

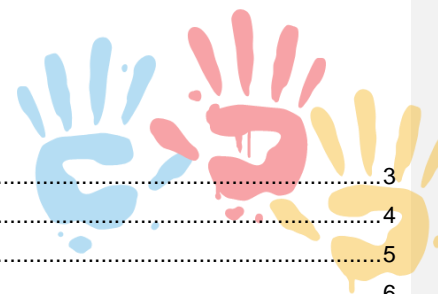
Early Years Sufficiency Strategy Assessment 2024



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Executive Summary

This annual Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) has been produced to aid the local authority in its statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents or for them to take up training opportunities that lead to work. The assessment looks at the childcare market in Sefton in 2024, estimating demand using a variety of indicators and assumptions and comparing this to supply. It takes into account the challenges that have been reported by the sector and the risks to the roll out of new Early Years funded Entitlements and the DfE ambition around the expansion of availability of Wrap Around Childcare. This includes financial sustainability and recruitment and retention.

This Childcare Sufficiency Assessment will be of interest to parents, providing them with an overview of the childcare which is offered across the city and in their locality. Existing and potential childcare providers will also find the information provided in the assessment useful when considering a change to their delivery models or expanding their provision or looking to develop in new areas of the borough and should be used alongside their own market research to assess demand in particular areas and points in time. The childcare market is particularly dynamic, with many factors affecting demand and supply, particularly parental choice. Therefore, the findings of this report are indicative only and further detailed analysis of local areas should be undertaken by childcare providers to fully understand the local market. This report will also be shared with Elected Members.

The main findings of this report are:

- There has been 2 closures of Private Voluntary Independent provision since the last sufficiency report.
- Birth rates generally have declined over the past few years and some providers are starting to see the impact of reducing cohort numbers on the take up of places at their settings.
- Parents who responded to the childcare surveys are generally happy with the quality of childcare that they receive.
- Across Sefton as a whole, there are vacant childcare places available, however they may not always be at the setting parents or carers would prefer as some settings have no places available. There are wards of particular concern detailed later in the report.
- There are risks in Sefton's ability to ensure sufficient places to meet the estimated increase in demand for 30-hour places for children from 9 months old to 2 years as vacancies for children 0-2 places are limited.
- There are no sufficiency issues related to quality of childcare provision.
- Providers have raised serious concerns about the ongoing challenges with staff recruitment in the sector with 43.75% of PVI Early Years settings citing that staffing vacancies impact the number of places they are able to provide. In some cases, this can also be a barrier to Inclusion for children with SEND.
- Parents expressed that childcare, particularly for Early Years children and in school holidays, is 'fairly difficult' or 'very difficult' to afford. The ongoing impact of the COVID 19 pandemic along with the cost-of-living crisis leading to increases on utility rates, rent and consumables have led to financial



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difficulties within the sector. Many providers have increased their costs for private childcare places which has in some cases impacted on parents taking places.

- There has generally been an increase in demand for provision across all providers for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities across all provision types.
- Sefton's take up of 2-year funded childcare and 3–4-year-old funded places is above the national average.



Overall Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Summary

Sefton Council is required by law to “report annually to elected members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and make this report available and accessible to parents.”

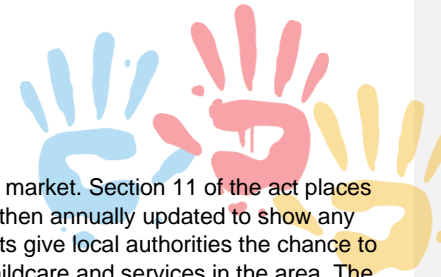
In this report, we have assessed sufficiency using data about the need for childcare and the amount of childcare available. We have used the following information to make our assessment:

Online surveys for:

- Parents and carers about their childcare needs and experiences (Wrap Around survey Feb/March 2024, Funded Early Years questionnaire parents of 1-year olds Nov-Feb 2024)
- Sefton Childcare and Early Years Survey for Parents and Carers 2023
- Early Years Private, Voluntary, and Independent Setting Survey 2024
- Childminder Survey 2024
- Sufficiency Survey-Maintained settings 2024
- School wrap Around Provision Sufficiency Data Autumn 2023
- PVI Out of school provision data 2024

Other sources of data including:

- Census information
- Individual Ward data
- Housing data including the Mover's survey and Population change data.



Introduction

The Childcare Act, 2006 placed a statutory duty upon local authorities to play a strategic role in facilitating the childcare market. Section 11 of the act places the responsibility on authorities to undertake a childcare sufficiency assessment every three years. This assessment is then annually updated to show any changes that occur during the intervening years and any progress that is being made. Childcare sufficiency assessments give local authorities the chance to work with local partners, including the Private, Voluntary and Independent sector to fill gaps in the market and shape childcare and services in the area. The aim is to provide the best possible childcare market for local families by ensuring sufficient, sustainable and flexible childcare that is responsive to parents/ carers' needs.

The 2006 Act gave local authorities a duty to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the provision of childcare is sufficient to meet the requirements of parents/ carers in their area to enable them to work or undertake education or training leading to work.

Reliable and affordable childcare is essential to families with children who need care whilst their parents are working. This is often a mixture of formal and informal care with parents juggling between work and ensuring the care their child receives is affordable and appropriate for their individual needs. It is recognised that for many families living in areas of deprivation that work is a route out of poverty and raises self-esteem which in turn reduces the occurrence of mental health and other social problems. Research shows evidence that good quality pre-school childcare gives children a flying start and leads to better progress as they move through school. It also enables older children to participate in a range of activities that promotes their personal development in a safe, stimulating environment.

What is a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment?

The Childcare Act 2006 placed a duty on all local authorities in England to carry out an assessment of the sufficiency of childcare within their area.

A Childcare Sufficiency Assessment is a comprehensive measure of the nature and extent of the need for, and the supply of childcare within a local area, paying particular attention to the following areas:

Choice and flexibility: parents have choice about balancing work and family life.

Availability: affordable, flexible, high-quality childcare available to all families who need it to enable them to work.

Quality: a highly skilled workforce

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Affordability: Families able to afford childcare that is appropriate to their needs.

By analysing the supply of childcare available, and comparing it with information about demand from parents, potential gaps in childcare provision can be identified.

The information will give Sefton Council the evidence and information it needs to facilitate and shape a market that contains sufficient, flexible, affordable, sustainable childcare and is responsive to parents' needs.

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment is therefore a key document in evaluating current formal childcare provision in the borough and anticipating future needs.

This assessment provides a summary of childcare provision in Sefton with the aim to support:

- Parents to gain a further understanding of the types of childcare on offer in Sefton and help to inform decisions about childcare options for their family.
- Childcare providers to understand the local childcare market and to help them make informed choices to better meet the childcare needs of families in Sefton.
- Councillors and Executive Members, providing clarity on childcare services available for their local families and the priority focus for the coming year.
- Sefton Borough Council officers providing a structured picture of the current childcare offer in Sefton that informs potential actions for market management.

What Is Childcare?

Childcare is defined under Section 18 of the Childcare Act 2006, as any form of care for a child. This includes education and any other supervised activity for a young child, apart from a school during school hours for a registered pupil who is not a young child.

Section 19 states that the definition of a young child is "from birth to immediately before 1st September following the date the child is five". Childcare does not include care provided by a parent or stepparent of the child (or a person with parental responsibility), a foster carer or a relative of the child.

Funded Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) 3 and 4 year olds.

All three- and four-year-olds and eligible two-year-olds are entitled to 570 hours funded early education a year, delivered as a minimum as 15 hours a week over 38 weeks (school term time) but can be taken as a stretched offer with fewer hours a week over more weeks in a year. Since September 2017 eligible



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three- and four-year-olds have been entitled to an additional 570 hours of funded childcare, taking the entitlement for some children to 1,140 hours a year. Parents of children accessing a FEEE place can pay for additional hours to meet their childcare needs. This offer is widely available within the sector.

Two-year-old funding for families in receipt of additional government funding.

Some two-year-old children are eligible for FEEE; eligibility for funding is based on the national criteria. In Sefton eligible two-year-olds can access a funded early education place from the term after their second birthday. Each eligible child is entitled to up to 570 hours per year of funded early education from the term after their second birthday for a maximum of three terms.

Funded childcare for working parents

From April 2024 most working parents of 2-year-olds will be able to access, 15 hours of funded childcare. Most parents who work more than 16 hours and earn less than £100,000 are eligible for this funding.

This is a term time only entitlement, however, most childcare providers will offer a 'stretched' offer providing fewer weekly hours over a whole year. Further eligibility and application process can be found here: www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

From September 2024, the above funded entitlement and eligibility criteria will apply to most working parents of 9-month-olds (starting the term after they turn 9 months.)

From September 2025, the above eligibility criteria will apply to 30 hours of funded, term time childcare for children from the term after they turn 9 months old.



The Cost of Childcare

This table provides the average charges per provider type for different service in each ward. The types of providers cannot always be compared however, as childcare as providers use different models of delivery offering flexibility of service which is variable across the sector. There may be variations on price based on the number of hours a family uses, with reductions for longer hours or reductions for family groups, some providers charge more for younger children as the staff to child ratio is higher and therefore more expensive. Providers decide their own charges.

Most providers have increased their increased their prices since the last assessment.

Table 1; Average cost (£) per setting type across Sefton.



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Table 1a Average Charges in PVI Source

Source Early Years PVI sufficiency survey 2024 Source: Early Years Private Voluntary and Independent Setting Survey 2024



Daily	Half Day*	Hourly*
58.20	32	6.20

Table 1b Average Charges in maintained/ school nursery

Source: Sufficiency Survey maintained settings 2024

Daily	Half Day*	Hourly*
30	14.30	4.98

Table 1c Average childminder cost:

Source: Childminder Survey 2024

Daily	Half Day*	Hourly*
47	27	5.40

Table 1d Average Wrap Around Costs:

Sources:

PVI Out of School Provision 2024

Breakfast Club	After school club	Holiday club (full day)
6.05	11.80	30.66

* Not all settings will offer half day sessions or the option of hourly childcare.

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Charges for additional hours and consumables:

Parents and carers must be able to access their childcare entitlement for free, they may wish to purchase additional hours of childcare privately. Settings are, however, able to offer additional services such as providing lunch, nappies, and wipes at a cost. This must be itemised on invoices and the option for parents to provide their own lunch, snacks and other consumables should be offered.

64% of PVI settings ask for voluntary contributions towards consumable costs, charges vary as detailed in the table below:

Table 2a Additional charges for consumables charged by PVI settings.

Source: Early Years Private Voluntary and Independent Setting Survey 2024

Option	Total	Percent
Less than £1 per session	5	7.81%
£1-£2	11	17.19%
£2-£3	3	4.69%
£3-£4	6	9.38%
£4-£5	8	12.50%
More than £5	8	12.50%
Not applicable	17	26.56%
Not Answered	6	9.38%



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23.64% of childminders ask for voluntary contributions towards consumable costs, charges vary as detailed in the table below:

Table 2b Additional charges for consumables charges by childminders.

Source: Childminder survey 2024

Option	Total	Percent
Less than £1 per session	1	1.82%
£1-£2	1	1.82%
£2-£3	3	5.45%
£3-£4	4	7.27%
£4-£5	1	1.82%
More than £5	3	5.45%
Not applicable	27	49.09%
Not Answered	15	27.27%



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67.31% of maintained/school nurseries ask for additional voluntary contributions as detailed below:

Table 2c Additional charges for consumables from maintained/school nursery settings:

Source: Sufficiency survey-maintained settings.

Option	Total	Percent
Less than £1 per session	25	48.08%
£1-£2	7	13.46%
£2-£3	0	0.00%
£3-£4	1	1.92%
£4-£5	1	1.92%
More than £5	2	3.85%
Not applicable	15	28.85%
Not Answered	1	1.92%



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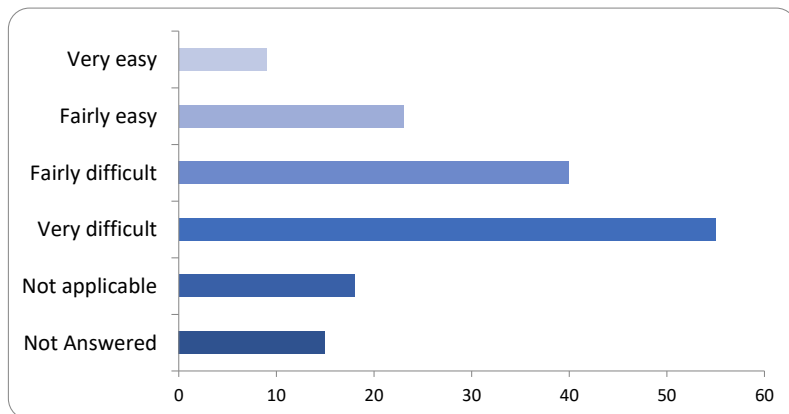
Parental Feedback on the Cost of Childcare:

The table below represents the feedback from parents from the parent and carer survey who were asked 'How easy is it to afford the EARLY YEARS childcare you want?'

59.38% of respondents answered that affordability was either difficult or very difficult compared to 19.99% who indicated that it was *fairly easy* or *very easy*.

Graph 1a How easy is it to find Early Years childcare?

Source: Sefton Childcare and Early Years Survey for Parents and carers 2023

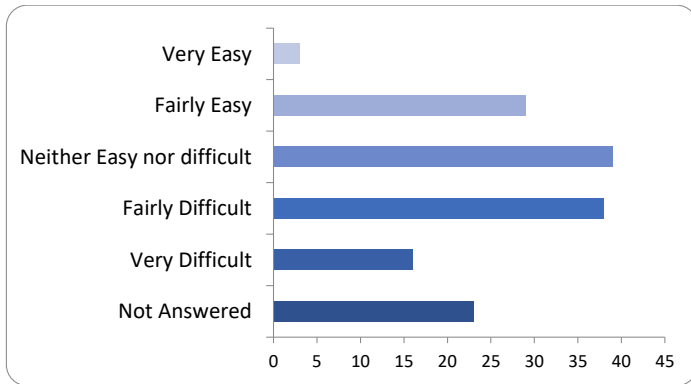


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The Wrap Around Parent and Carers survey (2024) indicates the following comments from parents about affordability of Childcare for school aged children.

Graph 1b How easy is it to afford the childcare you need for your school aged child(ren)?

Source: Parent and Carer Wrap around survey 2024





What Is Sufficient Childcare?

The government's definition of sufficient childcare is "sufficient to meet the requirements of parents who require childcare in order to enable them:

- To take up or remain in work.
- To undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work.

Local authorities should regard childcare as any provision that is regular and reliable and provides children a safe place to be. It would not include, for example, before or after-school activity that was unsupervised or that was provided as a one-off activity.

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Local Authorities have a further duty to secure sufficient funded places for eligible families with two, three and four-year-olds. With the extended Early Years funded entitlements, this responsibility will extend to secure places for children from 9 months from September 2024.

There are many beneficial reasons why parents may require childcare and Local Authorities must ensure that their activities in relation to the statutory sufficiency duty, complement and reinforce other duties they have in relation to childcare. Supporting parents who are in work or training by ensuring sufficient childcare also complements numerous other priorities, such as reducing child poverty, improving economic well-being and narrowing the child attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their more affluent peers.



The Sefton Local Context

Children and Young People's Plan 2020/25



The Children and Young People's Plan is our strategic plan which intends to maximize the health and wellbeing of all our children and young people living in Sefton. The childcare sector in Sefton is instrumental in supporting the delivery of the ambitions, outcomes and priorities for the council as set out in the Children and Young People's Plan.

Sufficient and affordable childcare is fundamental to ensuring that parents can work, with the sector also providing employment opportunities directly within the city's registered childcare settings.

Early learning opportunities provided in childcare settings support all children to be ready for learning, with developed language and communication skills – the key to ensuring they attend, attain and achieve and go on to engage in employment and make a positive contribution to the economy in Sefton. Actions identified in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment are intended to support the priorities in the Children and Young People's Plan and the ambition – My Sefton: happy, healthy, achieving, heard. At the time of this report, this plan is in the process of being updated. Sefton Early Years will contribute to this process.

Childcare Sufficiency in Sefton

Places and Supply

Across Sefton:

Our Data indicates that the availability of places across Sefton indicate that generally Sefton is sufficient for places for 3- and 4-year-olds, however places are not equal across the Wards and there are some areas where there are concerns in some wards about the availability to meet the demand. There are potential gaps in line with anticipated demand with the introduction of extended funded childcare entitlements for children from 9 months.



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Known Early Years vacancies across individual wards per age group:

Table 3a-Known vacancies based in **Childminder** provision in Sefton age group and Ward. Source Childminder Survey 2024

Ward	Weekly Vancancies available												
	Term time only						All year (48 - 52 weeks)						
	up to 1	1 y	2 y	3 & 4 y	5-8 y	over 8 y	up to 1	1 y	2 y	3 & 4 y	5-8 y	over 8 y	
Ainsdale	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Birkdale	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	15	15	15	0	0	0
Blundellsands	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	4	4	4	4
Church	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Derby	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	2	0	0	0	0
Duke's	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ford	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	7	7	7	2	2	2
Harington	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	4	5	4	4
Kew	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Linacre	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Litherland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Manor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	8	8	8
Meols	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Molyneux	0	0	0	0	8	8	3	3	3	1	12	12	12
Netherton and Orrell	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
Norwood	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	6	5	12	24	24
Ravenmeols	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	21	21	22	9	0	0
St Oswald	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	0	0	0
Sudell	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Victoria	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	13	5	0	0



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Table 3b Known vacancies based in **Maintained or School Nursery Provision** in Sefton age group and Ward. *Source Sufficiency Survey, Maintained Settings 2024.*



Ward	Weekly Vancancies available			
	Term Time Only		All year (48 - 52 weeks)	
	2 y	3 & 4 y	2 y	3 & 4 y
Ainsdale	4	35	0	0
Birkdale	0	32	0	0
Blundellsands	0	25	0	0
Church	45	71	0	240
Derby	111	93	0	0
Duke's	0	0	0	0
Ford	0	133	0	0
Harington	0	8	0	0
Kew	0	42	0	0
Linacre	15	165	0	0
Litherland	2	156	0	0
Manor	0	33	0	0
Meols	0	58	0	0
Molyneux	0	0	0	0
Netherton and Orrell	0	135	0	0
Norwood	0	0	0	0
Park	0	36	0	0
Ravenmeols	4.5	71	0	0
St Oswald	0	136	0	0
Sudell	0	29	0	0
Victoria	0	7	0	0

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Table: 3c Known vacancies based in **Private, Voluntary Independent provision** in Sefton age group and Ward

Source Private Voluntary and Independent Setting Survey 2024

Ward	Weekly Vancancies available							
	Term time only				All year (48 - 52 weeks)			
	up to 1	1 y	2 y	3 & 4 y	up to 1	1 y	2 y	3 & 4 y
Ainsdale	0	0	0	0	18	18	11	43
Birkdale	0	0	13	1	8	16	19	22
Blundellsands	0	0	30.5	49.5	35	48	25	68
Cambridge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Church	0	0	0	0	49	37	162	243
Derby	0	0	0	0	25	32	52	112
Duke's	0	0	4	0	111.5	93	206	157
Ford	0	0	44	45	68	56	46	60
Harrington	0	0	0	13	43	25	22	93
Kew	0	0	0	0	6	11	14	27
Linacre	0	0	0	0	7	4	17	51
Litherland	0	0	0	0	4	3	3	0
Manor	0	0	28	114	0	0	0	0
Meols	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Molyneux	0	0	0	0	5	1	5	2
Netherton and Orrell	0	0	14	19	4	8	17	88
Norwood	0	0	0	0	37	22	55	76
Park	0	0	0	0	12	16	21	79
Ravenmeols	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
St Oswald	0	0	0	0	26	26	176	120
Sudell	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Victoria	0	0	0	0	19	11	44	62



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- The data provided was correct to the best of our knowledge by April 2024
- Total number of weekly full-time places available, a place may sometimes be shared by more than one child.
- For private, voluntary, and independent nurseries and childminders, the number of registered places represents the maximum number of children who can be on the premises at any given time. In practice many providers choose to operate below their number of registered places.
- Vacancy rates are a snapshot and often change. In some cases, providers may have a place that is only available for a particular age group or for a particular part time arrangement. In general vacancy rates are higher in the autumn when children move into school.
- We ask providers to report vacancies to us so that we can update the Sefton Directory www.seftondirectory.com which can help promote the setting to parents and help parents find a suitable place. We also ask for this information to help inform our sufficiency assessment. Most providers give us this information but, in some cases, we are not able to obtain all data.



Wrap Around Childcare

As part of the Expansion of Childcare the Department for Education have launched an agenda to ensure that wrap around childcare is available for every school aged child aged 5-11) that needs it.

“The government’s ambition is that by 2026, all parents and carers of primary school-aged children who need it will be able to access term time childcare in their local area from 8am-6pm, so that parents can access employment and improve labour market participation. To support this ambition, the government announced that it will provide up to £289 million of start-up funding, over two academic years to support local authorities and providers in England to introduce or expand childcare provision on either side of the school day, which parents of primary school-aged children will be able to pay to access. This programme will only focus on primary school-aged children from reception to year 6, Monday to Friday during term time. Our expectation is that all wraparound provision is 8am-6pm, enabling parents to work a full day with travel time, unless data shows that local demand is for different hours, for example reflecting local labour market patterns.”

National Wrap Around Childcare handbook, guide for Local Authorities

February 2024

Department for Education

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Wrap Around Childcare in Sefton:

There are different models of delivery in Sefton providing Wrap Around Childcare. In some cases, this is delivered in house and managed by a school. Some schools work with a PVI provider to deliver this and some schools are catered for by local PVI providers based in community sites or childminders.

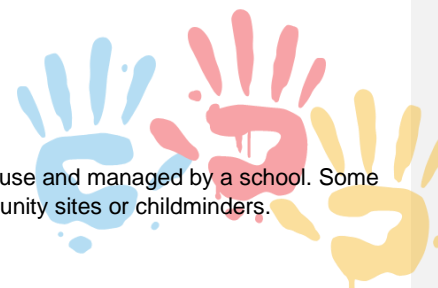
Finding Wrap Around Childcare:

According to the Wrap Around Parent survey 2024, Parents indicated the following, when asked 'how easy it is to find out of suitable childcare for school aged children'.

Table 4: How easy is it to find childcare for children 5-11years

Source: Parents/Carer wrap around survey 2024

Option	Total	Percent
Very Easy	24	16.22%
Fairly Easy	32	21.62%
Neither Easy nor difficult	24	16.22%
Fairly Difficult	24	16.22%
Very Difficult	20	13.51%
Not Answered	24	16.22%



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Supply and Demand mapping:

In terms of school run Wrap Around Provision the following table demonstrates the ability for Breakfast or 'before school' provision:

70.24% can meet demand

5.95% cannot meet demand.

3.57% have more places than required.

For those that did not respond to this question, it is likely that provision within the school is run by a private provider (PVI providers completed a separate questionnaire), or parents access a Community PVI provider or a childminder in the local area.

In terms of after school Wrap Around Provision run by schools:

34.5% can meet demand.

7.14% cannot meet demand.

5.95% have more places than needed.

Type of Provider:

For schools that do not run their own Wrap Around Provision:

22.62% schools have a PVI After school provider onsite.

16.67% signpost to an offsite PVI provider

2.38% signpost to a nearby school site

4.76% signpost to local childminder provision.

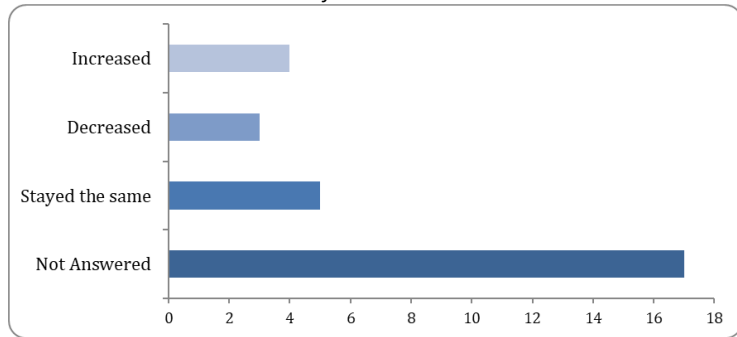
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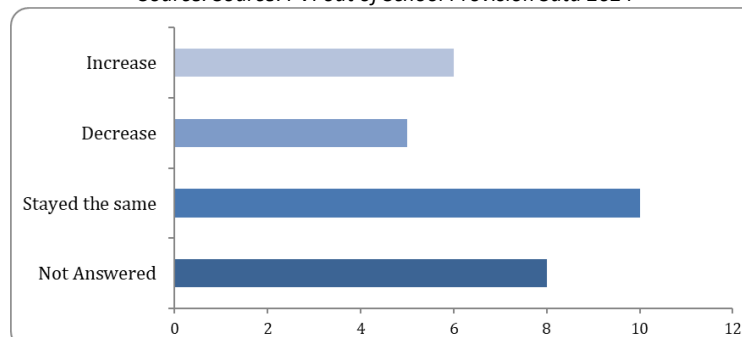
Demand for PVI Wrap Around Provision for 5-11 year olds provision.

The below graphs show the responses regarding demand for breakfast and after school club from PVI provision:

Graph 2a: Demand for Breakfast clubs within PVI provision over the past 12 months
Source: PVI out of School Provision Sata 2024



Graph: 2b Demand for Afterschool clubs within PVI provision over the past 12 months
Source: Source: PVI out of School Provision Sata 2024



Demand for Childcare

Sefton Demographics:

Socio economic:

Sefton has a unique socio-economic geography. In its entirety it is in the most deprived fifth of English Local Authorities, with 27 of the 189 Sefton Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) being in the top 5% nationally (17 of these being in South Sefton). Yet other parts of the Borough, particularly in the middle and North, are some of the least deprived areas, with seven LSOAs (six of which are in North Sefton) were in the least deprived 5% of areas nationally.

This means that different Sefton Wards are likely to have different childcare needs which will impact on supply and demand. For example, some wards will have a higher demand for 2-year funded places than others. For this reason, the sufficiency data we have collected has been split into wards.

Employment:

79.9% of Sefton residents aged between 16 and 64 were in employment in the year end December 2023. This is an increase compared to the previous year at 74.3. Economic inactivity in Sefton is lower than across the North West and Great Britain at 19.5% compared to North West 23.3%.



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The unemployment rate of those aged 16 and above in Sefton in the year ending 2023 was 3.5%.

This will have an impact on the demand for childcare for working parents, particularly with new funded entitlements being rolled out from April 2024.

Demand can be difficult to assess, although we can use population data and parental surveys to anticipate this, sometimes parents may choose childcare near to their place of work, or near a relative, rather than near to their home.

According to mid-year estimates 2022, there are approximately 13,548 children 0-4 living in Sefton.

Changes to the population

Estimates imply that the Early Years (0-4 years) population is reducing in Sefton, with an overall reduction of 7% from 2013 to 2022, possibly due to reductions in birth rates.

Sefton's crude birth rate (the number of live births per 1,000 mid-year total population estimate) in 2022 was 8.8. This remains below the Liverpool City Region at 9.8 and below the average in England at 10.1.



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Table 5a: Children 0-4 living in Sefton by Ward and Sefton total.

Source: Estimates 0 to 5 population by single year age bands for the 22 Sefton wards 2022 mid-year estimates

Ward Name	Aged: 0	Aged: 1	Aged: 2	Aged: 3	Aged: 4
Ainsdale	100	93	85	95	87
Birkdale	100	108	132	113	128
Blundellsands	92	86	80	105	95
Cambridge	76	85	76	94	98
Church	102	114	105	111	106
Derby	162	163	148	173	167
Duke's	77	97	64	95	89
Ford	140	112	137	153	145
Harington	70	54	91	72	72
Kew	153	154	184	158	191
Linacre	192	181	193	216	187
Litherland	160	156	167	176	151
Manor	108	109	115	118	114
Meols	92	83	97	94	102
Molyneux	120	118	139	117	113
Netherton and Orrell	150	144	164	157	140
Norwood	143	148	160	163	188
Park	72	94	94	92	99
Ravenmeols	96	106	102	114	116
St Oswald	92	119	112	104	139
Sudell	145	130	148	158	117
Victoria	140	152	124	167	154



Giving Children the Best Start in Life

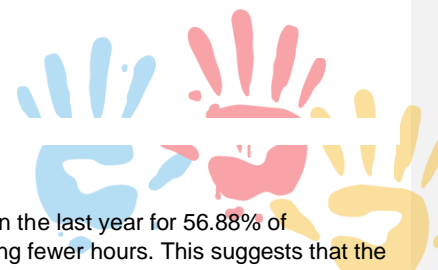
Table 5b: Children over 5 living in Sefton by Ward and Sefton total

Source: Sefton wards 2022 mid-year estimates

Ward Name	Aged: 5	Aged: 6	Aged: 7	Aged: 8	Aged: 9	Aged: 10	Aged: 11
Ainsdale	129	103	145	127	128	137	138
Birkdale	133	134	139	134	127	158	171
Blundellsands	97	125	97	123	116	108	113
Cambridge	90	80	82	99	100	84	78
Church	115	133	126	124	115	120	129
Derby	156	173	164	184	159	147	144
Duke's	82	90	98	87	89	85	88
Ford	179	167	172	165	154	151	162
Harington	93	92	104	106	100	124	142
Kew	148	196	190	210	197	188	174
Linacre	171	187	165	177	149	162	167
Litherland	167	155	157	178	142	167	183
Manor	131	138	122	131	135	134	133
Meols	118	121	109	113	132	111	147
Molyneux	124	123	126	154	127	141	144
Netherton and Orrell	150	150	160	180	170	173	177
Norwood	193	184	205	218	218	199	204
Park	99	128	107	103	119	140	128
Ravenmeols	112	125	136	133	127	124	124
St Oswald	132	137	143	146	153	143	125
Sudell	134	148	145	134	133	148	125
Victoria	166	165	146	157	150	151	147



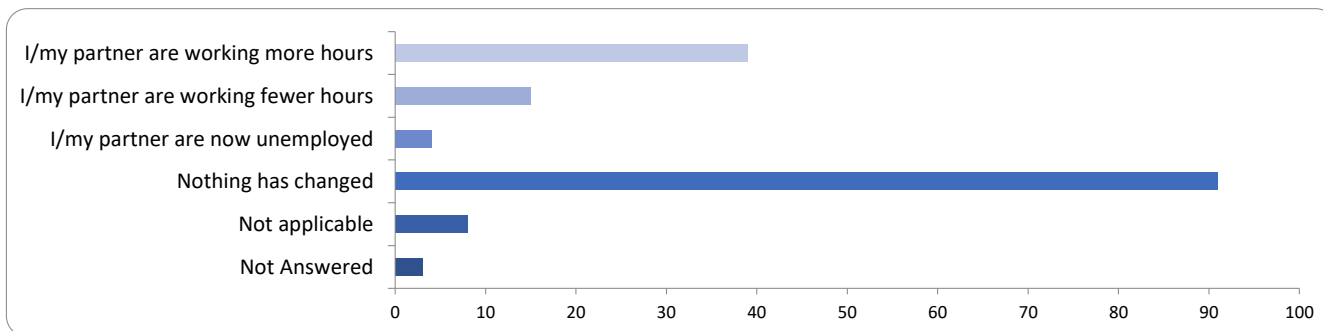
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Parental views on accessing childcare

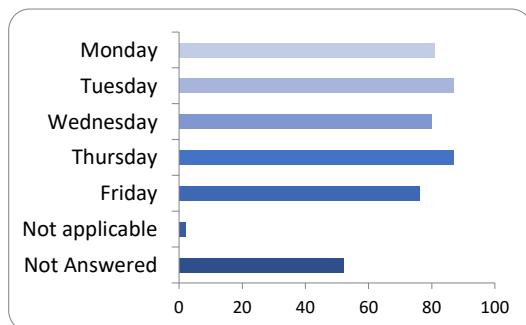
The results of the childcare survey for parents and carers identified that there had been no change to working patterns in the last year for 56.88% of respondents. 24.38% had seen an increase of working hours and a small number 9.38% of respondents reported working fewer hours. This suggests that the demand for childcare has grown slightly in the last year. This is likely to increase with the expansion of the childcare offers due to be implemented from April 2024.

Graph 3: Changes to working arrangements for parents and carers. Source: Sefton Childcare and Early Years Survey for Parents and carers 2023



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Demand for Early Years Childcare



Graph 4a: Days of the week Early Years childcare is needed. Source: Source: Sefton Childcare and Early Years Survey for Parents and carers 2023

Respondents in the survey for parents and carers (March 2023) identified that demands for childcare for Early Years children was relatively consistent throughout the week with slightly less demand on Fridays and a slight increase on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Option	Total	Percent
Early mornings between 6.00am – 9.00am	55	34.38%
Mornings, e.g. between 8.00am – 12.00 noon	93	58.13%
Afternoons, e.g. between 12.00 noon and 17.00pm	92	57.50%
Early evenings, e.g. between 3.00pm – 18.00pm	47	29.38%
Night times, e.g. between 18:00pm and 06.30am	2	1.25%
Not Answered	53	33.12%

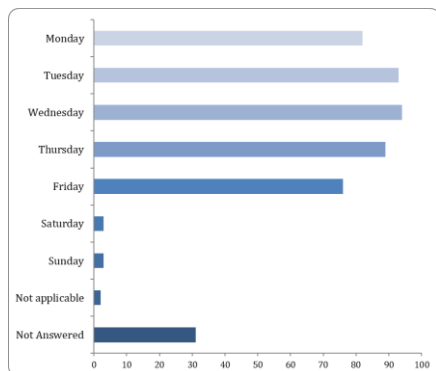


Table 6a: Times of day Early Years childcare is needed. Source: Source: Sefton Childcare and Early Years Survey for Parents and carers 2023

Demand for most Early Years Childcare, according to the Parents and Carer survey is between 6am-6pm with an increase between 8am and 5pm.

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Demand for places for School aged children



Graph 4b: Days of the week childcare is needed for school aged children.

Source: Parent Carer Wrap Around Childcare Survey 2024

Respondents in the survey for parents and carers (March 2023) identified that demands for childcare for School aged children was relatively consistent throughout the week with slightly less demand on Mondays and Fridays.

Option	Total	Percent
Before 7am	1	0.68%
7am until school starts	53	35.81%
8am until school starts	43	29.05%
After School until 4pm	8	5.41%
After school until 5pm	44	29.73%
After school until 6pm	58	39.19%
After school after 6pm	7	4.73%
School Holidays	30	20.27%
Not Answered	32	21.62%

Table 6b: Time of the day childcare is needed for school aged children.

Source: Parent Carer Wrap Around Childcare Survey 2024



Giving Children the Best Start in Life

Table 7: What do you expect the impact of Early Years entitlements will be on your provision in the next 12 months?

Source: 2023 sufficiency survey for PVI settings.

Option	Total	Percent
An increase in demand for children under 1	25	39.06%
An increase in demand for children aged 1-2	36	56.25%
An increase in demand for 2 year olds	52	81.25%
An increase in demand for 3 and 4 year olds.	14	21.88%
We do not expect any additional impact due to the roll out of Early Years entitlements	1	1.56%
I am not sure what the impact will be	11	17.19%
Other (Please specify)	0	0.00%
Not Answered	0	0.00%





Parent Feedback (Supply)

Table 8a: Early years provision is in the right location.
 Source: *Sefton Childcare and Early Years Survey for Parents and carers 2023*

Early Years provision is in the right locations:

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly Agree	32	20.00%
Agree	77	48.12%
Disagree	9	5.62%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.62%
Don't Know	15	9.38%
Not Answered	26	16.25%

Table 8b: Out of school provision is in the right location.
 Source: *Parent Carer Wrap Around Childcare Survey 2024*

Out of School Provision is in the right locations:

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly Agree	44	29.73%
Agree	49	33.11%
Disagree	8	5.41%
Strongly Disagree	6	4.05%
Don't Know	17	11.49%
Not Answered	24	16.22%

Parents were asked how they choose their childcare, there was a strong preference to choose childcare providers that have been recommended by others or by internet search.

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Table 9: How do you find information about childcare?

Source: Sefton Childcare and Early Years Survey for Parents and carers 2023



Type	Total responses
Recommendation	105
Family Information Service	3
Family Well-being Centre	7
School	56
Internet Search	94
Local Advertising	17
Other	14

Children with SEND

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are entitled to support with childcare up to the age of 18 (age 14 for children who do not have a special need or disability).

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The Early Years Service within Education Excellence are available to support settings that require advice with supporting children with SEND or emerging needs. Some children in Early Years will have an Education Health Care (EHC) plan, however many are at an early stage of assessment and having their needs identified. At this stage their needs are supported by their Early Years setting, with support from the Early Years SEND team and sometimes specialist services as appropriate. In some cases, children may be eligible for high needs funding.

The number of children per age group with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan in Sefton is:

Table 10: Number of children with an EHCP in Sefton in June 2024

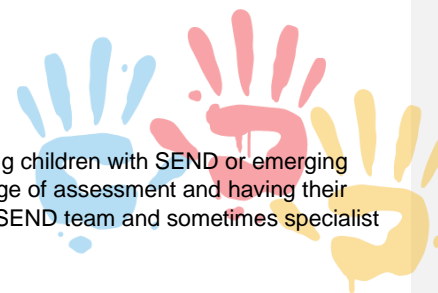
Source: Data provided by Sefton SEND Team August 2024.

Early Years EHCP	Finalised Plans	In Process
Current Reception	98	33
Reception cohort 2024	19	65
Other Early Years	0	1

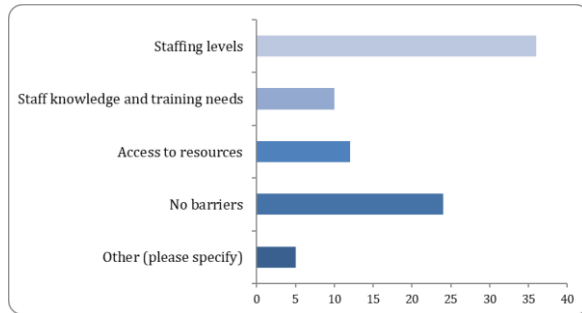
71.88% PVI settings have seen an increase in demand for children with SEND. The following barriers to Inclusion for these providers were identified by providers under this category:

Graph 5a: Identified barriers to Inclusion in PVI settings.

Source: PVI sufficiency survey 2024

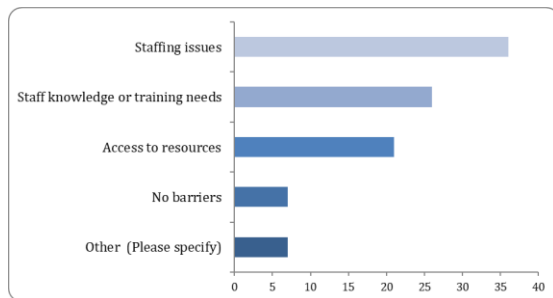


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84.62% Maintained Early Years settings have seen an increase in demand for children who have additional needs. The following barriers to Inclusion for these providers were identified by providers under this category:

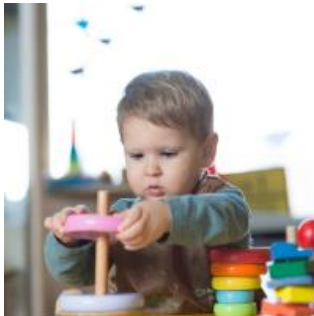
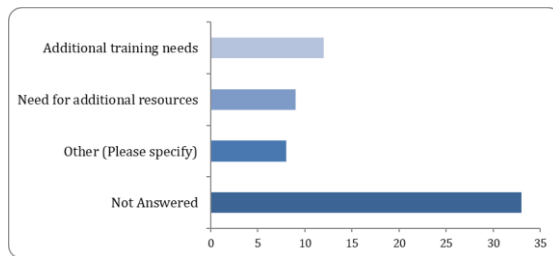
Graph 5b: Identified barriers to Inclusion in maintained settings. Source: sufficiency survey for maintained settings 2024



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18.18% Childminders have seen an increase in demand for children with SEND. The following barriers to Inclusion for these providers were identified by providers under this category:

Graph 5c: Identified barriers to Inclusion for childminders. Source: Childminder survey 2024



Summary of Early Years provision to support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)



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In addition to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory requirements and the Equality Act 2010, all publicly funded Early Years providers in the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sectors, are required to have regard to the SEND Code of Practice: 0-25. The Code of Practice states that Early Years settings should adopt a graduated approach to identifying and meeting the needs of all children and young people. At each stage of assessment and planning, settings should engage with parents and carers, making reasonable adjustments, wherever is practicable, to support the needs of the child.

Sefton Borough Council is committed to ensuring that disabled children and those with special educational needs have access to a wide range of high-quality childcare. To support providers to meet the needs of children and young people, Sefton Borough Council provides:

- Access to Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCo) training opportunities.
- A full Portage service to support families and ensure Early Identification of needs
- Early Years SEND Inclusion Officers and Consultants working with schools and settings to support children
- Early Intervention Officers-Supporting Early Years schools and settings to ensure effective systems are in place to support children with emerging needs and SEND.
- The Sefton Local Offer which provides information on services and provision available to families, young people and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

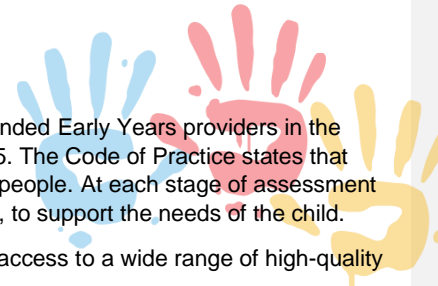
The local authority will continue to work with Early Years providers and families with children with additional needs/disabilities to improve their accessibility to childcare and early education. This includes:

- Highlighting the targeted early interventions for children that do not have an EHC Plan.
- Ensuring Early Years staff can confidently manage children's behaviour and other needs by making available advice, guidance and resources.
- Ensuring Early Years information and advice for parents of children with additional needs/disabilities is readily available.
- Work with schools, settings and partners to develop a 'Ready to learn' definition and strategy.

Disability Access Fund

The Equality Act 2010 requires local authorities and settings not to discriminate, harass or victimise disabled children, which may include an expectation to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate children's needs. Local authorities must comply with the provisions of the Act in finding suitable provision for eligible disabled children

Providers who offer funded childcare entitlements can apply to claim Disability Access Funding (**DAF**) to support disabled children to access their funded entitlement. A lump sum payment of £910 per year is available to providers who have eligible children in receipt of child Disability Living Allowance. This is not available to children in reception class.



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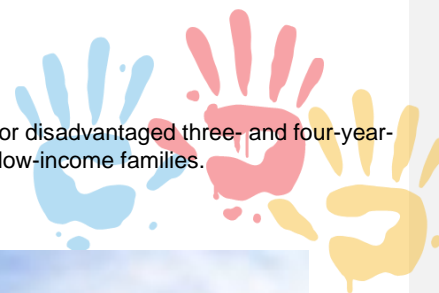
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Early Years Pupil Premium

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Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) is additional funding for Early Years settings to improve the education they provide for disadvantaged three- and four-year-olds. Children are eligible for EYPP if they meet certain (largely) economic criteria including children from workless and low-income families.





Potential Risks to Sufficiency in Sefton:

Financial Sustainability

When surveyed, some providers expressed concerns that the funded hourly rate is insufficient and there is uncertainty within the sector regarding the funding that will be allocated with the increase of entitlements for children from 9 months and out of school provision. Funding is decided by the Department for Education. It should be noted that some providers will have completed this survey prior to the funding rates being confirmed. The Department for Education has implemented increases in funding from the financial year 2023/24 with an introduction of a new under 2's rate in line with the expansion of childcare entitlements. Sefton Council retains a minimal amount of the Early Years Block of the DSG to ensure that maximum funds are passed to providers.

Table10: Providers assessment of financial sustainability. *Source: 2024 sufficiency surveys for providers.*

Type of Provider:	Very Good	Good	OK	Concerning	Critical
Private, Voluntary Independent Early Years	3.12%	17.19%	40.62%	23.44%	7.81%
Maintained/School Nursery	1.92%	9.62%	34.62%	38.46%	5.77%
Out of school Provision (PVI)	3.45%	24.14%	37.93%	20.69%	10.34%
Childminders	5.45%	12.73%	56.36%	14.55%	0%

The impact of the concerns over financial sustainability could have consequences for the childcare market. At the time of publication, settings are considering their delivery model in line with the roll out of childcare entitlements for children from 9 months, 30 hours and the Wrap Around Agenda.

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Recruitment and retention of staff

The sufficiency questionnaire for providers identified:

57.81% of PVI settings have vacancies. 39.06% have had vacancies for more than 4 weeks and 43.75% say that this impacts on the number of spaces they are able to provide for children.

21.15% maintained nurseries report staff vacancies, 9.62% have been open for more than 4 weeks and just 3.85% state that this impacts on spaces they can provide.

68.97% of PVI Wrap Around providers have concerns about staffing.

Anecdotally through ongoing engagement with the sector recruitment and retention is one of the biggest concerns, particularly from PVI settings. This is also reflected in free text responses to the provider surveys which include:

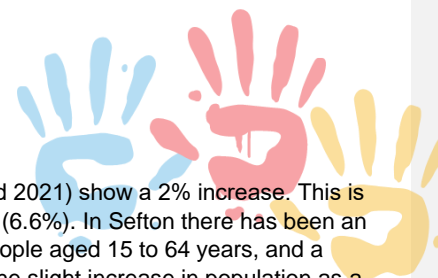
Still our biggest challenge is recruitment. Trying to employ good qualified staff.

We also have a high number of SEN children and not enough funding to help support them or enough staff to provide 1:1 support or to send on training to provide knowledge to help to support the staff and the children.

Still our biggest challenge is recruitment. Trying to employ good qualified staff.

Currently we are having an issue with recruiting qualified staff. Obviously that has an impact on child places within the setting due to ratios- that then becomes an impact on sustainability.





Local Development

In terms of Sefton's overall population change latest figures (between 2011 and 2021) show a 2% increase. This is lower than the Northwest increase (5.2%) and lower than the England increase (6.6%). In Sefton there has been an increase of 13.5% in people aged 65 years and over, a decrease of 1.3% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and a decrease of 0.3% in children aged under 15 years. It is unlikely therefore that the slight increase in population as a single factor will impact on demand for childcare.

Sefton Mover's Survey Results First Edition September 2022 identified:

The Sefton Local Plan identified a need for over 11,500 new homes to 2030. Many of these were planned on large housing allocations. The Local Plan was adopted in April 2017 and many of these housing allocations have been built or are under construction. The newly built houses are now providing homes for families in Sefton.

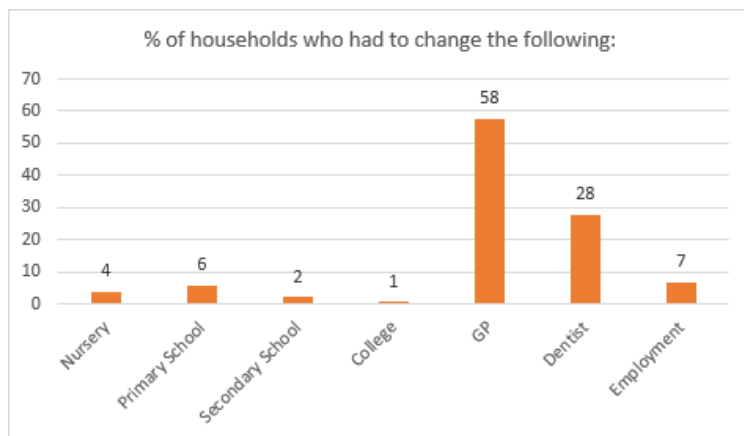
In response to the 'mover's survey' 111 of the 194 respondents (57%) said that they moved into their new home from within Sefton, whilst 83 (43%) moved from outside the borough.

The number of households that had someone having to switch a place of education was very small for all type of establishments, just 4% of those who completed the survey had changed nursery. This may suggest that those moving house tend to within their own locality rather than increasing the population in the local area. It may also reflect that the majority of those moving to new homes in Sefton are of an age that do not have young children in the household.



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Graph 6: Households that had moved house and changed Education and Health services. Source: Sefton Movers survey



Sefton's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA November 2022) identifies large sites for housing development, notably sites in Maghull and Southport. Early Years provision, particularly with the introduction of new entitlements from 9 months may need to be considered alongside large developments.

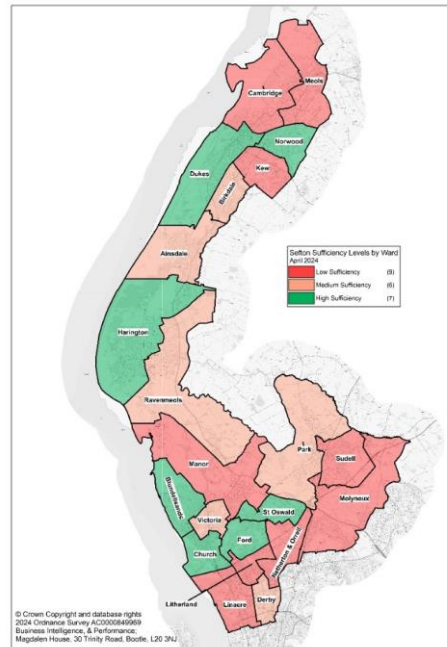
Identified Gaps

There are limited choices available for atypical hours of childcare (outside 8am to 6pm on weekdays and weekends). The Early Years funding team provide broker service to support to parents who might encounter difficulty in finding a suitable place.

In general, there are sufficient places for 3- and 4-year-olds across Sefton. In terms of risk to sufficiency to roll out the new funded entitlements, the map below demonstrates areas across the borough that has low (red), medium (amber) and high sufficiency (green) in relation to places for children 2 years and younger.

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Map 1: Red, Amber Green Early Years Sufficiency Across Sefton. *Source: Vacancy data collected through vacancy questionnaires 2024*



There are a small number of provisions who cannot meet demand for wrap around childcare, these settings will be supported as part of the childcare expansion for Wrap Around Childcare.



Take up of funded early education.

The take up of children attending Early Education in Sefton is slightly higher than the overall England figures. The proportion of children benefiting from Early Education compared to the population taking up their funded place (for at least some of the available hours) in Sefton is:

Table 12: Take up of eligible childcare in Sefton and England 2023. Source Sefton Early Years Data and National Statistics

	% Eligible 2 years registered	% Eligible 3- and 4-year-olds registered
Sefton	91%	95%
England	75%	95%

Quality of Childcare

All childcare providers must register with and be inspected by Ofsted, who will give them an overall grade for the quality of their provision. Childminders and private and voluntary providers are included on the Early Years register and schools and standalone maintained nursery schools are included on the schools register. The grades for both registers are equivalent. Schools with nurseries have an overall inspection grade for the whole school.



Schools and Early Years providers have four possible Ofsted grades:

Outstanding	Requires improvement.
Good	Inadequate

Some providers are awaiting their first full inspection. These have been excluded from the percentage calculation.

Table 13 Ofsted ratings for Sefton childcare provision. Source: Ofsted and Sefton Early Years data.

Type of provision	Total number of Providers	Percentage Good or Outstanding
Childminders registered with Ofsted	68	100%
Childminders registered with an agency	6	100%
Maintained and school nursery	52	94%

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Private, voluntary, and independent nurseries, including term time only.	64	98.4%
Out of School Clubs registered with Ofsted	19	94.7%



**Ofsted registered Out of school provision receive a judgement of met or not met. There are Out of school provisions that have not yet been inspected, they have not been included when calculating the percentage of provisions that have 'met' standards.

Out of school provision run by a school share their inspection grading with the school.

Early Years Quality Protocol process:

In addition to the inspection judgement the local Authority have a support package in place for settings. All settings are eligible for Quality Improvement visits which may result in a universal, targeted, or intense level of support. Where safeguarding concerns are identified the Local Authority Quality Team are duty bound to report to Ofsted and to follow Local Authority Safeguarding procedures.

The Early Years Team provide a programme of training events and projects to raise quality as well as individual casework for children with SEND and support for settings to develop inclusive practice and environments.

Parent's views on the quality of childcare

Parents and carers were asked to how happy they were with the quality of the childcare they received with 68.13% agreeing that they were happy compared to 4.47% who were not.

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Table 14a: I am happy with the quality of Early Years Childcare. Source: Childcare survey for Parents and carers March 2023



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly Agree	54	33.75%
Agree	55	34.38%
Disagree	6	3.75%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.62%
Don't Know	14	8.75%
Not Answered	30	18.75%

14b Table: I am happy with the quality of Out of school Childcare: Source: Childcare survey for Parents and carers March 2024

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly Agree	48	32.43%
Agree	45	30.41%
Disagree	9	6.08%
Strongly Disagree	8	5.41%
Don't Know	14	9.46%
Not Answered	24	16.22%

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To ensure that there are Sufficient Childcare Places

We want...	Why...	How...
<p>To ensure that there are sufficient easily accessible childcare places available across Sefton</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help children develop social and everyday skills and benefit from early education To enable parents to take up employment opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain termly vacancy data from providers and monitor fluctuations and any problem areas. Assist parents having difficulty finding suitable provision through telephone support and the Sefton directory website. Yearly detailed targeted Childcare survey for parents and carers and provider survey. Detailed WARD specific Action Plans to be completed for the Wards with specific sufficiency concerns. Work with partners to obtain local birth data to aid future sufficiency planning. Roll out of Capital funding to create additional provision to meet the growing demand in line with new funded entitlements. Work in partnership with Invest Sefton so that settings can access support to plan their delivery model, business plan and financial forecasts.
<p>To maintain and develop our relationships with our Early Years and other Childcare Providers</p>	<p>So that we can support and maintain a professional and well-trained Early Years and Childcare workforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support visits in accordance with Sefton's protocol processes to providers to ensure that funding is being used and allocated appropriately. Communication with providers through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newsletters Weekly round up Forums

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To facilitate providers' access to marketing and business planning advice and training.	To promote expansion in identified areas and secure sufficient childcare across the borough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By identifying providers in need of support in this area and linking them with available advice and training. • Through partnership with Sefton and LCR Economic Regeneration development including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Invest Sefton ○ Sefton in Work ○ Childcare Works online tools • Develop communication for providers regarding processes for expansion.
Support the Sector with Recruitment and Retention challenges.	So that we have a highly trained and professional workforce to allow settings to operate at full capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships made with high schools, to raise the profile of Early Years careers through career events. • Partnership with training providers and college to develop shared expectations from students and providers during placements and during early careers. To identify gaps and work with training providers to address these. • Partnership with Family Well-being services, promoting Early years careers through volunteer's programmes. • Partnership with Sefton in Work and the community learning. • A marketing strategy and campaign supported by Sefton Council Communications Team. • New to EYFS training. • Roll out Early Years Financial Incentives Pilot Programme.
To ensure the sector can meet an increase in demand following the increases to funding entitlements in Early Years.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project delivery strategy to address the increase of demand due to the increase of funding entitlements for 2-year-olds and babies over 9 months. • Work with schools on options to expand their out of school offer, including signposting to existing private providers.

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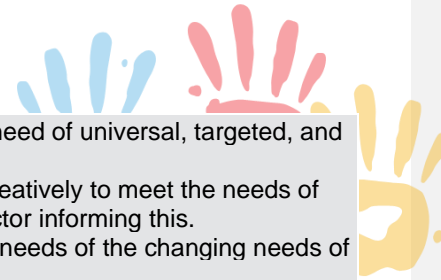
- Support/quality visits offered to childminders along with a specific conference.

To ensure that Childcare provided is good quality

We want...	Why...	How...
To ensure that the views of parents and carers are considered and that there is a mechanism in place to provided ongoing feedback	So that childcare provides positive outcomes and impacts on the lives of children and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaking an annual parental survey and share the results with the local provider market so that potential problem areas can be identified, and areas of good practice shared. • Develop links with existing parent/carer forums and local community groups as a way of engaging with parents and carers. • Ensure partners are up to date with developments in the sector by holding termly 'Understanding childcare' sessions promoted through the Early Years advocates.
To ensure that there is access for children with additional needs in all settings	So that parents have local access to fully inclusive childcare where practical to do so	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that providers are aware of the support available through the SEND Inclusion Fund and the Disability Access Fund. • The Early Years SEND Team will continue to provide support and guidance to providers through individual case work, training, and support for providers. • Development of Early years graduated approach document, coproduced with providers, families, and specialist teams with clear expectations from settings in regards their support for children with SEND. • Clear funding procedures to support children in settings, the impact of this support to be evaluated as per funding agreement.

Giving Children the Best Start in Life

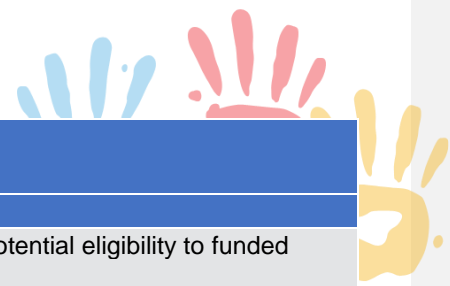
<p>To ensure high quality settings across the sector.</p>	<p>So that children can have their holistic needs met and make good progress.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Robust protocol process to identify settings in need of universal, targeted, and intense support.• High quality programme of training delivered creatively to meet the needs of the Sector, with the views and needs of the sector informing this.• Evidence based projects delivered to meet the needs of the changing needs of young children.
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To ensure that Childcare funding is accurate and timely

We want...	Why...	How...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that funding is accurate and timely To ensure as reasonably possible that the local childcare market is financially secure and viable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> So that there is a sufficient range of Early Years providers offering a range of choices to parents So that we have accurate business data and intelligence to inform our future plans To meet our statutory obligations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing our internal processes and systems to ensure we make the best use of technology. To continue to monitor our central expenditure and achieve savings where possible. To continue to work with the Early Years Development Group and Early Years Entitlement and Childcare Expansion Subgroup to ensure that there is a collaborative and partnership approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that there is adequate information to providers about the range of grant funding, supplements and support available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> So that providers can make the best and most appropriate use of funding to ensure sustainability and provide a quality service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular briefing sessions for providers regarding funding for children from 9 months (using the portal,) capital funding and Wrap Around Programme funding. Providing easily accessible policies and documentation To continue to evaluate and work from the strategic plan for the role out of extended childcare offers for children from 9 months.



To ensure that parents are accessing childcare

We want...	Why...	How...
To ensure that parents take up their entitlement to funded childcare	So that childcare provides positive outcomes and impact on the lives of children and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notifying parents of two-year-old children of their potential eligibility to funded childcare • Update of marketing materials to reflect the expansion of Early Years childcare entitlements. • Provide support to help parents find a suitable childcare place including children with SEND. • Provide publicity and marketing of childcare to parents by attending events and providing printed information at key locations, libraries, GP surgeries etc • Update and continue to promote the FYS directory website and the Sefton Local Offer online directories

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Methodology

We have used the following data to compile this assessment:

- Number of children based on Nomis Labour Market datasets.
- Children with EHC plans based on SEND Local Authority Tables
- Supply of childcare: based on data provided by Ofsted, who regulate early years provision in schools and childcare provision. This has been supplemented with local knowledge.
- Vacancy rates: Based on provider surveys undertaken during January and February 2024
- Funded early education: data on take up of funded early education entitlements is based on the Early Years and Schools Censuses, which are taken every January and published by the Department of Education in the statistical collection.
- 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 information collected from provider surveys undertaken during January and February 2024
- Quality of childcare: data on childcare quality is provided by Ofsted Data
- Sefton's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA November 2022) and Movers survey 2022

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Further Information

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