as I don't earn enough money in profit each week. It doesn't seem a fair comparison to some of the employed parents at the school who do meet the criteria although they work much less hours each week. I am fortunate that my mother took part retirement when my daughter was born to look after her on my working days as I couldn't afford nursery fee's.
21	Something needs to be done about the cost of early years childcare.
22	My husband and I both work full time and we simply cannot afford to use the childcare at our children's school. When the economy requires parents to work why are there no flexible alternatives available to those that work shifts and for those that work in education.
23	The before school club do not offer childcare early enough for me to use so I rely on family to look after my children. Sometime this is not always easy to sort out and can be quite stressful. Would prefer if there was a service I could use so that had more flexibility to
24	Reduce the cost of childcare as it's not worth working full time to pay for the costs.
25	Relevant childcare and activities that supports my ADHD and ASD senior school Sen child to socialise and learn life skills.
26	There should be wrap-around care for SEN children at a comparable price to non SEN children.
27	I did initially want a childminder who would look after my younger child and pick up my older child from school and look after her until I finished work but there were no childminders in my area that would do school pick up
28	Childcare starts at 7:45, but ideally would commence earlier.
29	Would be great if childcare was available earlier, currently it's 7:45
30	Child care is too expensive and needs to be subsidised more.
31	SEND childminders SEND schools providing before and after school care like ALL MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS LA creating provision for SEND children childcare, named lists that are available for mainstream children, but not for SEND. HUGE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN PROVISION FOR MAINSTREAM AND SEND CHILDREN with regards to child minding, holiday clubs etc.
32	The staff in the school are dedicated and provide a high level of care. Our child has flourished since joining.
33	This survey is more for the early years. I have a 11 year old who has additional needs. There needs to be consistency. Those who are involved with the child should all read of the same page.

18 Please provide any additional feedback that you feel is relevant to this survey

34	<p>Funded support for full time single parents is not great. Especially when other parent is not funding or supporting child care at all.</p> <p>To enable parents to work funding should be revised and be more accessible if you can prove only one parent funds and supports.</p>
35	<p>I reiterate 30 hours should be allowed for LAC children who need the additional learning opportunities in prep for reception</p>
36	<p>There is a lack of understanding around autism in girls and I feel educating childcare providers would really benefit these children.</p>
37	<p>My child is crying out for after school activities but when you mention they have additional needs a lot of places really don't want to know</p> <p>This makes it difficult to find the correct settings for them</p>
38	<p>All childcare is provided at my child's school site.</p>
39	<p>There have been times when I haven't needed to use afterschool care especially during the pandemic however, because I worry about losing the place I have continued to pay for the sessions.</p>
40	<p>I have never used childcare for my autistic daughter because the difficulty of finding somewhere that can cater for her needs, plus the lengthy time it takes her to get used to a new place/routine/person, has meant that it has never felt worth it - it's just easier to cover childcare between us as a couple.</p>
41	<p>My childcare is very professional, affordable and supports growth and development. She takes the children to groups which helps support physical, emotional, and social skills, creative and messy play for language and fine motor skills and healthy home cooked meals and snacks throughout the day.</p>
42	<p>More frequent ofsted reports would be nice</p>
43	<p>Again cost of child care is too high for those families who are on the cusp - we work hard for NHS yet get no help! Makes no sense</p>
44	<p>We are happy with the childcare we receive. My only gripe would be the quality of food provided.</p>
45	<p>My children's before and after school club and holiday club are fantastic they love it. Really well organised. Any criticism in this survey is aimed at the childcare companies I used before my children started school.</p>
46	<p>I would like to have more childcare to support my full-time study, but the costs are so high that I'm not able to do so and it is very challenging to fit in my studies around childcare responsibilities.</p> <p>As I'm a postgraduate student I'm neither eligible for the 30 free hours childcare, nor for help with childcare costs that are available to undergraduate students. It means that I am unfairly affected by the cost and do not receive the support I need.</p>

18 Please provide any additional feedback that you feel is relevant to this survey

47	I feel our Childcare is quite expensive but the service that provide is very good and the children are happy there.
48	<p>Flexibility of childcare is what I need as I am a key worker in the nhs and my working hours vary between day shifts, night shifts and weekends + bank holidays commitments and it is quite challenging for me to find childcare for those hours and the ones available ate quite expensive and I can't afford that.</p> <p>I am currently using pre and after school club which provides childcare from 07.30 to 1800 which is good , but is a bit challenging for me as I need to be at work at 0800 and I am always late as I can't drop my son before 0730 to school .For after 6 p.m and over the weekends, bank holidays, night shifts and inset days I have to find another childminder to drop my child in her house which is not ideal as it means my son will be always late to be (waiting for me to finish my shift to take him back home) and it is quite costly as well.</p> <p>I feel, for key workers, more support is needed for childcare and flexibility in hours is also needed.</p> <p>Despite using the childcare tax credit, the childcare cost remains high for me as I work long hours with shift patterns and that tax credit is not much of a support, but it is better than nothing.</p> <p>Thanks</p>
49	<p>Private nurseries and childcare settings are continually putting there prices up. It makes it nearly unaffordable to work. It's not fair that people who don't work are entitled to 2 year old hours etc and working parents who really need the childcare aren't entitled. If nurseries were more affordable, there would be far more people in full time work</p> <p>Also, houses are continually being built around the Solihull area but there aren't enough school places for the current population. This need to be considered when allowing developers to build large housing estates for families</p>
50	Not eligible to childcare at this moment
51	<p>Childcare not available early enough. For example my child uses breakfast club at the school - this starts at 8, I am meant to start work before this time - currently I am not working the hours I am contracted to do and catching up in breaks and after work in order to drop off for this time. the cost to send to a childminder is £26/day for drop off and pick up when I only need an earlier drop off than 8am (ideally 7.30). There is also only one childminder that covers the school and they do not work 5 days a week either so I have 0 other options to consider. Unless I pay £104/week for an additional 1/2 hour of childcare in the mornings for 4 days in the week. Very stressful to try and remain a productive member of society, work and support yourself and bring up young children with Costs and scenarios like this</p>
52	The quality of childcare available in the area is very good. We've always had a positive experience and the same is true for all of my friends whose children attend a range of different settings to my children.
53	<p>My daughter has significant disabilities. There is no childcare provision in Solihull for her so I have to employ someone myself.</p> <p>I would like to work full time but I can't because there is no childcare. How is that fair? Why is there no support for breakfast club and after school clubs in SEN schools?</p>
54	There is a lack of childcare options at weekends, especially on Sundays in our local area.

18 Please provide any additional feedback that you feel is relevant to this survey

55	There are not enough options for childcare on weekends in our area. Nursery costs are so high, that it puts a lot of pressure on our family budget.
56	There is literally no suitable or quality provision for SEN in Solihull other than in chelmsley wood. The provision is very poor. Premises not fit for purpose. Clearly underfunded in terms of staff & resources. Lack of proper safeguarding. Lack of policy's. Lack of staff. Lack of staff training.
57	There needs to be a more accessible approach to childcare. I cannot afford to send my children to the private nurseries because I don't have £50 a day, I cannot get places for the eldest children because they have no spaces in before and after school clubs, I have been trying to get them for months and months and they're always full. I am stuck at home because there is no childcare option available to me
58	Apart from one option There is absolutely no other choice for my daughter to access any kind of social activities for her age and disability needs . There is no respite apart from one facility that are always over subscribed and nothing else is appropriate . Children and young people with send are always overlooked and left with Little or sometimes no choice.
59	- I just feel as a teacher that I am educating other children and my children have to go in a club as a consequence. - I feel as a parent of twins I would have been better with separate children for the childcare voucher. I hope I have understood this process properly.
60	The activities carried out in after school clubs could be better and the quality of food could be improved.
61	There is not enough holiday clubs in this area so I had to change my hours to look after my children in the holiday
62	Thank you for taking the time to read my mail
63	I start work late and leave early to collect my child as his SeND school have never provided any provision outside of school hours. This is available at the mainstream schools. As the after school clubs haven't been there introduced since covid either, my son is at a disadvantage due to this. He mixed with other children at these.
64	My childminder is brilliant, I would change at all. My concern is around balancing work and school drop off when my daughter goes to secondary school
65	Cost of living gas increased significantly including childcare costs over the last few years. Wages have not risen in proportion. Many parents including myself are now facing the decision of quitting work, looking after my child myself and claiming welfare benefits.
66	Need more than one Adhd nurse in Solihull One is just not enough
67	We recently moved and I cannot get a place in the nearest nursery. We are very happy with our current nursery, but it is further from home and work now.

18 Please provide any additional feedback that you feel is relevant to this survey

68	Childcare utilised is after school club. This works really well. But due to limited places you have to book early and commit for the entire academic year. This does make it difficult if work commitments change.
69	Flexible for parents who don't have the usual 9am-5pm Monday-Friday jobs would make such a difference and avoid the critical dependence on family and friends.
70	I suggest solihull council assess the appalling way they meet the needs of sends children within the borough
71	I used childcare when my child was in early primary school but then both of us parents changed working hours, so was no longer necessary as child did not enjoy being away from home such long hours. Child now in senior school. We had used school wrap around so child could mix with others. Even attended nursery from 9mths old, but child still experiences social anxiety and received support from CAHMS as a result.
72	Children with SEND are not considered in school setting before and after school clubs. The settings and staff do not understand or have the ability to meet their needs. The food provided at the school before and after school clubs is woefully inadequate too which I've tried to address and end up with no answers or being fobbed off. Childcare is not cheap and yet we are made to feel like the school are doing us a favour. Also children with SEND / additional needs and their parents who have no eligibility criteria ie being on benefits get no help or support whatsoever in school holidays or weekends. There is no access to respite for these children that I am aware of and we have a post adoption social worker. Children with SEND / additional needs can be incredibly challenging and stressful to care for and parent and the support within Solihull is inadequate or incredibly poorly advertised. These are potentially children who have child in need plans and support is lacking.
73	There is childcare available closer to my home, but the quality is not great. The quality of childcare settings such as nurseries is very variable, this should be regulated and checked much more closely.
74	Previously when having to use a childminder I felt childcare options were very expensive due to the government contributions, meaning parents had to pay more.
75	A wider variety of childcare offers for teenagers would be of interest, including community volunteering opportunities or "taster days" to promote activities/sports during school holidays.
76	There is no access to or support available for SEND children's childcare in the holiday. There is no flexible and affordable holiday, evening and weekend childcare available locally for children with send.
77	Childcare and the school system use out dated methods of teaching and emotional coaching of children. Not enough is done for childcare providers to be up to date with the latest studies and research on child psychology and support. Often education is based on a rewards system which is geared up towards well achieving children but detrimental to middle ground to 'not' achieving children. More needs to be done to educate teachers about the benefits of different teaching methods based more on rewarding the process and effort rather than the outcome. Moreover, it would be beneficial both for teachers and children if emotions and behaviours were managed and perceived differently.

18 Please provide any additional feedback that you feel is relevant to this survey

78	<p>The childcare offered by my child's school is excellent and the only reason I am able to go to work knowing my daughter is safe and happy and has been since she was 10months old (now 4yr).</p>
79	<p>I'm looking at places for when we need it at 2 years but places keep saying they are not accepting any more funded places. Meaning if I want a place in a few months time I have to pay all out of pocket. And the chances of it being available are slim meaning I have to go outside the borough. This is obviously not ideal when u work and live in solihull and have to get a place in a Birmingham nursery.</p> <p>I was told that the 2 year funding, anyone living anywhere can apply to it if the want to attend a solihull nursery but that obviously doesn't make sense if all the funded spaces are taken by children living outside the borough than those living in the borough meaning they miss out on places. It puts us working parents in a precarious situation.</p>
80	<p>SEND needs are not recognised.</p> <p>Send children only have the chance to participate in childcare clubs that are for children with no SEND needs.</p>
81	<p>I am happy with the breakfast club offered and used at school but I struggle in the holidays finding somewhere my children would like to go</p>
82	<p>There's little variety for holiday clubs. It's either sports or running around a community centre. Times are short - few 9-5pm that are good quality & I feel confident in leaving my son. Always struggle every half term holiday to find a club I am happy to leave my son all day and also he enjoys going to.</p>
83	<p>Good quality childminder provision is hard to get locally as there are so few childminders and they are all booked up well in advance. Only got the childminder I did because she was moving to the area and heard via of word of mouth. She said she was inundated even before she'd even moved house!</p> <p>School does not have wraparound provision for nursery, so to enable my daughter to go to the nursery at that school I needed a childminder who did pick ups at the school, had availability, offered good quality care etc.</p> <p>She looks after my daughter in the holidays is she isn't away herself, but if she is away I/or my husband have to take the time off as I have no one else to look after her.</p>
84	<p>The fact is there is nothing in the area for SEN needs except for Signpost Inclusion and that includes after school clubs. The bottom line is we have given up as a family in accessing any kind of child care or holiday club as either they do not want to know, they do not have the staff or we have been basically told that they do not provide for SEN needs. This is not safe or right for SEN children and I can not afford a private childminder at rates they have every right to charge with no financial support of any kind. This is a failing not an over sight when the HAF was being planned and what really annoys me is that many SEN families are happy to provide partial payment and have proven recommendations of places that provide outstanding support for SEN but yet again it was not a consideration.</p> <p>Until it is realized that SEN is more than just access to a hall (which even then is a stretch) and attendance this will not change. That is why so many SEN families did not access HAF and why so many have had to choose between work and child care. The reality is I am sure there are many out there who provide amazing SEN support, I just can not afford it.</p>

18 Please provide any additional feedback that you feel is relevant to this survey

85	<p>I am lucky with a flexible employer and also a Partner with the same. We don't work weekends. I feel as though people who work at the weekends or evenings must have the most struggles with childcare. I have no clue how they make these arrangements.</p> <p>I was also lucky that I got my children into a Primary setting with before and after clubs and I got them in full time from the start of infants and so I have never had to make complicated arrangements for childcare. Before they were in school, they went to a day nursery that was close to where I lived and this was also important due to both me and my partner needed to do pick ups and drop offs. We had to sign my daughter up a whole year before she started to secure the place and this did in the end delay in my return to work after maternity leave as I had to wait for a place to become available.</p>
86	<p>Good childcare is expensive, it often means you have to decide whether or not you can carry on working.</p> <p>Giving up work or going part time effects your promotion prospects and changes your employers opinion of you as a good worker.</p> <p>I was made redundant by my employer as they didn't want a part time worker.</p> <p>I have now re-entered full time work, but have had to take a £15k per annum wage drop.</p>
87	<p>I find it challenging to get good quality affordable, flexible and local childcare. There are massive problems with the workforce in this sector...pay and conditions, level of training etc. Holiday clubs feel impersonal and my children find them overwhelming.</p> <p>I have a great a great childminder.</p> <p>I've used after school clubs but while they tick the boxes for ofsted the standard has been poor. Shouting and aggression toward the children.</p>
88	<p>My son's school nursery have been instrumental in getting him on the waiting lists for assessments. If it wasn't for them, we probably wouldn't be as far along the process as we are.</p>
89	<p>We have worked our way through the childcare register and even the one that said SEN experience was no good. Told me she wouldn't take him because she worked with Autistics before and they are scary and clingy. Really unprofessional and nasty. He did go to one for a little while but they treated him like he was a bomb waiting to go off and then said that couldn't cope when he ran. They needed to change there process of transfer from one location to another. But wouldn't even hold his hand. Completely not inclusive. Nothing else I available so I am left to be exhausted trying to fit an 8 hour day in then collect from school.</p>
90	<p>A few nursery i found could not meet my child needs due to needing 1 to 1 and also max sen numbers for staff they had</p>
91	<p>Lack of quality day nursery options with excellent ofsted ratings in Solihull</p>
92	<p>Please ensure there are enough school places in the local area.</p>
93	<p>When my child starts infant school, breakfast club doesn't start until 7.30 and there is no childminder availability for the school). I would prefer childcare to start at 7 as I am a teacher in Aston and not being able to drop till 7.30 will, I think, make it hard to get to my own school on time and prepared for the day.</p>

18 Please provide any additional feedback that you feel is relevant to this survey

94	We have no care from when the children leave primary. So from July of the year they leave there ment to defend themselves.
95	Working parents don't get the help apart from some may get help towards part of the costs yet parents who are home all day get to send their child to nursery for free even though they are sat at home doing nothing and could be watching their own child
96	Childcare costs are extortionate. They seem to be a lot cheaper at a pre school in a school but this isn't available until the sept after 3rd bday (my sons born in sept so not until he's almost 4). Nurseries can charge and do what they want and the pandemic has just meant they can do it behind closed doors and we don't get to go in and observe which is worrying. They have major staff issues - but what incentive do they have to tell us they haven't enough staff? We have to assume they do. But it's also not just about having staff it's about having the type and quality of staff we think we are paying for... a receptionist making up the numbers for the ratios isn't exactly educational for the children - but it does mean they can carry on keeping the children in!
97	Young children especially boys will benefit more from an outdoor approach nursery such as a forest school type setting! They are more boisterous and need that freedom to explore the natural surrounds to reach their full potential. It is evident that boys struggle more to read and write but if they were in outdoor based nursery then they can develop to their fullest by adapting activities where possible to cater for their develop
98	We were not entitled to 15 free hours at 2 years which meant we were having to pay £900 a month for childcare. Working parents need more support.
99	As a full time student with a wife only working part time being completely ineligible for any support above the grants provided by student loans. It is impossible for us to survive, my wife cannot work extra hours due to it reducing the childcare grant and I am fully unable to care for my child adequately whilst committing to studies and working to meet costs of living. Whenever our son is taken out of nursery for illness or otherwise it significantly impacts our life.
100	There are no childminders registered in our area , there is nothing available for under 3 apart from a nursery which has no outdoor space so I do not want my child attending there stuck inside all day long, My childminder is closing so I will have nothing for my child when she finishes The pre school only has children morning and is shut friday. So it's impossible to work and have my child locally. Please need to look into further childcare options in this area.

answered	100
skipped	442

