

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA)

2022 to 2023

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1. Overall assessment and headlines summary

This document outlines the local authority's work in meeting its childcare sufficiency duty.¹

It outlines the work that is being undertaken to promote high quality Early Years provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities for two- three- and four-year-olds eligible for free childcare places, school age children and children needing holiday care.

Local authorities are required by legislation to secure sufficient childcare for children aged 0 to 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children) whose parents are working or parents who are studying or training for employment, this means that parents are able to work because childcare places are available, accessible and affordable and are delivered flexibly at a range of high-quality settings.

An Early Years Education is critical to children becoming ready for school and to support their early social interactions and to form relationships with their peers.

This document will provide information about the current and projected supply and demand of childcare for particular age ranges of children, including the affordability, accessibility and quality of provision and details of how gaps in childcare provision will be addressed.

Covid-19

Government guidance and legislation for Early Years provision has been adhered to by Medway Council and childcare providers across Medway.

Medway Council and all Early Years providers in Medway, have actively and positively responded to the challenges that they have faced.

Medway Council and Early Years providers have continued to work together in partnership, to support the needs and preferences of parents and providers for delivery and use of childcare.

The arrangements of childcare demand and staffing within provision, will continue to change and these new challenges will be supported through the childcare assessment as an informative document.

¹ Sufficiency is defined as meeting the needs of local parents who require childcare in order to enable them to take up or remain in work or undertake training or education that will lead to work.

Headlines summary

Medway Council has met their Childcare Sufficiency duty in 2022 by:

- Ensuring there is enough accessible Early Years and childcare provision across Medway and addressing any gaps in provision.
- Ensuring high quality Early Years and childcare provision for children aged two, three and four years of age, taking up the free Early Years education and childcare entitlements.
- Continuing to support providers in offering the extended childcare entitlement to eligible families.
- Ensuring there is sufficient Early Years childcare provision for children and families using the childcare element of working tax credits.
- Currently across all settings in Medway there are approximately 744 FTE vacancies.

Sufficiency

Medway has been providing free/funded childcare spaces for disadvantaged two-year-olds since 2013. This offer was extended to over 40% of two-year-olds and in the current data provided by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) the number of potentially eligible two-year-olds is 44%.

Medway is committed to supporting as many families as possible to take up the offer of free or funded places for an eligible two-year-old. There are enough registered places to accept all of the potentially eligible two-year-olds in Medway.

In the summer term 2022, there were vacancies in all of the childcare sectors for three- and four-year-olds and this included 16 new providers who registered with Medway as a funded childcare setting from January 2022 to December 2022.

Since September 2017, Medway has provided funding for eligible families to access the 30 Hour entitlement. The Department for Education (DfE) estimated that there would be 2100 eligible families in Medway.

With an average take up of 80%, this would equate to approximately 1680 children taking up a place across the year. The number of children accessing a 30-hour place in summer 2022 was 1952 and therefore exceeding the expected take-up figure. The number of children accessing the 30 Hour entitlement funding in summer 2022 is 79 more children than in summer 2021.

The Early Years Sufficiency Team and Family Information Service at Medway Council have supported settings and families in sustainable provision and seeking childcare places and have worked in conjunction with Medway Early Years Ltd, to establish an Early Years Leaders Forum that has assisted settings in their knowledge and direction in sustaining a quality childcare service for the families of Medway.

2. Demand for childcare

Population of Early Years' children

Numbers by age (**birth data and school services forecast**)

In total, there are **17,258** children under the age of 5 years living in our local authority.

Age	Number of children
Age 0	3353
Age 1	3231
Age 2	3408
Age 3	3532
Age 4	3681

Childcare places

The total number of full-time registered childcare places across Medway is 6,150. There are approximately 10,621 children aged 2, 3 and 4 years of age in Medway. This is broken down as 3,408 children aged 2 years and 7,213 children aged 3 and 4 years.

The government informs Medway Council that approximately 44% of 2-year-olds will be eligible for a part-time funded childcare place and this equates to 1,500 children. Due to the childcare place being part-time, this figure is calculated as 750 full-time equivalent places required.

The government informs Medway Council that of the 7,213 children aged 3 and 4 years, approximately 2,100 of these children will potentially be eligible for a funded 30-hour childcare place of which the Government expect an 80% take up which totals 1680.

The remaining 5,113 children aged 3 and 4 years of age are all eligible for a funded universal 15 hour part-time childcare place. This is calculated as a full-time equivalent figure of 2,556.

The number of childcare places potentially required for children aged 2 to 4 years are added together in the chart below.

Potential requirement of full-time equivalent places for children aged 2 years	Potential requirement of 30-hour places for children aged 3 and 4 years	Potential requirement of full-time equivalent universal offer places for children aged 3 and 4 years	Total
750	<p>Approximately 2,100 children are eligible for a 30-hour place.</p> <p>The Government expect an 80% take-up which equates to 1,680 however, Medway Council allow the full 80% of places within their calculations.</p>	2,556	5,406

The total number of full-time equivalent registered childcare places offered across Medway is 6,150. The number of full-time equivalent places potentially required is 5,406.

Vacant childcare places = 744

Medway vacancy rates are a snapshot and often change rapidly. In some cases, providers may have a vacancy which is only available for a specific age group, or for a particular part time arrangement. In general, vacancy rates are higher in the autumn, when children move to school.

Population projections - local authority based by single year of age

Age	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
2 Years	-19	-28	-31	-10	-12	-13	-13	-12
3 Years	+16	-19	-28	-30	-10	-12	-12	-12
4 Years	-117	+17	-20	-27	-29	-10	-11	-13

The table above shows the population projections until 2030. A minimal difference in data can be seen across the age ranges, with one exception being 4-year-olds in 2023. A difference of minus 117 children aged 4 in the year 2023 equates to 0.48 children per setting.

Medway Council Early Years Sufficiency team have received no communications from parents/carers stating they are unable to find a universal or extended funded childcare place for their child. This supports the data that there is sufficiency of childcare places across Medway.

3. Medway CSA Action Plan 2022 to 2023

Key	Action required	Timeline
To sustain a high-quality childcare market.	Annual review of CSA	September 2022
	Childcare occupancy and cost reports coming directly from providers using the sufficiency report on the provider portal.	September 2022
	Ofsted information on registered provision from download directly linked to the Synergy System.	Daily
	To support providers to have a robust business model that supports childcare places in remaining sustainable.	Ongoing
	Appropriate training opportunities and briefings offered to all Medway Childcare Providers.	Throughout the year
	Quality of Childcare Provision supported and monitored by MEY	Throughout the year

<p>To map and place plan sustainable Early Years provision.</p>	<p>Continue to work with the School Organisation team, to ensure that in wards where there are new housing developments planned, that potential childcare needs are considered.</p> <p>Work with existing providers to manage the market.</p> <p>Stimulate the market by signposting new potential developers/providers to ward areas that would benefit from additional childcare providers.</p> <p>Publish business support for potential new providers on the Family Information Service Directory.</p> <p>Signpost to MEY business support</p> <p>Signpost providers to available funding streams to support sustainability with the cost of living.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
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<p>2-year-olds</p>	<p>FIS Outreach and Medway Media team to promote the Government 2-year-old offer of funded childcare.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>3- to 4-year-olds</p>	<p>Monitor the fluctuation in the housing market within wards to ensure that changes to demographics are being supported by changes to provision.</p>	<p>Sept 2022 to Sept 2023</p>
<p>To ensure Out of School Care is available to families</p>	<p>Advertise Out of School Care (OOSC) on the Family Information Service Directory (FISD) to support families in seeking provision.</p> <p>Complete annual survey returns issued through Coram to highlight the average cost of OOSC and use the survey</p>	<p>On-going</p> <p>Sept 22</p>

	results to implement a consistent information audit on the FISS.	
To ensure that SEN children and those with additional needs can access their entitlement.	Continue to work in partnership with the Medway SEND team to monitor the quality of provision for children with EHCPs and SEN to ensure that children are being provided with the best support. Ensure that providers are aware of funding they can potentially access to support and adapt to meet children's needs.	Regular contact with the SEN team at Medway.

Disability Access Funding

In 2022, there have been 55 children qualifying for Disability Access Funding (DAF) and these children have accessed the funding at 29 different providers. The Ofsted outcomes for providers that have been inspected, show that 93% of settings with children who are accessing DAF funding, have an inspection grading of Good or Outstanding.

4. Supply of childcare

Number of Early Years' providers and places

In total, there are 235 active Early Years' childcare providers in our local authority, offering a maximum of 6150 full-time Early Years' childcare places:

Type of provision	Number of providers
Childminders	105
Nursery classes in schools	41
Private, voluntary, and independent Day Nurseries and Preschools	89
Total	235

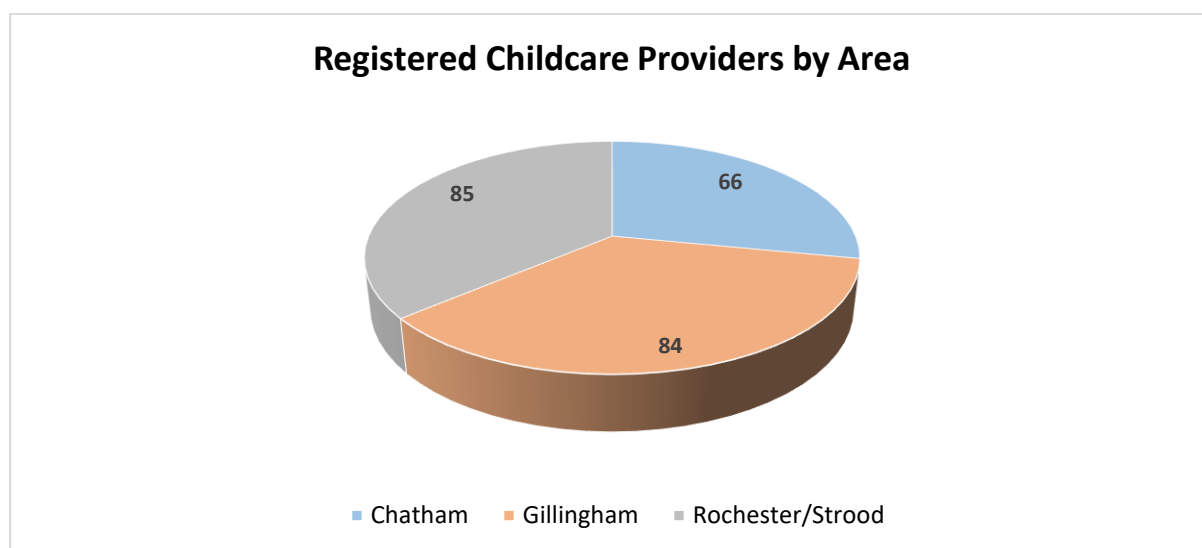
Children may attend childcare full time or part time. In some cases, two or more children attending part time may use one full time equivalent place. For example, one child may attend in the morning and one child may attend in the afternoon.

This results in more children accessing places than is noted as the setting's maximum registered number.

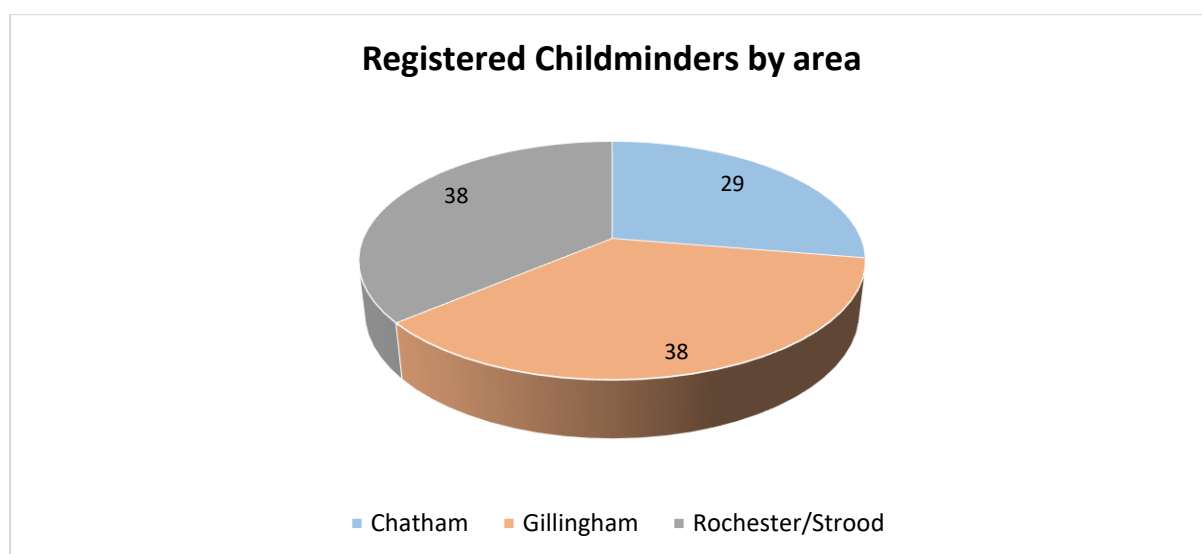
Access to providers

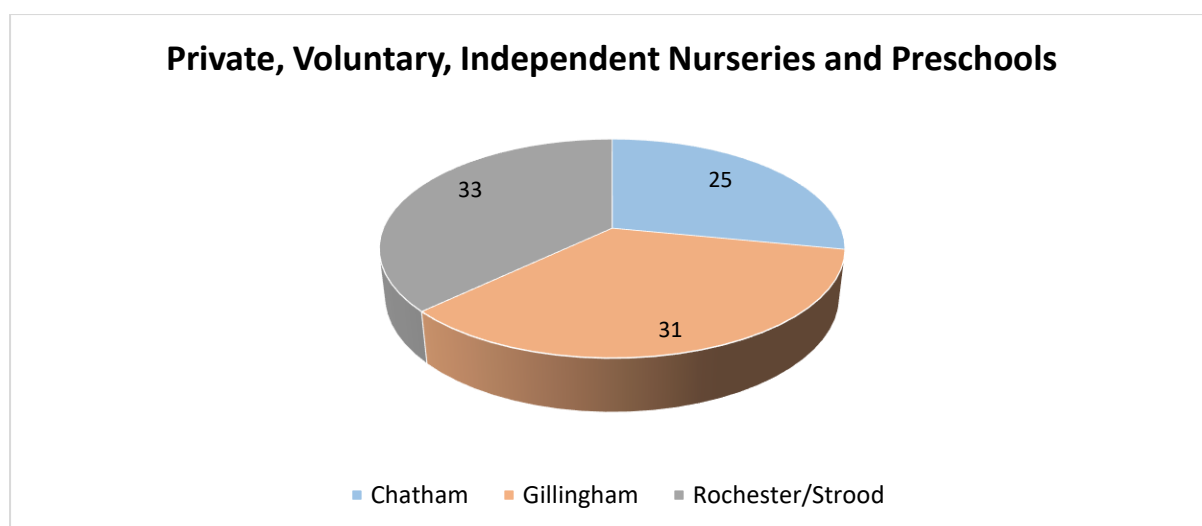
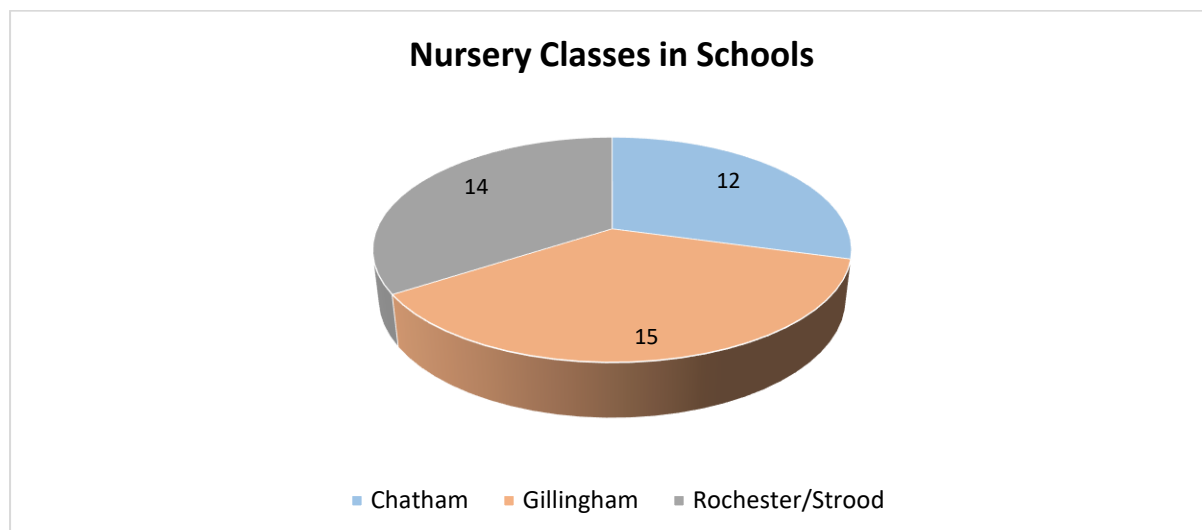
Parents in Medway employ a variety of models for accessing childcare including provision close to home, parental preference, provision on key work routes, public transport routes and provision in relation to school locations.

Location of childcare across Medway



Registered childcare provider types by area





Number of Early Years' breakfast and after school clubs

Type of provision	Number of providers
Breakfast club – primary school	26
After-school club – primary school	17
Holiday club	12

Tracking supply of childcare for school age children is difficult because not all of this type of provision is required to be registered with Ofsted.

Parents may also use provision which is not considered 'childcare', for example sports or arts clubs after school or in the holidays.

5. Funded early education

Introduction to funded early education

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

- Children aged 2 whose families receive certain benefits (including low-income families in receipt of in-work benefits), or those who meet additional non-economic criteria, are entitled to 15 hours per week. Nationally, about 40% of 2-year-olds are entitled to this offer, but the proportion varies by area
- All children aged 3 and 4 are entitled to 15 hours per week until they start reception class in school
- Children aged 3 and 4 where both parents are working, or from lone parent families where that parent is working, are entitled to 30 hours per week until they start reception class in school

Parents do not have to use all of the hours of their funded entitlement. They may choose to split the hours between providers.

With the agreement of their provider, parents may also spread hours 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.

Take up of funded early education

The number of individual children attending an Early Years setting at some time throughout the year.

Age	Medway
Age 2	1328
Age 3 and 4	6953
Age 3 and 4 (30 Hour Place)	2899

The maximum number of children attending an Early Years setting at any one time in the largest term (Summer 2022)

Age	Medway
Age 2	700
Age 3 and 4	5319 Equivalent to (2659 FTE)
Age 3 and 4 (30 Hour Place)	1952

Providers offering 2-year-old funded early education places

Type of provision	Number of providers in Medway	Number of Providers offering two-year-old places	Percentage of Providers offering two-year-old places
Childminders	105	103	98%
Nursery classes in schools	41	10	24%
Private, voluntary and independent nurseries	89	88	99%

3- and 4-year-old funded entitlement applications

Parents who think they are entitled to a 30 hour extended hours place apply for this online through the Government's Childcare Support website.

The same website is used to apply for tax free childcare and parents can apply for either or both.

If a parent is eligible, the system creates a code which they can use with their chosen childcare provider. If they are ineligible, they will still be entitled to the universal 15 hours of early education and childcare.

Providers offering funded early education places

Providers are paid using government funds for delivering funded early education. They are not required to offer the Government funded hours to parents, but of course parents may choose to use a different provider if they do not.

The percentages show the total percentage of providers offering funded places for specified ages.

Type of provision	Number of providers	Offering Age 2 targeted	Offering Age 3 and 4 universal 15 hours	Offering Age 3 and 4 – extended 30 hours
Childminders	105	98%	100%	100%
Nursery classes in schools	41	24%	100%	93%
Private, voluntary, and independent nurseries	89	99%	100%	100%

6. Cost of Early Years Childcare

For early years childcare outside the funded entitlements, we report on average prices per hour, reported to us by settings.

There may be variations to prices based on the number of hours a family uses, with reductions for longer hours, or discounts for sibling groups.

There may be additional payments for additional services such as lunch and other meals which are not included in these prices.

Price per hour	Private, voluntary and independent nurseries	Childminders
0 and 1 year olds	£5.85	£4.58
2 year olds	£5.68	£4.58
3 and 4 year olds	£5.10	£4.58

7. Quality of childcare in our area

Ofsted inspection grades

All childcare providers must register with and be inspected by Ofsted, who give them an overall grade for the quality of their provision.

Childminders and private and voluntary providers are on the Early Years Register, and 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 grade for the whole school and most also have a separate early year's grade.

Both schools and early years providers have four possible Ofsted grades: 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement', and 'inadequate'.

Some providers are still awaiting their first full inspection. These providers are excluded from our calculation below.

Type of provision	Total number of providers inspected	% achieving good or outstanding
Childminders	95	89%
Nursery classes in schools	41	100%
Private and voluntary nurseries	78	97%

Total number of providers achieving a good or outstanding Ofsted grade is 93.2%

8. Methodology

- Unless otherwise stated the data comes from the Summer Term 2022. This is generated from the data provided in the May Headcount and data held in the Medway Family Information Service Directory.
- Number of children: based on Medway population projections and the ONS.
- Supply of childcare: based on data provided to us by Ofsted, who regulate Early Years' provision in schools and childcare provision.
- Vacancy rates: based on the number of registered places against actual places filled by children across Medway in the different childcare sectors.
- Funded early education: data on take up of funded early education entitlements is based on the Early Years and Schools Census, which are taken every January and published by the Department for Education in the statistical collection *Education provision: children under five years of age*. Data on entitlement to a funded early education place for 2-year-olds is provided by the Department for Work and Pensions.
- Price of childcare: based on the data held in the Medway Family Information Service Directory
- Quality of childcare: data on childcare quality is provided by Ofsted and collated in the Synergy data base.

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