

# **Childcare Sufficiency Duty Report**

**Autumn 2024**

**Version 2**

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## **1. Introduction**

Welcome to the Autumn 2024 update of the Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) Council Childcare Sufficiency Duty Report. This report takes into consideration the current Early Years landscape within B&NES and will review the number of children residing across the wards within the county, the number of places within our Early Years Providers and review the demand and supply of places within the Early Years Sector within B&NES. The most recent data is taken into consideration for the Early Years Entitlement Expansion roll out for children aged 9-months to 4-years-old.

In addition, for the first time this report includes data and information on the new Wraparound Care Programme for school aged children. Focusing on the progression that has been made since this programme was launched in September 2024.

When reading this report, it must be noted that the data included within it is assumed and may not always represent the current occupancy of Early Years places and spaces. When the data is published and made available it can be up to 12-months out of date. The data provides a snapshot and does not consider other variables which may increase demand and reduce the capacity for Early Years providers to accommodate children, such as working patterns, parental choice, and attending settings across wards and/or neighbouring council areas.

Within this report the term 'places' refers to the number of Ofsted registered places within a childcare provision which keep within ratios. The term 'spaces' refers to the total number of children accessing the registered places in total, not the number of available spaces within each setting. For example, if a child attended a setting for 2 days, and then another child attended the same setting for 3 days. This would total 1 place within the setting but 2 spaces in total.

To increase the accuracy of the figures provided in this report B&NES Early Years Providers have been contacted to get an understanding of their demand, places, and occupancy of spaces. Early Years places can be difficult to determine with many children attending for a variety of sessions or days across providers. It is also fast moving, with demand changing throughout the course of the year.

## 2. Number of children aged 0 – 4 years old children within B&NES

The county of B&NES is classed as being 'urban with significant rural areas'<sup>1</sup>. According to ONS data between 26% to 49% of the population reside in rural areas. At the time of writing this report, there were approximately just over 9000<sup>2</sup> children aged 0 – 4-years-old living across 33 wards within B&NES. The number of children per age group breaks down into the following:

<b>Age of child:</b>	<b>Approximate number of children within B&amp;NES:</b>
0–12-months-olds	1804
1-year-olds	1794
2-year-olds	1782
3-year-olds	1810
4-year-olds	1901

Appendix A provides a breakdown of the number of children living within each ward across B&NES. From looking at this data, the wards which contain the most children within the age ranges of 0 – 4-years-old are Keynsham South, Twerton, Radstock, Paulton and Combe Down. There are approximately just over 2200 children living within these five wards. The wards which house the least number of children aged 0 – 4-years-old within B&NES are Mendip, Timsbury, Oldfield Park, High Littleton and Bathwick. In comparison, there are approximately only 700 children living within these five wards. The disparity between these figures could be due to a variety of factors such as: students living within Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs), areas with greater employment opportunities and rural areas with a smaller percentage of housing.

## 3. Providers within B&NES

Within B&NES there are approximately 167<sup>3</sup> registered Early Years Education and Childcare Providers. This number is made up of Childminders, Private, Voluntary, or Independent (PVI) settings and Schools who offer a nursery class predominantly within the school grounds.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/rural-urban-classification>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates>

<sup>3</sup> <https://livewell.bathnes.gov.uk/search-childcare-providers>

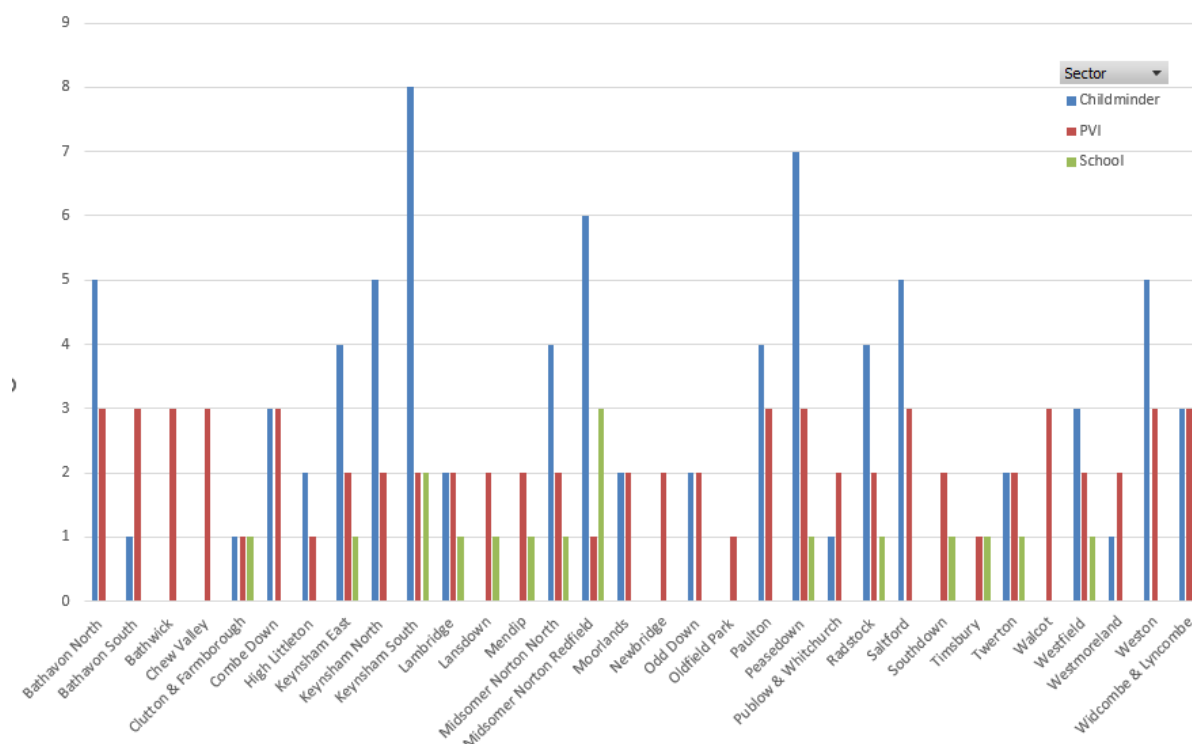
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The breakdown of these settings is as follows:

Type of setting:	Approximate number of providers:
Childminder	80
PVI Settings	70
Schools	17

These Early Years Education and Childcare Providers are spread across the wards within B&NES, there are some wards where there are more providers compared to others. The wards with the highest number of childcare providers are Keynsham South, Peasedown, Midsomer Norton Redfield, Saltford and Weston. The wards with the lowest number of Early Years Providers are Kingsmead, Oldfield Park, Timsbury, Chew Valley and Clutton and Farmborough.

The graph below shows the different wards and where Early Years Education and Childcare Providers are located across the wards within B&NES.



From the 167 registered providers considered above, 57% of the providers are open all year round which equates to roughly 51 weeks of the year and 43% of the providers considered above are open term-time only, which equates to 38 weeks of the year.

All 167 settings are registered with Ofsted and 65% of settings have attained an Ofsted rating of "Good", 14% of settings have attained the Ofsted rating of "Outstanding" and

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only 1% have the rating of “Requires Improvement”. The last 20% of providers are either new or have not yet had a rating provided by Ofsted due having no children registered within their setting at the time of their Ofsted inspection.

Out of the Early Years settings included above, 64% of providers offer places to children aged 0- to 23-months, 91% of providers offer places to children aged 2 and 98% of providers offer places to children aged 3 and 4. The remaining 2% of providers not included in this figure include a baby-only unit and providers who did not disclose if they offer places to 3- and 4-year-old children.

Within a setting, each space may have more than one child taking the place if that child is only attending the setting part-time. Therefore, a formula can be applied which estimates how many children are utilising each place and provides an estimated number of spaces within a childcare provider. Naturally, this number will vary over time and additional factors should be taken into consideration such as staffing, keeping within ratio numbers and popularity of days. Looking across all registered providers with B&NES there are approximately 5300 childcare spaces being offered across the 167 providers. From the individualised information that we know B&NES estimates that there are approximately 870 spaces for babies aged 0–2-year-olds, 1500 spaces for toddlers aged 2-years-old and 3000 spaces for children aged 3-4-years-old.

The number of spaces offered by the Early Years providers will differ depending on the type of setting and the facilities that they can offer. Childminders on average can offer a capacity of 6 spaces daily, whereas some PVIs can offer up to 160 spaces per day across the age groups. Naturally, these places and the number of children accessing the different age brackets will vary due to parent's working patterns, demand for certain days and part-time attendance patterns amongst other factors.

Please see Appendix B which details a breakdown of where these childcare spaces are located across B&NES. The spaces detailed do not refer to spaces being available, but in fact the total number of spaces available in a setting which children are utilising.

#### **4. Early Years Entitlement Funding**

The Early Years Entitlement (EYE) funding has been available since the 1990s and has been expanded over the subsequent decades to a point when all 3- and 4- year-old children were universally able to access 15 funded hours of childcare across England. This was then later expanded in 2017, to include the funding for Working Families. A child could then access an additional 15 funded hours if the family met the eligibility criteria, therefore providing these families with a total 30 funded hours per week.

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In the 2023 Spring Budget, it was announced that Early Years Childcare Entitlements would be expanded for working families with children aged 9 months plus over the following three stages:

- in April 2024, working parents of 2-year-olds were able to access 15 hours of Early Years Entitlement per week (over 38 weeks a year) from the term after their child's birthday,
- the offer was then extended from September 2024 to parents who have children aged 9-months and above. This funding is accessible the term after their child turns 9-months-old; and
- finally, from September 2025, working parents will be able to access 30 funded hours per week (over 38 weeks a year) for children aged 9-months to 4-years-old.

As of September 2024, there were just over 4,150 children claiming some form of Early Years Entitlement. This is evaluated in more detail below.

### **4.1 Early Years Entitlement for 3-and 4-year-olds**

B&NES have been offering children and their families the universal hours and the extended 30-hours since both schemes were launched.

Currently B&NES have approximately just over 2,040 3- and 4-year-old children accessing Early Years Entitlement across all the wards. This number can be broken down to identify approximately 920 children who are accessing their universal entitlement and 1120 children are accessing their universal entitlement and the Working Families Entitlements.

From looking at the approximate number of children via the birth data and using the latest figures from the Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT), these figures would indicate that 94% of 3- and 4-year-olds within B&NES are accessing and attending a registered Early Years Setting. It is worth noting that this percentage of 3- and 4-year-old children accessing funded early education had been decreasing over the last few years, but the 2024 data shows a marginal increase of 1% of children attending Early Years Settings. It is hoped that this trend will now continue. The overall decline in numbers of children attending Early Years Settings can be attributed to many factors such as an increase in flexible working patterns, hybrid working models and parents choosing to send their children to settings closer to home rather than on their commuter route.

## **4.2 Early Years Pupil Premium**

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) has been available for children aged 3- and 4-years-old since April 2015.

From September 2024, EYPP is now payable for all EYE children aged 9-months to 4-years-old.

EYPP is usually paid for families on low income and other income related benefits. It is also payable for children who are currently looked after, adopted or with a Special Guardianship Order and are being looked after by the Local Authority.

The EYPP funding is targeted to help narrow the gap in attainment between the children in low-income families whose learning outcomes from pre-school through into school and beyond are typically lower than the rest of their peer cohort.

Since the expansion of the Early Years Entitlements, B&NES continue to promote the EYPP funding to all providers to ensure that all children who may be entitled to this additional funding are in receipt of it. As of September 2024, approximately 270 children within B&NES are claiming EYPP.

## **4.3 Disadvantage funding for 2-year-olds**

In 2013, the DfE extended the Early Years Entitlement to include 2-year-olds from disadvantaged families to access 15 funded hours. This funded childcare can be taken in playgroups and pre-schools, nursery schools, nursery classes in primary schools, in children's centres or with childminders.

Currently B&NES supports and provides funding to 220 disadvantaged 2-year-olds. These children are currently accessing places in PVI settings, childminders, and a proportion of school settings.

There are still a percentage of children who are recognised as being disadvantaged within B&NES and who are not accessing funding that they are deemed eligible for.

Engagement with these families takes place regularly and correspondence is sent out to the prospective families informing them of the funding options that are available. From reviewing our internal data, the number of children B&NES who are entitled to the 2-year-old disadvantaged funding is decreasing which means that more parents may be working and will start to be able to access the new Working Families Early Years Entitlement funding for their children within early years settings.



## **4.4 Early Years Entitlement Funding for 2-year-olds**

From the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, working parents of 2-year-olds have been able access 15 hours of Early Years Entitlement per week (over 38 weeks a year) from the term after their child's birthday.

From looking at and reviewing both our external and internal data, as of Autumn 2024, just under 960 working families were claiming funding for their 2-year-old children. This number has increased by approximately 12% since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024. The number of codes to be validated sat at 88%<sup>4</sup> which is the national average across the country. Overall, these figures indicate a positive trend implying that more children within the 2-year-old age bracket are accessing and receiving Early Years support within settings as the Early Years Entitlement Expansion continues to be rolled out.

When looking at the approximate number of 2-year-olds across the whole county alongside the 2-year-old disadvantage funding and new Working Family Entitlement, it is reported (via LAIT) that a total of 91% of 2-year-olds are accessing and attending a childcare place within a registered Early Years Setting with a rating of Good or Outstanding.

## **4.5 Early Years Entitlement funding for children aged 9-months-olds to 2-years-old**

As part of the continued childcare expansion, working parents with children aged 9-months-old and over by the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024, were able to apply for an Early Years Entitlement Code from May 2024. These eligible codes have allowed working families to access 15 funded hours with a registered childcare provider from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024.

A total of 1032 codes were applied for before the 31<sup>st</sup> August and 90%<sup>5</sup> of these codes were verified and validated. This validation rate sits above the national average of 84%<sup>6</sup> of the country for children aged 9-months to 2-years-old.

These figures indicate that a good proportion of children aged 9-months to 2-years-old are managing to access childcare places within settings which accommodate for

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<sup>4</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/expansion-to-early-childcare-entitlements-eligibility-codes-issued-and-validated>

<sup>5</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/expansion-to-early-childcare-entitlements-eligibility-codes-issued-and-validated>

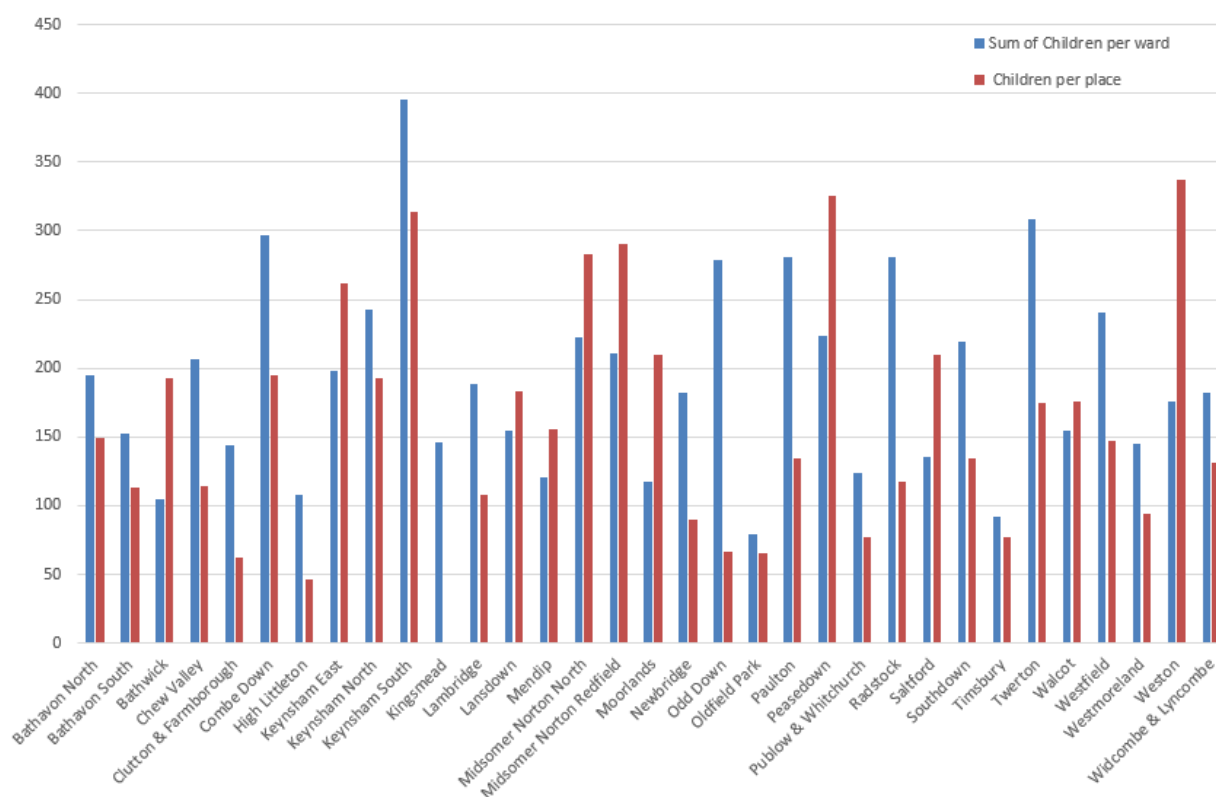
<sup>6</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/expansion-to-early-childcare-entitlements-eligibility-codes-issued-and-validated>

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this age range. As we move through the next couple of terms, the data will become clear to see if this number increases or decreases and if parents are able to access places for their young children within B&NES.

### 5. Sufficiency of Places Available

The number of total spaces across the wards have been compared with the number of children within each ward who would be looking to utilise a childcare place and inputted into the graph below:



From looking at this graph and the data included 12 out of the 33 wards offer more spaces within their settings than the number of children residing within the wards who are looking to utilise a childcare place. The five wards with largest number of spaces for children within their settings are Weston, Bathwick, Moorlands, Saltford and Peasedown. In contrast, the wards with the lowest number of spaces within settings are High Littleton, Clutton and Farmborough, Radstock, Odd Down and Kingsmead.

Just over half of the wards within B&NES have a larger number of children residing within the area compared to the number of spaces within providers from the same ward. For these families who are requiring childcare, it is most likely that they will need to look further afield into neighbouring wards to access available childcare provision.

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Looking at the total spaces available and the number of children across all the wards, theoretically there are enough spaces for the total number of children residing across the wards. Naturally, this data does not consider additional factors such as parent's working patterns, availability of particular days (Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursday being the most popular and Mondays and Fridays being the least popular), preference of settings and those families commuting into or out of the county. Families may therefore struggle to find a space and location of setting that suits their needs, meaning that they are unable to take up a place within their chosen setting or location parameters.

The total number of spaces is also determined by what the Early Years Education and Childcare Providers can offer and accommodate in terms of staffing and ratios, places within rooms and for those children with additional needs. From looking at the numbers earlier on in this report, there are a higher number of babies born than places available and so it is probable that there will be shortage of places and spaces available for baby places within settings within the foreseeable future unless action is taken.

It must also be noted that most settings have waiting lists, so although the data is showing that the settings have sufficient spaces, many of these spaces are already filled and so the number of actual available spaces will vary across settings and wards. This data will fluctuate regularly as children move into, out and around the settings.

Many waiting lists are for babies who are waiting to start within a setting or babies that are yet to be conceived. Some babies are on more than one waiting list with different providers and so the true number of babies currently waiting for a place is difficult to determine. As we continue to work through the Early Years Entitlement Expansion, data will become available of the numbers of working families applying for and accessing the funding for their children aged 9-month-olds to 4-years-old. This will then continue to provide us with a clearer picture of the demand and how this reflects on the whole landscape.

The Department for Education (DfE) have also provided data and a forecast on the supply and demand of childcare places. This information is located within Appendix C.

## **6. Future Prospective Places and New Settings**

Looking to the future, B&NES have recently received enquiries from current providers investigating the expansion of new spaces in current settings, looking to open a second setting, and new settings putting in planning applications to create brand new provision.

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These proposals are still in the development stages and B&NES are hopeful that they will come to fruition. This report highlights the areas where it may be beneficial for perspective providers to consider.

The DFE have allocated councils with a limited amount of capital funding to help stimulate additional provision which will be allocated in 2024 and 2025. This funding will be spent on capital projects. It is being provided to meet the capital costs associated with projects that help ensure sufficient places for children who are taking up an early year's place through the expanded early years entitlement for qualifying working parents (from the term following the child reaching 9-months to the term in which they turn 3-years-old).

All new places created will be accessible to all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. B&NES have considered projects that will adapt or improve facilities to expand their use or make places available for a wider range of needs.

The first round of funding has now been allocated. We will report in the Spring 2025 Sufficiency report, the outcome of these projects and the number of new places being created.

## **7. Wraparound Childcare**

Wraparound Childcare is defined as childcare that 'wraps around' the conventional school day. It can also refer to provision in the school holidays. This provision can be offered by schools and by private, voluntary and independent (PVI) providers which include childminders and Early Years settings. It can be delivered on a school site or at another community space in the local area but is important to denote that Wraparound Childcare should not require parents to collect their children from school and drop them off at another location.

The National Wraparound Childcare Programme was announced during the 2023 Spring Budget when the government set out their ambition that by 2026, all working parents and carers of primary-aged children, who need it, would have access to high quality, term-time childcare from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.

To support this programme, £289 million of startup funding was pledged over two academic years to allow local authorities in England to create or expand childcare provision which parents will pay to access. Of this, Bath & North East Somerset Council was provisionally awarded £981,000 to create 670 additional Wraparound Childcare spaces by July 2026.

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The programme focuses on creating an over-supply of Wraparound Childcare places across England for children from Reception to Year 6, five days a week during term-time allowing working parents to work a full day with travel time included. This over-supply ensures that no parent wishing to book their child into before or after-school childcare finds themselves in a position where the provision is unavailable or fully booked.

Across B&NES, there are 63 schools eligible for grant funding under the National Wraparound Childcare Programme.

During July 2024, excluding childminders, 13 different PVIs ran Wraparound Childcare provision on or near school sites across the local authority area. 72% of all before-school Wraparound Childcare was provided by the school and on the school site compared to 62% of after-school provision.

Before the Summer holidays, the picture of Wraparound Childcare across B&NES was varied. 6% of schools had no Wraparound Childcare offer to parents at all while a further 10% had either no before or after-school Wraparound childcare provision. Of the remaining schools, only 37% offered full Wraparound Childcare as defined by the Department for Education (Monday to Friday 8am-6pm). Many of these schools offer the same core number of hours but with slightly different start and finish times to meet local need. e.g. 730am to 530pm. Schools offering this provision were still classed as providing the full offer to working parents. The remaining 48% of schools offered some before and after school provision to parents but this fell short of the core number of hours as defined by the National Wraparound Childcare Programme. These figures represent the presence of a childcare provision at the school but does not reflect an availability of places. Many of the schools within B&NES offer popular Wraparound Childcare used regularly by the parents of the school. Several of these report waiting lists and sessions that are fully booked either long in advance or immediately upon release. The National Wraparound Programme grant funding is being utilised across B&NES to create brand new provision for schools with none and to provide expansion opportunities for those schools experiencing provision that is regularly oversubscribed.

To date (October 2024) 24 applications from schools and PVIs across B&NES have been approved although several more are expected. Grant funding totalling £446,000 has been allocated to these providers creating an additional 476 wraparound childcare places across Bath & North East Somerset. In addition to creating much-needed available childcare places in some areas, the funding has also been used to increase the hours of existing provision at many schools meaning that now 54% of schools now have the full Wraparound Childcare provision of Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm (with some adjustments).

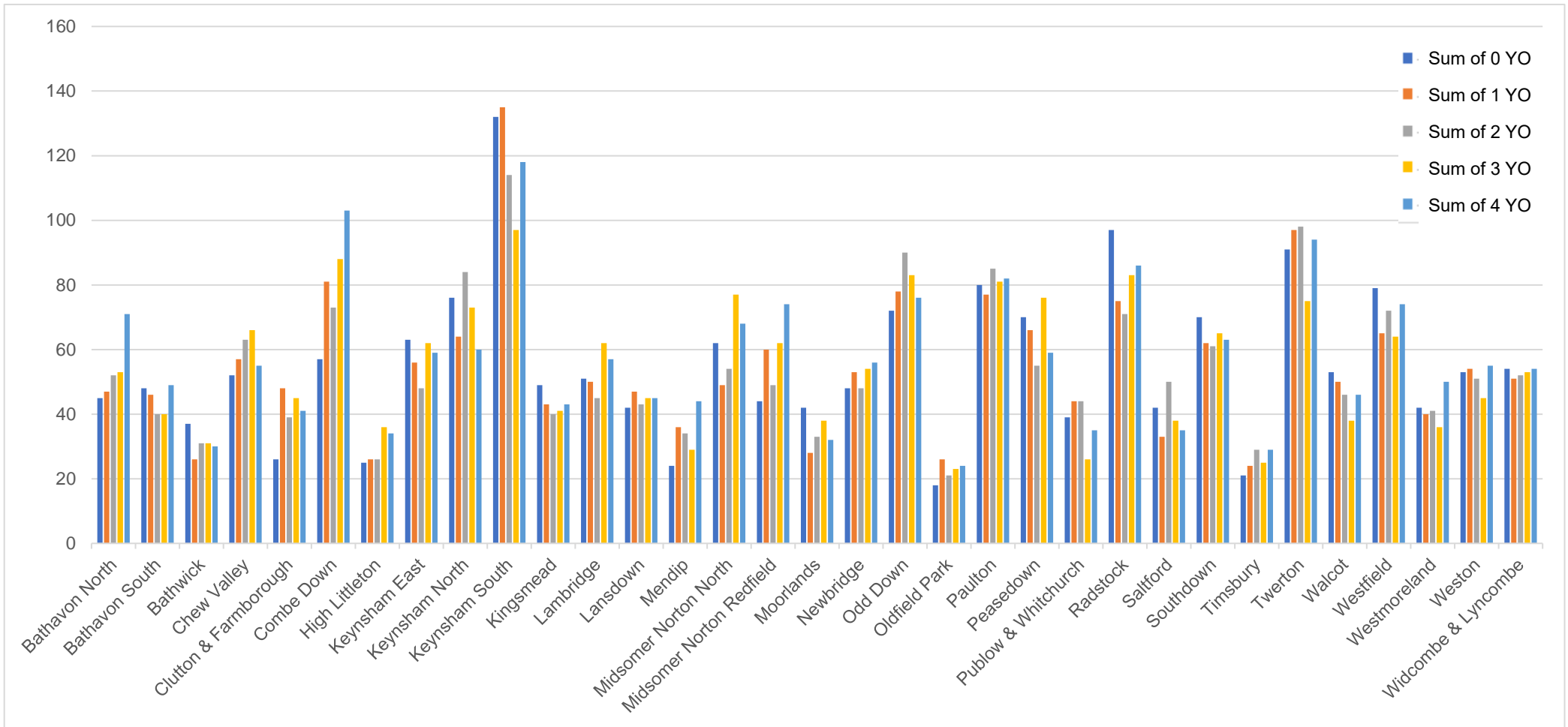
Work continues to deliver the remaining 194 places using the remaining grant funding and to increase the hours of available Wraparound Childcare in other schools across the county so that working parents can rely on the childcare being available whenever it is needed.

## **8. Additional Articles on Sufficiency**

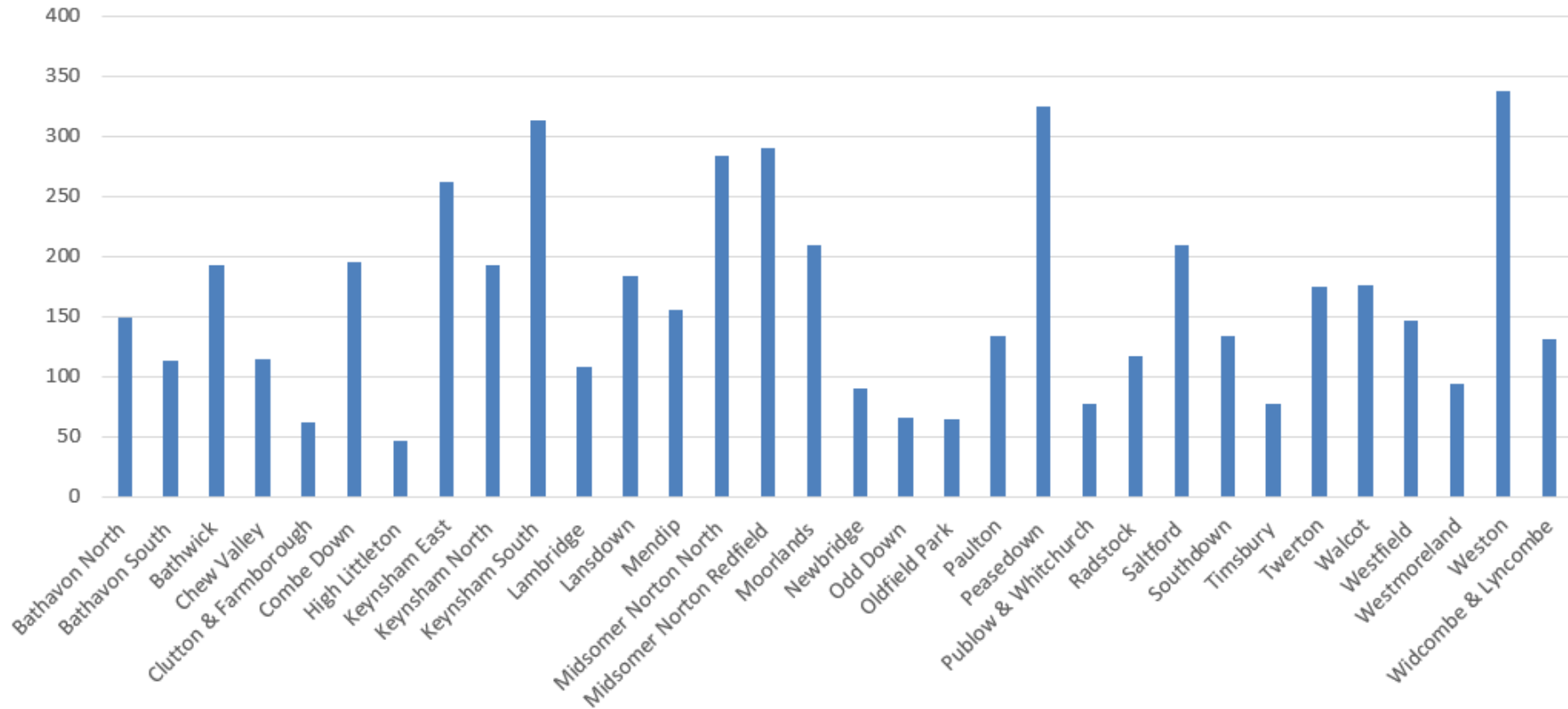
**Ofsted** – Changes in access to childcare in England, October 2024: <https://ofsted-eyda.github.io/childcare-accessibility-ofsted/>

**Coram** – Barriers to take-up of Early Education Entitlement for Disadvantaged Children, October 2024: <https://www.coram.org.uk/news/barriers-to-take-up-of-early-education-entitlements/>

**Appendix A: Number of children per B&NES Ward**



**Appendix B: Total number of childcare spaces across B&NES**





## Appendix C: DfE Data

DfE have provided B&NES with a data forecast of the current Supply and Demand across the 33 wards. This information and evidence provide an indicative view of the level of demand in B&NES and is intended to support local data.

The DfE has made estimates of the number of children expected to take up the expanded Early Years Entitlement at each of the roll out milestones.

The table below summarises the top 5 wards where DfE predict there will be the highest and lowest demand for childcare places by September 2025:

	<b>Highest Level of Demand per Ward:</b>	<b>Lowest Level of Demand per Ward:</b>
<b>1)</b>	Keynsham South	Timsbury
<b>2)</b>	Midsomer Norton North	Midsomer Norton Redfield
<b>3)</b>	Saltford	Kingsmead
<b>4)</b>	Weston	Oldfield Park
<b>5)</b>	Combe Down	Lambridge

The table below summarises the top 5 wards where the DfE believe there will be the highest and lowest supply of childcare places by September 2025:

	<b>Highest Level of Supply per Ward:</b>	<b>Lowest Level of Supply per Ward:</b>
<b>1)</b>	Keynsham East	Kingsmead
<b>2)</b>	Saltford	Odd Down
<b>3)</b>	Walcot	High Littleton
<b>4)</b>	Combe Down	Timsbury
<b>5)</b>	Weston	Radstock

Therefore, from looking at the DfE Data and their results of calculating the difference between demand and supply of childcare places verses the number of children eligible for those places leaves the following areas with shortfall: Odd Down, Lansdown, Midsomer Norton North, Keynsham South and High Littleton and the following areas with a surplus of childcare hours and places: Keynsham East, Newbridge, Bathavon South, Bathavon North and Chew Valley. Consideration should be given that some of these wards neighbour one another, therefore families will be able to access childcare places across wards.