



Leicester
City Council

**Childcare Sufficiency Assessment
Market Position Statement for
Funded Early Education Entitlement (FEEE)
places**

Forecast for September 2026

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Introduction

The Childcare Act places a duty on local authorities in England to secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient childcare to meet the requirements of parents in their area who require childcare, and this includes securing provision of funded early education entitlement (FEEE) places, for eligible young children under compulsory school age, as follows:

- secure 570 hours a year of FEEE for qualifying 2 year olds from families receiving additional forms of government support, referred to as **Early Learning for 2 year olds**.
- secure 570 hours a year of FEEE for all 3 and 4 year olds, referred to as the **Universal Entitlement**.
- secure 1,140 hours a year of FEEE for children aged 9-23 months, 2 year olds and 3 and 4 year olds from eligible working families and therefore referred to as **working parents entitlements**. For 3 and 4 year olds, this represents a further 570 hours a year of **Extended Entitlement** in addition to their Universal Entitlement. Implementation of the entitlement for children aged 9-23 months and 2 year olds was phased in between April 2024 and September 2025 as the new **Expanded Entitlement**.

The eligibility information and criteria for all entitlements are available via [15 and 30 hours support - Best Start in Life](#).

The annual entitlements of 570 hours or 1,140 hours are also referred to as '15 hour' or '30 hour' entitlements as these can be accessed over a maximum of 15 or 30 hours per week 'term time' i.e. over 38 weeks per year. Alternatively, the 570 or 1,140 hours can be 'stretched' over 48 or 51 weeks per year.

The local authority works with providers in the early years childcare sector to ensure there is sufficiency of childcare places in the city. The sector consists of:

- private, voluntary and independent (PVI) group-care settings
- childminders (CM)
- schools with nursery (foundation 1 or F1) and reception (foundation 2 or F2) classes.

An important part of their service is provision of funded places and sufficiency of FEEE places is a key priority for the local authority. Although not compulsory, these are an entitlement for qualifying children, making it free or affordable for parents to access childcare and to help improve children's outcomes and readiness to start school.

This forecast is for the sufficiency outlook for FEEE places from September 2026. It is based on the supply of FEEE places in Spring 2026, adjusted for expected expansion of provider capacity (e.g. new providers and/or expansion funded through capital projects) and demand predictions based on the latest data, such as population estimates and take-up trends, available as at Spring 2026. The regulatory framework for early years requires all provision to be inclusive for all children, including children with SEND.

Purpose and interpretation

A Market Position Statement for FEEE places helps to measure sufficiency of funded places. It is essentially a snapshot, at a point in time, based on the known supply of funded places and projected demand for the funded entitlements worked out using various sources of data such as population data, historical take-up trends, data from the department of education (DfE), data from the department of works and pensions (DWP) and application of reasonable estimates where necessary.

This Market Position Statement (MPS-Spr-26) will support the local authority, existing childcare providers and potential new providers to understand the market.

The local authority has an allocation from DfE for an Early Years Capital (EYC) grants programme to support development of FEEE places for the expanded entitlements.

Also, following phase 1 and 2, the School Based Nursery (SBN) capital grant funding programme phase 3 gives local authorities an opportunity to develop multi-year funding proposals, from 2027 to 2030, to create new and extended school-based nurseries, in state-funded primary-phase schools, maintained nursery schools and Best Start Family Hub sites.

The findings of this MPS will be used as a guide to plan a strategic approach for the capital funding opportunities and for growth to be channelled in areas where significant gaps in FEEE provision are indicated.

The MPS-Spr-26 indicates surpluses and deficits of FEEE places at ward or cluster level by comparing supply in each ward or cluster with predicted demand for FEEE places from children from the respective ward or cluster. In practice, there will be children accessing entitlement outside of their home ward or home cluster. Any indicative gaps at ward level need to be considered in conjunction with the overall position in the respective cluster area or in other cluster areas. There will also be some children accessing FEEE places with providers outside the city and children from outside the city accessing FEEE in the city.

It is important for new providers, or those who are planning to expand provision, to carry out further market research around the specific location being considered. This will help account for local attributes, any changes in the market and other factors.

For example, consideration must be given for:

- existing provision in the area, including school nursery (F1) and reception (F2) places and their capacities and level of vacancies
- plans for new childcare provision or expansion by existing providers which could be through projects funded from the EYC or the SBN capital programmes
- closure of childcare provision in the area
- childcare provision in neighbouring wards or cluster areas which may be serving the childcare needs of families in the ward or cluster area being evaluated
- parental need and demand for non-funded places, additional hours and services
- new housing or business developments in the area and expected demand from outside the local ward or cluster area
- also refer to the other factors and challenges detailed below

For the purposes of MPS-Spr-26 the different funded entitlements, or FEEE categories, are referred to as follows:

- **2YO (15) FRAS** – 15-hour places for qualifying 2 year olds from families receiving additional forms of government support (FRAS) also referred to as Early Learning for 2 year olds.
- **3 and 4YO (15) UE** – 15 hour ‘universal entitlement’ places for all 3 and 4 year olds.
- **9-23MO (30) WP; 2YO (30) WP and 3 and 4YO (30) WP** – 30-hour ‘working parents’ entitlement places for qualifying children aged 9-23 months, 2 year olds and 3 and 4 year olds from eligible working families.

30-hour places are usually accessed as ‘sole’ places with one provider. However, some children will be accessing these by splitting the hours across 2 (or more) providers, as ‘blended’ places.

15-hour places too, in some instances, are accessed across two providers.

Section 1: FEEE Providers and the Supply and Demand

a. FEEE Providers

i. Private, voluntary and independent group-care settings (PVIs) and Childminders (CMs)

PVIs and childminders signed up to the [Early Years Provider Agreement](#), which is based on the Statutory Guidance from DfE, to deliver FEEE places in Leicester, consist of:

• 107 PVI providers

- All PVIs offer 3 and 4YO (15 hour) universal entitlement places and over 90% offer 2YO (15 hour) FRAS places. For the working parents' entitlements, over 90% offer 3 and 4YO (30 hour) places, over 85% offer 2YO (30 hour) places and over 60% offer 9-23MO (30 hour) places.
- the total number of providers include 7 independent schools delivering FEEE to nursery and/or reception age children. Of these, 3 have a separate Ofsted registered nursery provision too.
- not included are 1 other PVI setting with an active Ofsted registration but currently closed and 1 other independent primary school who do not deliver FEEE places.
- Spr-26 data indicates that around 35% of the PVIs delivered 'stretched' FEEE.

• 49 Childminders

Childminders can be registered with Ofsted or with a childminder agency.

- all funded childminders are likely to offer all the different FEEE entitlements.
- there are 13 other CMs registered on the early years register (EYR) but who do not deliver FEEE. Some may not be actively delivering a service, but most are likely to be offering wraparound childcare only, before and after school.
- there are a further 8 CMs not registered on EYR and cannot offer funded places.
- Spr-26 data indicates that around 25% of the CMs delivered 'stretched' FEEE.

ii. Schools

• 75 mainstream schools (LA maintained, Academies and Free schools) deliver nursery (F1) and/or reception (F2) provision as follows:

- All 75 schools offer provision for 4YOs* in their reception classes. (* from the autumn term after the child's 4th birthday).
- 67 have Nursery class provision for 3 and 4YO (15 hour) universal entitlement places.
- 43 of the 67 schools with F1 offer sole 3 and 4YO (30 hour) places.

Please note:

- Nursery classes include 1 school, which has secured SBN (phase 2) capital grant funding to create a new nursery provision, expected to be operational by September 2026. The school does not have a nursery provision currently.
- Schools do not usually offer places for 9–23-month-olds. There are some schools offering places for 2 year olds and more expected by September 2026. Some schools may enrol children in the term of their 3rd birthday and claim 2YO funding for the child until the child qualifies for 3 and 4YO funding in the subsequent term.
- Schools deliver FEEE during term-time only.
- 4YOs who have been admitted to a state funded school reception class place will be attending full time and are not considered to be in scope for FEEE.

iii. Specialist Nursery and Special Schools

The providers consist of:

- 1 local authority managed specialist nursery (for 0–5-year-olds) which is registered with Ofsted with an indicative capacity of 16 places at any one time.
- 6 special schools with a limited number* of potential places for F1 and F2 age groups. (* as indicated by historical take-up data).

Several mainstream schools have specialist SEND units referred to as [Designated Specialist Provisions](#) (DSPs). These will be delivering a small number of places for F1 and F2 age groups.

This report does not include specific analysis for the capacity and demand for SEND places. However, the regulatory framework for early years requires all provision to be inclusive for all children, including children with SEND. Refer to Section 3 for more details on the challenges of measuring sufficiency for SEND places.

b. Supply of FEEE places

The workings, for the purposes of MPS-Spr-26, show the indicative citywide supply of places for all the FEEE categories as follows:

Table 1 - Supply of FEEE places

By provider type and FEEE category	9-23MO (30) WP	2YO (30) WP	2YO (15) FRAS	3 and 4YO (15) UE	3 and 4YO (30) WP
PVIs and CMs	1,053	1,409	1,250	2,374	1,596
Schools (F1)	0	24	108	2,284	580
Total indicative supply	1,053	1,433	1,358	4,658	2,176

Additionally, the schools' capacity information shows a total of 4,828 full time places for 4YOs in state funded school reception classes.

New FEEE places created with the help of the EYC grants programme and new school (F1) places expected to be created by schools which been awarded SBN (phase 2) capital grant funding have been factored in the workings for the capacities.

The apportionment of the capacity figures is indicative because, in the PVI-CM sector, to some extent, subject to staffing, other resources and demand, the places can be offered flexibly across the FEEE categories. Also, some 30-hour places are accessed as a 'blended' place between two settings with each providing a 15-hour place.

Refer to Section 5 for the [detailed information for the Supply of FEEE places](#) and Table 4 which shows the ward and cluster level analysis of the capacities at any one time from which the figures above have been derived.

c. Demand for FEEE places

The workings and predictions, for the purposes of MPS-Spr-26, indicate the following figures as the potential citywide demand for places for all the FEEE categories:

Table 2 - Demand for FEEE places

9-23MO (30) WP	2YO (30) WP	2YO (15) FRAS	3 and 4YO (15) UE	3 and 4YO (30) WP
1,000	1,200	805	3,998	1,600

Note: the demand for reception places for 4YOs in state funded school reception classes is not included above.

Refer to Section 5 for the [detailed information for the Demand for FEEE places](#) and Table 5 which shows the ward and cluster level analysis of the demand estimates.

Section 2: Market Position Statement (MPS-Spr-26) for sufficiency of FEEE places - forecast for September 2026

The table below shows the indicative Surplus or Deficit, for each FEEE category, by comparing the supply with the expected demand from children living in the respective ward or cluster.

Table 3 – MPS (Spr-26) Sufficiency of FEEE places - forecast for September 2026

Key to RAG rating of the indicative Surpluses or Deficits						
Deficits: -11 and lower		Small Deficits: -1 to -10 No surplus or deficit: 0 Surplus: 1 to 24		Surpluses: 25 and over		
CLUSTER	WARD	Indicative Surplus or (Deficit) figures				
		9-23MO (30) WP	2YO (30) WP	2YO (15) FRAS	3 and 4YO (15) UE	3 and 4YO (30) WP
		30-hour Working Parents entitlement	30-hour Working Parents entitlement	15-hour Early Learning entitlement	15-hour Universal Entitlement	30-hour Working Parents entitlement
CENTRAL	Castle	50	61	68	21	88
	Spinney Hills	(1)	14	11	(11)	24
	Stoneygate	17	48	9	87	53
	Wycliffe	(11)	11	95	199	23
CENTRAL (TOTALS)		55	134	183	296	188
EAST	Evington	2	9	68	6	33
	Humberstone & Hamilton	(26)	(17)	19	72	1
	Thurncourt	(31)	(34)	(7)	1	(46)
EAST (TOTALS)		(55)	(42)	80	79	(12)
NORTH	Belgrave	25	44	72	118	70
	North Evington	9	30	26	80	52
	Rushey Mead	(35)	(31)	(18)	(44)	(30)
	Troon	73	95	44	33	94
NORTH (TOTALS)		72	138	124	187	186
NORTH WEST	Abbey	(34)	(54)	6	(27)	6
	Beaumont Leys	(21)	(2)	48	92	19
	Fosse	(2)	(15)	(2)	(85)	(16)
NORTH WEST (TOTALS)		(57)	(71)	52	(20)	9
SOUTH	Aylestone	(23)	(23)	1	(3)	(10)
	Eyres Monsell	(21)	(12)	24	24	(4)
	Knighton	57	80	45	53	123
	Saffron	(10)	9	9	(54)	(7)
SOUTH (TOTALS)		3	54	79	20	102
WEST	Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields	(10)	(10)	23	47	17
	Westcotes	74	88	41	100	119
	Western	(29)	(58)	(29)	(49)	(33)
WEST (TOTALS)		35	20	35	98	103
LEICESTER (TOTALS)		53	233	553	660	576

Summary of the cluster and ward analysis

Central Cluster (4 wards)

- Spinney Hills and Wycliffe wards have small deficits for some FEEE categories. However, these do not raise significant sufficiency concerns due to surpluses in other FEEE categories. Castle and Stoneygate wards have surpluses in all FEEE categories.
- Overall, the cluster has a surplus of places in all FEEE categories, and the capacity will be accessed by parents residing in the cluster or in other clusters and working in the city.

East Cluster (3 wards)

- Thurncourt ward has deficits or indication of need in all FEEE categories. Humberstone & Hamilton ward has indicative deficits for the 30 hour expanded entitlements places. Evington ward has an indicative surplus of places in all FEEE categories.
- Overall, the cluster has deficits for 30 hour working parent entitlement places.

North Cluster (4 wards)

- Rushey Mead ward has a deficit of places in all FEEE categories. Belgrave, North Evington and Troon wards have surpluses in all FEEE categories.
- Overall, the cluster has a surplus of places in all FEEE categories.
- We are supporting plans to re-open a previously closed provision in Rushey Mead ward. This will help reduce the deficit position, especially for 2YO (15 hour) places. We are also supporting expansion plans by a provision in Troon ward and expect more capacity to be available by September 2026.

North West Cluster (3 wards)

- Abbey and Fosse wards have deficits or indication of need in all FEEE categories. Beaumont Leys ward has deficits for the 30 hour expanded entitlements places.
- Overall, the cluster has deficits or an indication of need for most FEEE categories.

South Cluster (3 wards)

- Aylestone, Saffron and Eyres Monsell wards have deficits or an indication of need for all FEEE categories. Knighton Ward has surpluses in all FEEE categories.
- Overall, the cluster has a surplus of places in all FEEE categories.

West Cluster (3 wards)

- Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields ward has deficits for 30 hour expanded entitlement places. Western ward has a deficit of places in all FEEE categories. Westcotes Ward has surpluses in all FEEE categories.
- Overall, the cluster has a surplus of places in all FEEE categories.

Interpretation of the sufficiency position indicated by the MPS-Spr-26

The indicative surpluses or deficits at ward level need to be considered in conjunction with the overall position in the respective cluster area or in other clusters areas too.

The main areas of focus for growth in capacity would be the wards and clusters with significant indicative deficits for 9-23MO (30 hour) and 2YO (30 hour) FEEE places.

However, a key priority for the local authority is local area sufficiency for 2YO (15) FRAS places and capacity for children with SEND and our focus for growth in capacity will also be on wards with deficits or relatively small surpluses for 2YO (15 hour) places, especially where there are corresponding deficits in 2YO (30 hour) places.

The surpluses or deficits are **indicative** because of use of assumptions and estimates in the working for supply and demand as detailed in this report and because, in practice:

- In the PVI-CM sector, subject to staffing, other resources and demand, some providers will be utilising their capacity flexibly across the FEEE categories and some 30-hour places will be available as 'blended' places between providers.
- There is parental choice in where children access their entitlement, and children can access provision outside their home ward or cluster. There will be cross ward, cross cluster take-up of places and some children will be accessing FEEE places with providers outside the city. Additionally, some children from outside the city will be accessing FEEE in the city.

Our data of where Leicester children are accessing their entitlement indicates the following:

- For 2YO (15) FRAS and 3 and 4YO (15) UE places, a high proportion of children access their entitlements in their home cluster. The main reason for this is because distance to provision can be a barrier to access for vulnerable families, including families on low income or not in work (refer to Table 7 below).
- a significant proportion of children qualifying for the working parent entitlements access their entitlement outside their home cluster. This is because distance to provision is much less of a barrier for working parents and they are likely to be able to travel out of their local area to access a place of their choice even where there is capacity with providers in their local area (refer to Table 7 below).
- Additionally, our data indicates that the numbers of Leicestershire children accessing their entitlement in Leicester settings is higher than the numbers of Leicester children accessing entitlement in Leicestershire based settings (refer to Tables 8a and 8b below).

Section 3: Factors and challenges to consider for the sufficiency of places

In addition to place sufficiency, the local authority must consider other factors and challenges that affect the market, some of which are highlighted in the points below:

- The local authority has a statutory duty to secure information, advice and training for providers on matters regarding meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (Quality); meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), vulnerable and disadvantaged children; and effective safeguarding and child protection.
- The quality of provision is an essential factor when considering sufficiency. Ofsted inspection outcomes determine a providers' ability to deliver FEEE places, particularly for 2YO (15) FRAS places. Good quality early education experiences have a positive impact on a child's overall outcomes, and the local authority aims to ensure that every child in Leicester gets the very best start in life and is given every opportunity to learn and develop so that they are ready to begin school and achieve their best.
- The market position fluctuates over time as it is impacted by the ongoing changes to various contributory factors such as demographic changes, new housing and business schemes, Ofsted inspection outcomes affecting providers' ability to offer FEEE places, new provision or expansion of existing provision, setting closures and other changes.
- Providers in the sector, nationally and locally, are experiencing challenges with recruitment and retention of appropriately qualified and experienced staff. As a result, many providers are not able to operate to their potential registered capacity based on space availability. Recruitment challenges can particularly affect providers' ability to offer places for children with SEND and other vulnerable children, including 2YOs from families receiving additional forms of government support, who may require additional staffing input to meet their needs.
- Providers receive government funding from the local authority to deliver the FEEE entitlements. The hourly funding rate consists of a fixed base rate for each age group and, where applicable, deprivation and quality related supplements. Additionally, providers can receive payment for Early Year Pupil Premium (EYPP), Disability Access Fund (DAF) and Special Educational Needs Inclusion Funding (SENIF) for qualifying children. Providers must deliver the 15 or 30 hour entitlement hours at no cost to parents and, whilst providers can charge for extras such as consumables, meals and snacks, extra activities, and additional hours, these must not be made mandatory for parents in relation to the funded hours. Providers should be mindful of the impact of charges on families, particularly the most disadvantaged and any additional charges must be voluntary for parents.
- Providers can plan for the expected annual increases in statutory living or minimum wage levels but, due to the ongoing economic crisis, their businesses have experienced unexpected and unprecedented levels of increases to other operating expenditure. Although the government has increased the hourly funding rates, including rates for EYPP, DAF and SENIF for qualifying children, the limitations of the government funding has affected provider sustainability and growth especially in areas of deprivation where the demand would be mainly for 2YO (15) FRAS and 3 and 4YOs (15) UE places. The local authority must factor for these challenges when supporting growth for inclusive places for all FEEE categories.
- The hourly FEEE rates that the local authority pays to providers are based on the funding levels received from the government and reflect the effective delivery costs, mainly based on the staff ratio requirements for PVI group-based settings, for the different age groups. Therefore, funding rates for 9-23MOs are the highest, followed by funding rates for 2YOs and the funding rates for 3 and 4YOs being the lowest. Normally, providers have similar fee levels for all age groups based on average cost of delivery across the age groups and therefore, they will have some challenges in planning for significant decreases in the funding income, for any given child, as the child moved from one age group to the next. However, they will be helped by the fact that the cost of delivery will also decrease in line with the funding levels. For childminders, their delivery costs do not change much for the different age groups and, the significant decrease in

funding income for any given child, as the child moves from 9-23MO funding to 2YO funding to 3 and 4YO funding, will be more of a challenge from a financial management perspective. Childminders will therefore have to plan carefully and manage admissions of children, from different age groups, in a way that ensures that their overall funding income remains at a consistent and sustainable level.

- The specific capacity and demand data for SEND places is not reflected in the workings for MPS-Spr-26.
 - Measuring capacity for SEND places in mainstream early years provision is challenging. The regulatory framework for early years requires all provision to be inclusive and, unlike for school places, parents have a choice whether to take up provision. Therefore, the number of SEND places are not readily measurable within the overall sector capacity and indication of SEND capacity would be based on take up information.
 - There are challenges and restrictions to mainstream provider capacity to deliver SEND places due to factors such as availability of suitably qualified and trained staff, issues with the level of additional funding, space and resources considerations based on children's needs.
 - The latest available [government statistics](#) (EY census) for Leicester, for spring term 2025, shows the percentage of children recorded as receiving SEND support was around 6% of all funded children. Our data for Autumn 2025 indicates that the percentage has increased slightly. Further work is being planned in partnership with the Early Years support team and other stakeholders regarding sufficiency of places for children with SEND and finding out more about unmet demand for SEND places.

Section 4: Planning for the sufficiency of FEEE places

- With the [Early Years Capital](#) (EYC) programme we will continue to support the creation of new settings, or expansion of existing settings, or for existing settings to remodel their capacity to enable delivery of more FEEE places where needed and which are accessible to all children in the priority age groups (under 2YOs and 2YOs), including those with SEND.
- We have supported schools to access SBN capital grant funding in phase 2 and are building governance and processes to manage the [SBN capital grant - 2027 to 2030 \(phase 3\)](#) opportunity to support schools to create new nursery places or expand existing nursery capacities, including accessible places for disadvantaged families and children with SEND.
- The MPS-Spr-26 – forecast for September 2026, will help us identify and prioritise areas of need and channel the funds accordingly to meet the needs in the city.
- As well as focusing on areas where there are indicative deficits for 9-23MO (30 hour) and 2YO (30 hour) places, we know from local intelligence and government guidance that we need to give priority to places for children with SEND and to maintain sufficiency for 2YO (15) FRAS places as capacity for these will be adversely affected by the growth in demand for the expanded entitlement places. Additionally, as PVI providers remodel their existing capacity to respond to the increased demand for the expanded entitlement places, there is likely to be a need arising for places for 3 and 4 year olds, especially for the 15 hour universal entitlement.
- The historical data for the entitlements shows that qualifying working families have less of a barrier to access provision outside of their home ward or cluster. Therefore, the impact of the indicative deficits at ward level may not be as significant for children from working families as they will access surplus capacity in other wards and clusters.
- We will take into consideration the geographical spread of wards with indicative deficits and surpluses and work on plans for supporting growth in areas which indicate significant deficits of places which are not readily served by areas which indicate surpluses. The planned growth will be essential to ensure localised sufficiency, especially for 2YO (15) FRAS places and capacity for children with SEND.
- We will continue to analyse the take-up data each term to inform our plans for supporting growth where the data indicates significant gaps and where we have information on unmet demand for the expanded entitlements and for 2YO (15) FRAS places.
- We will continue to monitor the sufficiency of places in localised areas and work with the children centres to monitor the position and support parents who raise concerns about the availability of suitable provision for 2YO (15) FRAS places and for children with SEND.
- The funding team will work with PVI-CM providers to support them to offer 'stretched' FEEE places which will help them effectively extend their overall capacity for FEEE delivery and offer this choice, especially for the working parent entitlements.
- The local authority will review provider capacities where these are being restricted due to recruitment and retention challenges and continue to support providers and facilitate them to access appropriate training to help them take steps to recruit appropriately where they have the demand for places and are able to offer more places to optimise use of their registered capacity.
- The local authority has processes in place to provide information, guidance and support on Ofsted registration, sufficiency considerations and business sustainability to:
 - prospective childminders, who can either register with Ofsted or with a childminder agency, and facilitate all new eligible childminders to sign-up to deliver funded places.
 - new and existing providers to open new provision or expand provision where needed.

- The local authority has processes in place to support new and existing providers by providing CPD training opportunities to help providers improve their quality of care and access specific training to explore how they can offer quality provision for under 2 year olds.

If you have any queries or comments, please email the Early Education Development Team, Leicester City Council, at EEDteam@leicester.gov.uk.

Section 5: Detailed information for the Supply and Demand workings

Detailed information for the Supply of FEEE places

a. PVI providers

The supply as at Spr-26 is based on the data from DfE of the numbers of registered places per Ofsted and information previously made available from the providers.

The capacities may be adjusted or moderated in line with:

- take-up data for FEEE places for Autumn 2025 and Spring 2026 (the latest data available since the full implementation of the expanded FEEE entitlements for working families).
- delivery of FEEE places as 'stretched' over 48 or 51 weeks per annum, and longer sessions of up to 10 hours per day, which effectively increases the capacity of numbers of FEEE places being offered.
- any other information known e.g. the impact of recruitment challenges which may be affecting practical capacity to deliver places.

The Ofsted figures and the adjusted or moderated figures are for places at any one time which are analysed further into indicative capacities for the different FEEE entitlements.

- The workings for MPS-Spr-26 count a 15-hour place as part-time equivalent (PTE) and a 30-hour place as a full time equivalent (FTE) place.
- More than 50% PVI providers are open all year round, open for 45 to 50 hours per week. Therefore, there is a level of allowance, within our workings for PTE and FTE places, for additional hours, over the FEEE hour, being accessed by some families and for capacity for Under 2YOs and 2YO places for children not qualifying for FEEE.
- It should be noted that, with the expansion of FEEE to children aged 9 months and over, the proportion of children in settings, likely to qualify for 15 or 30 hour funded entitlement, will have increased significantly.

b. Childminders

- For the purposes of the MPS, which is for sufficiency of FEEE places, the capacity included is for Childminders who are signed-up to deliver funded places and the registered capacity for each childminder is apportioned only for the potential number of FEEE places they can offer for the different entitlements.
- Where necessary, based on information known or from the FEEE take-up data for Autumn 2025 and Spring 2026, additional capacity is considered for childminders who employ assistants.

c. Schools (state funded LA maintained, Academies and Free schools)

- Nursery (F1) and Reception (F2) capacities have been taken from the information we have from previous surveys, reports and information about the published admission numbers (PAN) for schools for their F2 places.
- Adjustments are made, where necessary, to Nursery class places for 3 and 4YO (15 hour) places and sole 3 and 4YO (30 hour) places in line with actual take-up for Autumn 2025 and Spring 2026.
- Adjustments are also made for known changes to capacity and information we have for schools who may be restricting their nursery sessions for example limiting places by offering morning sessions only or offering afternoon places only for children accessing 3 and 4YO (30 hour) places.

Table 4 – Number of providers and overall capacity

Number of providers and total adjusted or moderated PVI-CM and school F1 capacity at any one time from which the indicative numbers of places for each FEEE category has been derived.

CLUSTER	WARD	Numbers of providers delivering FEEE (or F1/F2) places			Capacity at any one time For sufficiency working this is moderated and split into the relevant 15 hour and 30 hours FEEE capacities.		
		PVIs	CMs	Schools	PVI-CM & School F1 capacity (moderated capacity used for MPS-Spr-26)	PVI - potential extra capacity Differences between MPS capacity and full Ofsted registered capacity	F1 - potential extra capacity (15-hour) Where sessions are limited to mornings only or numbers restricted
CENTRAL	Castle	10	3	2	501	100	0
	Spinney Hills	3	1	3	276	0	0
	Stoneygate	9	1	3	483	16	26
	Wycliffe	6	0	4	411	0	26
CENTRAL (TOTAL)		28	5	12	1,671	116	52
EAST	Evington	5	3	4	394	31	26
	Humberstone & Hamilton	5	4	6	441	0	61
	Thurncourt	2	1	2	128	0	52
EAST (TOTAL)		12	8	12	963	31	139
NORTH	Belgrave	6	3	4	411	36	15
	North Evington	6	1	5	475	0	65
	Rushey Mead	1	0	4	107	0	56
	Troon	7	6	3	478	0	26
NORTH (TOTAL)		20	10	16	1,471	36	162
NORTH WEST	Abbey	5	6	5	376	0	0
	Beaumont Leys	6	1	6	429	0	63
	Fosse	3	2	2	194	0	26
NORTH WEST (TOTAL)		14	9	13	999	0	89
SOUTH	Aylestone	2	1	2	170	22	0
	Eyres Monsell	2	3	4	211	0	52
	Knighton	10	3	2	552	0	0
	Saffron	3	3	3	194	0	51
SOUTH (TOTAL)		17	10	11	1,127	22	103
WEST	Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields	5	5	5	391	14	18
	Westcotes	7	0	1	496	0	0
	Western	4	2	5	265	0	30
WEST (TOTAL)		16	7	11	1,152	14	48
LEICESTER (TOTAL)		107	49	75	7,383	219	593

Note:

The capacities may be adjusted or moderated for various reasons as explained in the report above and, for the sufficiency workings, the moderated capacity at any one time is split into the indicative number of places for each FEEE category.

Additionally, the schools' capacity data shows that there are 4,828 places (full school day equivalent) for 4YOs in state funded school reception classes.

Detailed information for the Demand for FEEE places

a. 2YO (15 hour) places for qualifying children from families receiving additional forms of government support

The places are mainly delivered by PVI providers and childminders.

The estimated number of children eligible for 2YO (15 hour) places is derived from data supplied by DWP each term. It is the best estimate available for this entitlement. The number of eligible children decreases over time and this is mainly due to the income thresholds for the eligibility criteria remaining unchanged whilst average incomes rise in line with increases in the national living wage and national minimum wage.

- The demand estimate used for MPS-Spr-26 is 80% of DWP data for numbers of children potentially eligible in Spring 2026.
- [Table 6](#) below shows that the average take-up in the last 3 terms (Spr-26; Aut-25; Sum-25) by eligible 2YOs from Leicester was 65%. The local authority priority is to increase the take-up percentage, ideally to around 80%.

b. 3 and 4YO (15 hour) and 3 and 4YO (30 hour) places

These are delivered by PVI providers, Childminders and in School nursery (F1) classes.

Note: school reception (F2) class places for 4YOs are considered separately as detailed below.

The latest available [government statistics](#) (EY census) for Leicester are for spring term 2025 and these show that 91% of 3 and 4YOs were taking up their 15 or 30 hour entitlement or a state school reception (F2) place, with the split being 82% for 3YOs and 99% for 4YOs.

For MPS-Spr-26, to estimate the demand for 3 and 4YOs (15 hour) places delivered by PVIs, CMs and in School nursery (F1) classes, we have used the following data and statistics:

- The population figure for 3 and 4YOs (8,970) from the GP registrations data (Oct-2025). This data is an estimation based on the resident postcode of the child at the point of collection and it is one of the data sets used for school place planning.
- Take-up figures relating to Leicester children, derived from headcount data from Leicester based providers and adjusted to remove numbers of children from outside Leicester accessing provision in Leicester and to add numbers of Leicester children accessing entitlement in Leicestershire County based providers.
- The demand estimate for the total places for 3 and 4YOs, including 4YOs in School reception classes (8,073 - which is 90% of the 3 and 4YO population). Note: the percentage is based on the average percentage take-up of 87% in the last 3 terms (Spr-26; Aut-25; Sum-25) by 3 and 4YO children from Leicester.
- The number of 4YOs from Leicester in School reception classes in Spr-26 (2,475).
- The demand estimate of 1,600 places for 3 and 4YO (30 hour) places. This is based on the take-up of 30 hour places by 3 and 4YOs from Leicester in Spr-26 which was 1,595.

The demand estimate for the total places for 3 and 4YOs [8,073] net of the 4YOs in School reception [2,475] is 5,598 places. The demand estimate for 3 and 4YO (30) WP places is 1,600 (as stated above) and the balance, of 3,998, is for 3 and 4YO (15) UE places.

Analysis of the take-up of 3 and 4YO (30 hour) places, by Leicester children, in the last 3 terms (Spr-26; Aut-25; Sum-25) indicates the following trend:

- Take-up by 4YOs is the lowest in autumn term (Aut-25: 43), as almost all 4YOs will be in a state school reception place. The numbers increase in the spring term (Spr-26: 444) and are at the highest level in summer term (for example Sum-25 was 722).
- Take-up by 3YOs is at a relatively constant level each term (Spr-26: 1,151; Aut-25: 1,181; Sum-25: 1,008) with the average take-up of 30 hour places by 3YOs being 1,113.

c. 9-23MO (30 hour) places and 2YO (30 hour) places

These are delivered by PVI providers and Childminders.

The DfE and the local authority does not have firm numbers for the demand for places for the expanded entitlements implemented in full in Aut-25. The eligibility criteria is the same as for 3 and 4YO (30 hour) entitlement and we understand that the best estimate for demand for the new entitlements for 9-23MO and 2YO places is the historical level of participation by 3YOs for the 30-hour extended entitlement as this has been established since 2017.

The average take-up of 3YO (30 hour) places by Leicester children in the last 3 terms (Spr-26; Aut-25; Sum-25), as stated above, was 1,113. Allowing for some growth in demand, we expect the **maximum demand** for the 30 hour working parent entitlements for 2YOs and 3YOs to be around 1,200 and, for 9-23MO (30 hour) places, to be around 1,500 (15/12 of 1,200 to allow for the age range covering 15 months).

Demand estimate for 9-23MO (30 hour) places:

- In the last 2 terms (Spr-26; Aut-25) since the full implementation of the 9-23MO (30 hour) working parents' entitlement, the average take-up by Leicester children was 809 places.
- Based on this data and allowing for some increase in take-up, we have used a figure of 1,000 places (67% of the 1,500 maximum expectation) as the estimated demand for MPS-Spr-26.

Demand estimate for 2YO (30 hour) places:

- In the last 2 terms (Spr-26; Aut-25) since the full implementation of the 2YO (30 hour) working parents' entitlement, the average take-up by Leicester children was 1,016 places.
- Based on this data and allowing for some increase in take-up, we have used a figure of 1,200 places (100% of the 1,200 maximum expectation) as the estimated demand for MPS-Spr-26.

The demand estimates have been apportioned at ward level based on the relevant ward level take-up (average for Spr-26 and Aut-25) for the respective entitlements.

We will continue to monitor the take-up data over time and update our demand estimates and ward level apportionments accordingly.

d. School Reception (F2) places for 4 year olds

Children who have turned 4 years old on or before 31 August each year can start a full-time state school reception class place from the autumn term.

The potential maximum demand for reception places is based on the population of 4YOs from GP registrations data (Oct-2025).

- Comparing the population of 4YOs (demand) against the school reception places capacity (supply) shows an indicative surplus of reception places overall for the city.
- The actual surplus will be higher as not all 4YOs will join school F2, with a small percentage either remaining in PVI-CM settings or not accessing their entitlement as it is not mandatory (the compulsory school age for all children is the term after their 5th birthday).

As there is an overall surplus indicated, and as reception places are normally allocated by school catchment areas and not by ward areas, no further work or ward level analysis is done for the purposes of the MPS-Spr-26.

Table 5 shows the population data and estimated demand for places for the various FEEE categories. The data is analysed by ward and cluster areas.

Table 5 - Population data and estimated demand for FEEE places

CLUSTER	WARD	Population data <i>Source: GP lists (Oct-25)</i>			Estimated Demand for FEEE places				
		Under 2 year olds	2 year olds	3 and 4 year olds	Expanded Entitlements for Working Parents (based on take-up of the 30-hour FEEE (Leicester Ave.Spr-26; Aut-25)		Early Learning for 2YOs 80% of DWP data Nov-25 list (Spr-26 target)	3 and 4YOs demand at midpoint of the annual cycle (Spring Census) 3&4YOs: 90% of population less 4YOs in Reception in Spr-26	
					9-23 month- olds (30 hour)	2YOs (30 hour)	2YOs (15 hour)	3 and 4YO FEEE (15 hour)	3 and 4YO FEEE (30 hour)
CENTRAL	Castle	458	185	386	46	45	26	206	50
	Spinney Hills	374	185	400	35	46	17	215	44
	Stoneygate	547	279	508	47	65	49	275	64
	Wycliffe	351	160	381	23	24	40	281	34
CENTRAL (TOTALS)		1730	809	1675	151	180	132	914	192
EAST	Evington	401	198	455	66	69	28	204	78
	Humberstone & Hamilton	516	264	552	95	104	42	192	155
	Thurncourt	258	141	282	43	54	30	87	69
EAST (TOTALS)		1175	603	1289	204	227	100	483	302
NORTH	Belgrave	425	184	403	30	43	20	197	38
	North Evington	693	313	593	36	44	56	343	47
	Rushey Mead	311	139	364	35	34	22	150	51
	Tron	348	180	360	33	53	24	144	73
NORTH (TOTALS)		1777	816	1720	134	174	122	834	209
NORTH WEST	Abbey	687	326	668	67	87	81	298	135
	Beaumont Leys	450	239	493	62	83	54	185	109
	Fosse	407	190	424	30	53	36	195	71
NORTH WEST (TOTALS)		1544	755	1585	159	223	171	678	315
SOUTH	Aylestone	282	131	313	48	58	25	97	93
	Eyres Monsell	280	147	295	40	39	37	128	54
	Knighton	312	135	335	96	87	6	94	121
	Saffron	300	126	343	37	26	37	160	47
SOUTH (TOTALS)		1174	539	1286	221	210	105	479	315
WEST	Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields	419	228	513	58	61	65	202	110
	Westcotes	401	205	356	19	40	30	185	39
	Western	394	229	546	54	85	80	223	118
WEST (TOTALS)		1214	662	1415	131	186	175	610	267
LEICESTER (TOTALS)		8614	4184	8970	1,000	1,200	805	3,998	1,600

Note:

- All 3 and 4YOs qualify for FEEE and 4YOs can access a state school reception class place from the autumn term after their 4th birthday. For the purposes of MPS-Spr-26, the expected demand for 3 and 4YO FEEE for places with PVIs, CMs and in School F1, at the midpoint of the annual cycle in the spring, has been worked out at 90% of the 3 and 4YO population less 4YOs in school reception places. This figure is split into expected demand for 30 hour places and the balance being expected demand for 15 hour places.
- Not all 2YOs qualify for FEEE. The percentage of 2YOs who potentially qualify for FEEE, based on the estimated demand above, is around 50% of the 2YO population.
- Not all Under 2YOs qualify for FEEE. The percentage of 9-23MOs who potentially qualify for FEEE, based on the estimated demand above, is around 12% of the Under 2YOs population.

The demand for under 2YOs and 2YOs can grow if more families meet the criteria and qualify for the new expanded entitlements for 9-23MOs or 2YOs, or for 2YO (15) FRAS places.

Table 6 – take-up of 2YO (15 hour) FEEE places by Leicester children

Take take-up of 2YO (15) FRAS places (Average of Spr-26; Aut-25; Sum-25) by eligible 2 year olds from Leicester.

CLUSTER	WARD	2YO (15) FRAS Numbers eligible Average per DWP data for these terms	2YO (15) FRAS Take-Up Average (Spr-26; Aut-25; Sum-25)	% Take-Up Average
CENTRAL	Castle	39	26	67%
	Spinney Hills	27	19	70%
	Stoneygate	68	45	66%
	Wycliffe	56	44	79%
CENTRAL (TOTALS)		190	134	71%
EAST	Evington	40	30	75%
	Humberstone & Hamilton	60	37	62%
	Thurncourt	39	21	54%
EAST (TOTALS)		139	88	63%
NORTH	Belgrave	31	21	68%
	North Evington	70	57	81%
	Rushey Mead	33	18	55%
	Troon	41	26	63%
NORTH (TOTALS)		175	122	70%
NORTH WEST	Abbey	103	69	67%
	Beaumont Leys	79	53	67%
	Fosse	48	24	50%
NORTH WEST (TOTALS)		230	146	63%
SOUTH	Aylestone	33	23	70%
	Eyres Monsell	56	37	66%
	Knighton	12	5	42%
	Saffron	55	28	51%
SOUTH (TOTALS)		156	93	60%
WEST	Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields	96	62	65%
	Westcotes	38	28	74%
	Western	104	57	55%
WEST (TOTALS)		238	147	62%
LEICESTER (TOTALS)		1,128	730	65%

Note:

The take-up figures is for eligible 2YOs from Leicester who are accessing their entitlement with PVI-CM providers in Leicester or with PVI-CM providers in Leicestershire County.

Table 7 – summary of where funded children accessed entitlement

Average percentages for the last 3 terms (for Spr-26; Aut-25; Sum-25) for where funded children were accessing their entitlement (in their home cluster or outside their home cluster)

FEEE places accessed	Working Parent Entitlements Average for 9-23MO*, 2YO* and 3 and 4YO (30)	2YO (15) FRAS	3 and 4YO (15) UE	4YOs in Reception
In the home cluster	58%	75%	76%	80%
In another city cluster	28%	19%	20%	16%
Outside the city	14%	6%	4%	4%

Proportion of average take-up by children from outside the city*	19%	5%	6%	5%
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*For 9-23MO (WP) and 2YO (WP) entitlements, the data is for 30-hour take-up in the last 2 terms (Spr-26; Aut-25) since full implementation of the expanded entitlements.

Table 8a – numbers of Leicester children accessing entitlement

Numbers of children from Leicester, including 4YOs in school reception classes, on our FEEE headcounts plus adjustments for children from Leicester accessing entitlement with PVI-CM providers and Schools in Leicestershire County.

Term	PVI-CM	Schools	Total
Spr-26	5,360	4,700	10,060
Aut-25	4,772	5,930	10,702
Sum-25	6,212	4,086	10,298

Table 8b – numbers of FEEE children in PVI-CMs and Schools in Leicester

Numbers of children from Leicester and from outside Leicester accessing FEEE places, including 4YOs in school reception classes, with Leicester based PVI-CMs and Schools.

Term	PVI-CM	Schools	Total
Spr-26	5,657	4,858	10,515
Aut-25	5,028	6,044	11,072
Sum-25	6,547	4,209	10,756

Note: for tables 8a and 8b, children in school reception classes will all be 4YO for FEEE purposes, in Autumn. The apparent decrease in numbers in schools from Autumn to Spring to Summer is mainly due to 4YOs in school reception places turning 5YO during the term and not included in the take-up data in each subsequent term. The overall numbers of children in school reception (4YOs and 5YOs) will not be decreasing from term to term.

Table 9 – Glossary of Terms and information links

2YO (15) FRAS	15 hour places for qualifying 2 year olds from families receiving additional forms of government support (FRAS); also referred to as Early Learning for 2 year olds. Early Learning for 2 year olds - Best Start in Life
3YO (15) UE	15 hour 'universal entitlement' places for all 3 and 4 year olds 15 hours childcare for all families in England - Best Start in Life
9-23MO (30) WP 2YO (30) WP 3 and 4YO (30) WP	30 hour 'working parents' entitlement places for qualifying children aged 9-23 months, 2 year olds and 3 and 4 year olds from eligible working families. 30 hours childcare - Best Start in Life
FEEE	Funded Early Education Entitlement
Statutory Guidance	Statutory guidance - Early education and childcare (effective 1 April 2026) Early education and childcare - GOV.UK
PVIs	Private, voluntary and independent group-care settings
CMs	Childminders
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
EYPP	Early Years Pupil Premium click here for more information
DAF	Disability Access Fund click here for more information
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. Ofsted inspect services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. This includes, registering, inspecting and regulating services that care for children and young people.
CMAs	Childminder agencies CMAs are organisations that can register, and quality assure childminders as an alternative to registering with Ofsted.
EYFS	Early years foundation stage statutory framework Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework - GOV.UK
RAG ratings	Red-Amber-Green ratings These are used to summarise indicator values, where green denotes a 'favourable' value, red an 'unfavourable' value and amber a 'neutral' value.

Other useful information sources:

- Early Education Development Team webpage – [EED team webpage](#)
Refer to the section 'Starting a childcare business'
- Family information, advice and guidance webpage – [Family Hub home page](#)
Refer to the section on 'Childcare' for further information including FEEE information.
- My Choice Leicester City directory of services - mychoice.leicester.gov.uk/
click on 'Children's Services' and then 'Childcare' to access information on childcare providers