

Date of issue: Tuesday, 16 May 2023

MEETING:	CABINET To all members of the Cabinet as appointed by the Leader of the Council following the Annual Meeting of Council held on 18th May 2023.
DATE AND TIME:	WEDNESDAY, 24TH MAY, 2023 AT 6.30 PM
VENUE:	COUNCIL CHAMBER - OBSERVATORY HOUSE, 25 WINDSOR ROAD, SL1 2EL
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER: (for all enquiries)	NICHOLAS PONTONE 07749 709 868

NOTICE OF MEETING

The above Meeting will take place at the time and date indicated to deal with the business set out in the following agenda.



STEPHEN BROWN
Chief Executive

AGENDA

PART I

<u>AGENDA</u> <u>ITEM</u>	<u>REPORT TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>	<u>WARD</u>
	Apologies for absence.		
1.	Declarations of Interest <i>All Members who believe they have a Disclosable Pecuniary or other Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting must declare that interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in Section 9 and Appendix B of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter is discussed.</i>	-	-
2.	Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th April 2023	1 - 6	-
3.	Appointment of Deputy Leader of the Council <i>The Leader to appoint the Deputy Leader of the Council in accordance with Article 7, paragraph 10 of the Constitution – Leader to report.</i>	-	All

4.	Remodelling of Children's Centres	7 - 176	All
5.	Electric Vehicles Charge Point Tariffs	177 - 192	All
6.	Implementation of NEC Housing Phase 2	193 - 198	All

Press and Public

Attendance and accessibility: You are welcome to attend this meeting which is open to the press and public, as an observer. You will however be asked to leave before any items in the Part II agenda are considered. For those hard of hearing an Induction Loop System is available in the Council Chamber.

Webcasting and recording: The public part of the meeting will be filmed by the Council for live and/or subsequent broadcast on the Council's website. The footage will remain on our website for 12 months. A copy of the recording will also be retained in accordance with the Council's data retention policy. By entering the meeting room and using the public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings.

In addition, the law allows members of the public to take photographs, film, audio-record or tweet the proceedings at public meetings. Anyone proposing to do so is requested to advise the Democratic Services Officer before the start of the meeting. Filming or recording must be overt and persons filming should not move around the meeting room whilst filming nor should they obstruct proceedings or the public from viewing the meeting. The use of flash photography, additional lighting or any non hand held devices, including tripods, will not be allowed unless this has been discussed with the Democratic Services Officer.

Emergency procedures: The fire alarm is a continuous siren. If the alarm sounds Immediately vacate the premises by the nearest available exit at either the front or rear of the Chamber and proceed to the assembly point: The pavement of the service road outside of Westminster House, 31 Windsor Road.

Key decisions shown in bold.

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 17th April, 2023.

Present:- Councillors Swindlehurst (Chair), Mann (Vice-Chair), Ajaib, Anderson, Bains, Hulme, Nazir and Pantelic

Apologies for Absence:- None.

PART 1

157. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

158. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th March 2023

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20th March 2023 be approved as a correct record.

159. Garden Waste Disposal (Composting) Contract

The Lead Member for Transport & The Local Environment introduced a report on the garden waste disposal (composting) contract.

The current contract with Shorts Agricultural Services Ltd would expire in September 2023 following a six-month extension to the contract by the Procurement Board in January 2023. The contract did not permit any further extensions therefore the Council would need to re-procure. Cabinet approval was sought to conduct a procurement exercise and to delegate authority to award the contract to the winning bidder, following consultation with the relevant Lead Members.

The Cabinet agreed the recommendations.

Resolved –

- (a) Authorised the commencement of a tender process for a contract for the disposal of garden waste (composting) to start in September 2023.
- (b) Delegated authority to the Executive Director of Place and Communities, in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial, the Lead Member for Customer Services, Procurement & Performance and the Lead Member for Transport and The Environment, to award the contract to the winning bidder and to enter into the contract.

(Councillor Pantelic joined the meeting)

160. Process to Procure DSO Vehicles

The Lead Member for Transport & The Local Environment introduced a report regarding the procurement options for the fleet of vehicles used by the environmental services team to provide waste collection, disposal, grounds maintenance, street cleansing and minor highway works.

The Council had been leasing a fleet of vehicles through a contract with Enterprise since 2017 but the contract was due to terminate and the vehicles were at end of life and procurement of replacement vehicles needed to take place. The preferred operating model was to continue to lease vehicles but that may be unaffordable so the alternative option of purchasing and maintaining vehicles would be considered. Once the pricing review of the options had taken place a report would come back to Cabinet in July 2023 to take the decision on the contract award.

The Cabinet agreed to test the market and requested that the options for electric or LPG vehicles was considered to attempt to achieve environmental benefits if possible. It was noted that the Council had previously had electric vehicles in its fleet. The Executive Director for Place & Community confirmed that all the options would be assessed, taking into account operational requirements, market availability and cost.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Cabinet agreed the recommendations.

Resolved –

- (a) That the use of the national ESPO framework and mini competition for the procurement of leased/contract hire vehicles where this provides best value be approved.
- (b) That the use of the CCS framework and mini competition for the purchase of vehicles where this provides best value be approved, noting that vehicle maintenance would be provided by Dennis Eagle under our existing vehicle maintenance contract.
- (c) Noted that a contract award report would be submitted to July Cabinet 2023.

161. Re-commissioning of Berkshire East Specialist Integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health Service

The Lead Member for Social Care & Public Health introduced a report that set out recommendations about how the Council could secure provision of a new specialist Sexual and Reproductive Health service (SRH) contract by 1st July 2024.

Sexual health services (contraception and testing/treatment for sexually transmitted diseases) were prescribed functions that local authorities had to fund through the public health grant. The Council had secured provision

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through a joint arrangement with other Berkshire authorities since the transfer of public health to local government in 2013. The contract with the current specialist provider expired on 30th June 2024. The Lead Member commented that the current arrangements worked well and joint commissioning provided best value and opportunities for economies of scale. A comprehensive service was offered from the Garden Clinic and outcomes such as HIV testing rates in Slough were considered to be good.

After due consideration the Cabinet agreed the recommendations.

Resolved –

- (a) Agreed to the re-procurement of the Berkshire East Integrated SRH Service led by Bracknell Forest Council on behalf of Bracknell Forest Council, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, and Slough Borough Council as a continuation of joint commissioning arrangements.
- (b) Approved the funding envelope for the Slough Borough Council element of the service to a maximum value of £6,256,691 over 5 years.
- (c) Agreed that Bracknell Forest Council would lead the procurement process, with representation from Slough Borough Council Public Health Team on the assessment and evaluation panel.
- (d) Delegated authority to the Executive Director People - Adults in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial and Lead Member for Social Care and Public Health, to take any action necessary and to sign all related legal and contractual documentation to enter into the new specialist SRH Service contract as a member of the Berkshire East joint commissioning arrangement.

162. School Places Strategy 2023-27

The Lead Member for Children's Services, Lifelong Learning & Skills introduced a report that sought approval of the School Places Strategy 2023-27.

The strategy had been revised and updated to set out the current school place planning position and projected requirements for nursery, primary, secondary, post-16 and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Local authorities were required to offer a school place to every resident pupil and the strategy was an important document in detailing the approach to secure suitable provision.

The Cabinet discussed some of the key demographic trends that influenced the strategy. The number of births in Slough had peaked in 2012 and had since been declining and the reduction in birth rates had affected the west of Slough much more than other areas of the town. There had been a significant

expansion of school places to accommodate the additional demand and it was noted that numbers of post-16 places were currently rising. There was also considerable fluctuation each year in the number of in-year applications from new arrivals to Slough and this made forecasting the future need for places challenging.

After discussion, the Cabinet agreed that the document was a sound basis to respond to these issues and approved the strategy as at Appendix A to the report.

Resolved – That the School Places Strategy 2023-2027 attached at Appendix A to the report be approved.

163. Procurement forward plan for services in excess of £180,000 and works in excess of £1 million in 2023/24

A report was considered that sought authority from Cabinet to commence the procurement for contracts of an estimated value of over £180,000 (services) and £1 million (works), that were proposed to be let in the 2023/24 financial year.

Further reports would be brought to Cabinet with an updated procurement forward plan for any services or works to be procured for the remainder of the financial year or before the cabinet meeting in April 2024. Lead Members were also asked to approve delegated authority to award a small number of contracts where tight timescales were involved.

The recommendations were agreed.

Resolved –

- (a) That commencement of procurement for the list of goods, works or services set out in Appendix A to the report be authorised;
- (b) That delegated authority be given to the Executive Director of Place and Communities, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport & The Local Environment and the Cabinet for Customer Services, Procurement and Performance to award contracts, to the best value bidder, for the Home to School Transport contracts indicated in Appendix A, as requiring delegated authority to award contracts due to tight timescales involved.
- (c) That delegated authority be given to the Executive Director of Strategy and Improvement following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Procurement & Performance to award contracts, to the best value bidder, for the Disaster Recovery for IT Systems, Backup Solution, Adults & Children's Social Care Systems SaaS Migration, Mobile Telephony Contract contracts indicated in Appendix A, as requiring delegated authority to award contracts due to tight timescales involved.

- (d) That delegated authority be given to Executive Director of Housing and Property following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Financial Oversight & Council Assets to award the contract, to the best value bidder for the Cornwall House Fire Safety works, as requiring delegated authority to award contracts due to tight timescales involved.

164. References from Overview & Scrutiny

There were no references from Overview & Scrutiny.

165. Disposal of 380 Bath Road, Slough

The Lead Member for Financial Oversight & Council Assets introduced a report that sought approval to dispose of the asset at 380 Bath Road, Slough. The property was currently let to Halfords Limited.

The Cabinet agreed to consider the matter as an urgent item. Members noted the information in the Part II appendix without disclosing any of the exempt information. It was noted that the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee had agreed that call-in could be waived to enable the disposal to be made as soon possible and minimise the risks to the Council if completion was to be delayed.

The Lead Member summarised the key aspects of the proposed disposal which was in line with the agreed Asset Disposal Strategy and had been declared surplus. The property had a good tenant in Halfords and if the disposal was agreed the Council would secure a sum in excess of the initial purchase price. The sale would contribute to the reduction in the Council's future financial commitments and generate a capital receipt to help reduce the Council's borrowing and MRP. Assurance was provided that the proposed sale had been subject to the due diligence process and reflected best consideration in relation to the relevant legislation.

The Cabinet agreed the recommendations.

Resolved –

- (a) Agreed to the Council sale of 380 Bath Road, Slough with the bidder named in Appendix 1 – Heads of Terms;
- (b) Delegated authority to the Executive Director of Property, Planning and Housing, in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Oversight and Council Assets and the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial, to negotiate the terms of and enter into the contract and any associated documentation in connection with the disposal consistent with the disposal report and Heads of Terms appended at Confidential Appendix 1 to the report.

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166. Exclusion of Press and Public

It was not necessary to exclude the press and public as all decisions were taken in Part I of the meeting without disclosing any exempt information.

167. Disposal of 380 Bath Road, Slough - Appendix

Resolved – That the Part II Appendix be noted.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.32 pm and closed at 7.14 pm)

Slough Borough Council

Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	24 th May 2023
Subject:	Remodelling of Children's Centres
Portfolio:	Children's Services, Lifelong Learning & Skills
Chief Officer:	Sue Butcher Chief Executive and Executive Director for Children's Services
Contact Officer:	Neil Hoskinson Associate Director for Education and Inclusion
Ward(s):	All
Key Decision:	YES
Exempt:	NO
Decision Subject to Call In:	YES
Appendices:	<p>Appendix 1 - Consultation Summary Report</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Travel Time Modelling</p> <p>Appendix 3 - Childcare sufficiency assessment update</p> <p>Appendix 4 - Revised Equalities Impact Assessment</p> <p>Appendix 5 - Focus Group Schedule – private, voluntary and independent sector</p> <p>Appendix 6 - Focus Group Schedule – residents and service users</p>

1. Summary and recommendations

- 1.1 This report seeks a decision from cabinet on the remodelling of children's centre services and ceasing directly provided childcare in specific children's centres where demand is low.
- 1.2 Consultation was recommended by cabinet at the December 2022 cabinet meeting. Public Consultation started early February 2023 and ended on 17th March 2023. We are now bringing the option suggested by the analysis of the outcome of the public consultation back to cabinet for a decision.
- 1.3 It is recommended that Cabinet agree to:

- (a) retain Chalvey Grove, Penn Road and Romsey Close as children's centre delivery sites with early years and Monksfield Way and Yew Tree Road for only Early Years provision. All other 5 current sites to close from September 2023.
- (b) Note that a report and strategy (following a business case and a feasibility study) will be brought back to Cabinet in October 2023 on a wider family hub model following engagement with the community and partner agencies in Slough.

1.4 Reasons:

- 1.4.1 The analysis of the online consultation, the face-to-face focus groups, service demand analysis for services, income maximisation analysis and the Slough area sufficiency report indicate the council should retain five sites for childcare and three sites for children centre based services at this time.
- 1.4.2 It is proposed that further work is undertaken on a wider strategy to ensure council and partner services are appropriately targeted and that the Council supports the PVI sector to meet the childcare sufficiency requirements.

Commissioner Review

Commissioners are content with the recommendations.

2. Report

2.1 Council priorities, strategic context, and the outcome of the public consultation

2.1.1 The decision recommended to the council is consistent with the following council priorities:

- A council that lives within its means, balances the budget, and delivers best value services for taxpayers and service users; and
- A borough for children and young people to thrive.

2.1.2 The recommended decision supports these priorities by seeking to make efficiencies from children's centres where demand is low for the services provided or there are suitable alternatives.

2.1.3 There is evidence to support from the public consultation and the evidence from a review of current service provision the current children centre services in Slough can be greatly improved by the following,

- shaping the market and in building in good commissioning practice to secure best value for public money.
- having a strategic commissioning approach to allow the private, the voluntary, and independent (PVI) sectors to provide for most childcare needs in the Borough.
- by consolidating services so that service provision is stronger and more sustainable in fewer centres.

2.2 Consultation feedback

2.2.1 The consultation engaged a wide range of stakeholder groups over a 6-week period using a range of different tools to gain evidence to support this report. The methods included an online survey, focus groups, and receiving feedback by email. The online

survey received 410 responses, with 91% of the respondents living in Slough. Focus groups and emails combined gathered feedback from headteachers, health professionals, residents who use the centres currently, Slough Borough Council staff, and Slough Children First staff. A detailed write-up of the feedback from the consultation is included in Appendix 1.

- 2.2.2 Respondents were asked to rank the three options for change, with option 1 receiving the highest level of support, being the option that retained the most physical sites. Many respondents mentioned that retaining 1 or 2 more centres than included in Option 1 would mitigate many of their concerns. This would bring the number of centres remaining open to 4 or 5. There were a range of views on which additional centres being kept open would make the biggest difference on improving outcomes for children and families. All centres were mentioned at least once by a respondent as a preferred option to keep open.
- 2.2.3 Overall, the centres are liked by families, staff, partner agency professionals, and other residents. This positive feeling came through in the responses, which expressed anxiety and sadness that some of the centres could close. When asked to rank which services respondents valued, childcare was ranked highest.
- 2.2.4 Many respondents said that more information on the future service offer might help to reduce their concerns.
- 2.2.5 There was a set of risks and opportunities related to Option 1 that were raised by respondents to the consultation. There were more risks than opportunities described. The main themes of the risks articulated by respondents included:
- Difficulties in finding suitable alternative childcare arrangements.
 - Increased barriers to access services through extra travel time or cost of travel.
 - Families where the adults and/or children have additional needs may not find suitable family services, early education services, or childcare that meet their specific needs.
 - The risk that additional needs would not be identified at an early stage, leading to delays in support and intervention.
 - Increased safeguarding risks as these remain “hidden” without opportunities for social interaction.
 - Risk of health services not being as accessible due to reduction in buildings.
- 2.2.6 Some opportunities were articulated by respondents, including:
- The remaining buildings could be kept open longer in the weekday evenings and on weekends to enable greater access.
 - Some of the services currently delivered in centres could be redesigned to be delivered from alternative buildings through a pop-up or outreach model.
 - Private and Voluntary Sector providers of family services, early education, and childcare might be able to expand and/or adapt provision.

2.3 Council response to consultation feedback

- 2.3.1 The Council has conducted travel modelling, the results of which are appended at Appendix 2. This has indicated that increasing the number of buildings available for childcare will have a positive impact on travel times to areas with higher prevalence of children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). Continuing to provide direct provision particularly suitable for these children will allow support to be put in place at an early stage and before the child starts school.
- 2.3.2 The new model of delivery is intended to provide outreach services, including via other council and community buildings. Extending this to a wider age range of children and families will be a key consideration in formulating a family hub model of delivery.
- 2.3.3 The Council will consider options for utilising the buildings in the evenings and weekends, where this fits with a family hub model. This will be particularly relevant when providing services for families with older children. It is intended that a report be brought back to Cabinet for approval of a new strategy.
- 2.3.4 Whilst the PVI sector already provide childcare to assist the Council with its childcare sufficiency duty, the Council will consider its strategic commissioning approach, taking account of the Government's policy plans in terms of increasing the provision of free childcare.

2.4 Other information

- 2.4.1 A petition entitled 'Save Slough Children's Centres' was launched on the [Change.Org](#) website platform by a resident. The petition referenced the potential closure of children's centres but with a focus on any potential impact on Romsey Close and a focus on childcare provision. The petition by 21/04/2023 gained signatories of 969. The council is not seeking the closure of Romsey Close.
- 2.4.2 Slough Borough Council also updated the statutory assessment for childcare sufficiency. This review is key to understanding the change in decision from a 3+1 model to a 3+2 model as detailed in the recommended option section. The update to the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment can be reviewed at appendix 3a and 3b.

2.5 Table 1: Range of options to consider.

Option	Early Years & Childcare	Children's Centre Functions	Recommendation
1 – Retain the status quo (current children centre provision remains the same with no change)	All ten centres	All ten centres	This model is not recommended as it does not provide value for taxpayer's money. This model does not also allow for targeting of resource to those most in need and involves spending resources on maintaining buildings as opposed to focusing these on outreach and community

			provision. This option will maintain childcare in areas where there is a surplus or evidence that the Private Voluntary and Independent sector who could also meet the demand. Childcare Sufficiency Addendum.
2 – Retain 3 CC sites and 3 childcare sites	Chalvey Grove, Romsey Close, Yew Tree Road	Chalvey Grove, Romsey Close, Penn Road	This option is not recommended based on the revised sufficiency evidence and the analysis of the public consultation outcome.
3 – Retain 2 Children’s Centres to include childcare provision	Chalvey Grove, Romsey Close	Chalvey Grove, Penn Road	This option is not recommended. There is a high-risk Slough Borough Council would not be able to meet its sufficiency duty as more time is required to shape the market and to bring alternative provision onboard with commissioning.
4 – Retain 1 Children Centre and offer no direct provision of childcare	No	Chalvey Grove	This option is not recommended. There is a high-risk Slough Borough Council would not be able to meet its sufficiency duty as more time is required to shape the market and to bring alternative provision onboard with commissioning.
5 – Retain 3 Children’s Centres and 5 childcare sites	Chalvey Grove, Romsey Close, Yew Tree Road, Monksfield Way, Penn Road	Chalvey Grove, Romsey Close, Penn Road.	This option is recommended based upon the outcome of the public consultation and further data analysis on in the effect of people being the least of all options whilst providing both optimum operational efficiency and value for taxpayer’s money.

2.6 Recommended option - retain three Children’s Centres and five early years provisions.

2.6.1 The two centres not used as children’s centres can be utilised as delivery sites for some services. The consultation results and their analysis have highlighted the

need to bring another option to cabinet to consider, which is based on current and potential future demand as well as the analysis of the need for residents and service users within Slough to travel further than what perhaps they had before by walking, by public transport and by car, this analysis can be reviewed in Appendix 2 “Modelling on Travel Times”.

2.7 Table 2 – Recommended Model

Location	Function	Service Delivery	
		Early Years and Childcare	Children’s Centre
Chalvey Grove	Main Centre or Hub	Yes	Yes
Penn Road	Main Centre/Hub	Yes	Yes
Romsey Close	Main Centre/Hub	Yes	Yes
Monskfield Way	Outreach/Spoke	Yes	No/Outreach/Virtual
Yew Tree	Outreach/Spoke	Yes	No/Outreach/Virtual

- 2.7.1 This option is recommended based on the outcome of consultation and further data analysis on sufficiency, legal duty, in retaining council income and in ensuring the council can meet future needs.

Implications of the Recommendation

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 The 2022-23 budget included £456k of planned savings in relation to Children’s Centres. £179k of these savings were achieved on an on-going basis via a review of staffing requirements, as previously reported to Members in the quarterly budget monitoring reports. The balance of savings totalling £277k will be achieved by the remodelling of the centres, scheduled to begin in September 2023, which will release on-going savings over both 2023/24 and 2024/25. In 2023/24 savings released will total £165k, with a further £118k of savings being released in 2024/25. This means that full year effect savings, of £462k, will be delivered from 2024/25 onwards, which is £6k above the original savings target. In 2023/24 the shortfall against the budgeted savings target will be covered by the reserve set aside for potential phased delivery of savings.

Table 3.2 Savings to be achieved.

Saving Description	2022/23	2023-24	2024-25
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Review of Staffing Requirements	179	179	179
Retain three Children's Centres and five early years provisions.	0	165	283
Total Full Year Savings	179	344	462

- 3.3 The above reductions ignore the potential reduction in property operating costs such as business rates and utilities as these would still be incurred whether the buildings were in use for the purpose or not. The budget in respect of this expenditure is held by the Housing and Property directorate so that the ongoing use of the properties can be considered including the financial impact of any change of use.
- 3.4 There may be some additional savings that arise later, but there will not be immediate savings as premises costs would continue to be incurred until such time as an alternative use/occupant is identified. Full consideration of options for alternative use will need to take account of potential income from tenants, any restrictions on use through planning, capital investment required for any change of use etc. This does not form part of this decision and will be considered at the appropriate time.
- 3.5 Although savings will be made through this proposal, there are staffing implications that need to be considered included redundancy and pension strain costs which could be in the region of £300k dependent on the staffing changes arising from this proposal. The cost of funding redundancy and pension strain costs is met from a corporate redundancy reserve which is held for this purpose.
- 3.6 There are ongoing costs to maintain unused buildings which are referred to further in the property implications section.

4. Legal implications

- 4.1 The Childcare Act 2006 requires local authorities to improve the wellbeing of young children in relation to their physical, mental and emotional well-being, education, training and recreation, contribution made by them to society and social and economic well-being. Local authorities are also under a duty to reduce inequalities between young children in these areas and ensure that early childhood services are provided in an integrated manner to facilitate access and maximise the benefit to users of the services. Children's centres are key to meeting these duties and the Council must ensure it has sufficient centres, so far as reasonably practicable, to meet local need.
- 4.2 In relation to sufficiency, the statutory guidance states that local authorities should ensure a network of centres that are accessible to all families with young children in the area, take account of distance and availability of transport, work with health and employment services to ensure those families who need support can access it, target services at those most at risk of poor outcomes through effective outreach services based on analysis of local need, demonstrate that all children and families can be reached effectively, ensure opening times and availability of services meet the needs of families and not close an existing centre unless it can be demonstrated that the outcomes of children, particularly the most disadvantaged, would not be adversely affected. There is a duty to consult on any intended closure or significant change to services. The results of the consultation are contained in appendix 1 and summarised in this report. These results must be considered in reaching a decision on future provision.
- 4.3 The Childcare Act 2006 also requires local authorities to secure sufficient childcare, as far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 – 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children). The strategic aim of early education and childcare provision is to work with parents, early years practitioners and partner agencies to support the development of all young children, including the most vulnerable, and to help them build the skills and resilience needed to become successful adults, with the capability and willingness to make a positive contribution to society.
- 4.4 The legislation allows local authorities to assist others to provide childcare including given financial assistance but specifies that local authorities should not directly provide childcare unless they are satisfied that no other person is willing to provide childcare for a particular child or group or it is otherwise appropriate to provide it. Local authorities providing childcare directly risk distorting the market, potentially preventing choice and options for small businesses to meet demand. Since 2006 local authorities' role in childcare/early years education has been to focus on market management and ensuring quality of provision.
- 4.5 When determining sufficiency, local authorities should take into account what is reasonably practicable, the state of the local childcare market including demand for specific types of providers, the state of the local labour market, the quality and capacity of childcare providers, encourage schools to offer childcare from 8am to 6pm and in school holidays, encourage existing providers to expand provision and new providers to enter the market if needed and encourage a sustainable business approach to planning by signposting providers to resources to support them.

- 4.6 The Children and Families Act 2014 sets out a statutory framework for supporting families of children with SEND. This includes a duty on local authorities to ensure that all providers delivering funded early education places meet the needs of children with SEND and should make sure that funding arrangements for early education reflect the need to provide suitable support for these children. This Act also requires local authorities to work in partnership with health providers to ensure integration of educational, health and social care provision where this would promote wellbeing and improve the quality of provision for children with SEND.

5. Risk management implications

Risks	Potential impact	Mitigating actions
1. Failure to maintain Children's Centre sufficiency	Breach of statutory duty. Inability of families, particularly the vulnerable to access early childhood services.	Needs assessment appended to December cabinet report. Consultation undertaken to assess impact. Work with partners so that core offer is maintained with emphasis placed on revised model coordinating offer and providing outreach and family support.
2. Failure to maintain early education and childcare sufficiency	Breach of statutory duty. Inability of families to access early education and childcare with residual impact on child (early education) and family (employment risk for example). Inability of vulnerable children including those with SEND to access early education.	Updated childcare sufficiency assessment. Increased directly provided childcare as result of consultation feedback. Continued work with PVI sector as part of strategic commissioning role.
3. Inability to make alternative use of assets, surplus to service requirements	Sites remain vacant and require ongoing maintenance.	Research potential alternative use options informed by scope and limitations of facilities. This work will be driven primarily by the Asset Disposals Programme Team to ensure that, where possible, surplus assets will be brought forward for disposal and any retained are effectively managed through the future Asset Management Plan.
4. Failure to manage transition effectively	Parents experience major difficult in finding alternative provision in a timely fashion.	Phase implementation in order to manage impact In line with the needs of parents in finding alternatives.

5. Clawback of capital grant afforded to construct centres	Financial impact on cost and savings projections.	Options for surplus buildings to continue to be used to support early years services either via use by PVI sector or schools.
6. Loss of preventative capacity which minimises children's social care demand	Increase in demand for statutory children's social care.	Work with targeted early help and Children's Social Care to manage transition as part of family hub strategy development.
7. Income	The centres need to drive income to support the structure	If the centre is unable to get the income there may be strain on budgets elsewhere.
8. Savings Targets	The recommended option is rejected.	Ensure the recommended option is supported by senior managers and continue engagement with members.

6 Environmental implications

6.1 No environmental implications identified.

7 Equality implications

7.1 A revised Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been drafted and attached as appendix 4 to this report. The proposed changes are likely to disproportionately impact females, as they are more likely to be the carer organising childcare or be the principal carer in a single parent family (64% of respondents to the survey were female), children with a disability and their families (16.9% of respondents indicated they had a child with a disability), working age adults and in particular those aged 25 to 39 as this age range are more likely to have young children and those who are pregnant or have had a baby in the last 12 months (11.8% of respondents had had a baby in the last 12 months). Mitigations identified are to work with a wider network of agencies and providers, including the PVI sector and to ensure that the new model is appropriately targeted to those most in need. Further work on a family hub strategy will consider these equality implications. In addition, the implementation plans will include clear communications and information on the changes and alternative service provision.

7.2 There are equalities implications associated with the proposed re-modelling of Slough Childrens Centres: these are likely to include both positive and negative impacts. Negative impacts include the potential reduction in access to and availability of services, and consequential support, particularly in the short term, whilst a transition to the new operating model is implemented. Full details of the profile of current service users, respondents to the consultation and specific equalities issues raised, is included in the Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 4). However, in summary due to the nature of the services children's centres provide, women and children under

the age of 5 years are over-represented as users compared to the general Slough population. Service monitoring also suggests that children and families from the Asian and Asian British communities are over-represented as users, and children/families of White/White British and Black/Black British communities are under-represented. Both recommended options involve a reduction in current centres, and this will impact the current users of those centres. However, both recommended options seek to mitigate those negative impacts wherever possible, ensuring access to services is maintained and ultimately benefit these groups by enhancing the targeting of services to help reduce inequalities of outcome for children and offer better, more sustainable support to local families.

8 Procurement implications

8.1 There are no procurement implications in this report to consider.

9 Workforce implications

9.1 All presented options for consultation have workforce implications which include the potential need to consult with the staff on proposed changes to the service should they be recommended and agreed.

9.2 Staff will be actively engaged in the consultation process with any further workforce implications determined and addressed, subject to the outcomes of the consultation process and any resultant changes that may be recommended. Several staff may need to be redeployed or are at risk of redundancy where they cannot be matched into another role. This could be a maximum of 10 roles that are not in the new structure and where job roles cannot be matched.

9.3 There is a need for a 45-day consultation with staff arising from the whole council restructuring of directorates and departments. There may be the need to consult full council and we will also consult the employment and appeals committee at Slough with the restructure report. We may also have a need to go to council regarding pension strain where this meets a certain threshold.

10 Property implications

10.1 Nine of the ten children's centres are on school land and therefore have constraints that need to be considered if a change of use or lease is proposed.

- 9 of the 10 assets are on school land and therefore require Secretary of State approval for disposal including entering into lease arrangements. An application for disposal to the Secretary of State would require full details of proposed leasing arrangements with an expectation that income would be used to benefit the school whose land is affected by the disposal.
- An application requesting permission to lease the facility to an alternative provider of childcare services is likely to be more acceptable to the Secretary of State and in addition a change of use planning application would not be required.
- Vicarage Way Children's Centre is not on a school site and permission for disposal would not be required. The site could be sold generating a receipt for the Council.
- Orchard Avenue Children's Centre is sited on land held in Trust by the school and is not owned by SBC.
- Advice from Planners is that the centres currently fall under Use Class F1(a) which is for the provision of education. If the children's centres are to provide medical or

health services, then this would fall under use class E and would require change of use planning permission. Any change of use application of school land would need approval from the Secretary of State.

- One of the main issues with any alternative use of the Children's Centres will be access as most of these centres sit within school grounds or have narrow access.

10.2 These proposals will mean that at least 4 assets on school sites will become vacant later this year. As the next step and to avoid funding empty assets a project team will be set up to determine the best use of each asset. Options for the released assets fall into 3 main categories:

Sale: this is not possible without Secretary of State approval apart from Vicarage Way. The receipt is likely to be ringfenced for schools by the Secretary of State as part of any approval. The school's view will be sought by the DfE as part of any application process.

Lease: not possible without Secretary of State approval. If there is interest from the PVI sector, consideration should be given to the terms of such an arrangement to ensure the building costs are not an ongoing burden for the Council. Capital clawback risk is reduced if the building continues to be used for early years services.

Transfer: this would remove SBC's financial burden for maintenance of the asset if passed onto the school. No Secretary of State permission would be required. An agreement could be reached with the school to ensure the services required by the LA are still delivered and capital clawback by the DfE is not a risk.

11 Background Papers

None.

Appendix - Consultation Responses Summary Report

1. Research Method

1.1 The consultation asked for opinions and evidence against three options presented. Three methods were used to gather opinions and evidence: (1) an online survey, (2) focus groups conducted in-person or virtually, (3) feedback from emails received.

1.2 The three methods described in more detail:

1. The online survey was published on Citizen Space, a consultation tool provided through the council's website - [Slough Children's Centres Consultation - Slough Borough Council - Citizen Space](#).
2. Focus groups were offered to parents and carers, headteachers, health service representatives, private and voluntary sector childcare providers, and other voluntary sector services. These took place in-person or virtually, depending on the preference of the group. The groups were led by a Group Manager from the council.
3. Email feedback was received mainly through the central mailbox - Childrens.Centres@slough.gov.uk and the council's complaints mailbox - Complaints@slough.gov.uk.

1.3 The consultation questions were designed to understand respondents' preferences between different options proposed for change, the services they valued most and identify the impact of specific decisions. The analysis overall has shown the responses for all centre users, specific centre users and separated based on equality groups and other characteristic such as household income or composition. The consultation data on equality groups has been used to update the equality impact assessment.

1.4 A set of research questions was used to focus the data capture and analysis, including but not limited to:

- What would the difference in impact be between Option 1, Option 2, and Option 3 in the consultation?
- How many people would have to travel further to reach a setting, and what would the increase travel time be?
- What would the impact be on areas within Slough that had higher levels of family, child, and services deprivation?
- What services delivered are most in demand currently and what would be the impact on those services if centres closed?
- Are there sufficient childcare places across the borough and in localities within the borough (this is covered in more detail in the childcare sufficiency assessment published separately to this paper)?
- What are the effects on provision from partner organisations e.g., health services?

2. Overall summary of the responses from the consultation

2.1 The majority response to the three options presented in the consultation document was that Option 1 was the preferred option. Option 1 was deemed to provide the most effective coverage of services out of the three options presented.

2.2 Many respondents mentioned that retaining 1 or 2 more centres than included in Option 1 would mitigate many of the risks. This would bring the number of centres remaining open to 4 or 5. There were a range of views on which additional centres being kept open would make the biggest difference on improving outcomes for children and families. All centres were mentioned at least once by a respondent as a preferred option to keep open.

2.3 Overall, the centres are liked by families, staff, partner agency professionals, and other residents. This positive feeling came through in the responses, which expressed anxiety and sadness that some of the centres could close.

2.4 Many respondents said that more information on the future service offer might help to reduce their concerns.

2.5 There was a set of risks and opportunities related to Option 1 that were raised by respondents to the consultation. There were more risks than opportunities described. The main themes of the risks articulated by respondents included:

- Families accessing childcare provision in centres that are closing may not find suitable alternative childcare arrangements.
- Families who currently walk to their local children's centre might now need to use public transport, a taxi, or a car and this would increase barriers to access through extra travel time or cost of travel.
- Families where the adults and/or children have additional needs may not find suitable family services, early education services, or childcare that meet their specific needs.
- The needs of children and adults would be spotted later in their life, due to more limited services and social interactions when children are in their first years.
- There may be fewer opportunities to safeguard vulnerable children and adults as current or emerging issues in families could remain more 'hidden' without the service support and social interactions that take place through the centres.

2.7 Some opportunities were articulated by respondents, including:

- The remaining buildings could be kept open longer in the weekday evenings and on weekends to enable greater access.
- Some of the services currently delivered in centres could be redesigned to be delivered from alternative buildings through a pop-up or outreach model.

- Private and Voluntary Sector providers of family services, early education, and childcare might be able to expand and/or adapt provision.

3. Online survey responses in detail

Headline summary

- 410 people responded to the online consultation survey.
- 374 respondents (91%) live in Slough.
- 229 respondents (57%) have at least one child aged 0-4.
- 241 respondents (59%) currently use Slough Children’s Centres - others are professionals or do not use centres currently.
- The most used centres were (in descending order): Penn Road (82 users, 34%), Romsey Close (70 users, 29%), Chalvey Grove (55 users, 23%), Monksfield Way (54 users, 22%), and Yew Tree Road (45 users, 19%).
- 125 respondents (56%) use centres daily.
- 114 users (47%) travel to centres by car and 111 (46%) walk.
- 100 users (42%) travel less than one mile to centres and 90 users (37%) travel 1-2 miles.
- 86% of respondents selected option 1 (3 Children’s Centre model).
- However, many respondents stated risks and concerns relating to option 1, such as a reduction in services that meet needs and limited access to different centres (e.g., travel times, no access to a car, costs, access to childcare affecting work).
- Many proposed keeping more centres open – frequently suggesting 4-5 centres, adding Monksfield Way and Yew Tree Road to the three proposed in option 1.
- Most respondents supported the idea of expanding services to older children up to age 18 (or age 25 if they have SEND).
- Demographic information:
 - 74% were female and 19% male. 7% did not say.
 - 48% were age 25-39 and 26% were age 40-49.
 - 42% were White and 33% were Asian.
 - 78% were in employment.
 - 29% were in receipt of benefits.
 - 11% have a disability and 17% have a child with a disability.
 - 37% were Christian and 24% were Muslim.
 - 1.1% were pregnant at the time of the survey and 10.5% had a baby in the last 12 months.
 - 19% were single parents.

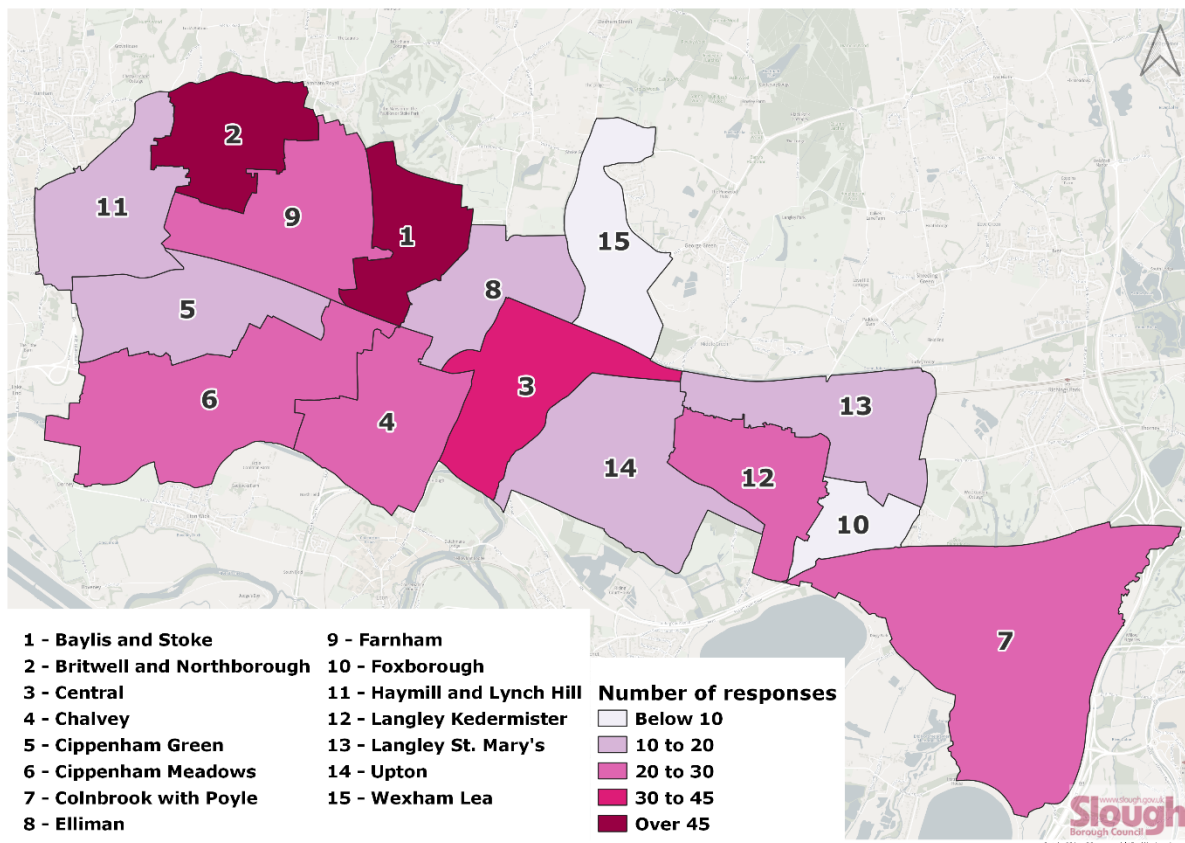
The respondents

There were 410 responses to the online consultation survey.

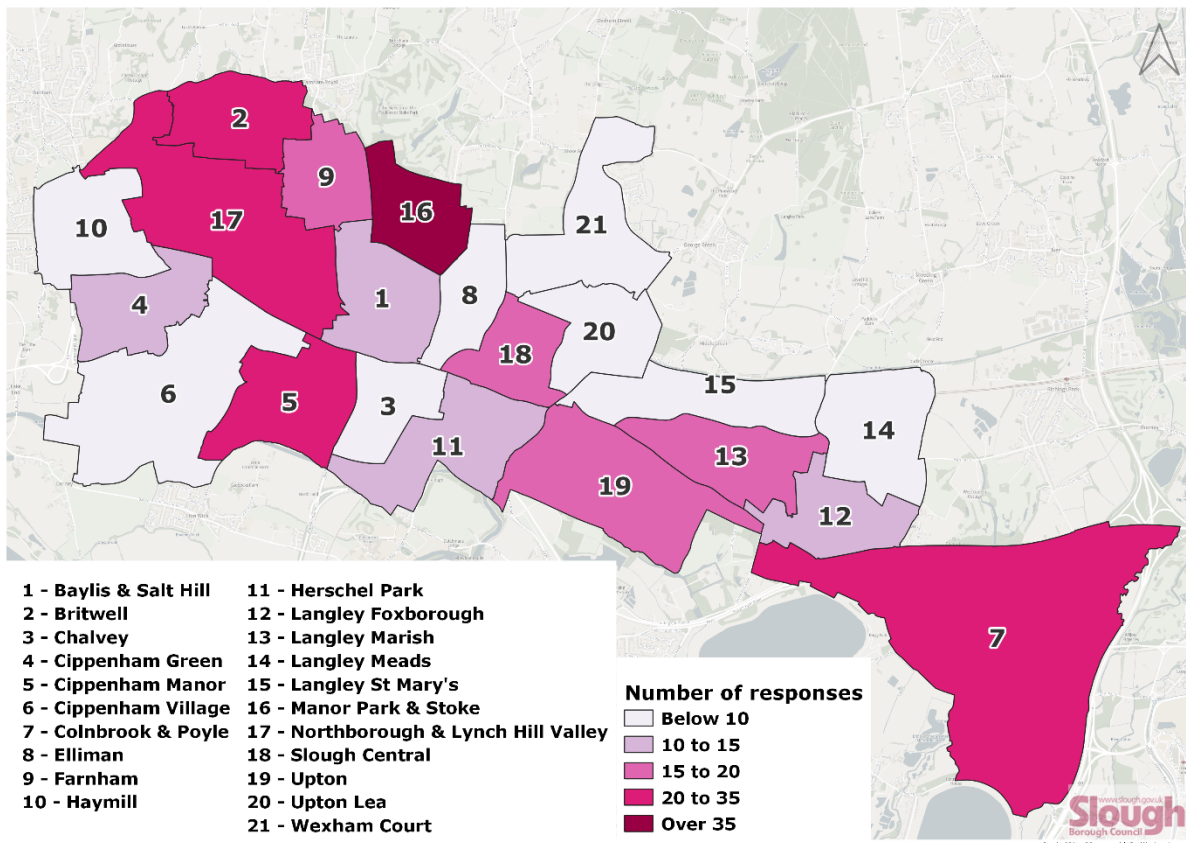
The online survey was set up so that respondents were shown relevant questions based on their previous answers (e.g., respondents who answered that they were partners or stakeholders were not shown questions intended for service users and residents).

Responses by Ward (previous ward boundaries and new ward boundaries):

Previous wards	Count of responses	Percent of responses
Baylis and Stoke	48	12%
Britwell and Northborough	50	12%
Central	33	8%
Chalvey	21	5%
Cippenham Green	16	4%
Cippenham Meadows	30	7%
Colnbrook with Poyle	22	5%
Elliman	11	3%
Farnham	28	7%
Foxborough	8	2%
Haymill and Lynch Hill	16	4%
Langley Kedermister	24	6%
Langley St. Mary's	13	3%
Not within SBC	64	16%
Upton	19	5%
Wexham Lea	7	2%
Grand Total	410	100%



New wards	Count of responses	Percent of responses
Baylis & Salt Hill	13	3%
Britwell	30	7%
Chalvey	9	2%
Cippenham Green	15	4%
Cippenham Manor	27	7%
Cippenham Village	9	2%
Colnbrook & Poyle	24	6%
Elliman	6	1%
Farnham	20	5%
Haymill	9	2%
Herschel Park	14	3%
Langley Foxborough	12	3%
Langley Marish	19	5%
Langley Meads	9	2%
Langley St Mary's	5	1%
Manor Park & Stoke	43	10%
Northborough & Lynch Hill Valley	32	8%
Not within SBC	64	16%
Slough Central	16	4%
Upton	17	4%
Upton Lea	10	2%
Wexham Court	7	2%
Grand Total	410	100%



All 410 respondents were shown the following questions (Q1-5).

Q1: Is English the language you (or the person you are responding on behalf of) are most comfortable using?

395 respondents (96.3%) answered “yes”. The survey presented all respondents with information on how to access a translated version of the survey if required.

Q2: Are you registered with Slough Children’s Centres?

261 respondents (63.7%) answered that they are registered with Slough Children’s Centres. 132 (32.2%) answered that they are not registered, and 17 (4.1%) answered that they did not know.

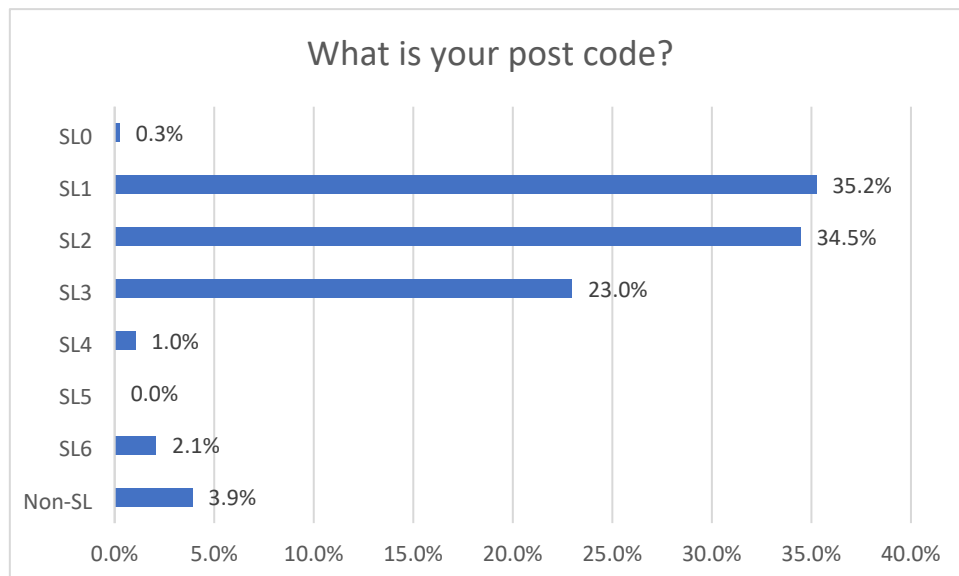
Q3: Do you live in Slough?

374 respondents (91.2%) answered that they live in Slough. 36 (8.8%) did not live in Slough.

Q4: What is your post code?

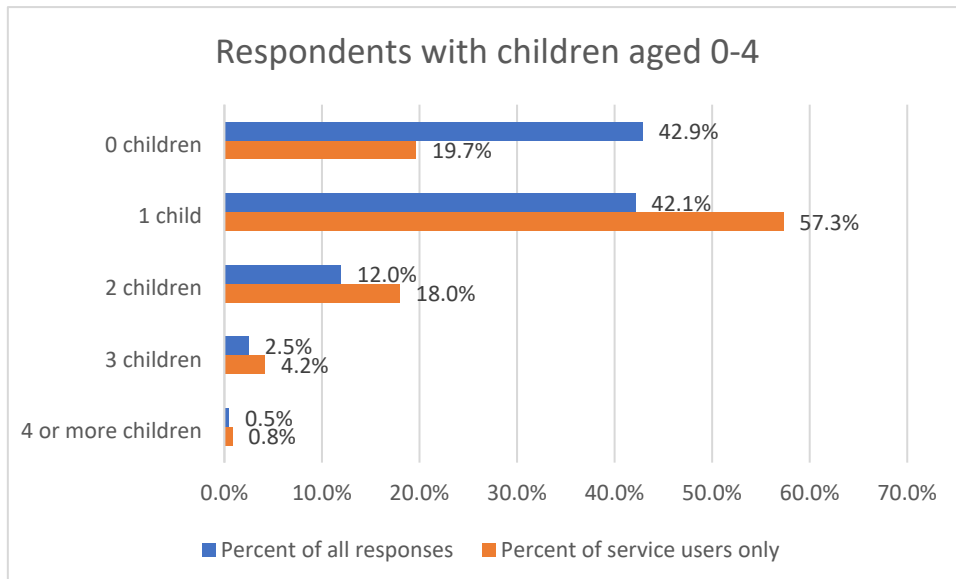
383 respondents provided their post code. The most frequent post codes were SL1 (135 responses, 35.2%) and SL2 (132 responses, 34.5%).

Post codes



Q5: What is the number of people in your household?

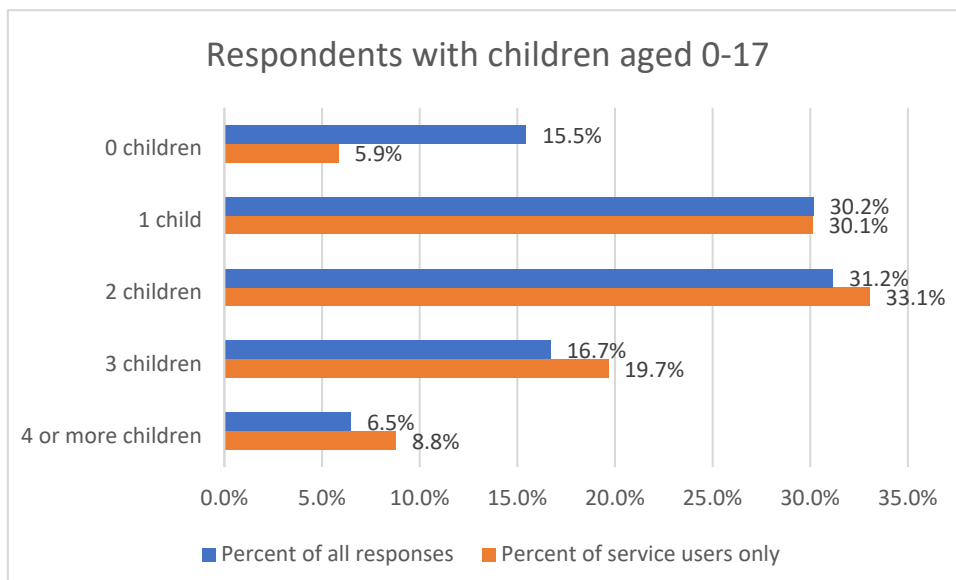
All 410 respondents answered question 5 regarding their household composition, however 9 of these responses contained invalid answers (e.g., 0 adults in a household or 0 for all age groups), resulting in 401 valid responses. 240 of these responses were from respondents who answered that they use Slough Children’s Centres in the next question (Q6).



The blue bars are responses from all 401 respondents. The orange bars are responses from only the 240 who said they use Slough Children’s Centres.

169 of the 401 respondents (42.1%) have one child aged 0-4, 48 (12.0%) have two children, 10 (2.5%) have three children, 2 (0.5%) have four or more children, and 172 (42.9%) have no children aged 0-4.

137 of the 240 service users (57.3%) have one child aged 0-4, 43 (18.0%) have two children, 10 (4.2%) have three children, 2 (0.8%) have four or more children, and 47 (19.7%) have no children aged 0-4.



The blue bars are responses from all 401 respondents. The orange bars are responses from only the 240 who said they use Slough Children’s Centres.

121 of the 401 respondents (30.2%) have one child aged 0-17, 125 (31.2%) have two children, 67 (16.7%) have three children, 26 (6.5%) have four or more children, and 62 (15.5%) have no children aged 0-17.

72 of the 240 service users (30.1%) have one child aged 0-17, 79 (33.1%) have two children, 47 (19.7%) have three children, 21 (8.8%) have four or more children, and 14 (5.9%) have no children aged 0-17.

Use of Children’s Centres and services

Q6: Do you use a Children’s Centre to access services?

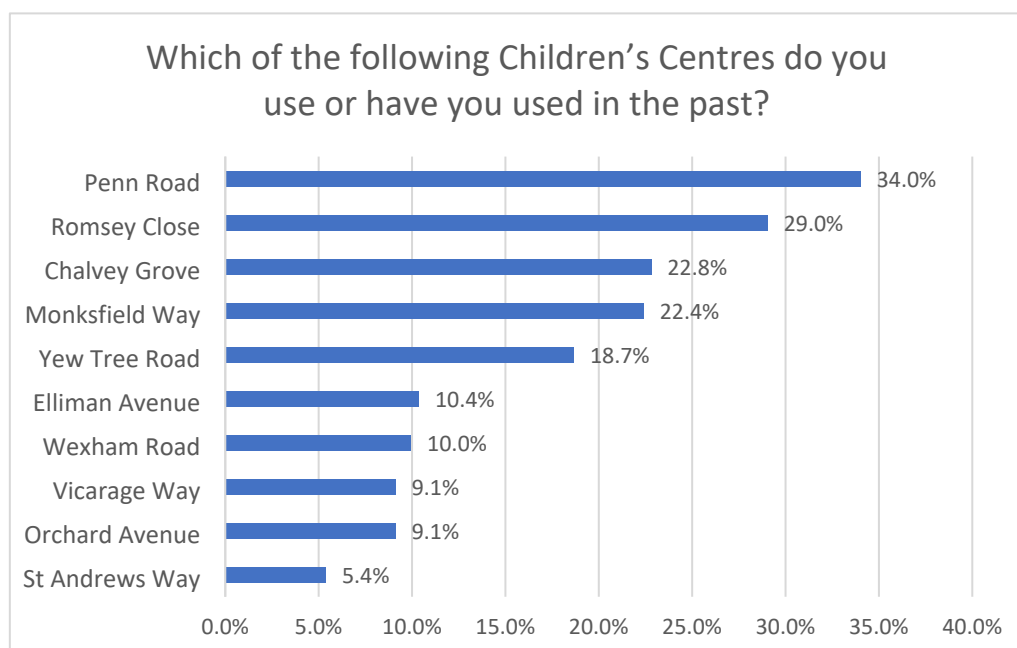
241 respondents (58.8%) answered that they use Children’s Centres to access services. 109 (26.6%) answered that they do not use Children’s Centres to access services and 60 (14.6%) answered “not applicable”. “Not applicable” was the recommended answer for partners, stakeholders, service providers, and members of staff in Slough Children’s Centres.

Only the 241 respondents that answered that they use Children’s Centres in Slough (“yes” to Q6) were asked the following questions (Q7-10).

Q7: If yes, which of the following Children’s Centres do you use or have you used in the past?

The five Children’s Centres used most by respondents were:

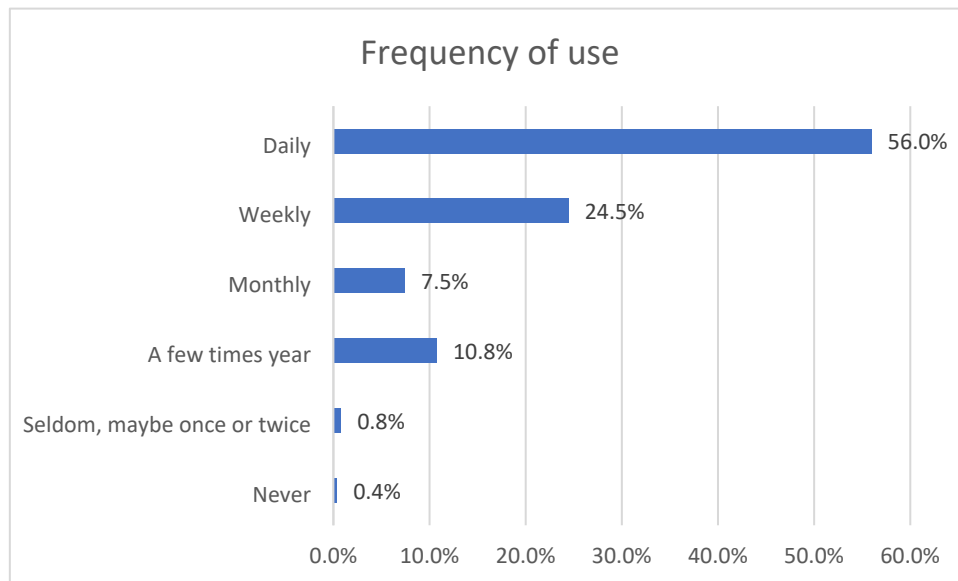
1. Penn Road - 82 users (34.0% of users)
2. Romsey Close - 70 users (29.0%)
3. Chalvey Grove - 55 users (22.8%)
4. Monksfield Way – 54 users (22.4%)
5. Yew Tree Road – 45 users (18.7%)



Respondents could select more than one Centre.

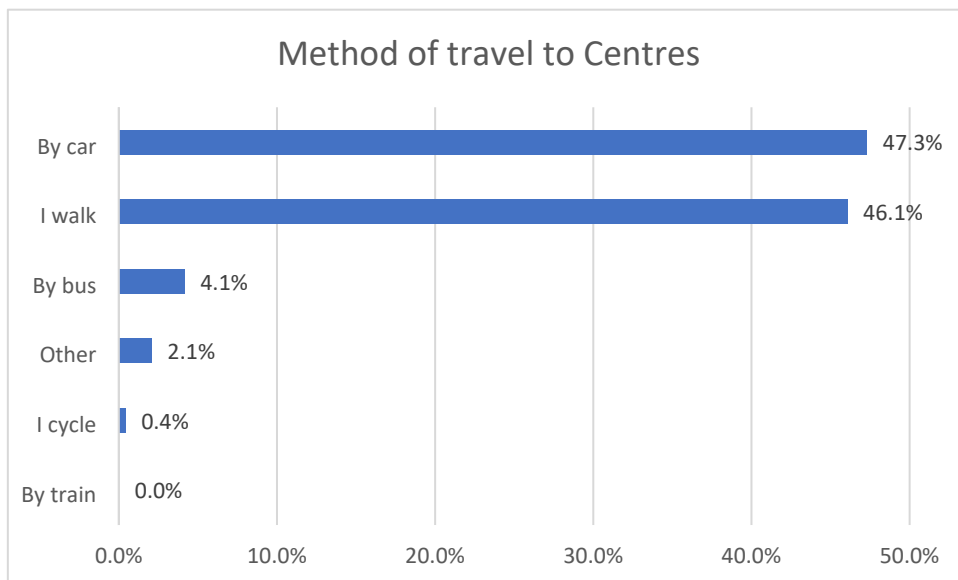
Q8: In a typical year, how often would you use a Children’s Centre?

135 of the 241 respondents who use Children’s Centres (56.0%) use them daily, 59 (24.5%) use them weekly, 18 (7.5%) use them monthly, and 29 (12.0%) use them a few times a year or less.



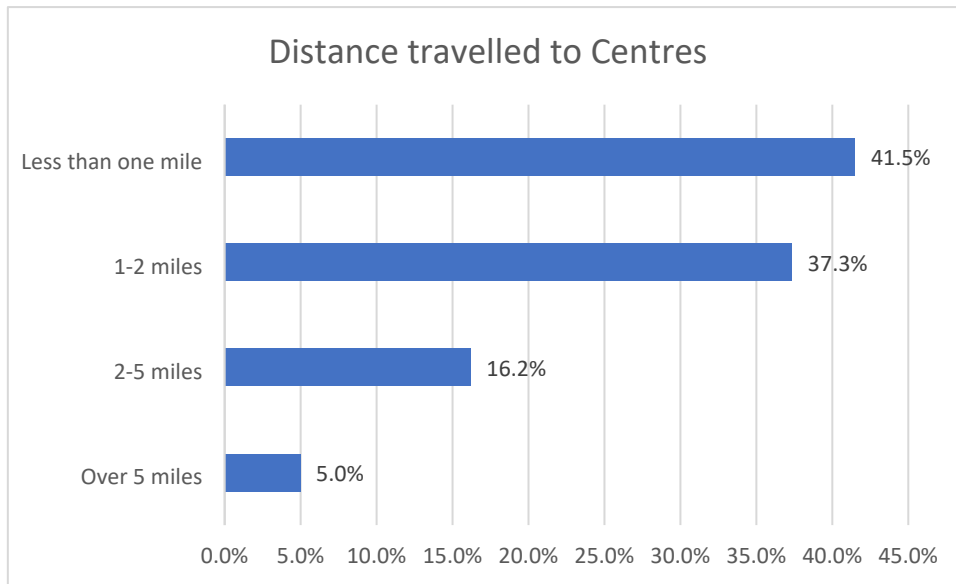
Q9: When you visit a Centre, how do you normally travel there?

114 of the 241 respondents who use Children’s Centres (47.3%) travel to Centres by car, 111 (46.1%) walk, 10 (4.1%) travel by bus, and 6 (2.5%) use other methods such as cycling, taxi, or a combination of car and walking.



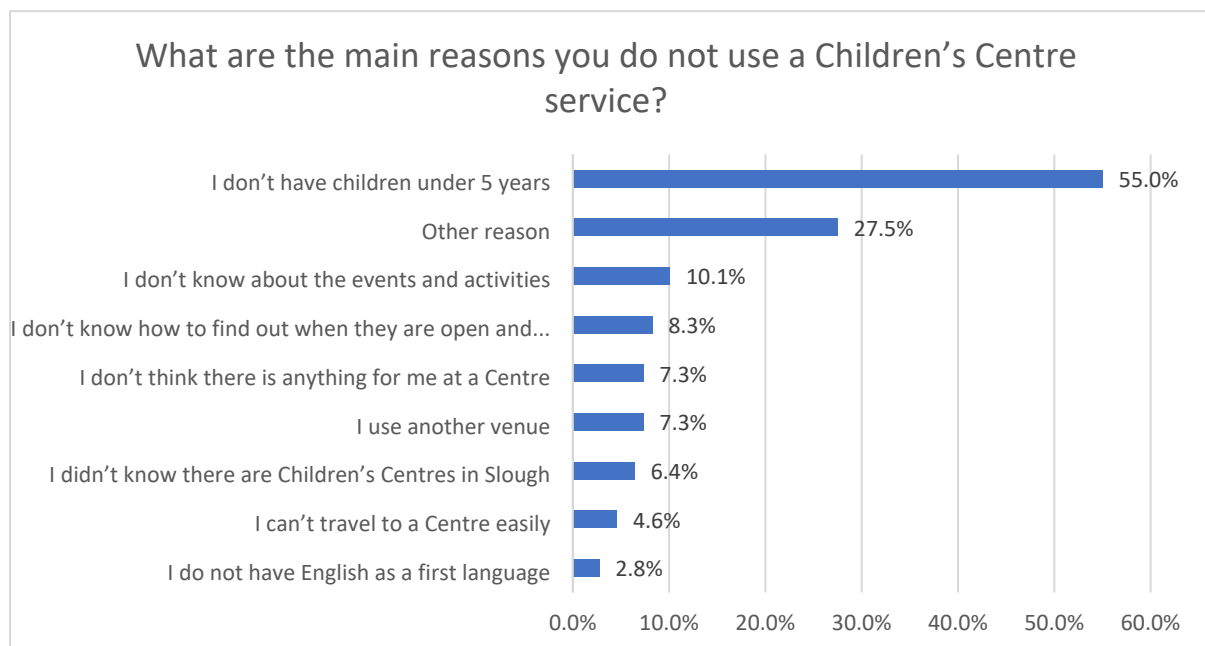
Q10: How far do you travel to get to the Centre?

100 of the 241 respondents who use Children’s Centres (41.5%) travel less than one mile, 90 (37.3%) travel 1-2 miles, 39 (16.2%) travel 2-5 miles, and 12 (5.0%) travel over 5 miles.



Q11: What are the main reasons you do not use a Children’s Centre service?

The 109 respondents who answered that they do not use Children’s Centres were asked for the main reasons they do not use them. The most frequent response was “I don’t have children under 5 years” (60 respondents, 55.0%).



Of those that selected “I don’t need to attend services in a Children’s Centre, I use another venue” and expanded in the text box:

- Three said they use another venue that is more culturally diverse or that the Children’s Centre services are not culturally diverse enough.
 - One respondent wrote: “I use more of a diverse surface that accommodates all cultures as there is not enough diversity in the children centres and so we opt for private services that will accommodate us”
- Three said they use private/paid for services

- Two use online support (e.g., Teams)

Of those that selected “other reason” and specified in the text box:

- 9 said they are not currently using them but have in the past (e.g., their children are now older)
- 3 said they plan to use them in the future (e.g., planning for a baby)
- 2 said they do not use them because the services are not culturally diverse enough or that they are “aimed towards certain groups”
 - One respondent wrote: “SBC has little to no services for the ethnic community especially for black families and children i use a service that covers this in the community thus is not reflected i your staff or services”.
- Other responses included: using other services instead, another family member uses them, wanting online support or one-to-one sessions instead, and being unable to get appointments

Q12: Out of the list of services below, please select all the services that you value as part of the Children’s Centre offer.

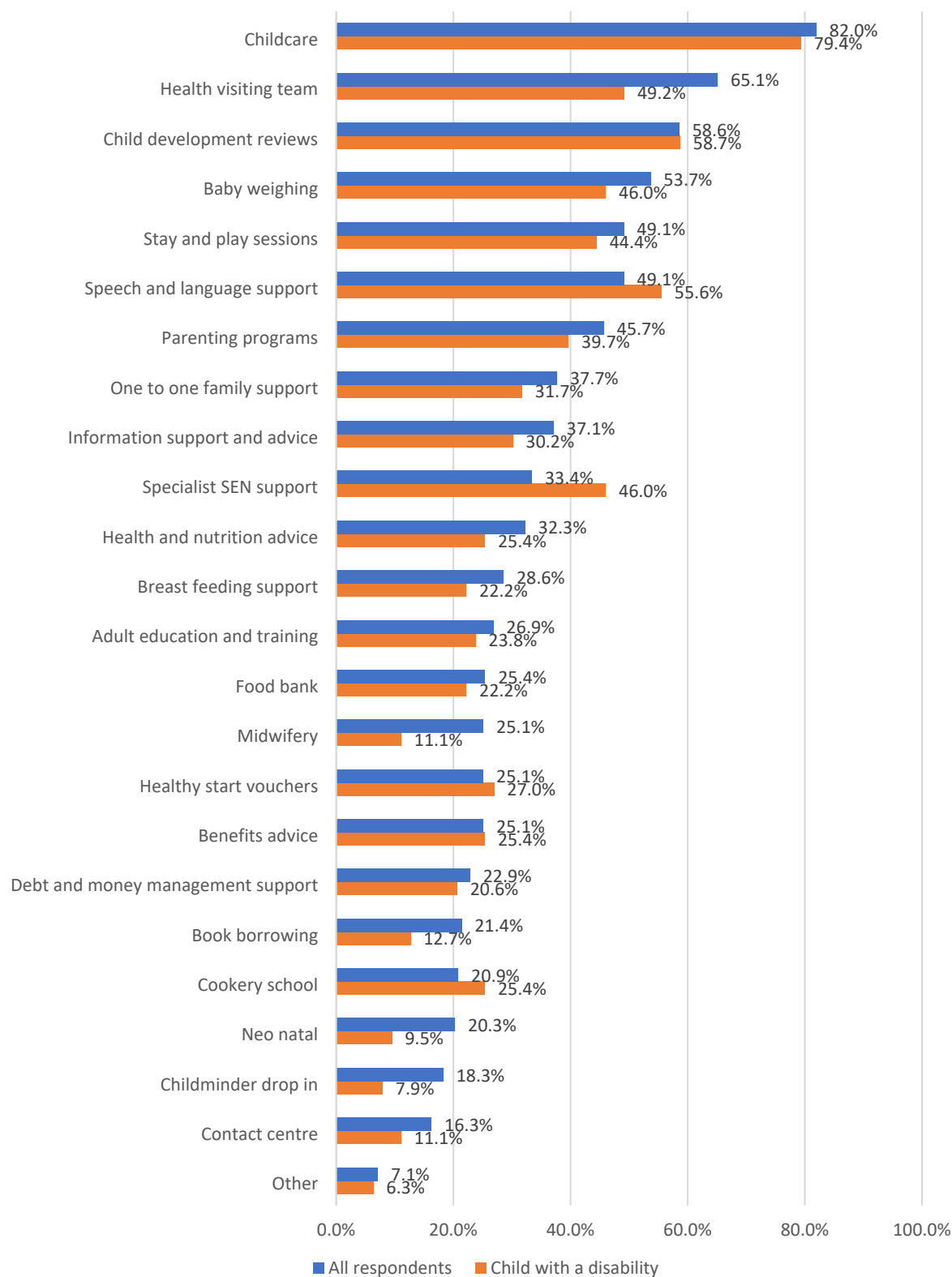
Residents and service users (350 respondents) were asked to select from a list which services they valued as part of a Children’s Centre offer. The top 10 options selected were:

- Childcare - 287 responses (82.0% of respondents)
- Health visiting team - 228 responses (65.1%)
- Child development reviews - 205 responses (58.6%)
- Baby weighing - 118 responses (53.7%)
- Speech and language support, and stay and play sessions – tied with 172 responses (49.1%)
- Parenting programs – 160 responses (45.7%)
- One to one family support – 132 responses (37.7%)
- Information support and advice – 130 responses (37.1%)
- Specialist SEN support – 117 responses (33.4%)

63 of these respondents have a child with a disability. The top 10 options selected by these respondents were:

- Childcare – 50 responses (79.4% of respondents with a child with a disability)
- Child development reviews – 37 responses (58.7%)
- Speech and language support – 35 responses (55.6%)
- Health visiting team – 31 responses (49.2%)
- Baby weighing and Specialist SEN support – tied with 29 responses (46.0%)
- Stay and play sessions – 28 responses (44.4%)
- Parenting programs – 25 responses (39.7%)
- One to one family support – 20 responses (31.7%)
- Information support and advice – 19 responses (30.2%)

Which services residents and service users value as essential

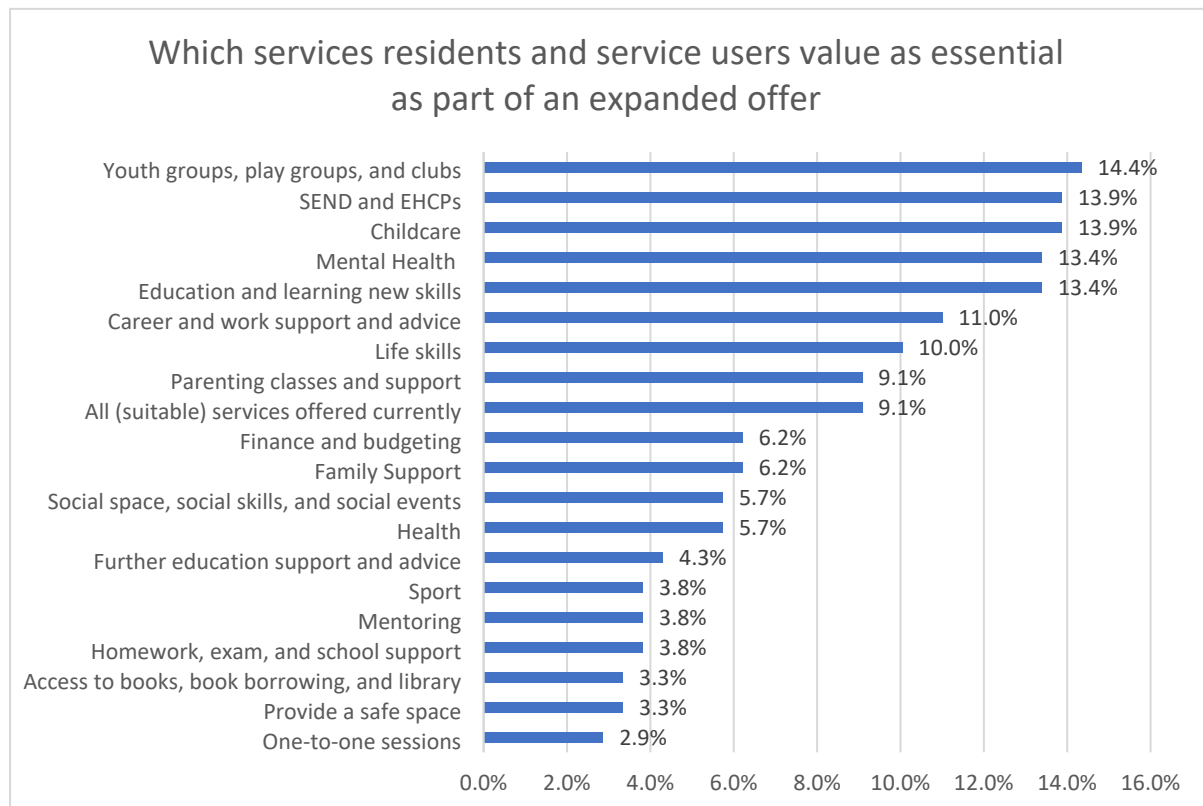


The blue bars are responses from all 350 respondents. The orange bars are responses from only the 63 respondents with a child with a disability.

Q13: If in future we were to expand services to families with older children and young people up to age 18 (or age 25 if they have SEND), what services would you feel would be essential?

209 respondents wrote in answers. The most frequent responses were:

- Youth groups, play groups, and clubs – 30 responses (14.4% of respondents)
- Childcare (including wrap around, after school, breakfast clubs, and during school holidays), and SEND and EHCPs support – tied with 29 responses (13.9%)
- Education and learning new skills, and mental health support – tied with 28 responses (13.4%)
- Career and work support and advice – 23 responses (11.0%)
- Life skills – 21 responses (10.0%)



7 respondents (3.3%) did not agree with extending services to older children or wanted to focus on existing children’s services for now.

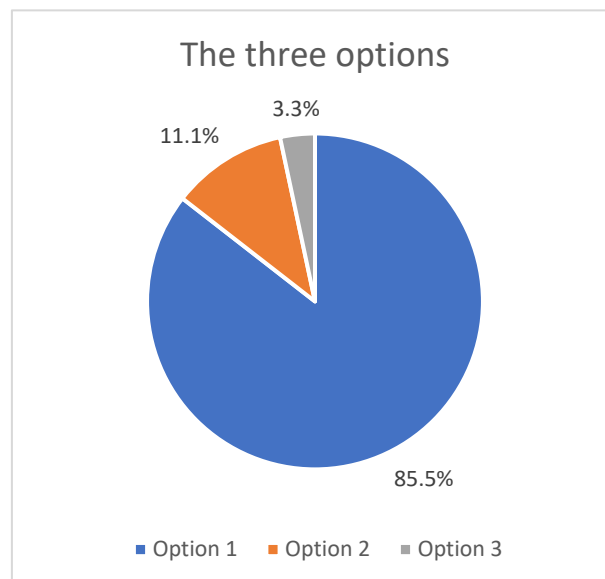
The options

All 410 respondents were asked the following questions regarding the proposed options (Q14-16). However, due to an error with the wording of Question 14 in the consultation document that was originally published, there was a need to validate the first 65 responses. An email was sent to respondents where an email address was provided. 39 of these respondents provided their email addresses and were contacted to validate their responses. 18 responded and 16 validated their

responses (2 responded to the email but did not choose an option). This resulted in 359 valid responses for Q14 and 15. All 410 responses were valid for Q16.

Q14: After reading the proposal for change to Slough Borough Council’s Children’s Centre provision, what are your thoughts about our proposal to make changes to Slough’s Children’s Centres? Listed below are three options to consider. Please choose the option that you believe is the best option for Slough Borough Council.

Option 1 (3 Children’s Centre model) was the most frequently selected option, receiving 307 responses (85.5%). Option 2 (2 Centre model) received 40 responses (11.1%), and option 3 (1 Centre model) received 12 responses (3.3%).



Q15: Please tell us why you chose that option.

350 respondents wrote in a response to this question. The most frequent responses were:

- Wanting to keep more than 3 Children’s Centres open - 98 respondents (28.0%)
- Not agreeing with any of the options and wanting to keep all 10 Centres open - 78 respondents (22.3%)
- Choosing option 1 because it kept the highest number of Centres open - 51 respondents (14.6%)
- Wanting the “four main” Centres to stay open (Penn Road, Romsey Close, Chalvey Grove, and Monksfield Way) - 19 responses (5.4%)
- Praise for the current Centres - 59 respondents (16.9%)

Several respondents named specific Centres in their responses, praising them and/or saying they would like that Centre to stay open:

- Penn Road – 38 responses (10.9%)
- Romsey Close – 24 responses (6.9%)

- Monksfield Way – 17 responses (4.9%)
- Yew Tree Road – 17 responses (4.9%)
- Chalvey Grove – 9 responses (2.6%)
- Vicarage Way – 5 responses (1.4%)
- Orchard Avenue – 1 response (0.3%)

The most frequent concerns or risks raised in responses were around:

- Reducing services that meet needs (including where will children and parents go to access these services and will there be enough capacity for everyone to access the services at the remaining Centres) – 52 responses (14.9%)
- Limiting access, especially due to travel times, travel availability/access, and costs – 43 responses (12.3%)
- Affecting work (including not being able to work without childcare provision, having to reduce hours, or not being able to travel to a Centre and then get to work on time) – 22 responses (6.3%)
- Not being able to access alternative provision (including availability and costs) – 18 responses (5.1%)
- Reducing early prevention, signposting and referral to other services and information – 16 responses (1.7%)
- Loss of safe spaces and safeguarding for vulnerable children and adults – 6 responses (1.7%)

The following are some quotes from responses:

- “The delivery of accessible Early Childhood services is evident in national research to have a significant impact on positive outcomes for children. Since the pandemic, we have seen a reduction in children's centre services and a subsequent knock on effect of increasing needs for children requiring statutory services because needs have not been met early. There has been a decrease in face to face support for residents in Slough which impacts on accessibility with many of our residents lacking access to technology or technical ability to access the current service offer from sbc”
- “Children's Centres in Slough have historically been considered a safe place for victims of domestic abuse, with many seeking solace as they make disclosures about DA, due to the placement of Children's centres on school sites.”
- “There will be too many vulnerable families being missed, which will definitely impact children's child protection. Also to close that many nursery's, will directly Impact parents. They will be pushed to private day nursery's some at double the cost. There will also not be enough places to to cover all those children.”
- “Travelling for some parents would be difficult. with the amount of people in the area waiting lists will be long”
- “We are both parents working and to drop & pick up we need to be close to our house, we dont have a car, otherwise we can loose our job if need to walk to [another centre]”

- “A reduction in the children's centres could result in the most vulnerable children and families being missed for the support they may require. This will could also have a impact on slough children's services.”

Q16: If you have any other options you think the council should consider, please state these.

254 respondents wrote in a response to this question.

133 respondents (52.4%) mentioned wanting to keep more centres open.

- 65 respondents (25.6%) mentioned wanting to keep all centres open.
- 19 respondents (7.5%) specifically mentioned keeping the “four main Centres to stay open (Penn Road, Romsey Close, Chalvey Grove, and Monksfield Way).
 - 7 respondents (2.8%) specifically mentioned keeping the “main four” plus Yew Tree Road open.
- 15 (5.9%) specifically mentioned keeping a different arrangement of three centres open: Romsey Close, Chalvey Grove, and Yew Tree Road.

Several respondents named specific Childrens’ Centres they want to stay open:

- Penn Road – 30 respondents (11.8%)
- Monksfield Way – 26 respondents (10.2%)
- Yew Tree Road – 23 respondents (9.1%)
- Chalvey Grove – 21 respondents (8.3%)
- Romsey Close – 20 respondents (7.9%)
- Vicarage Way – 7 respondents (2.9%)
- Elliman Avenue – 1 respondent (0.4%)
- Wexham Road – 1 respondent (0.4%)

More detailed and specific suggestions included:

- Hiring out the buildings when not in use for children, e.g., for evening classes, community groups, and external organisations to use
- More working in partnership with schools and the private, voluntary, and independent sector
- Expanding outreach provision to engage with more families
- Expanding paid for services such as childcare for older children
- Offering online services and support

The following are some quotes from responses:

- “I say Monksfield Way needs to be added to this list, make it 4 Centres, one for each part of the town, and let the Britwell Community come together, supported by partners and the Council and make it financially viable.”
- “Keep 5 centre's the original 4 penn road, chalvey Grove, monksfield way and Romsey close and the central slough centre yew tree road as I belive this would be beneficial to the children and families of slough with all major areas covered. I live in [redacted] and if I had to travel to [a different centre] I simply

wouldn't use the centres as they would be too difficult to get to having to get 2 buses or walking 45 mins to 1 hour each way to the centres would be too much”

- “I suggest keeping Vicarage Way Children's Centre as it's on the outskirts of Slough and so many residents, especially children, need this centre to stay open so they can attend activities and use the only satellite library service available in the Colnbrook area”
- “Consider allowing the space to be rented by outside organisations in the evenings eg Antenatal Education, language classes etc”
- “Creating mini hubs in community centers with access to technology, to access web chat contact with leading professions who can provide support and advice about child health and learning/ development”
- “Staffing children centres seems to be an issue, so use staff differently. Have the experts in Early Years focus on the nursery/childcare provision. Then have a room for NHS, a room for DWP, a room for SBC housing etc.”
- “...you need to close the ones without education. You need to look at those education settings becoming centres of excellence and providing support to the PVI sector” ... “You could work in partnership with EY funding to upskill PVIs using the CC model and ensure that settings can only claim EY funding if they engage. You could further partner with linked Primary schools to enhance early years understanding amongst qualified teachers. You could develop a model similar to the Slough Nursery Schools network and look at charging for your experience. You could run seminars for all sorts of professionals, at a cost. You could offer an "advisory service" at a cost. You could use CCs as a venue for other speakers on education, health etc. matters.”
- “I believe the council should continue to provide options for nursery care for baby onwards as a private option and generate revenue for the council”
- “My option would be to let the Nurseries lead on the education side, as they have for many years, there is no reason why they couldn't work collaboratively with Children's Centre. They would then be free to concentrate and run excellent childcare provision (both paid & funded) at a smaller number of centres targeted where the need is and also run centres for excellent Early Years Family Support, such as health visitor weigh ins, Special Needs Units and referrals, play groups, courses & help for parents, advisory sessions CAB etc. to support families who need it the most.”
- “Provide some of these facilities in libraries, which would reduce costs, but maintain provision of facilities and help keep libraries open as well.”

Partners, stakeholders, service providers, and members of staff in Slough Children's Centres

Q17: Are you a resident or service user, or a partner organisation, stakeholder, service provider, or member of staff in a Slough Children's Centre?

340 respondents selected “resident or service user” (82.9%) and 70 respondents (17.1%) selected “partner organisation, stakeholder, service provider, or member of staff in Children’s Centre in Slough”. Only partner organisations, stakeholders, service providers, and Children’s Centre staff answered the following questions (Q18-23).

Q18: What is your organisation?

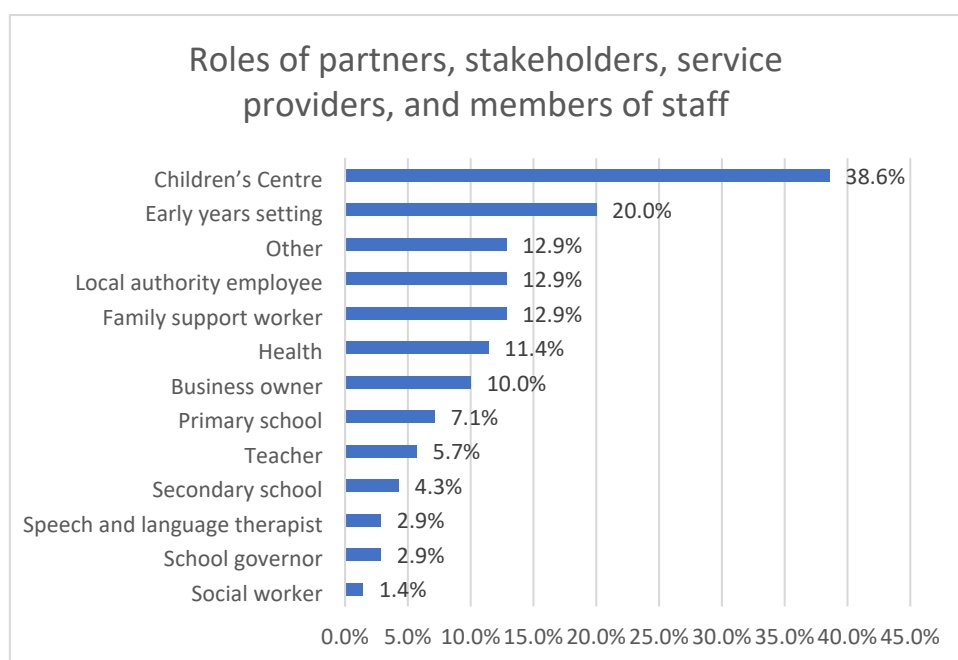
The most common organisations written in by the 70 partners were:

- Children’s Centres – 14 responses (20%)
- Slough Borough Council – 12 responses (17%)
- Schools – 11 responses (16%)
- Slough Children First – 6 responses (9%)
- Early Years Services – 5 responses (7%)

Q19: As a partner, stakeholder, service provider, or member of staff, which of the following (if any) closely matches your role?

27 of the 70 respondents (38.6%) selected “Children’s Centre” as their role, 14 (20.0%) selected “Early years setting”, and 9 (12.9%) selected “Family support worker”, “Local authority employee” or “Other”.

Of those that selected “other” and specified, responses included Slough Children First, Learning Advocate, Housekeeping, Pre-school, and therapeutic adviser.



Q20: From your perspective as a current or future service partner, stakeholder or early years provider please tell us how the proposals impact your aims and objectives?

70 respondents wrote in responses to this question.

12 responses (17.1%) suggested that they may be able to continue with their work (with some changes to adapt to the change in Centres).

Other responses raised the following concerns:

- Whether children and parents would still be able to access services (e.g., “where will the children go”, will there be enough capacity or longer waiting lists) - 16 respondents (22.9%)
- The impact on children’s outcomes and/or that children would miss out on support and opportunities - 12 respondents (17.1%)
- Decreased uptake in their services - 7 respondents (10.0%)
- The impact on support and identification of children with SEND - 6 respondents (8.6%)
- Other concerns included the loss of early years provision, access to child care, partnership opportunities, and opportunities to identify and support vulnerable families.

The following are some quotes from responses:

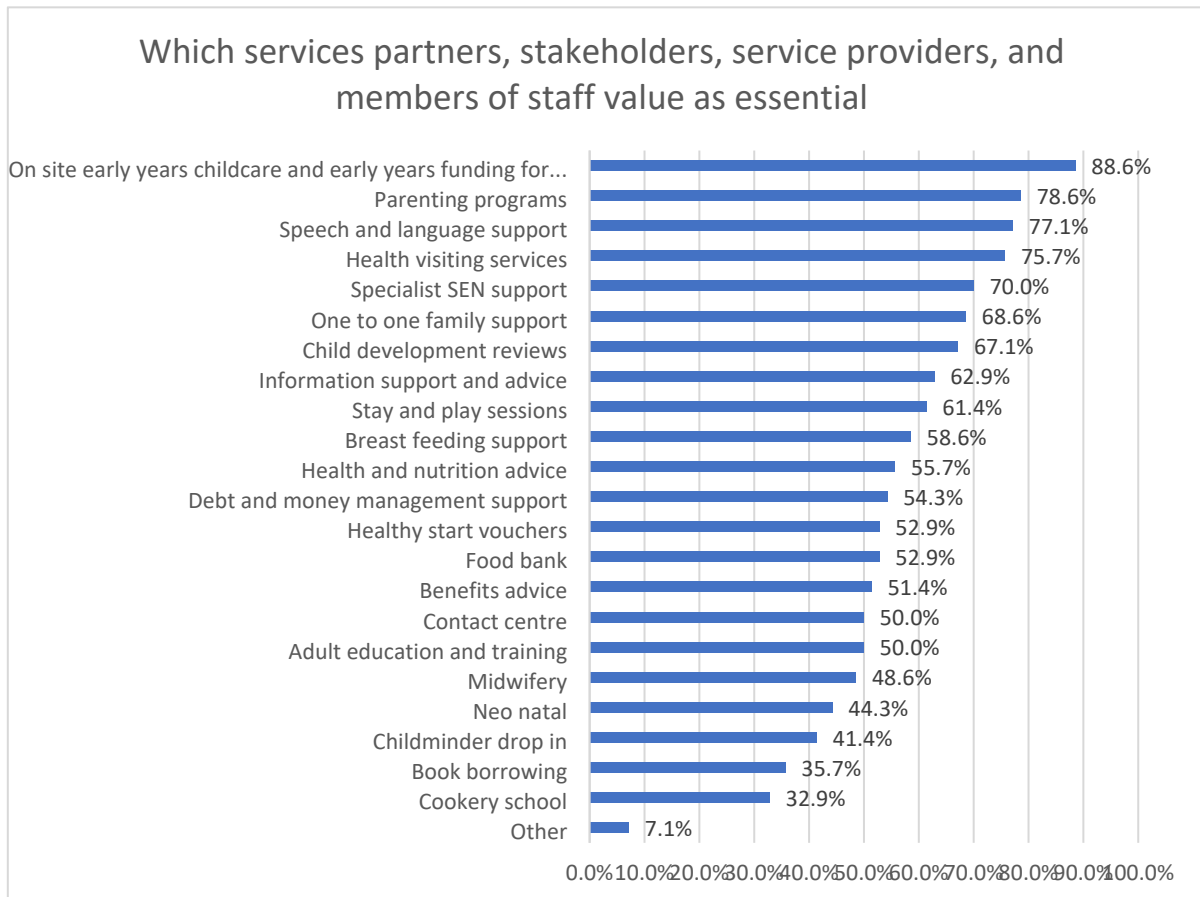
- “I feel closing the centres leave people out of work and children out of care. Some children rely on a session at the children’s centre for a cooked meal, routine and care. Their parents need support and respite with challenging children and children with SEN. It is important to make sure families are getting the right support and to have members of staff to take to for help. It’s also known a child who starts nursery at 2 has a better outcome in school.”
- “The availability of a centre in the 3 main areas in Slough means we will still be able to arrange and meet clients at the children centres. Our presence at the Family Centres also keeps our service at the forefront and staff can refer families to us when issues we support with arise within a family who are service users.”
- “Less opportunity to work in partnership with Children’s center and professional staff.”
- “We will have to look for other venues to deliver our services. We will have less places to refer our families to.”
- “Delivery of Early Help needs to be localised and accessible within communities. The delivery of parenting programmes, SEND outreach and localised direct work with young people will not be possible without access to the safe space of our children’s centres which will decrease accessibility to this much needed support from my team”

Q21: Which of the following services in Children’s Centres do you feel are essential in supporting improved outcomes for children and families?

The 70 partners, stakeholders, service providers, and staff in Children’s Centres were asked to select from a list which services they feel are essential in supporting improved outcomes for children and families. The top 10 options selected were:

- On site early years childcare and early years funding for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds - 62 responses (88.6% of respondents)

- Parenting programs - 55 responses (78.6%)
- Speech and language support - 54 respondents (77.1%)
- Health visiting services - 53 responses (75.7%)
- Specialist SEN support - 49 responses (70.0%)
- One to one family support – 48 responses (68.6%)
- Child development reviews – 47 responses (67.1%)
- Information support and advice – 44 responses (62.9%)
- Stay and play session – 43 responses (61.4%)
- Breast feeding support – 41 responses (58.6%)

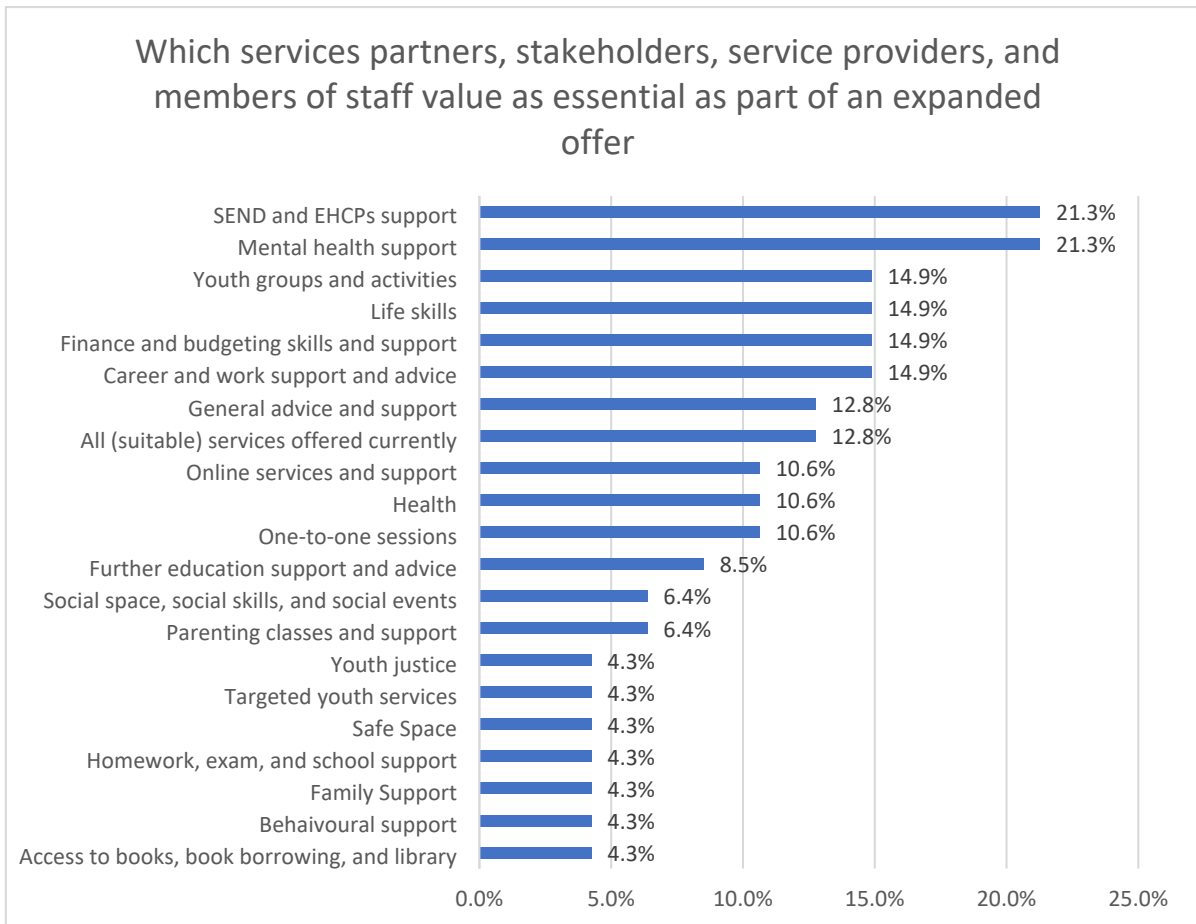


Respondents could select more than one option.

Of those that selected “other” and specified, responses included baby massage, story and rhyme, online support, support networks, and classes for parents.

Q22: If in future we were to expand services to families with older children and young people up to age 18 (or age 25 if they have SEND), what services would you feel would be essential?

47 respondents wrote-in a response to this question. The most frequent responses were mental health support and SEND and ECHPs support, being mentioned in 10 responses each (21.3% of respondents).



Q23: Are you a member of staff in one of the ten named Children’s Centres in Slough?

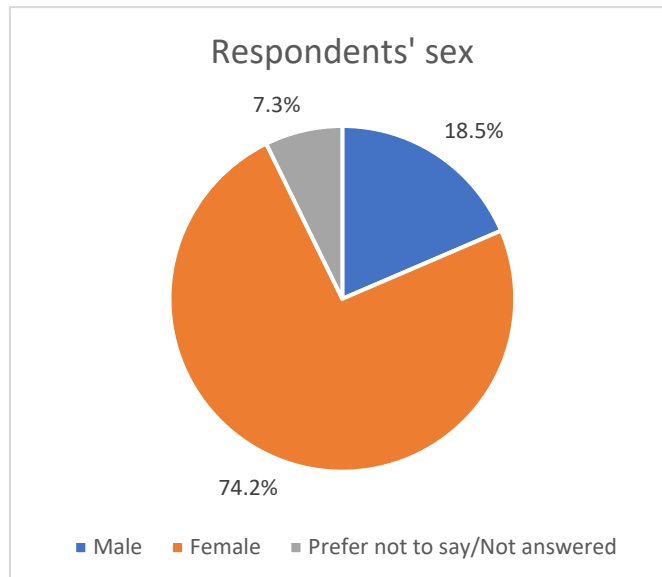
32 of the 70 respondents (45.7% of the 70 responses, 7.8% of the total 410 consultation respondents) answered that they are members of staff in one of the ten named Children’s Centres in Slough.

Demographic information

Only residents, service users, and members of staff in Slough Children’s Centres (372 respondents) answered the following questions (Q24-43). All these questions were optional and respondents that did not wish to answer could either skip the question (“not answered”) or select “prefer not to say” as an answer – these answers have been combined in the follow results and tables.

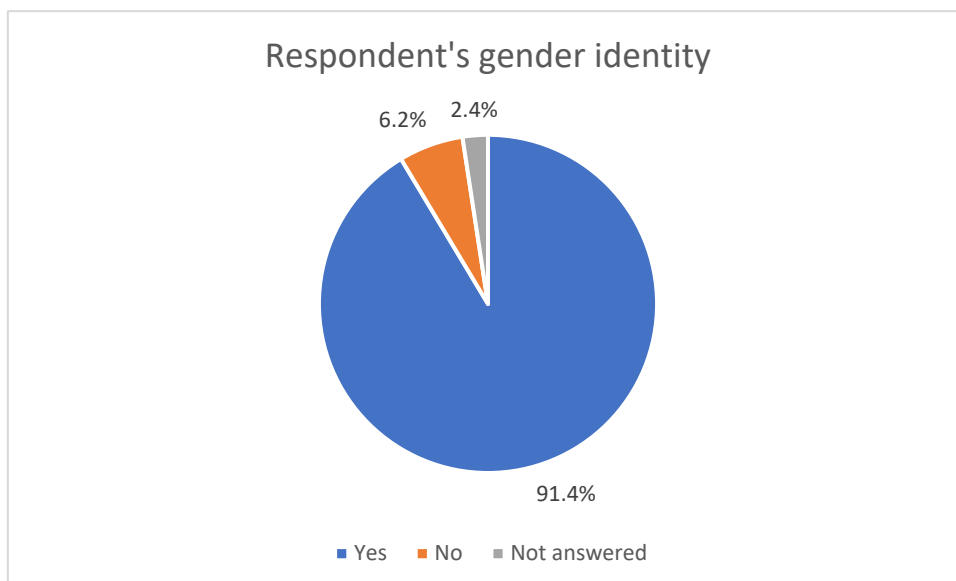
Q24: What is your (or the person you are responding on behalf of) sex (as registered at birth)?

276 respondents (74.2%) were female and 69 (18.5%) were male.



Q25: Is the gender you (or the person you are responding on behalf of) identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

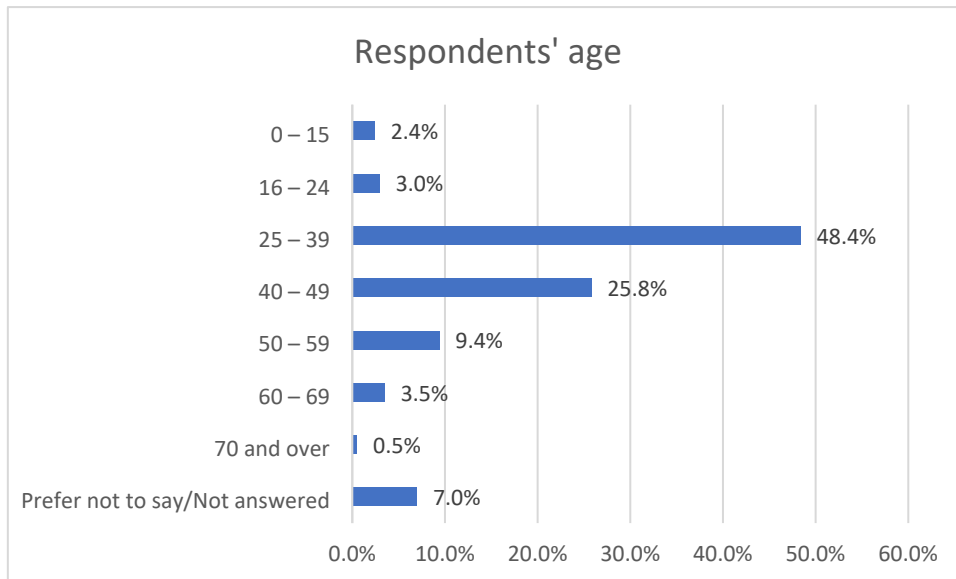
340 respondents (91.4%) answered yes (they identify as the same gender that they were assigned at birth). 23 respondents (6.2%) answered no.



Most respondents who answered no did not specify their gender identity. 3 respondents wrote in identities – 2 male and 1 female. This aligns with the 2021 census, where most people in Slough and nationally that selected “no” did not specify an identity.

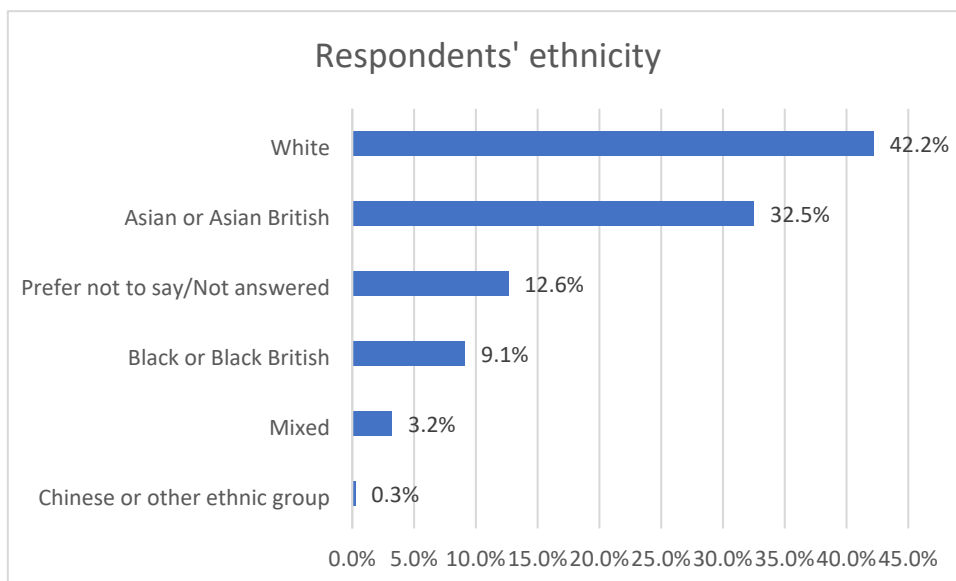
Q26: What is your age (or the age of the person you are responding on behalf of)?

180 respondents (48.4%) were aged 25-39 and 96 (25.8%) were aged 40-49.



Q27: What is your (or the person you are responding on behalf of) ethnic group?

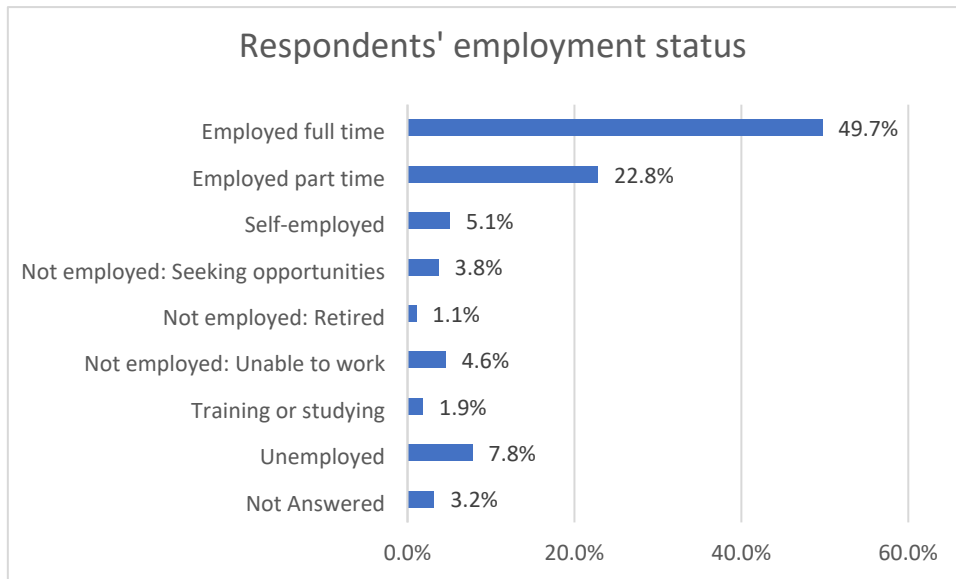
157 respondents (42%) were from White ethnic groups and 121 (33%) were from Asian ethnic groups.



Q28: What is your employment status?

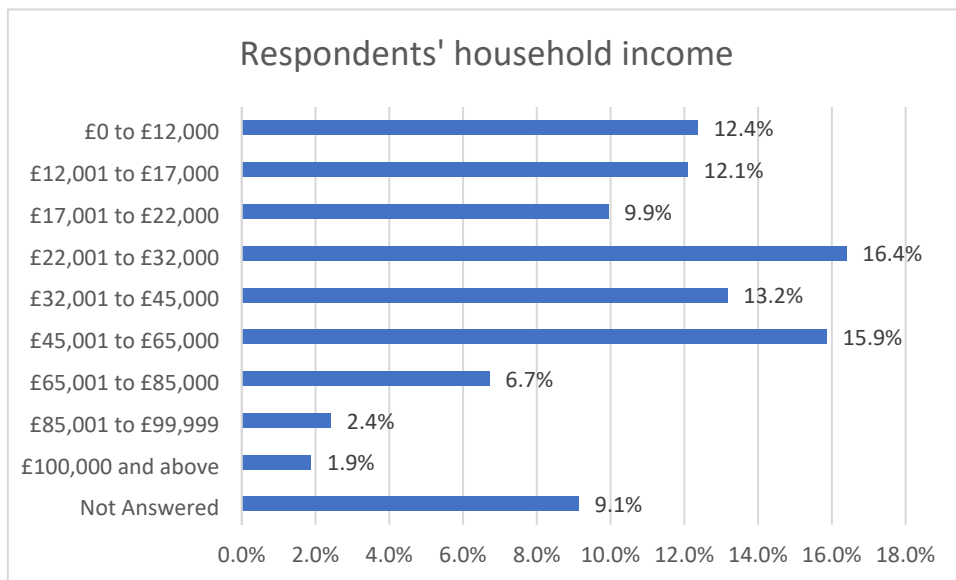
289 respondents were employed (77.7%), with 185 (49.7%) employed full time, 85 (22.9%) employed part time, and 19 (5.1%) self-employed.

71 respondents were not in employment (19.1%), with 29 unemployed (7.8%), 17 (4.6%) unable to work, and 14 seeking opportunities (3.8%).



Q29: What is your household income?

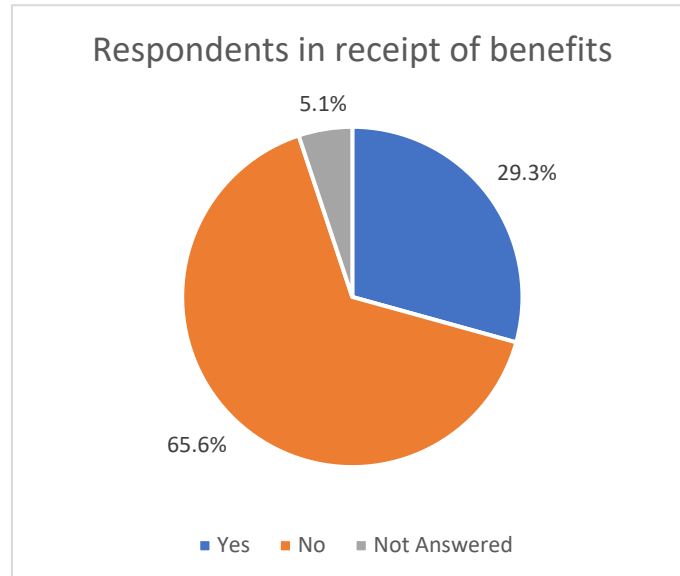
The most frequent responses were £22,001 to £32,000 (61 responses, 16.4%) and £45,001 to £65,000 (59 responses, 15.9%).



Household income	Total	Percent
£0 to £12,000	46	12.4%
£12,001 to £17,000	45	12.1%
£17,001 to £22,000	37	9.9%
£22,001 to £32,000	61	16.4%
£32,001 to £45,000	49	13.2%
£45,001 to £65,000	59	15.9%
£65,001 to £85,000	25	6.7%
£85,001 to £99,999	9	2.4%
£100,000 and above	7	1.9%
Not Answered	34	9.1%

Q30: Are you in receipt of any benefits?

109 respondents (29.3%) were in receipt of benefits and 244 (65.6%) were not.

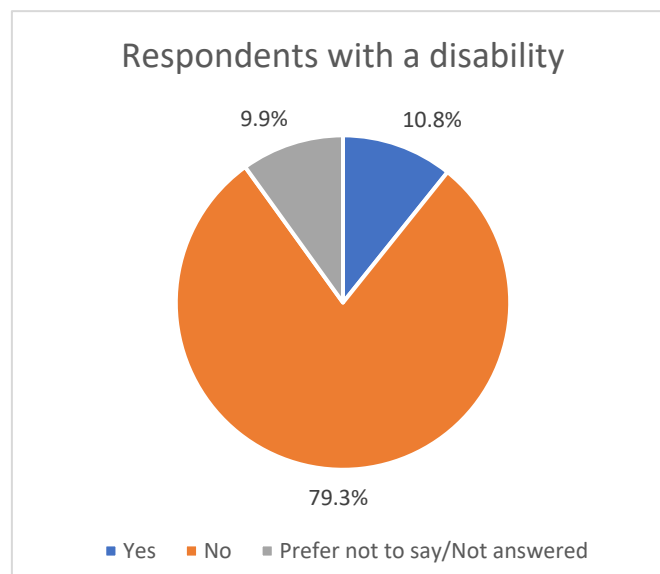


Respondents were also asked to write-in which benefits they receive. 82 respondents wrote-in responses. The most frequent responses were:

- Universal Credit – 40 responses
- Child Benefit – 20 responses
- Tax Credits – 10 responses
- Income Support – 4 responses
- Disability Living Allowance – 4 responses
- Carer’s Allowance – 3 responses
- Housing Benefit – 3 responses

Q31: Do you (or the person you are responding on behalf of) have a disability?

40 respondents (10.8%) have a disability and 295 (79.3%) do not.



Q32: If you have a disability, please tell us which of the following impairment groups apply to you.

Of the 40 respondents that selected “yes” they have a disability for Q31, the most frequent impairment selected was mental health/mental distress issues (11 respondents, 27.5% of respondents)

Respondents with a disability – impairment groups (1)

Impairment Group	Total	Percent
Visual impairment	1	2.5%
Physical impairment	2	5.0%
Deaf/BSL User	1	2.5%
Hearing impairment	0	0.0%
Mental health/mental distress issues	11	27.5%
Learning difficulties	8	20.0%
Long term health condition/hidden impairment	6	15.0%
Neurodiverse	9	22.5%
Prefer not to say	3	7.5%
Other (please specify)	3	7.5%
No. Eligible Respondents	40	

Of those that selected “other” and specified, responses included Autism and specific health conditions (e.g., heart disease).

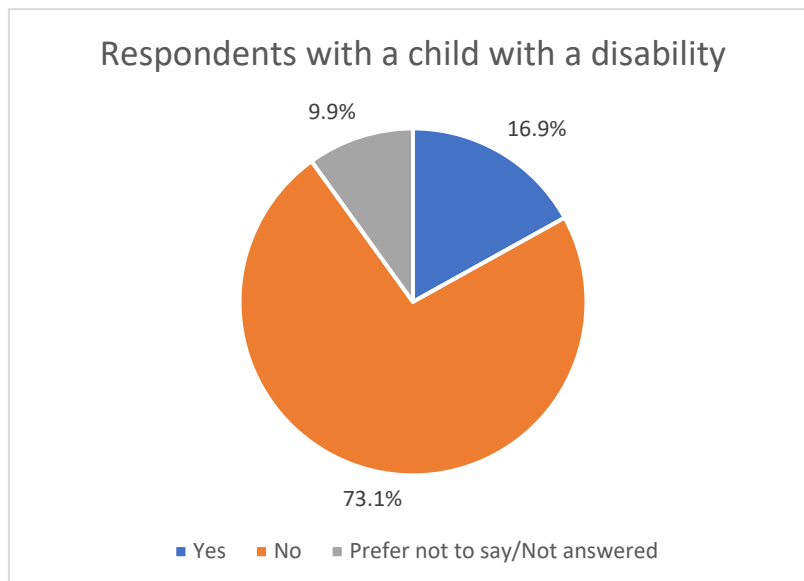
7 respondents selected “no”, “prefer not to say” or did not answer Q31 but then selected an answer for Q32: 5 responses for mental health/mental distress issues, 2 for long term health condition/hidden impairment, and 1 for visual impairment. These responses have been added to the table below in addition to the responses from the 40 respondents that selected “yes” for Q31.

Respondents with a disability – impairment groups (2)

Impairment Group	Total	Percent
Visual impairment	2	4.3%
Physical impairment	2	4.3%
Deaf/BSL User	1	2.1%
Hearing impairment	0	0.0%
Mental health/mental distress issues	16	34.0%
Learning difficulties	8	17.0%
Long term health condition/hidden impairment	8	17.0%
Neurodiverse	9	19.1%
Prefer not to say	3	6.4%
Other (please specify)	3	6.4%
No. Respondents	47	

Q33: Do you (or the person you are responding on behalf of) have a child (someone under the age of 18) that has a disability?

63 respondents (16.9%) have a child with a disability and 272 (73.1%) do not.



Q34: If you have a child with a disability, please tell us which of the following impairment groups apply to your child

Of the 63 respondents that selected “yes” they have a child with a disability for Q33, the most frequent impairment selected was learning difficulties (21 respondents, 33.3% of respondents)

Respondents with a child with a disability – impairment groups (1)

Impairment Group	Total	Percent
Visual impairment	0	0.0%
Physical impairment	0	0.0%
Deaf/BSL User	0	0.0%
Hearing impairment	1	1.6%
Mental health/mental distress issues	2	3.2%
Learning difficulties	21	33.3%
Long term health condition/hidden impairment	7	11.1%
Neurodiverse	13	20.6%
Prefer not to say	4	6.3%
Other (please specify)	11	17.5%
No. Eligible Respondents	63	

Of those that selected “other” and specified, responses included Autism (7 responses), ADHD, and specific health conditions (e.g., diabetes).

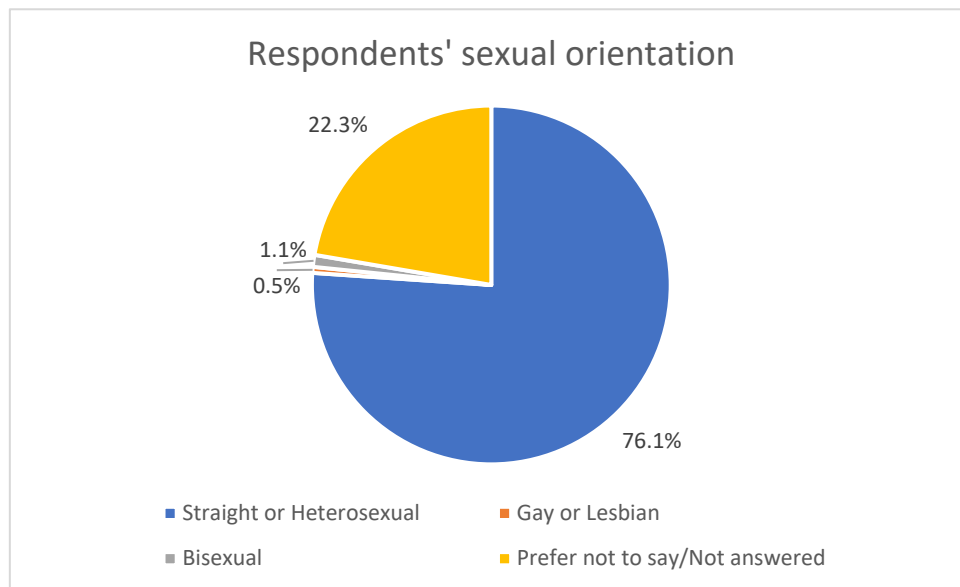
7 respondents selected “no”, “prefer not to say” or did not answer Q33 but then selected an answer for Q34: 4 responses for learning difficulties, 1 for physical impairment, 1 for mental health/mental distress issues, and 1 for neurodiverse. These responses have been added to the table below in addition to the responses from the 63 respondents that selected “yes” for Q31.

Respondents with a child with a disability – impairment groups (2)

Impairment Group	Total	Percent
Visual impairment	0	0.0%
Physical impairment	1	1.4%
Deaf/BSL User	0	0.0%
Hearing impairment	1	1.4%
Mental health/mental distress issues	3	4.3%
Learning difficulties	25	35.7%
Long term health condition/hidden impairment	7	10.0%
Neurodiverse	14	20.0%
Prefer not to say	4	5.7%
Other (please specify)	11	15.7%
No. Respondents	70	

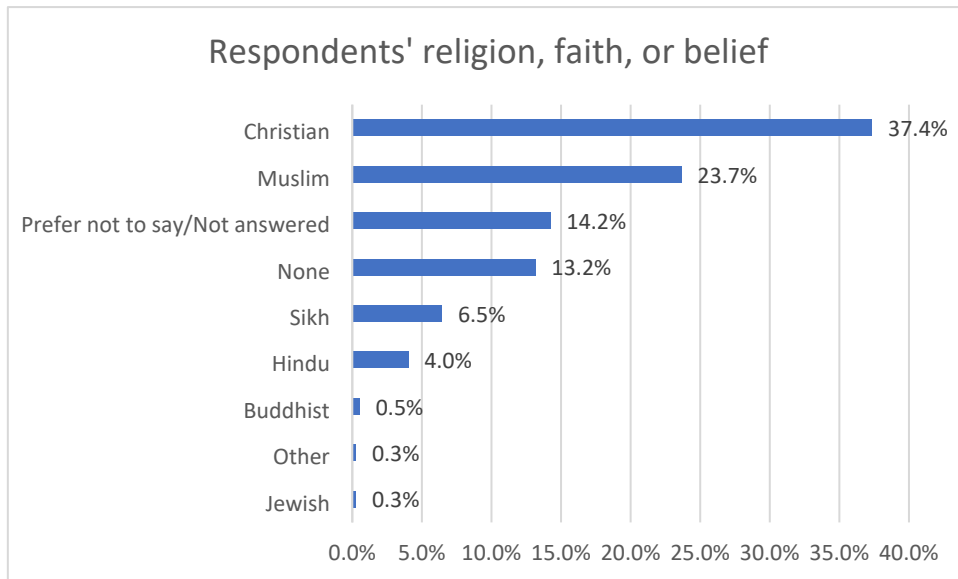
Q35: How would you (or the person you are responding on behalf of) describe your sexual orientation?

283 respondents (76.1%) identified as straight or heterosexual, 2 (0.5%) identified as gay or lesbian, and 4 (1.1%) identified as bisexual.



Q36: What is your (or the person you are responding on behalf of) religion, faith, or belief?

139 respondents (37.4%) were Christian and 88 (23.7%) were Muslim.



Q37: If you are female, are you pregnant?

4 respondents (1.1%) were pregnant.

Q38: If you are female, have you had a baby in the last 12 months?

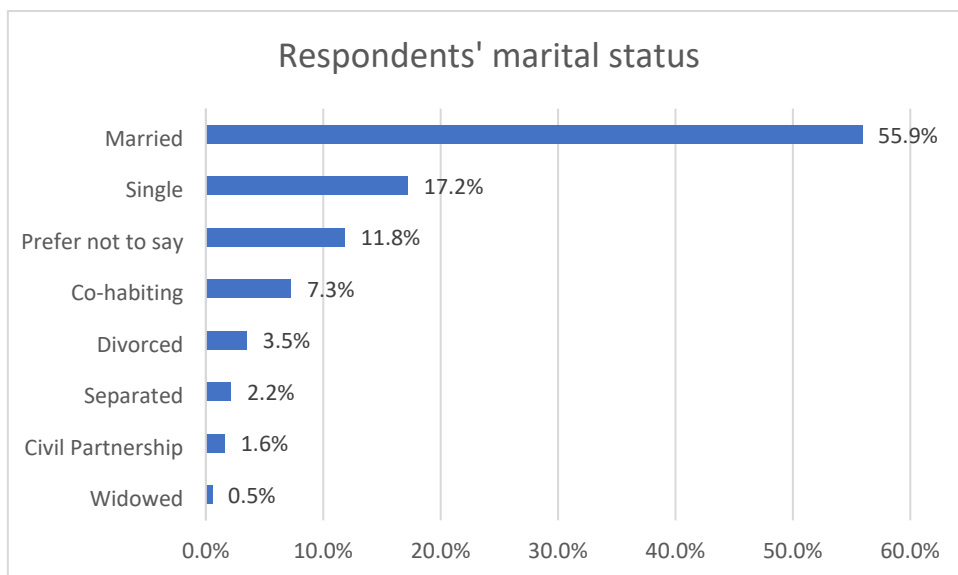
39 respondents (10.5%) had a baby in the last 12 months.

Q39: Are you a carer for a child or young person aged 0 - 25?

175 respondents (47.0%) answered that they were a carer for a child or young person aged 0-25. However, this proportion is higher than expected and it is possible that some respondents may not have understood what was meant by “carer”. 150 respondents (40.3%) answered that they were not a carer for a child or young person.

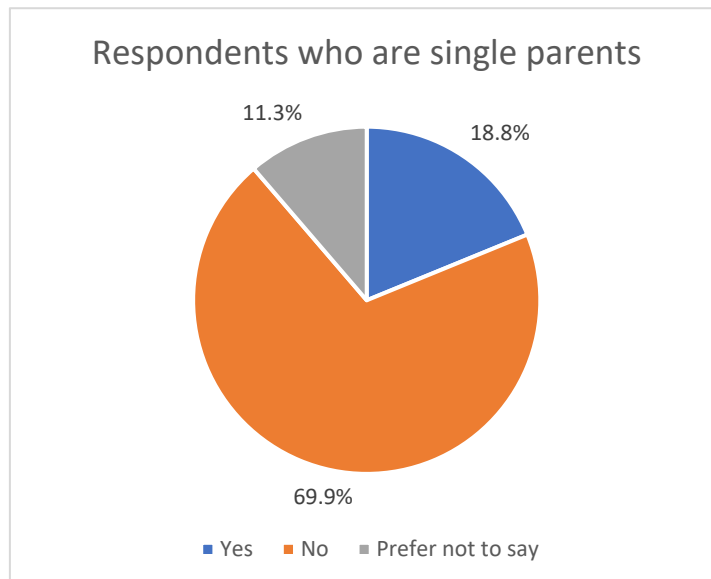
Q40: Are you married or in a civil partnership?

208 respondents (55.9%) were married and 64 (17.2%) were single.



Q41: Are you a single parent?

70 respondents (18.8%) were single parents and 260 (69.9%) were not.



Data Quality Considerations and Corrections

- Q14-16: All 410 respondents were asked Q14-16 regarding the proposed options. However, there was an issue with Q14 that resulted in the need to revalidate the answers from the 65 respondents who answered the survey before the issue was identified. 39 of these respondents provided their email addresses and were contacted to validate their responses. 18 responded and 16 validated their responses (2 responded to the email but did not choose an option). This resulted in 359 valid responses for Q14 and 15. All 410 responses were valid for Q16.
- Q6&17: In Q6, all respondents were asked if they use Children’s Centres to access services. Partners, stakeholders, service providers, and members of staff in Children’s Centres were advised to select “not applicable” instead of “yes” or “no”. 60 respondents selected “not applicable”. In Q17, all respondents were asked if they were a “resident or service user” or “partner organisation, stakeholder, service provider, or member of staff in a Slough Children’s Centre” and 70 people selected “partner organisation...”, which is 10 people more than in Q6. While we cannot confirm why some respondents answered Q6 and 17 differently, it is possible that some of these respondents may also be service users so selected “yes” for Q6.
- Q32&34: These questions asked those who have a disability or a child with a disability to tick which of the impairments listed applied. Some respondents who selected “no”, “prefer not to say”, or did not answer the previous questions asking if they had a disability (Q31&33) then answered Q32&34. Most of these responses were “prefer not to say” and were removed from the analysis for Q32&34, however those who selected specific impairments were

included in the analyses. All responses from those who selected “yes” for Q31&33 were included in the analyses.

4. Focus Group results in detail

4.1 While the feedback from the focus groups was very constructive and the members of public appreciated having their voice heard, many had concerns about the proposal and the three options that were presented.

4.2 Feedback headlines by stakeholder group

Residents' views -

- There was limited information presented on the future service offer.
- It felt as though a decision had already been made as the options were limited.
- It was not clear if the buildings themselves would still be used for another purpose.
- The scale of reduction seems severe.
- Is there an option to phase the closure of the centres.
- Travel times to reach centres will increase for many families.
- This felt like a short-term plan without a long-term vision.
- Removing childcare options could mean parents having to stop working or reduce their working hours.

Health professionals' views -

- Concerned about the scale of the closures and the pace.
- Many health services run from the centres that will be closing, and it is not clear where they could be delivered from in the future.
- Centres are a safe and accessible space, which enables clinics and drop-in sessions to run.
- Returning to home visits for a range of services would be inefficient and add risk to the service staff.
- Returning to home visits for all health visiting services would not be practical after the reduction in the numbers of Health Visitors covering Slough.
- Families may be unwilling or unable to travel.
- Challenges that families face could become ‘hidden’ again if access to the centres reduces.

Headteachers' views -

- Concern for the impact on parents as well as children.
- Centres are often able to spot, refer, and support where there is domestic violence or post-natal depression.

- Slough has had high scores for children in the early years at Good Level of Development before starting school. There is a risk that this level could fall back and during a period where development levels are reducing in most local areas due the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.

4.3 One of the themes that emerged from the focus groups was that it seemed as though the decision had already been made to choose one of the three options presented, with an overall aim to significantly reduce the number of children's centres remaining open. Some members of the public felt that there was **no opportunity to influence the outcome** of the consultation, which was further supported by the survey needing either option one, two or three to be picked before it allowed the user to move on. While most chose Option 1 in the survey, it was fed back that they only chose this due to there not being an option for other suggestions, which they felt supported their claim that the decision had already been made.

4.4 A further common theme was the **additional travel time** required to attend the centres that were remaining open and linked to this the additional cost if mode of transport had to switch from walking to public transport, or public transport to private vehicle. Many expressed concerns that they were unable to drive and so would either have to walk further with young children, increasing the time taken to get to the centre and back or to use public transport, which would increase the time taken to arrive at a proposed centre due to extended periods of time on the bus by travelling further or having to travel into Slough central and taking another bus out. This also raised concerns about the **increase in costs** the parent would have to endure amid a time of high cost of living.

4.5 A third theme was concerns around **waiting times to access services, childcare and early years provision** either at a children centre or a private or voluntary sector provider (PVI sector) if one of the three options proposed was chosen. PVI providers already have a waiting list and this would only increase if there were fewer children centres open. It was also raised that the potential children centres proposed to remain open are currently full and would not be able to meet the demand of the increase in children and parents trying to access services.

4.6 Many members of the public raised the question as to why 7 of the 10 centres would close at the same time and provided a suggestion of undertaking a **phased closure** to allow for families to prepare to move and attend a new centre. This would also allow the council to evaluate the effects of the closures without there being significant disruption to the services and subsequently delivering a less detrimental effect overall on children.

4.7 Through the focus group with **health professionals**, concerns were raised about there not being enough active centre's if one of the proposed option was to go forward to be able to run health services especially in a time post COVID where the need for intervention is increasing. The number of health visitors has already reduced in number making home visits even more impractical as the health visitor

cannot fit in as many home visits a day due to travel times between each location and needs the drop-in centres to alleviate this problem.

4.8 As part of the focus groups, headteachers also raised concerns that they had with the proposed options. One concern raised was that the **Good Level of Development scores** in Slough are currently above the national average and that there is a risk of lowering this to below average if there is less early years provision in place. Another concern raised was the impact it would have on adults who not only use it for their children but also a lifeline if they may be suffering from personal problems such as **post-natal depression or experiencing domestic violence**. If the number of centres were to reduce, then there may not be a safe space for these parents to go and risk missing out on safeguarding opportunities for these parents.

5 Responses received through email

5.1 Email feedback was received through the central mailbox - Childrens.Centres@slough.gov.uk and the council's complaints mailbox - Complaints@slough.gov.uk. In one instance an email came directly to the Group Manager for Children's Centres.

5.2 The 13 individual emails were all stored and reviewed. There was also 1 additional drawing passed on by a resident to a children's centre staff member. The themes of the emails and the drawing were considered and are reported in this section.

5.3 Email feedback was received from the following sources:

- An enquiry from a Member of Parliament's office.
- Experiences of residents who use a centre or whose children use a centre.
- Reflections from Slough Borough Council staff.
- Reflections from Slough Children First staff.
- Reflections from residents who use a centre, or whose children use a centre, and where they also express a view from the perspective of their profession which is linked in some way to child or family services.

5.4 It should be noted that emails were used to clarify responses to the online survey questions after a change was made early in the consultation period. The responses received through those emails are captured in the section outlining responses to the online survey and are not duplicated in this section.

5.5 The feedback received by email raised concerns and highlighted risks in relation to all three options that were consulted on. The common themes from the feedback received by email were:

- Overall concern for where services will be provided in the future.
- Reducing support in the early years will result in needs presenting more often and more acutely later in childhood and into adulthood.
- The rationale for closing children's centres is purely financial, and the problem was caused by council mismanagement.

- Centres enable engagement with vulnerable adults and children, and are often a safe space to talk, learn, and be signposted to further support.
- Centres engage positively with the Slough Virtual School to enable children to receive appropriate support.
- The current service provision is working well from a parent's perspective, and children are happy there.
- The current centres have helped to identify social communication needs early, supporting the parents to work with the correct professionals to get a formal diagnosis and a treatment pathway.
- The concept of moving to a new centre that is further from home raises anxieties such as cost of travel and the ability to maintain paid work for parents and carers.
- Queries over the sufficiency of childcare provision in the borough.
- A greater volume of emails received in support of retaining provision at Monksfield Way.

5.6 The themes that came through the email feedback correlated with the themes fed back through the focus groups and through the free text comments of the online survey. Overall, the options provided in the consultation present risks from the perspectives of parents, staff, and child and family professionals. These risks will be considered fully, and an option recommend to Cabinet that aims to mitigate those risks where feasible.

Appendix – Travel Time Modelling

1. Rationale

Early in the consultation period, following feedback from early online survey respondents and focus group participants, it became apparent that a key risk identified was the additional time it would take to travel from a family home to a new centre. In all options there was a reduction in centres remaining open, and this would mean a likely greater travel time for some families. To estimate those impacts the council developed a travel time model using existing centre use information alongside travel time data and local area deprivation data.

2. Methodology

The location, demographics and current service use of the existing centre user base was modelled to estimate the potential travel time impacts of the options proposed in the consultation. To further the analysis, travel time changes were then matched to levels of deprivation in the areas where current centre users travel from (their registered home address).

Two separate travel time models were created - one to assess access for people registered at Children's Centres for group work sessions and one for current and previous childcare users. The two models were created to account for the fact that not all existing centres were used for childcare.

The travel time models used Google Maps data to calculate walking, public transport and drive times from households to children's centres at both peak and off-peak times of day. With this, the models estimated the best combination of location of centres in a 3-centre model, as well as the travel time differences.

3. Travel time impacts where Option 1 was the preferred option

Reducing the number of centres open would increase the travel time for some families if they move from using an existing centre that was closer to home than a new centre that was kept open.

The summary impacts if Option 1 were to be the preferred option are:

- The following proportion of attendees could arrive within 30 minutes at peak time using the following modes of transport:
 - 72% of group session attendees could walk to a centre
 - 93% of group session attendees could take public transport to a centre
 - 64% of childcare attendees could walk to a centre
 - 71% of childcare attendees could take public transport to a centre
- 100% of group session and childcare attendees could drive to a centre within 13 minutes at peak time.

The proportion of attendees able to attend sessions within 30 minutes of travel time from home by walking or public transport would reduce in the scenario of Option 2 or Option 3 where fewer centres were kept open.

4. Modelling a scenario: What would the optimum combination of centres be if 3 centres was the preferred number remaining open

The travel time models developed were then used to consider what the optimum combination of centres would be if 3 centres were the preferred number remaining open. Based on early results from the online survey and focus groups it was likely that Option 1 would be selected by respondents as the preferred option, and therefore the modelling was extended further to inform the decision.

It should be noted that the modelling considers the variable of travel time. There are a wide range of other factors to consider in deciding the final response to the consultation.

For group session attendees, if 3 centres were to remain open, then to optimise travel time the best configuration of centres remaining open would-be Romsey Close, Elliman Avenue, and St Andrews Way.

Option 1 configuration	Optimum configuration
Chalvey Grove	Elliman Avenue
Romsey Close	Romsey Close
Penn Road	Saint Andrews Way

For childcare attendees, if 3 centres were to remain open, then to optimise travel time the best configuration of centres remaining open would-be Romsey Close, Chalvey Grove, and Monksfield Way.

Option 1 configuration	Optimum configuration
Chalvey Grove	Chalvey Grove
Romsey Close	Romsey Close
Yew Tree Road	Monksfield Way

The difference in the total travel times for attendees between the Option 1 configuration and the optimum configuration is outlined in the full results section below.

5. Full travel time modelling results

5.1 Analysing the impacts on users of group session for families and children

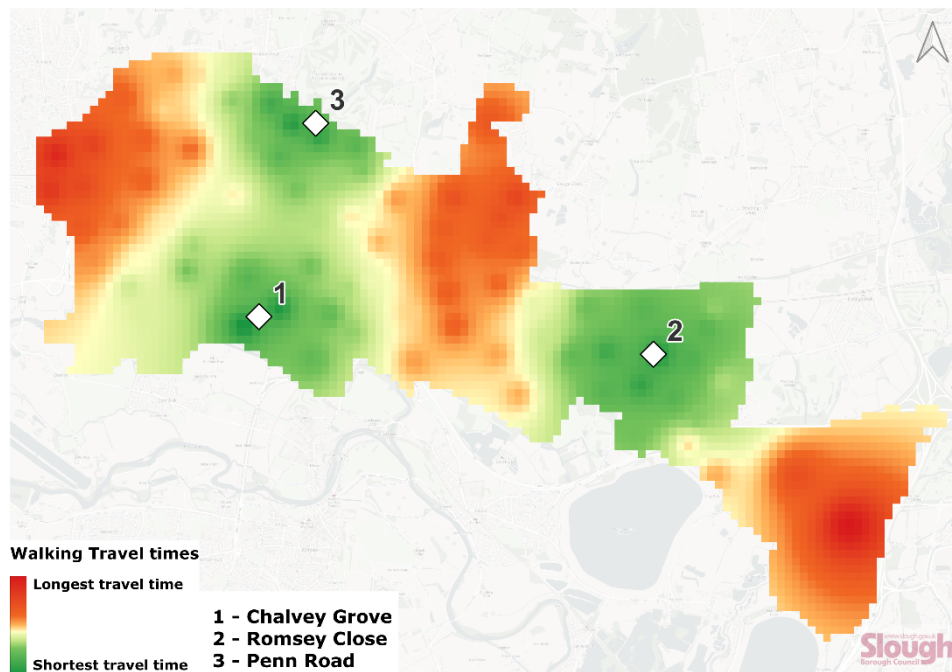
All Children’s Centres across the borough currently have the facility to provide group work.

The three-centre model with the best access for group work users is the same for both peak and off-peak travel times, therefore only peak hours results are included here for information.

Walking – peak hours

Access within (minutes)	Option 1 - CG, RC, PR	Optimum - EA, RC, SAW
10	22.1%	31.0%
20	50.8%	64.8%
30	71.5%	91.7%
40	91.9%	97.0%
50	97.0%	97.0%
60	100.0%	100.0%

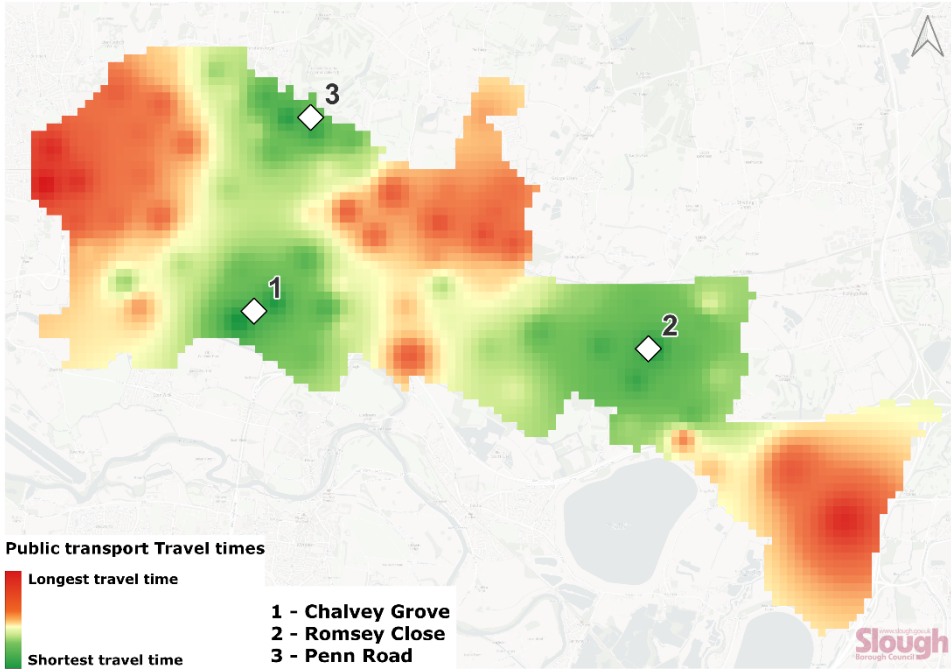
Figure 1: Walking travel times for option 1



Public Transport – peak hours

Access within (minutes)	Option 1 - CG, RC, PR	Optimum - EA, RC, SAW
10	9.6%	14.7%
20	59.6%	71.9%
30	92.6%	97.0%
40	100.0%	100.0%

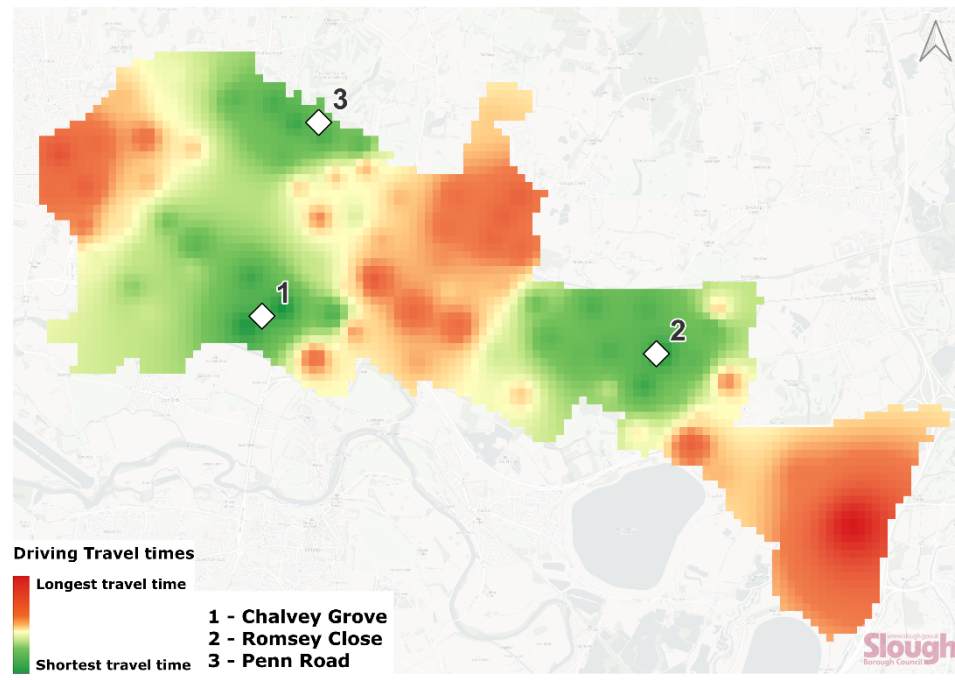
Figure 2: Public transport travel times for option 1



Driving – peak hours

Access within (minutes)	Option 1 - CG, RC, PR	Optimum - EA, RC, SAW
1	2.5%	5.8%
2	5.9%	10.6%
3	14.0%	21.8%
4	25.2%	37.3%
5	32.1%	49.7%
6	42.7%	59.6%
7	68.6%	79.1%
8	82.4%	92.0%
9	95.8%	97.0%
10	97.0%	97.0%
11	97.0%	97.0%
12	97.0%	97.0%
13	100.0%	100.0%

Figure 3: Driving travel times for option 3



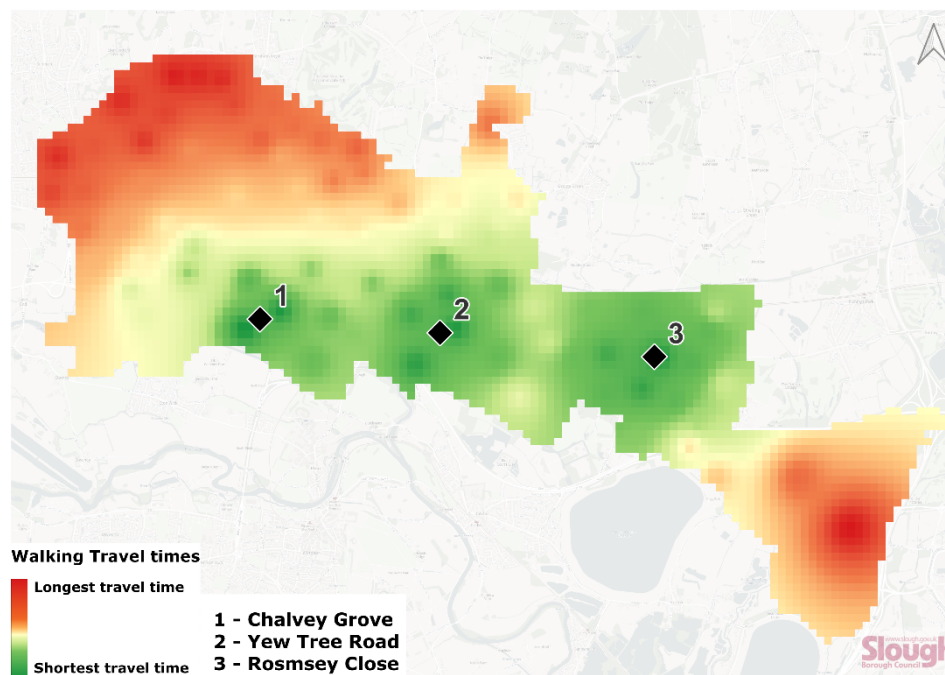
5.2 Analysing the impacts on users of childcare services for families and children

Childcare cannot currently be provided from Saint Andrews Way and Elliman Avenue, and therefore these centres were removed from the model when assessing impacts.

Walking – peak hours

Access within (minutes)	Option 1 - CG, RC, YTR	Optimum - CG, RC, MW
10	22.7%	28.2%
20	46.1%	57.7%
30	63.5%	82.6%
40	84.2%	96.9%
50	94.7%	98.2%
60	100.0%	100.0%

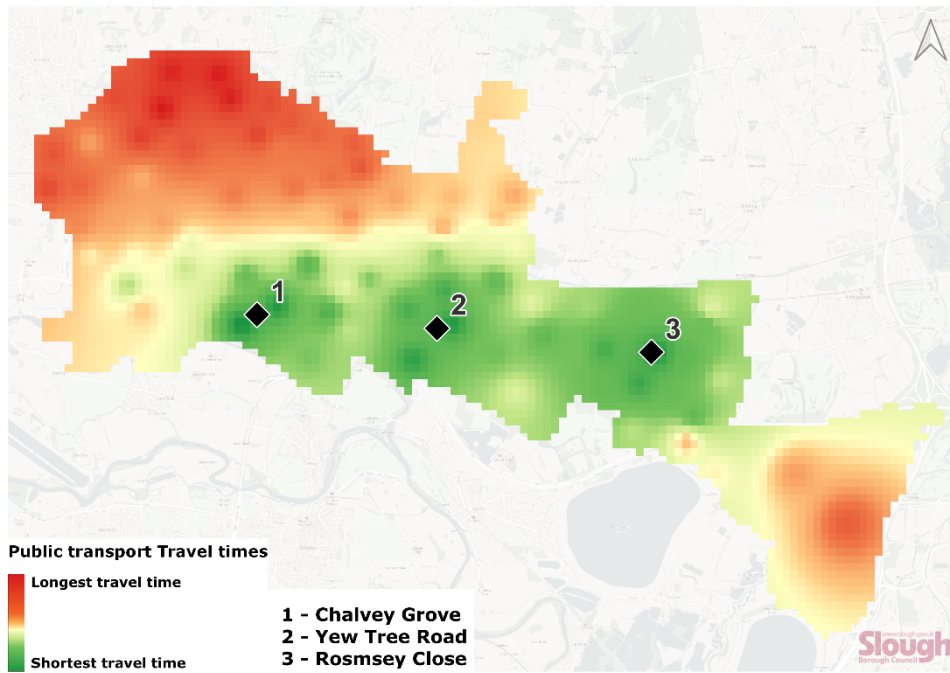
Figure 4: Walking travel times for option 1



Public Transport – peak hours

Access within (minutes)	Option 1 - CG, RC, YTR	Optimum - CG, RC, MW
10	16.5%	23.3%
20	44.5%	57.6%
30	71.1%	97.6%
40	100.0%	100.0%

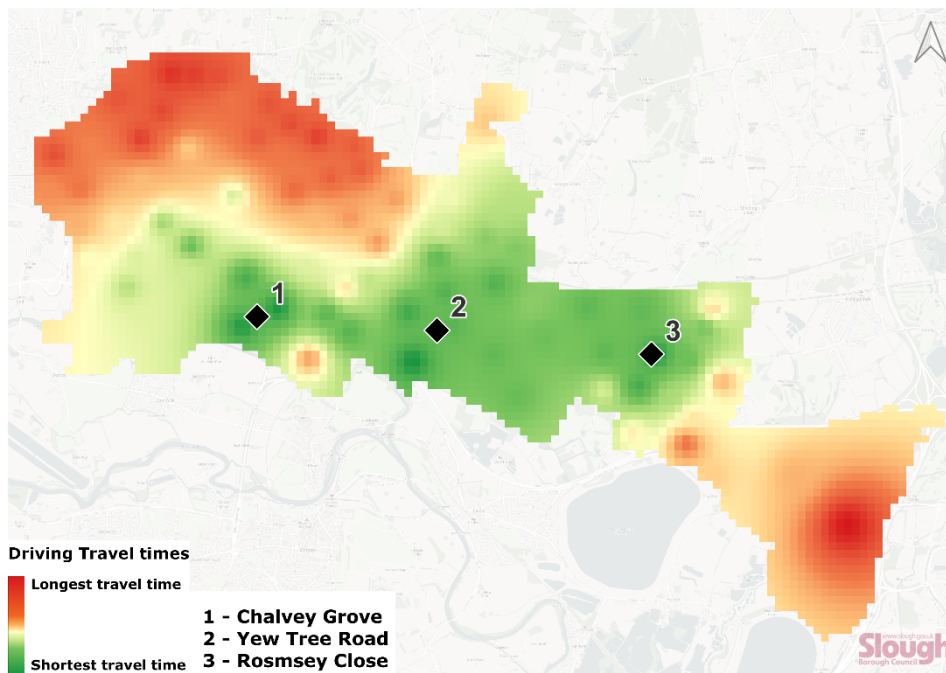
Figure 5: Public transport travel times for option 1



Driving – peak hours

Access within (minutes)	Option 1 - CG, RC, YTR	Optimum - CG, RC, MW
1	7.4%	13.4%
2	12.8%	17.5%
3	24.9%	30.1%
4	30.5%	38.4%
5	37.6%	53.6%
6	48.1%	62.8%
7	56.0%	76.1%
8	67.9%	85.2%
9	75.0%	98.4%
10	80.2%	98.7%
11	91.2%	98.7%
12	98.7%	98.7%
13	100.0%	100.0%

Figure 6: Driving travel times for option 1



Slough Childcare Sufficiency Assessment



2022 – 2023

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Background

The Childcare Act 2006 and 2016 and the associated statutory guidance for local authorities on [Early Education and Childcare, March 2017](#) requires Slough Borough Council (the Local Authority) to secure sufficient childcare, as far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 – 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).

The duty is detailed in the following sections of the Acts:

Childcare Act 2006

Section 6 secures sufficient childcare for parents;

Section 7 secures early years provision free of charge;

Section 7A discharges its duty;

Section 9 gives local authorities the power to attach requirements to the arrangements they make with providers (other than the governing body of a maintained school) to deliver childcare including free early years provision;

Section 9a allows regulations to be made which prescribe the requirements local authorities may or may not impose when they make arrangements;

Section 12 provides information, advice and assistance to parents about childcare in the area;

Section 13 secures the provision of information, advice and training to childcare providers and childcare workers

Childcare Act 2016

Section 1 places a duty on the secretary of state to secure the equivalent of 30 hours free childcare over 38 weeks of the year for qualifying children;

Section 2 allows the secretary of state to discharge her duty under section 1 of the Act by placing a duty on English local authorities to secure free childcare for qualifying children;

To secure sufficient childcare places, local authorities should take into account:

- what is 'reasonably practicable' when assessing what sufficient childcare means for their area.
- the state of the local childcare market, including the demand for specific types of providers in a particular locality and the amount and type of supply that currently exists.
- the state of the labour market including the sufficiency of the local childcare workforce.
- the quality and capacity of childcare providers and childminders registered with a childminder agency, including their funding, staff, premises, experience and expertise.
- what schools in their area are offering or able to offer for out-of-hours childcare from 8.00am until 6.00pm and in school holidays.
- if existing providers are able to expand their provision and what new providers are going to enter the local childcare market; and
- if providers take a sustainable business approach to planning and signpost providers to resources to support them.

The Local Authority is responsible for determining the appropriate level of detail in the report, geographical division and date of publication. However, the report should include:

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

In addition, the Local Authority is required by legislation to maintain a service that provides information, to parents and prospective parents on the provision of childcare in their area, as listed in Schedule 1 of the Childcare Act 2006 and from 1st September publish this information electronically on the local authority website and update it, at a minimum termly on 1st January, 1st April and 1st September, ensuring parents are aware of:

- Early education places for two, three and four year olds;
- The option to continue to take up their child's 15 hour early education place until their child reaches compulsory school age;
- How to identify high quality provision in their area.

Introduction

The Slough Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) refresh provides an overview of the childcare market in Slough and covers the period from autumn 2021 to autumn 2022.

The context within which an early years and childcare sufficiency assessment is compiled can fluctuate considerably from year to year. The early years sector is demonstrably volatile within relatively short timescales, making place planning more complex and necessitating on-going processes.

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient places for every child eligible for Free Early Education. These places are developed and offered by providers who respond to localised changes in demand, recruitment and retention issues, rent increases, competition and new national initiatives by altering their offer.

It is impossible to predict how the local early years and childcare market will look in the next year. There are still many uncertainties following the global pandemic which continue to impact on the local economy such as:

- Rising business rates or rent costs
- increased costs of food and supplies,
- fuel costs,

- inflation rates which stood at 10.1% in August 2022

Demand for childcare and in particular 2, 3 and 4 year old and 30 hours places are highly dynamic and is likely to fluctuate as we continue go through this recovery phase.

The trends in take up of Early Years and Childcare are still unstable and the scale of this impact continues to develop, especially in conjunction with Brexit, the war in Ukraine, and rising inflation.

Flexible working- working from home and hybrid working has reduced the number of places being taken up.

The number of claimants of Universal Credit is falling and therefore the number of claimants eligible for 2 year old funding is on the decline. (source: DWP Universal Credit official statistics)

Childcare providers are continuing to rebuild their businesses in what is still seen to be the recovery phase of the pandemic, making decisions on their viability and sustainability which will impact the local market.

The objectives are to produce a baseline of childcare sufficiency in Slough during 2022, mapping the supply, demand and any gaps in provision. The report will include an overview of participation of 2,3 and 4 year old and 30 hours funded places.

- Number of providers and places by type of provision.
- Costs of provision.
- Rising numbers of children with SEND accessing places.
- Workforce, including recruitment and retention and training needs.
- Overview of general demand.

Supply information has been gathered using the provider annual audit which was completed at the end of the Autumn Term. All providers were contacted electronically in to update their participation and vacancy information specifically regarding funded early education places.

We have drawn on other data to inform this refresh including:

- Early Years and School census January 2022
- ONS Census 2021
- Slough Borough Council Housing Strategy
- Family Information Service statistics
- [Statistics: Early Years and Childcare](#)

Policy direction

There are a number of policy initiatives that continue to be influential through 2021 – 2022 that impact on the childcare market and provision of places. These include:

- National Living Wage
- Tax Free Childcare
- Free 30hrs Childcare Extended Entitlement
- Free 2 year old funding entitlement
- Early Years National Funding Formula

- Increase in national minimum wage / national living wage
- Increase in rent/ mortgage amount
- Increase in energy costs
- Increase in the cost of food and consumables
- Increase in staffing costs due to an increase in the number of children needing additional support
- Increase in staffing costs due to the need for agency staff
- Increase in salaries due to inflation
- Decrease in number of children attending

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment will focus on the impact of these policy changes and external issues specifically on the increase in demand for new early years and childcare places across the borough.

Executive Summary

When concluding childcare sufficiency in Slough we need to consider the multi-faceted layers of supply, demand and local and national influences. Place planning for early years is based on the number of places, by age, in the right location, with the right mix of flexible offers, meeting the needs of children and their families. The market can fluctuate considerably from year to year which makes place planning more complex. There continues to be many uncertainties that impact on the sectors viability, and it is through ongoing working relationships with providers that we must aim to mitigate impact on children and their families.

In Slough there is a mixed economy of providers who each offer a range of services, and this can be somewhat directed by the different demographics with in the town. The trends in participation can vary from one Children's Centre Area to another, for instance the Romsey Close Children's Centre Area have a much higher proportion of families accessing fee paying childcare provision compared to neighbouring Children's Centre Areas such as Vicarage Way and Yew Tree Road. This area therefore requires a higher degree of 'childcare providers' offering full day care all year round. Chalvey Grove Children's Centre Area has the highest number of under 5 year olds living in the area, yet the take up of funded early education for 2 year olds is low and there is little demand for childcare. It can therefore be concluded that the best way to ensure sufficient early years and childcare across the town is to provide analysis by the 10 Children Centre Areas.

It is increasingly difficult for the early years sector to provide a large number of places for children under 2 years old due to the high staff to child ratio (1 to 3) and affordability. Predicting the take up of childcare for this age group is also difficult to assess as some families opt to access informal childcare with family and friends and this can vary from year to year. Ongoing consultation with parents will help to inform this area for future Childcare Sufficiency Assessments. Since 2019/20 Slough has seen a slight decrease of 25 places for under 2 year olds and although settings have

reported a waiting list of 31 babies wanting a place in the Autumn term 2022 the Family Information Service did not experience a high number of enquiries from families stating that they were unable to find a placement. It is known that parents will put their child's name down at a number of settings to ensure that they get a place with at least one provider. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is not a need to develop more places for children under 2 years old. The monitoring of places for children under 2 will continue, particularly in line with national changes such as government policy relating to maternity/paternity, funded early education and help with childcare costs. Where new large housing development is planned in Slough, under 2 year old places will be considered within a new nursery build.

Looking at the data analysis of 2 year old places available in the borough, take up of fee paying places and funded early education for 2 year olds, it appears that there is a shortfall of 60 places. However, there were some vacant spaces for 2 year olds across the whole of Slough in Autumn 2022. When considering these vacancies, we can assume that the actual surplus is 49 places. The deficit of places are in **Chalvey Grove, Elliman Avenue, Penn Road, Yew Tree Road and Vicarage Way**.

Slough's participation rates for funded 2 year olds (55% Autumn 2022) is below the national average of 72%. In real terms, an increase of 100 children receiving 2 year old funding (from 305 to 405 children) is required to hit the national average percentage. In order to increase take up further work needs to be done with the sector to increase the numbers of places they are offering for 2 year olds. This work will focus on business sustainability of existing providers to ensure that it is financially viable to offer more spaces for 2 year olds and increase the workforce. A targeted approach will be needed in the 5 areas currently showing a deficit of places for this age group.

There will also need to be another marketing campaign to support an increase in the percentage of families taking up the offer. This will include raising awareness of the benefits of early education and supporting families to find the right provision for their child.

Take up of 3 & 4 year old funding starts low in the Autumn term (62%) and increases in the summer term (91%). Providers are required to make adjustments throughout the year to accommodate more children as the year progresses. This could mean employing more staff or having to pay staff who are not actually part of the ratios at the beginning of the year, making financial planning important. Looking at the data for 3 & 4 year olds there appears to be a shortfall of places, but when vacancies are added there is a surplus of places of 69 across the whole of Slough. When split into areas the deficit of 3 & 4 year old places are in **Orchard Avenue, Chalvey Grove, Penn Road, Yew Tree Road and Vicarage Way Children's Centre Areas**.

When considering new development of early years provision, we should look at the difference between registered places and actual places being offered. There is a difference of 1,214 places across the borough, providers are offering less spaces than they are registered to. Settings are reporting the closure of rooms and the capping of numbers due to staff shortages (recruitment and retention) and/or financial stability. PVI settings are also reported a total of 273 children on their waiting lists in Autumn 2022, but they also reported that they have additional capacity to provide more spaces across all age groups but current issues with recruitment and retention is impacting their ability to expand and work to registered capacity.

Children's Centre Areas that have a deficit of 2 and/or 3&4 year old places	Surplus/Deficit of 2 year old places by area	Surplus/Deficit of 3&4 year old places by area	Total number of places by area	Actual places available	Number of registered places**	Variance-additional places not currently being offered	Surplus/Deficit overall
Monksfield Way	31	147	146	459	483	24	170
Orchard Avenue	14	-214	-216	384	626	242	26
St. Andrew's Way	17	28	45	434	540	106	151
Chalvey Grove	-33	-79	-112	568	702	134	22
Elliman Avenue	-36	58	22	507	516	9	31
Penn Road	-1	-87	-120	296	396	100	-20
Wexham Road	2	269	259	664	782	118	377
Yew Tree Road	-38	-264	-302	428	472	44	-258
Romsey Close	103	274	377	872	1,241	369	746
Vicarage Way	-10	-63	-86	124	192	68	-18
Total	49	69	13	4,736	5,950	1,214	1,227

Initially there appears to be deficit of places in 5 CCA however when consideration is given to actual registered places there is 3 areas that could need further development, Penn Road, Yew Tree Road and Vicarage Way CCA. The shortfall of places is most significant in Yew Tree Road CCA.

Between 2021 – 2022 PVI settings reported that staff leaving the sector were leaving to work in other industries, 16% of staff were finding better salary/ benefits in other roles, 14% citing a change of career and 14% staff moving on to work in schools. There were 54 job vacancies in the PVI sector in Autumn 2022, 20 were for Level 3 qualified staff and 28% of PVI nurseries had vacancies for apprentices. Nationally it is reported that there are challenges in the early years sector with recruitment and retention. Further work needs to be done to coordinate a sector wide workforce strategy, with a focus on recruiting / attracting qualified staff and encouraging partnership with local FE colleges, schools and training providers, providing work-based learning and apprenticeships. In order to maximise the number of registered places the sector needs to recruit more qualified practitioners.

In Autumn 2022 there were 86 registered childminders in Slough, of which 72 are actively working. The highest drop in registered providers is childminders, going from 109 in 2020 to 86 in 2022, a loss of 23. Nationally there is an ongoing decrease in the number of registered childminders. Future recruitment and retention work is required to raise and retain the number of childminders in certain areas of Slough, particularly in the centre of town.

The number of children presenting with SEND has risen from 866 in 2020-21 to 2,380 in 2021-22, an increase of 175%. The number of children presenting with SEND in Autumn 2022 only currently stands at 1,924. Should this level continue into the spring and summer terms we could be expecting the annual number to be well over 5,000. Overall 39% of children attending an early years setting in the period September 2021- August 2022 were identified by settings as having a range of special educational needs or disability.

Chalvey Grove CCA identified 10% of children attending in the period September 2021- August 2022 as having Specialist Educational Support this was the highest percentage across all CCAs.

Monksfield Way CCA reported having 23% of children attending in the period September 2021- August 2022 classed as vulnerable requiring universal support and Vicarage Way CCA reported the highest percentage of children attending (49%) who were classed as vulnerable requiring specialist support.

In order to support the early years sector with the increasing number of children with SEND, further targeted work is needed to upskill the workforce and increase specialist skill sets. In total 67 early years workforce members across the sector have been trained in Makaton levels 1 & 2 during 2022. The annual provider audit showed a willingness across the sector to engage with further training of staff and access to qualifications, including SEND specific development. An increase in a

skilled workforce will impact on increased capacity particularly for children with SEND. This will in time support retention of staff and inclusive practice (providing more skilled staff to work with children with SEND) and upskilling staff to adapt whole provision to be truly inclusive.

The average cost of an early years/childcare place for under 2 year olds in PVI settings is £7.22, this is £1.38 more than the south-east average for a part-time place. The average cost of an early years/childcare place for under 2 year olds with a childminder is between £5.50- £6.50p per hour. The south-east average for a part time place £5.84, full time £5.68. Therefore a place for children under 2 years old in Slough is likely to cost less with a childminder.

The average cost of an early years/childcare place for 2 year olds in PVI settings is £7.02, this is £1.42 more than the south-east average for a part time place and £1.08 more than the early years funding in Slough.

The average cost of an early years/childcare place for 3 & 4 year olds in PVI settings is £6.05, this is £0.77 more than the south-east average for a part time place and £0.40 more than the early years funding in Slough.

The private fees in Slough are more comparable to London borough's rather than the south-east averages, as are the business costs such as rental fees, rates, consumables and rates of pay for staff. It is anticipated that rental costs and business rates will increase in April 2023 at the same time as an increase in national minimum and living wage and rising energy costs. Although 78% of PVI providers and 79% of school nursery classes felt that their business was sustainable in the short term, a higher percentage are uncertain about their medium to long term sustainability. Business and financial forecasting will be key to ensuring sufficient early years and childcare places in the future in Slough.

Slough has seen a drop in the number of provides offering out of school provision since the last CSA report. This was mainly due to the changes in parental work patterns since the pandemic, with providers stating that demand for afterschool and holiday provision had decreased considerably. The Holiday, Activities and Food Programme began in 2021 offering holiday provision for children in receipt of free school meals. During the Easter and Summer holidays 2022 1,654 children, accessed the HAF programme, with many providers also offered places for fee paying children. The availability of holiday provision has therefore grown as a result of the HAF programme offering a variety of activities and childcare for families.

Where there is still demand for afterschool provision childminders continue to offer a wrap around service and in some areas of the borough further development is required to meet the needs of working families. A targeted approach working with schools is required and close monitoring of increases in demand needs reviewing to ensure a balanced approach.

Key findings

Population figures for 0 - 4 year olds living in Slough

- The number of births in Slough have been declining and are forecasted to continue with this trend.
- The most significant factor affecting demand for places is the number of births in Slough.
- Overall, the Elliman Avenue Children's Centre area saw the biggest decrease (42), however every area saw a decrease in birth rates apart from the Orchard Avenue Children's Centre Area.

Early Years Foundation Stage Data 2022 and quality

- 65.2 % of children in England achieved a GLD in 2022 and 65.1 % of children in Slough achieved a GLD. In previous years (excluding 2019/20 and 2020/21 as data collections were cancelled due to the pandemic) Slough was on a consistent upward increase and GLD was 2.5% above national average in 2018/19.
- Slough girls exceeded the national average by 1.6% and Slough boys were below the national average by 1.8%
- The quality of childcare in Slough is high. The percentage of settings in receipt of a full inspection judged to be good or outstanding was 99.2% against a national average of 96.3%.

Under 2 year olds

- Since 2019/20 there has been a slight decrease in the number of places for under 2 year olds across Slough of 25 places.
- Providers are not reporting specific demand for places for children under 2 years old and they are not reporting children on their waiting lists requiring a space which they cannot offer.

2 year old funding

- Based on data from the Annual Provider Audit, we expect there to be fee paying 2 year olds taking up 33% of the 2 year old places available.
- Based on the November 2022 DWP list it is expected that 31% of the 2 year old population is eligible to take up a funded 2 year old place (637)
- In 2019 Orchard Avenue and Penn Road Children's Centres saw the highest percentage of eligible 2 year olds but in 2022 Chalvey Grove and Yew Tree Road Children's Centres saw the highest percentage.
- Chalvey Grove Children's Centre area continues to have the highest number of 2 year olds living in the borough.
- The number of 2 year old places being offered across Slough is 861

- Headcount data for Autumn 2022 shows that 55% of funded 2 year olds were accessing a place.
- Vicarage Way children's centre area has the lowest number of places for 2 year olds.

3 & 4 year old universal funding (15 hours, 38 weeks per year)

- Indicative figures show that participation rates are approximately 62% for the autumn term 2022, historically, the autumn term has the lowest take up.
- The take up in the summer term 2022 was 91%. Based on this, the take up in 3 areas is higher than the number of eligible children in the CCA, Monksfield Way, Romsey Close and Wexham Road.
- Current number of places available across Slough is 3,486
- We can see that some areas of Slough there are more places than are actually required according to birth data, such as Monksfield Way, Elliman Avenue, Wexham Road and Romsey Close however in some of these areas there are more children than expected accessing their universal entitlement. This illustrates that parents are willing to travel into the different areas in order to access a funded place.

Extended Entitlement – 30 hours childcare

- It is forecast that 1,594 places would be required in Slough in 2022 for the extended entitlement – 30 hours childcare.
- In autumn 2022, 610 children were accessing the extended entitlement in Slough.

Gaps in provision

- 7 settings have opened, and 27 settings have closed, taking the number of settings from 210 to 190. The main loss was in the childminder sector, where numbers have dropped from 109 to 86, a loss of 23.
- Slough has seen a decrease in early years and childcare places of 1,612 from the previous assessment, a drop of 25.39%.
- Based on population size and local knowledge we are identifying insufficient places in one area of the town. However, as previously stated Slough has lost net 20 settings since the last CSA so this needs to be carefully observed and monitored.
- There appears to be a shortfall of 2 year old places across the whole of the borough of 60, however there reported to be vacant spaces in some areas. Therefore it could actually been viewed that there is an actual surplus of places of 49.
- There is a deficit of 2 year old places in Chalvey Grove, Elliman Avenue, Penn Road, Yew Tree Road and Vicarage Way.

- Looking at the data for 3 & 4 year olds there appears to be a shortfall of places, but when vacancies are added there is a surplus of places of 14 across the whole of Slough.
- The deficit of 3 & 4 year old places is in Orchard Avenue, Chalvey Grove, Penn Road Children's Centre Areas
- The difference between registered places and places currently being offered is 849. A number of providers have reported closing rooms / capping numbers due to staff shortages (recruitment and retention) and/or financial stability.
- PVI settings reported a total of 273 children on their waiting lists in Autumn 2022, but they also reported that they have additional capacity to provide more spaces across all areas. It could therefore be concluded that there are other considerations such as the additional staff required.

Childminders

- There are currently 86 registered childminders in Slough, of which 72 are actively working.
- The highest drop in registered providers is childminders, going from 109 in 2020 to 86 in 2022, a loss of 23.
- Nationally there is an ongoing decrease in the number of registered childminders.
- Future recruitment and retention work is required to raise and retain the number of childminders in certain areas of Slough.
- Since 2020 Slough has seen a 21.16% decrease in the number of places offered by childminders.

Holiday, Activities and Food Programme

- HAF ran in the Easter 2022 and Summer 2022 school holidays, offering activities and food to 1,654 children.
- In total 1,114 primary aged and 540 secondary aged children engaged in the programme.

Cost

- The average cost of an early years / childcare place for under 2 year olds in PVI settings is £7.22 and childminders is £5.50- £6.50p per hour. The south-east average for a part time place £5.84, full time £5.68
- The average cost of an early years/childcare place for 2 year olds in PVI settings is £7.02. The south-east average for a part time place £5.60, full time £5.37
- The average cost of an early years/childcare place for 3 & 4 year olds in PVI settings is £6.05. The south-east average for a part time place £5.28, full time £5.24

- Settings reported in the annual audit that they were concerned about the national minimum and living wage rises, along with the rising energy costs and the cost of food and consumables and the impact on their business.
- PVI settings were asked about their business rates. The average cost for PVI settings in business rates was £13,410.00, with the highest being £20,000 per annum. Looking at this data only, it appears that a large proportion of settings would not be affected. However, it should be expected that rent costs will increase in line with rising business rates.

Workforce Development

- PVI settings reported that 16% of staff were finding better salary/ benefits in other roles, 14% citing a change of career and 14% staff moving on to work in schools.
- There were 54 job vacancies in the PVI sector in Autumn 2022, 20 were for Level 3 qualified staff.
- 14% of PVI settings stated they had apprentices and 28% had vacancies for apprentices.
- The percentage of male staff in the sector is 2.1% of the total workforce. This was previously 2.8%
- There is a total of 521 practitioners working in the early years sector in Slough (Autumn 2022).
- In total 67 early years workforce members across the sector have been trained in Makaton levels 1 & 2 during 2022
- 76% of PVI providers have a training and CPD budget for the year and 21% said that this was an increased budget compared to the previous year.
- 75% of school based nurseries reported having a training and CPD budget and 84% said that this has stayed the same compared to the previous year.
- The annual provider audit showed a willingness across the sector to engage with further training of staff and access to qualifications. An increase in a skilled workforce will impact on increased capacity particularly for children with SEND. This will in time support retention of staff and inclusive practice (providing more skilled staff to work with children with SEND) and upskilling staff to adapt whole provision to be truly inclusive.
- Two settings reported that they felt they have not met the needs of parents and carers well. The reason for this was that they were unable to offer a place due to staffing levels. Settings reported that there were insufficient staff numbers to keep up with demand.

Special Educational Needs and Disability

- The number of children presenting with SEND has risen from 866 in 2020-21 to 2,380 in 2021-22, an increase of 175%

- The number of children presenting with SEND in Autumn 2022 only currently stands at 1,924. Should this level continue into the spring and summer terms we could be expecting the annual number of children to be well over 5,000.
- 39% of children attending an early years setting in the Autumn 2022 were identified by settings as having a range of special educational needs or disability.
- 1430 of children attending an early years setting required universal or additional support when accessing certain activities. The highest percentage is seen Elliman Avenue with 48%
- This shows that 646 of children attending an early years setting required Targeted support, and the highest percentage was in Chalvey Grove and Elliman Avenue 16%
- 410 of children attending an early years setting could be identified as having complex needs, the highest percentage in Monksfield Way and Elliman Avenue, 13%
- 182 children attending an early years setting is identified as having Specialist Educational Support, the highest percentage in Chalvey Grove, 10%
- 660 children attending an early years setting were classed as vulnerable requiring universal support. The highest percentage against number on roll was Monksfield Way, 23%
- 334 children attending an early years setting were classed as vulnerable requiring specialist support. The highest percentage based on number on roll was Vicarage Way with 49%

Key focus 2023/24	Key actions 2023/24
Ensure Sufficiency Information is maintained and current	To continue to carry out termly sufficiency tracking (supply and demand), identifying areas where sufficiency may be at risk and reporting to the Divisional Leadership Team.
Increasing the take up of 2 year old FEE places and the take up of 15 and 30 hour places for 3 & 4 year olds in all areas.	To continue to work with Corporate Communications to continually develop and promote 'the support with childcare costs marketing strategy' and social media posts. Broker vacant places, supporting parents to find suitable early years and childcare provision for their children.
To improve expertise in SEND by increasing the number of staff with an accredited SENCO qualification in early years settings.	To promote the Level 3 SENCO Qualification and supporting setting SENCOs to obtain this qualification which was a proposal within SEND Green Paper - SEND Review: Right support, Right place, Right time: March 2022. Develop and establish the delivery of an Early Years Inclusion and Transition tool kit to support the early years sector.
To promote the different ways all childcare providers can make their fees more affordable to parents at all income levels. This will include providing information to parents and providers about Tax Free Childcare, the Childcare Element of Universal Credit and Tax Credit.	Secure business support training and CPD opportunities for all providers, including workshops and one to one support. Market 'Help with Childcare Costs' to the sector and families.
To continue aiming for 100% of all types of settings to have a good or better Ofsted judgment, with an increased percentage of outstanding provision.	To continue to provide information, advice and training to childcare providers.
Continue to raise awareness of the HAF programme with families, stakeholders and partners.	To explore how the HAF programme can continue its growth within the allocated budget. This would include ensuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the amount of provision by area is determined upon demand and by areas of deprivation • the best use of funding is made when agreeing on future premises and their associated rental costs. Whilst continuing to promote the Holiday, Activities and Food programme for eligible families and support providers to offer 'childcare' places where there is demand.

<p>Continue to support childcare providers to deliver high quality, sustainable provision. Monitor national and local developments to support market management information, including new development opportunities.</p>	<p>Target areas in need of childminder development. Work with the out of school sector, early years sector and new providers to ensure provision meets parents’ needs, offering greater choice and flexibility. Approach providers where sufficiency gaps are identified to explore expansion of existing provision, especially in central Slough. Work with the sector to explore new development opportunities particularly when vacant and appropriate spaces become available. To work with colleagues in school place planning and the council’s planning department to identify Section 106 Education contributions to support the development of early years provision.</p>
<p>Increase GLD in Slough</p>	<p>To work more closely with providers to improve outcomes for children in respect of GLD.</p>
<p>Increase the workforce including qualified staffing capacity</p>	<p>Develop an Early Years workforce strategy that supports the sector, to recruit appropriately qualified staff and encouraging “home grown” staff in partnership with local FE colleges, schools and training providers, work-based learning and apprenticeships.</p>
<p>Support the increasing numbers of children with SEND accessing provision in Slough</p>	<p>Provide additional and targeted support for providers who need to change their operating models to accommodate changing parents’ needs, such as the rising numbers of children with SEND, to remain viable.</p>

Demographics

Slough is an urban town in the east of Berkshire, approximately 20 miles west of central London. It is home to 47,200 children and young people, 11,800 of which are aged 0-4. Out of a total population of approximately 158,500, this equates to 29.8% being below the age of 19, making the population of Slough significantly younger than the average for south east local authorities which stands at 23.1%. The average for our Berkshire neighbours stands at 24.2%, still significantly lower than Slough. Our 0-4 year olds are 7.4% of the population, higher than our Berkshire neighbours at 5.5% and south east local authorities at 5.1%

The borough also includes a higher proportion of young adults aged 25-44 of 6.7% against the south east average of 5.5%, suggesting a large number of young families are resident.

In previous years, Slough had traditionally high employment and a fast growing economy, but its unemployed claimant rate is higher now than it was pre-Covid. The

claimant rate is 5% and is gradually improving, but still higher than the pre-pandemic level of 3.0% and the national average of 3.7%

Slough is one of the most ethnically diverse towns in the UK, with 32% of Slough residents born outside the UK and the EU, and 15.8% having been resident in the UK for less than 10 years.

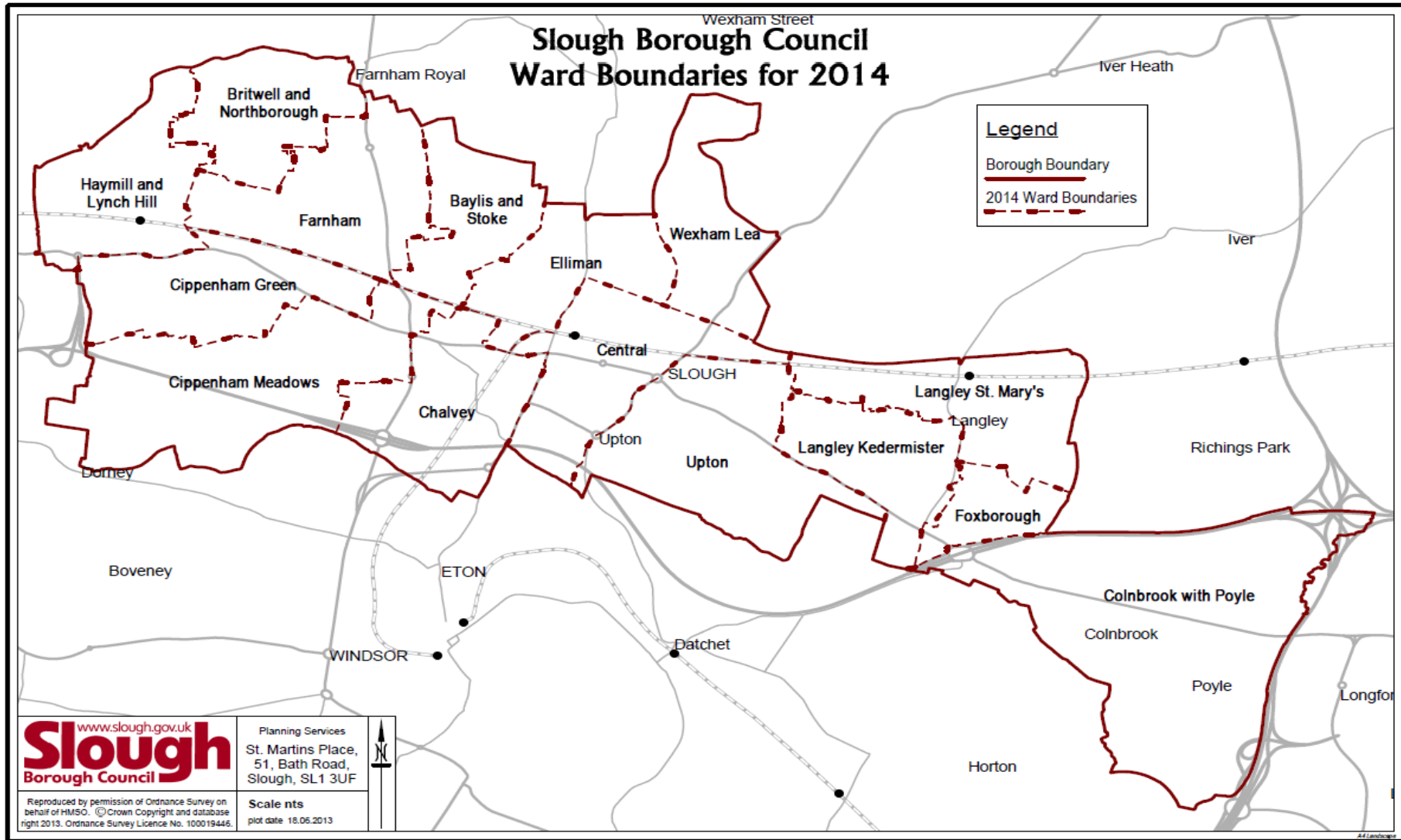
(Source: ONS Census 2021)

Slough unitary authority area was ranked 74th out of the 317 English local authorities for deprivation in the 2019 Indices of Deprivation, significantly more deprived than other Berkshire areas: Reading (140th), Bracknell Forest (282nd), West Berkshire (288th), Windsor and Maidenhead (302nd) and Wokingham (316th).

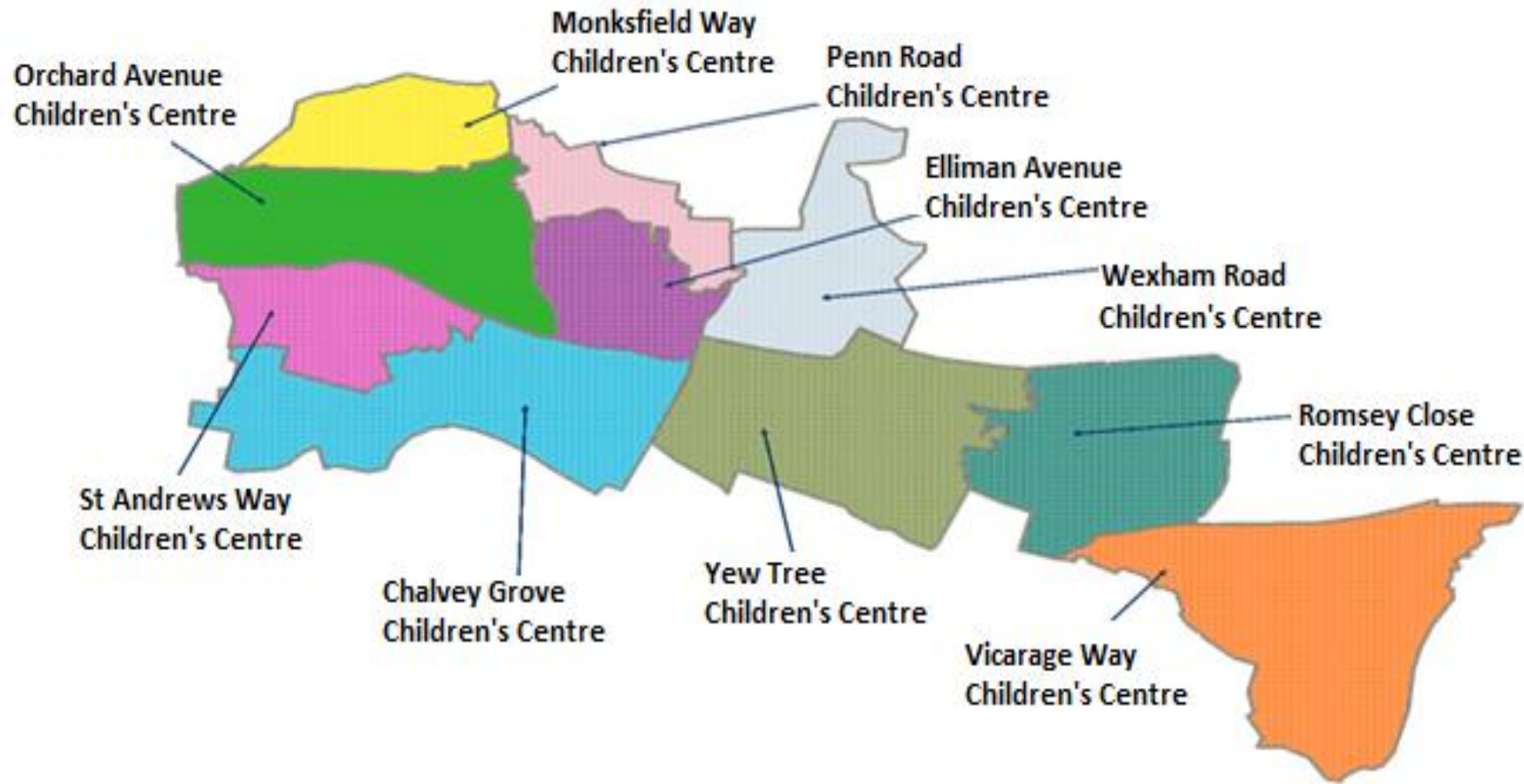
(Source: MHCLG English Indices of Deprivation 2019)

Overview

- Slough is made up of 14 wards
- It is bisected by the A4 (connecting Bath to London) and the Great Western Main line.
- It covers an area of 32.54 km² and is approx. 20 miles west of central London.



The Slough Early Years Service works across 10 Children’s Centre areas (CCA) which do not align with the ward boundaries of the borough. The map below shows how Slough is split into the 10 Children’s Centre areas which, when originally defined, were based on each area having equal numbers of under 5 year olds and aligned to Super Output Areas.

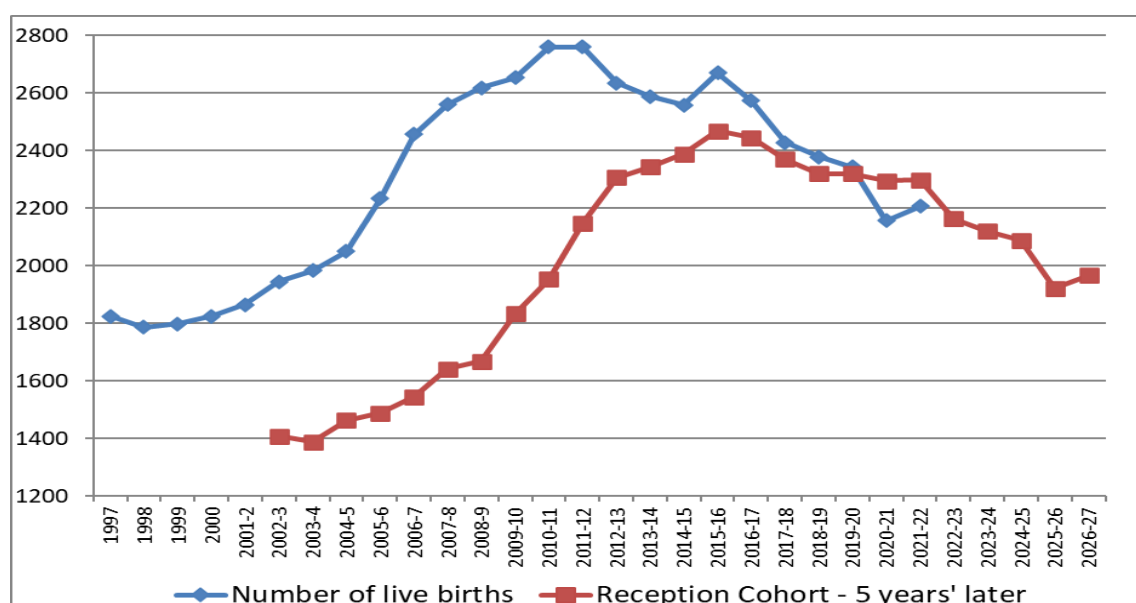


Population

The ONS birth data shows that the decreasing trend reported in the number of births during 2019 – 2020 across Slough has continued, with a further net drop of 251 in birth rates in 2020-21. Overall, the Elliman Avenue Children’s Centre area saw the biggest decrease (42), however every area saw a decrease in birth rates apart from the Orchard Avenue Children’s Centre Area.

CCA	5 years 2017-18	4 years 2018-19	3 years 2019-20	2 years 2020-21	Variance 2019-20 to 2020-21
Chalvey Grove	499	366	338	320	-18
Elliman Avenue	336	229	245	203	-42
Monksfield Way	157	146	156	125	-31
Orchard Avenue	138	209	189	190	1
Penn Road	180	197	181	147	-34
Romsey Close	335	297	265	256	-9
St. Andrews Way	134	189	203	185	-18
Vicarage Way	97	114	113	77	-36
Wexham Road	158	256	264	225	-39
Yew Tree Road	394	376	323	298	-25
	2428	2379	2277	2026	-251

The most significant factor affecting demand for places is the number of births in Slough. The graph below shows the number of births each year since 1997. Numbers rose steadily from 1999 until 2010-11 and 2011-12 when numbers were at their peak. Since then, the trend for birth numbers has been reducing and are forecasted to continue to decline.



Sources: ONS live birth data and School Census

Quality of childcare

The quality of childcare in Slough is high.

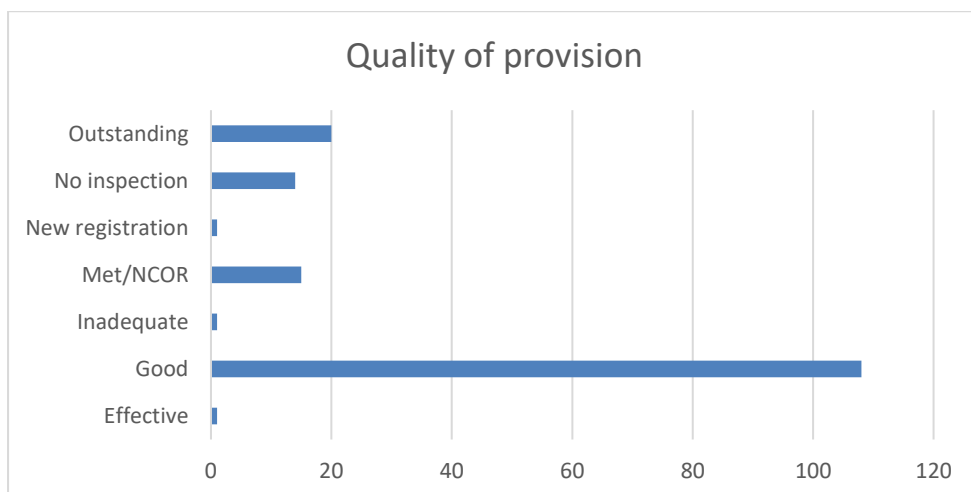


Of the 160 settings, 1 setting was effective, 1 was a new registration, 14 had yet to be inspected and 15 were met with no children on roll. There were 20 outstanding settings, 108 good settings and 1 inadequate setting.

In 2022 there were 2 childminders deemed to be Inadequate. Both have since been re-inspected and now rated Good.

1 childminder was rated Requires Improvement but has now been re-inspected and rated Outstanding.

The percentage of early years providers with a full inspection in Slough judged to be good or outstanding in Autumn 2022 was 99.2%. The national average was 96.3%.



EYFS Profile data

The 2019/20 and 2020/21 data collections were cancelled due to the pandemic.

This table shows the attainment of Slough boys and girls in 2022. It shows us that for GLD (Good level development)

- as a whole Slough was 0.1% below the national average of 65.2%
- Slough girls exceeded the national average by 1.6%
- Slough boys were below the national average by 1.8%

For the % at expected level across all Early Learning Goals (ELGs)

- Slough was 0.5% above the national average of 63.4%
- Slough girls exceeded the national average by 1.8%
- Slough boys were below the national average by 1.2%

	National	National girls	National boys	Slough	Slough Girls	Slough boys
Number of children	622583	304334	318249	2332	1161	1171
Good level development (GLD) %	65.2	71.9	58.7	65.1	73.5	56.9
% at expected level across all Early Learning Goals (ELGs)	63.4	70.6	56.5	63.9	72.4	55.4

It is not possible to directly compare 2021/22 assessments with earlier years due to the 2021/22 EYFS reforms introduced in September 2021
(Source GOV.uk Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Results)

Autumn term 2022 supply of early years and childcare provision

Type of formal childcare	Number of registered providers 2020	Number of registered providers 2022
Nursery class in a Maintained school	25	25
Nursery class in an Independent sector setting	3	3
Day nursery – full or part-time	13	13
Pre-School/Playgroup sessional childcare	13	14
Children’s Centres nursery full daycare	4	4
Children’s Centres nursery sessional daycare	6	4
Maintained Nursery School	5	5
Registered Childminder	109	86
Home Childcare (own home)	32	36
Total	210	190

The numbers of providers have fallen by 20 to 190, a 9.52% drop from 2020. The highest drop in registered providers is childminders, going from 109 in 2020 to 86 in 2022, a loss of 23.

Number of settings in Slough by Children’s Centre Area (CCA)

Children’s Centre Area	NCMS	MNS	DN	PSP	CC	NCIS	CM	Total
Monksfield Way	3		1	2	1		17	24
Orchard Avenue	2		2	1	1		7	13
St. Andrew’s Way	1	1		2			17	21
Chalvey Grove	2	1		4	1	1	4	13
Elliman Avenue	1	2	1				4	8
Penn Road	2		1	2	1		3	9
Wexham Road	4	1	2	2	1		9	19
Yew Tree Road	3		1	1	1	2	12	20
Romsey Close	5		4		1		11	21
Vicarage Way	2		1		1		2	6
Total	25	5	13	14	8	3	86	154

KEY	PSP- Pre-school/Playgroup sessional care
NCMS- Nursery class in maintained school	CC- Children's centre
MNS- Maintained nursery school	NCIS- Nursery class independent setting
DN- Day nursery, full or part time	CM- Registered childminder

*The table above excludes Home Childcare

Early years childcare and registered childminder places for 0 – 4 year olds

Type of formal childcare	Number of registered places PTP 2020	Number of places being offered PTP 2022	Change in places
Nursery class in a Maintained school	1,754	1,735	-1.08%
Nursery class in an independent sector setting	210	132	-37.14%
Day nursery – full or part-time	1,826	1032	-43.48%
Pre-School/Playgroup sessional childcare	642	382	-40.50%
Children’s Centres nursery full daycare	312	154	-50.64%
Children’s Centres nursery sessional daycare	176	56	-68.18%
Maintained Nursery School	744	745	0.13%
Registered Childminder	638	500	-21.63%
Total	6,302	4,736	-24.85%

The number of places being offered has dropped by 1,566 to 4,736, a drop of 24.85%

There are drops in numbers of places being offered across the sector, except for maintained nursery schools with an increase of 1 place.

Numbers of places for home childcarers are not included in these tables.

There are currently 86 registered childminders in Slough.

Ofsted Registered Places

The tables below show the number of Ofsted registered places by provider type.

Type of provider	Registered Part Time Places
Preschool (PSP)	917
Day Nursery (DN)	1940
Children's Centres (CC)	650
Childminder	520
Nursery class in maintained school	1348
Maintained nursery school	575
Total	5950

The annual provider audit recorded a total of 4736 available places across Slough in the Autumn 2022. This is a difference of 1214 registered places. This could therefore mean that there is existing capacity in the market should demand for places increase.

Children's Centre Area	Registered Part Time places
Chalvey Grove	702
Elliman Avenue	516
Monksfield Way	483
Orchard Avenue	626
Penn Road	396
Romsey Close	1241
St Andrews Way	540
Vicarage Way	192
Wexham Road	782
Yew Tree Road	472
Total	5950

Supply of places by age group

The tables below shows the breakdown of children and types and numbers of childcare places in each of the Children's Centre Areas.

Under 2s	Provider Type	
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CC AREA	CC	Day Nursery	CM	TOTAL
Monksfield Way		12	17	29
Orchard Avenue		60	7	67
St. Andrew's Way			15	15
Chalvey Grove	6		4	10
Elliman Avenue		12	4	16
Penn Road	6		1	7
Wexham Road		18	8	26
Yew Tree Road		12	12	24
Romsey Close	6	110	12	128
Vicarage Way		9	2	11
TOTAL	18	233	82	333

In the St Andrews Way children's centre area, there are no childcare places for under 2s except with childminders. The lowest number of places are in Penn Road CCA, the highest in Romsey Close CCA

2 year olds CC AREA	Provider Type						CM	TOTAL
	CC	DN	NCIS	MNS	NCMS	PSP		
Monksfield Way	8	18			7	22	38	93
Orchard Avenue	8	71				4	15	98
St. Andrew's Way		12		8		20	38	78
Chalvey Grove	12	6		16	30	22	9	95
Elliman Avenue		20		36			9	65
Penn Road	8	0				20	7	35
Wexham Road	4	40		16	4	12	20	96
Yew Tree Road	8	24	22				26	80
Romsey Close	12	137			16	12	24	201
Vicarage Way	4	12					4	20
TOTAL	64	340	22	76	57	112	190	861

Vicarage Way children's centre area has the lowest number of 2 year old places with 20, Romsey Close the highest with 201.

3 & 4 yr olds CC AREA	Provider type							TOTAL
	CC	DN	NCIS	MNS	NCMS	PSP	CM	
Monksfield Way	24	22			220	26	45	337
Orchard Avenue	8	65			112	16	18	219
St. Andrew's Way		18		156	90	32	45	341
Chalvey Grove	24	40	30	104	156	98	11	463

Elliman Avenue		32		279	104		11	426
Penn Road	24				164	58	8	254
Wexham Road	8	74		130	282	24	24	542
Yew Tree Road	8	48	80		154		32	322
Romsey Close	24	136			338	16	29	543
Vicarage Way	8	24			58		5	95
TOTAL	128	459	110	669	1678	270	228	3542

The total of places by age breakdown does not include the number of places for home childcare

The highest number of places is in Romsey Close and the lowest in Vicarage Way

Sufficiency

Children's Centre Area	NCMS	MNS	DN	PSP	CC	NCIS	CM	Total Places	Birth Data 0-4 years	% of children to places	Weighting of CCA **	Conclusion- is childcare sufficient?
Monksfield Way	227	0	52	48	32		100	459	750	61.20%	50.00%	Yes
Orchard Avenue	112	0	196	20	16		40	384	1032	37.21%	33.33%	Yes
St. Andrew's Way	90	164	0	82	0		98	434	1012	42.89%	33.33%	Yes
Chalvey Grove	186	120		166	42	30	24	568	1797	31.61%	33.33%	No
Elliman Avenue	104	315	64	0	0		24	507	1188	42.68%	33.33%	Yes
Penn Road	164	0	0	78	38		16	296	922	32.10%	33.33%	No
Wexham Road	286	146	94	74	12		52	664	1308	50.76%	33.33%	Yes
Yew Tree Road	154	0	52	32	16	102	70	428	1750	24.34%	50.00%	No
Romsey Close	354	0	411	0	42		65	872	1436	60.72%	50.00%	Yes
Vicarage Way	58	0	45	0	12		11	126	534	23.6%	20.00%	Yes
Total	1735	745	914	500	210	132	500	4736	11729	40.38%		

*Home childcarers have been excluded from this dataset

**The weighting has been arrived at using historical data, local knowledge, birth rates and informal childcare within the local communities as shown in the detailed table below.

The above table is based purely on numbers and does not consider SEND, flexibility of offer, affordability trends in take up and future demand and should not be looked at in isolation. Further sufficiency analysis is detailed further in this report.

Children's Centre Area	Weighting	reasons for weighting
Monksfield Way	1 childcare place per 2 children	Vacant places not being taken up as much as in other areas, including the schools. Drop in birth rates
Orchard Avenue	1 childcare place per 3 children	Covers a large area including the trading estate, 2 large day nurseries servicing parents who work there.
St. Andrew's Way	1 childcare place per 3 children	Children's Centre closed due to lack of demand. Shortage of full day care- currently provided by childminders. The MNS is preferred by parents
Chalvey Grove	1 childcare place per 3 children	This CCA is at the minimum limit of sufficiency. Locally there are communities that include extended family providing informal childcare. Work is required to promote formal early learning as a basis before children start school
Elliman Avenue	1 childcare place per 3 children	The children's centre in this area was closed due to lack of demand. This area borders central Slough where new builds will potentially require more formal childcare
Penn Road	1 childcare place per 3 children	This CCA is at the minimum limit of sufficiency. Locally there are communities that include extended family providing informal childcare. A new setting will be opening in Spring 2023 that will help with the sufficiency in this area
Wexham Road	1 childcare place per 3 children	There are no sufficiency requirements in this area. There are several settings in the area including schools, MNS, day nurseries and pre-schools. There is potential new housing at the Akzo Nobel site so there could be further nursery provision under S106
Yew Tree Road	1 childcare place per 2 children	Childcare is insufficient in this area. There are several small house developments (houses converted into a number of flats) that fall outside S106. There will be a need for further wraparound care, day nurseries etc as there are only 2 day nurseries and 1 children's centre in this area
Romsey Close	1 childcare place per 2 children	There are no sufficiency issues, but historically and currently there is a higher than expected demand for all types of childcare places in this area
Vicarage Way	1 childcare place per 5 children	Colnbrook CofE reduced PAN due to lack of children, Bright World Day Nursery is not at capacity. Families local to the area travel into neighbouring authorities and cross the M4 into Langley

Sufficiency 2 year olds

Looking at the sufficiency of places for 2 year olds we need to consider the expected take up of a 2 year old place, as parents will need to pay if they are not eligible for a funded space.

Based on data from the Annual Provider Audit, we expect there to be fee paying 2 year olds taking up 33% of the 2 year old places available.

Based on the November 2022 DWP list it is expected that 31% of the 2 year old population is eligible to take up a funded 2 year old place (637)

Children's Centre Area	Total 2 year old places Schools and PVI	Notional CM numbers	Total 2 year old places	Number of two year olds expected to access a place (total 64%)	Number of funded two year olds attending autumn'22	Number of fee paying two year olds attending autumn'22	Total 2 year olds accessing a place	Subtotal remaining places	Funded 2 year olds not yet accessing a place	Surplus/ Deficit of places
Monksfield Way	55	38	93	80	23	31	54	39	22	17
Orchard Avenue	83	15	98	122	28	32	60	38	34	4
St. Andrew's Way	40	38	78	118	15	26	41	37	29	8
Chalvey Grove	86	9	95	205	54	31	85	10	46	-36
Elliman Avenue	56	9	65	130	40	21	61	4	41	-37
Penn Road	28	7	35	94	20	12	32	3	26	-23
Wexham Road	76	20	96	144	32	32	64	32	39	-7
Yew Tree Road	54	26	80	191	46	26	72	8	46	-38
Romsey Close	177	24	201	164	33	66	99	102	34	68
Vicarage Way	16	4	20	49	14	7	21	-1	15	-16
Total	671	190	861	1297	305	284	589	272	332	-60

Looking at the data there appears to be a shortfall of places of 60, but there are still some vacant spaces, showing an actual surplus of places of 48. The deficit of places is in Chalvey Grove, Elliman Avenue, Penn Road, Yew Tree Road and Vicarage Way.

	No of vacancies	Surplus/ Deficit of 2 yr old places from table above	Actual Surplus/ Deficit of 2 yr old places
Monksfield Way	14	17	31
Orchard Avenue	10	4	14
St. Andrew's Way	9	8	17
Chalvey Grove	3	-36	-33
Elliman Avenue	1	-37	-36
Penn Road	22	-23	-1
Wexham Road	9	-7	2
Yew Tree Road	0	-38	-38
Romsey Close	35	68	103
Vicarage Way	6	-16	-10
	108	-60	49

We have used an average take up across all CCAs of 33% for all Fee paying 2 year olds, but Romsey Close is significantly higher at 44%. Therefore, it can be expected that the number of surplus places in the table above (103) are likely to be utilised by fee payers.

Sufficiency 3 and 4 year old

Unlike 2 year olds, all 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to a minimum of 15 hours of free childcare per week over 38 weeks of the year, so we would expect take up of places to be much higher. 4 year old children in Reception classes have been removed from this calculation to show the true sufficiency of Early Years places.

Children's Centre Area	Total 3&4 year old places Schools and PVI	Notional CM numbers	Total places	3&4 year olds	Less no of 4 yr olds in reception classes	Total no of 3&4 yr olds in EY	Total places	Surplus/ Deficit
Monksfield Way	292	45	337	390	181	209	337	128
Orchard Avenue	201	18	219	548	100	448	219	-229
St. Andrew's Way	296	45	341	518	196	322	341	19
Chalvey Grove	452	11	463	807	259	548	463	-85
Elliman Avenue	415	11	426	522	143	379	426	47

Penn Road	246	8	254	519	130	389	254	-135
Wexham Road	518	24	542	617	301	316	542	226
Yew Tree Road	290	32	322	798	199	599	322	-277
Romsey Close	514	29	543	707	385	322	543	221
Vicarage Way	90	5	95	219	53	166	95	-71
Total	3314	228	3542	5645	1947	3698	3542	-156

Looking at the data there appears to be a shortfall of places, but when vacancies are added in it shows a surplus of places of 69. The deficit is in Orchard Avenue, Chalvey Grove, Penn Road, Yew Tree Road and Vicarage Way.

	No of vacancies	Surplus/ Deficit of 3 & 4 yr old places from table above	Actual Surplus/ Deficit of 3 & 4 yr old places
Monksfield Way	19	128	147
Orchard Avenue	15	-229	-214
St. Andrew's Way	9	19	28
Chalvey Grove	6	-85	-79
Elliman Avenue	11	47	58
Penn Road	48	-135	-87
Wexham Road	43	226	269
Yew Tree Road	13	-277	-264
Romsey Close	53	221	274
Vicarage Way	8	-71	-63
	225	-156	69

2 year old Funded Early Education criteria

2 year old children can get a free childcare place if families receive any of the following benefits:

- [Income Support](#)
- [Income based Jobseeker's Allowance \(JSA\)](#)
- [Income related Employment and Support Allowance \(ESA\)](#)
- [Universal Credit](#) and the household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, not including benefit payments, assessed on up to three of the parent's most recent Universal Credit assessment periods.
- [The Guaranteed element of Pension Credit](#)
- [Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit](#) (or both) and have a household income of £16,190 a year or less before tax
- The Working Tax Credit 4-week run (the payment parents can receive when they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

A child can also get free early education at the age of two, if:

- they are looked after by a local authority
- they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- they receive Disability Living Allowance
- they have left care under a special guardianship order, child arrangements order or adoption order.

Non- UK citizens who cannot claim benefits

Parents whose immigration status states they have 'no recourse to public funds' may be able to receive 2 year old funding if their household income is no more than:

- household income of £26,500 a year with one child (outside London)
- household income of £30,600 a year with two or more children (outside London)
- They have no more than £16,000 in savings or investments

Eligible children will be able to start their free place from the beginning of the term after their second birthday. Parents/carers can apply in the term of their child's second birthday by completing an application online on the [Citizen Portal](#).

2 year old funding 2022/23

- The DWP list September 2022 showed 630 families potentially eligible for 2 year old funding, this is a decrease of 155 compared to 2021
- According to the DWP list September 2022, Chalvey Grove Children's Centre area continues to have the highest number of eligible 2 year olds living in the borough, followed by Yew Tree Road.

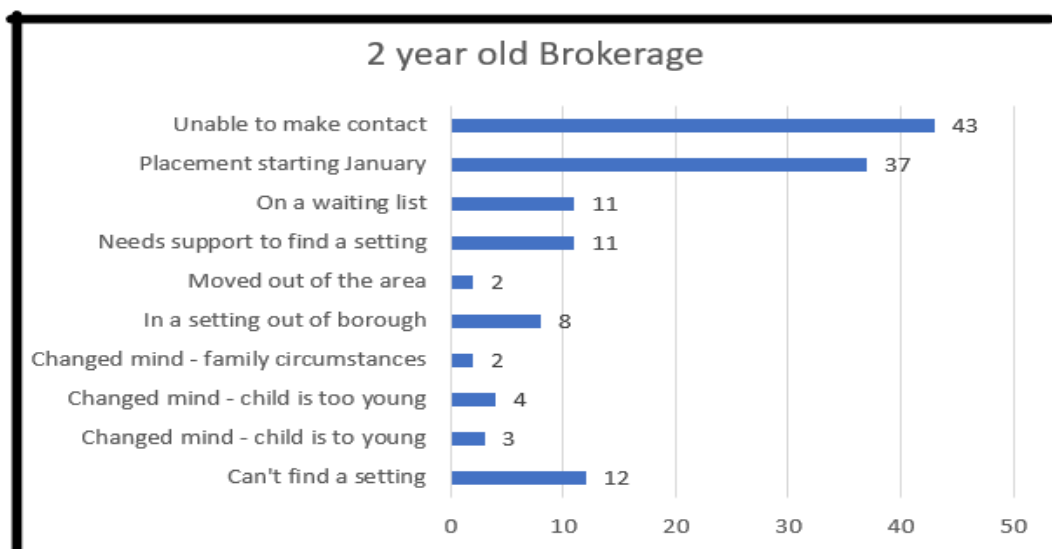
CCA	Eligible – DWP Sep 2022 list	Applications as of Sep 22	Reach
Chalvey Grove	105	37 (35%)	68 (65%)
Elliman Avenue	80	31 (39%)	49 (61%)
Monksfield Way	44	20 (45%)	24 (55%)
Orchard Ave	63	15 (24%)	48 (76%)
Penn Road	44	14 (32%)	30 (68%)
Romsey Close	65	23 (35%)	42 (65%)
St Andrews Way	42	15 (36%)	27 (64%)
Vicarage Way	25	9 (36%)	16 (64%)
Wexham Road	76	31 (41%)	45 (59%)
Yew Tree Road	86	32 (37%)	54 (63%)
	630	227	403

Following receipt of the September 2022 DWP the local authority received a new updated list in November 2022. Comparison of the data tells us that the overall number of potential eligible families increased by 7, with the highest number of eligible 2 year olds again in Chalvey Grove CCA.

However, the number of families applying for 2 year old funding during the period of September – November 2022 increased by 78, a 12% increase from September.

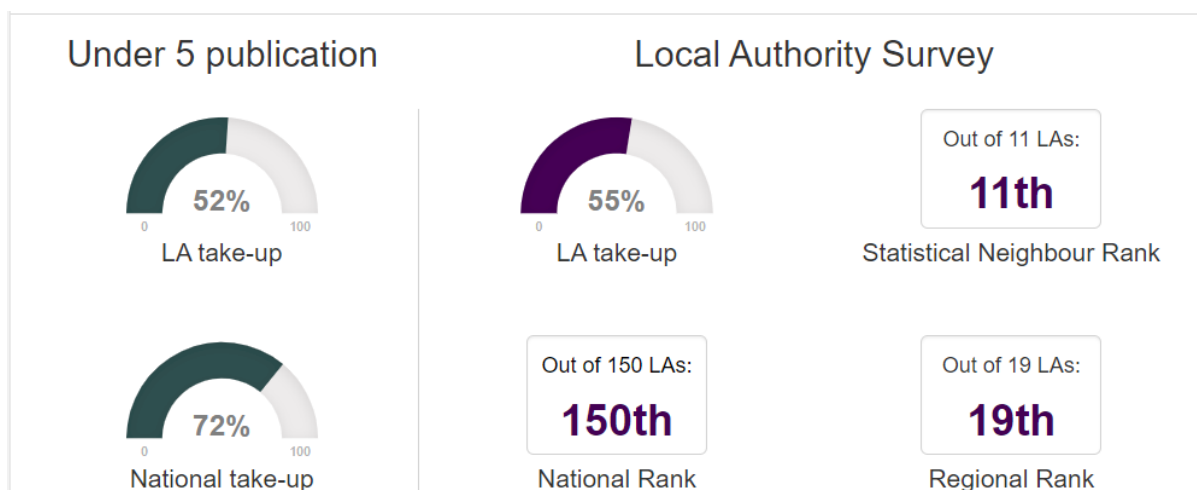
CCA	Eligible – DWP Nov 2022 list	Applications as of Nov 22	Reach
Chalvey Grove	100	54 (54%)	46 (46%)
Elliman Avenue	81	40 (49%)	41 (49%)
Monksfield Way	45	23 (51%)	22 (49%)
Orchard Ave	62	28 (45%)	34 (55%)
Penn Road	46	20 (43%)	26 (57%)
Romsey Close	67	33 (49%)	34 (51%)
St Andrews Way	44	15 (34%)	29 (66%)
Vicarage Way	29	14 (48%)	15 (52%)
Wexham Road	71	32 (45%)	39 (55%)
Yew Tree Road	92	46 (50%)	46 (50%)
	637	305	332

A brokerage exercise was undertaken to try to find the reasons for the lack of take up of a 2 year old place. 43 families were uncontactable and the majority stated that the child was due to start the following term. Only 12 families stated that they could find a setting.



The numbers of eligible 2 year olds have dropped considerably since its height in 2017. There has been a drop in birth rates, with 2 year olds being 251 less than in 2019-20.

Term	Participation- 2 year olds taking up a space	% take up	Numbers on DWP list	% drop in eligible families since autumn 2017
Autumn 2017	443	51%	869	
Summer 2019	464	55%	847	-2.53%
Autumn 2019	433	54%	795	-8.52%
Spring 2020	418	57%	731	-15.88%
Summer 2020	336	45%	754	-13.23%
Autumn 2020	317	38%	824	-5.18%
Spring 2021	380	48%	785	-9.67%
Summer 2021	361	47%	761	-12.43%
Autumn 2021	402	55%	725	-16.57%
Spring 2022	396	57%	690	-20.60%
Summer 2022	397	59%	668	-23.13%
Autumn 2022	350	55%	632	-27.27%



Slough’s participation rates for funded 2 year olds (55% Autumn 2022) is below the national average of 72%. In real terms, an increase of 100 children receiving 2 year old funding (from 305 to 405 children) is required to hit the national average percentage.

3 & 4 year old universal entitlement

When considering the number of universal places required for 3 & 4 year old provision we need to consider the number of 4 year olds attending a reception place. The table below shows the current numbers on roll as per headcount data autumn 2022 and the total number of places against the number of children who may require a universal 3 & 4 year old place.

CCA	3 & 4 year olds	4 year olds in reception classes	Target number 3 & 4 year olds	Autumn 2022 participation	Difference
Chalvey Grove	807	259	549	336	212
Elliman Avenue	522	143	379	265	114
Monksfield Way	390	181	209	170	39
Orchard Avenue	548	100	448	143	305
Penn Road	519	130	389	166	223
Romsey Close	707	385	322	352	-30
St. Andrews Way	518	196	322	179	143
Vicarage Way	219	53	166	90	76
Wexham Road	617	316	301	308	-7
Yew Tree Road	798	199	599	276	323
	5645	1962	3683	2285	1398

The table above does appear to show that the take up of places is significantly lower than the population. However, historically, the autumn term has the lowest take up,

so we need to ensure that there are sufficient spaces in the summer term which has the highest take up.

CCA	3 & 4 year olds	4 year olds in reception classes	Target number 3 & 4 year olds	Summer 2022 participation	Difference
Chalvey Grove	807	259	548	465	83
Elliman Avenue	522	143	379	376	3
Monksfield Way	390	181	209	287	-78
Orchard Avenue	548	100	448	217	231
Penn Road	519	130	389	250	139
Romsey Close	707	385	322	617	-295
St. Andrews Way	518	196	322	248	74
Vicarage Way	219	53	166	87	79
Wexham Road	617	316	301	505	-204
Yew Tree Road	798	199	599	301	298
	5645	1962	3683	3353	330

The take up in the summer term 2022 was 91%. Based on this, the take up in 3 areas is higher than the number of eligible children in the CCA, Monksfield Way, Romsey Close and Wexham Road.

30 hours Childcare - Extended entitlement

The extended entitlement criteria:

A child will be entitled to the additional free hours from the term after both of the following conditions are satisfied:

- (1) the child has attained the age of three;
- (2) the child's parent has a current positive determination of eligibility from HMRC.

Parents must be working (both parents in a two parent household or one parent in a one parent household) and earning the equivalent of 16 hours per week at the national minimum or living wage and not more than £100,000 per year. If they are self employed, or on a zero hour contract they are asked to confirm that they meet the income threshold outlined above.

In order to forecast the number of places required in Slough for the extended entitlement we used the DFE's process infographic for estimating our local authority's eligibility for 30 hours. This enabled us to work out projected number of children's who could be eligible between 2018 -2023.

Each area uses the projected population of 3 & 4 year olds living in that children’s centre area and therefore as expected Chalvey Grove and Yew Tree Road CCAs have the highest number of eligible children in 2022 and 2023.

	Projections at April 2018					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Monksfield Way	108	106	110	107	106	104
Orchard Avenue	148	156	146	142	140	138
St. Andrew's Way	175	162	144	141	138	136
Chalvey Grove	257	254	254	248	244	240
Elliman Avenue	167	174	175	171	168	165
Penn Road	141	151	152	148	146	143
Wexham Road	172	178	181	176	173	170
Yew Tree Road	224	236	222	218	213	209
Romsey Close	213	201	209	203	200	197
Vicarage Way	72	71	69	67	66	65
Total	1677	1689	1662	1621	1594	1567

Funded Early Education 2, 3 and 4 year olds

The table below tracks the actual number of children who received funding between the spring term 2019 through to the autumn term 2022. In previous years the numbers of children in receipt of the universal 3 & 4 year old offer and the extended entitlement gradually build from autumn through to the summer term as more children become eligible for the funding entitlements. Two year old numbers were more stable, showing a more static number across the whole year. However, our numbers following lockdown have shown a different picture.

Funding claims 2019 – 2022 Universal 3 & 4 year olds

Term	Universal 3 & 4	Number previous year	Variance	% change
Spring 2019	3,073	3,131	-58	-1.85%
Summer 2019	3,517	3,500	17	0.49%
Autumn 2019	2,461	2,318	143	6.17%
Spring 2020	3,163	3,073	90	2.93%
Summer 2020	3,424	3,517	-93	-2.64%
Autumn 2020	2,436	2,461	-25	-1.02%
Spring 2021	2,840	3,163	-323	-10.21%
Summer 2021	3,368	3,424	-56	-1.64%
Autumn 2021	2,392	2,436	-44	-1.81%
Spring 2022	2975	2,840	135	4.75%
Summer 2022	3353	3,368	-15	-0.45%
Autumn 2022	2285	2,392	-107	-4.47%

Funding claims 2019 – 2022 Extended Entitlement 3 & 4 year olds

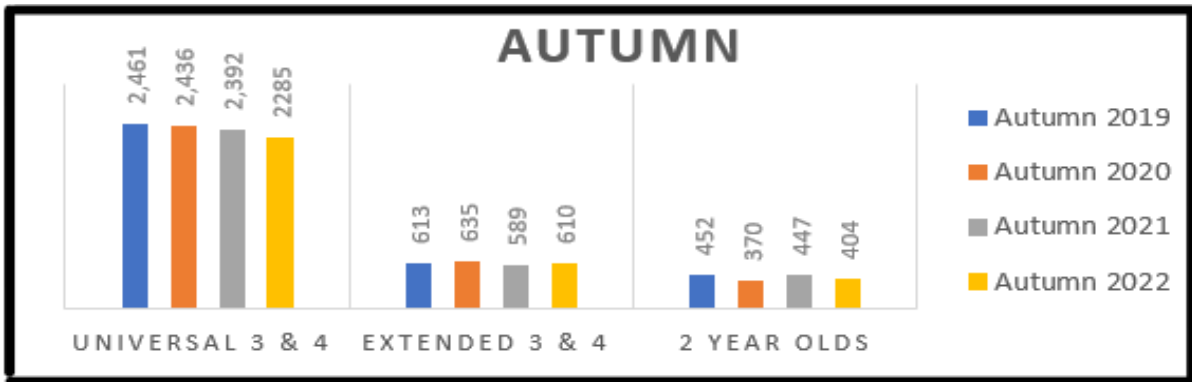
Term	Extended 3 & 4	Number previous year	Variance	% change
Spring 2019	804	662	142	21.45%
Summer 2019	935	825	110	13.33%
Autumn 2019	613	620	-7	-1.13%
Spring 2020	843	804	39	4.85%
Summer 2020	919	935	-16	-1.71%
Autumn 2020	635	613	22	3.59%
Spring 2021	780	843	-63	-7.47%
Summer 2021	895	919	-24	-2.61%
Autumn 2021	589	635	-46	-7.24%
Spring 2022	806	780	26	3.33%
Summer 2022	901	895	6	0.67%
Autumn 2022	610	589	21	3.57%

Funding claims 2019 – 2022 2 year olds

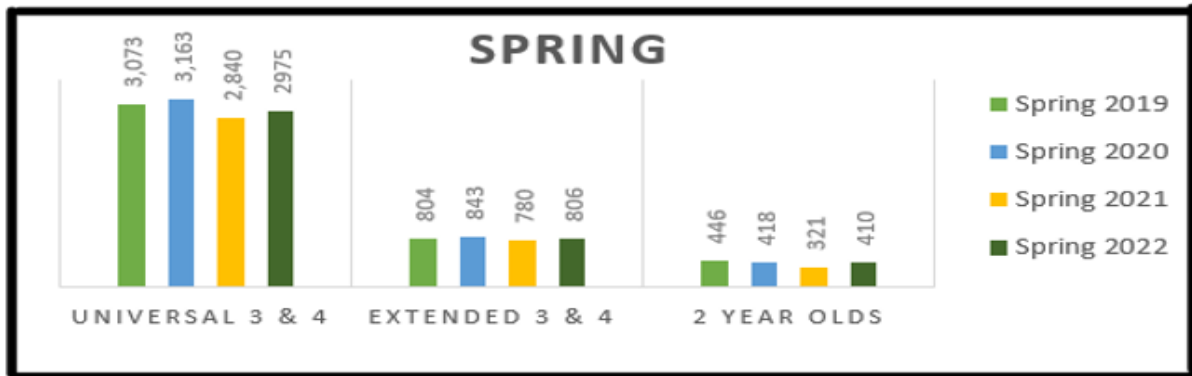
Term	2 year olds	Number previous year	Variance	% change
Spring 2019	446	443	3	0.68%
Summer 2019	464	424	40	9.43%
Autumn 2019	452	458	-6	-1.31%
Spring 2020	418	446	-28	-6.28%
Summer 2020	336	464	-128	-27.59%
Autumn 2020	317	452	-135	-29.87%
Spring 2021	380	418	-38	-9.09%
Summer 2021	361	336	25	7.44%
Autumn 2021	402	317	85	26.81%
Spring 2022	396	380	16	4.21%
Summer 2022	397	361	36	9.97%
Autumn 2022	350	402	-52	-12.94%

Comparison of funding claims 2019 – 2022

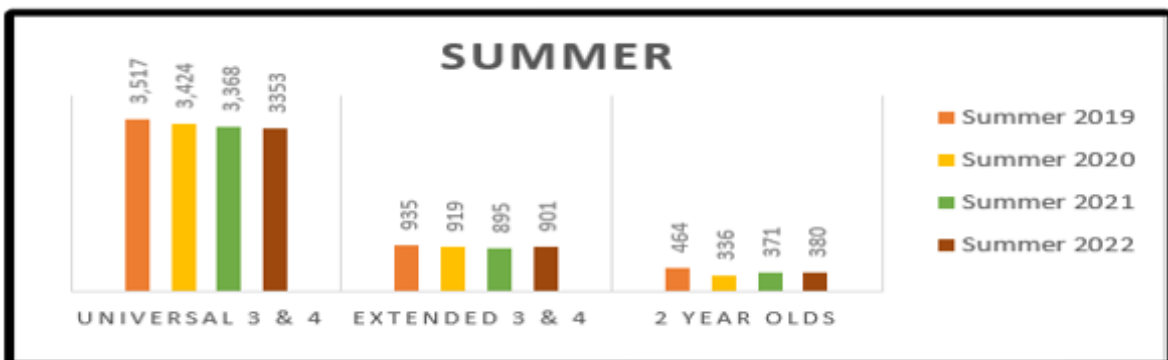
Autumn: When reviewing the funding claims for the autumn term we can see that numbers for universal funding have yet to reach pre-COVID levels and are 7% down from 2019 and 4.5% down from autumn 2021. Numbers for extended entitlement dropped in 2021 but have risen by 3.5% in 2022. Two year old funded children rose significantly by 21% in 2021 but have dropped by 10% in 2022.



Spring: As in the autumn term, we have yet to reach pre-COVID levels for universal funding. There was a marked drop of 10% in 2021, due to the January 2021 lockdown and fear of the virus, however spring 2022 shows a 5% increase in take up. There is a 3.5% increase in take up in spring 2022 for the extended entitlement.



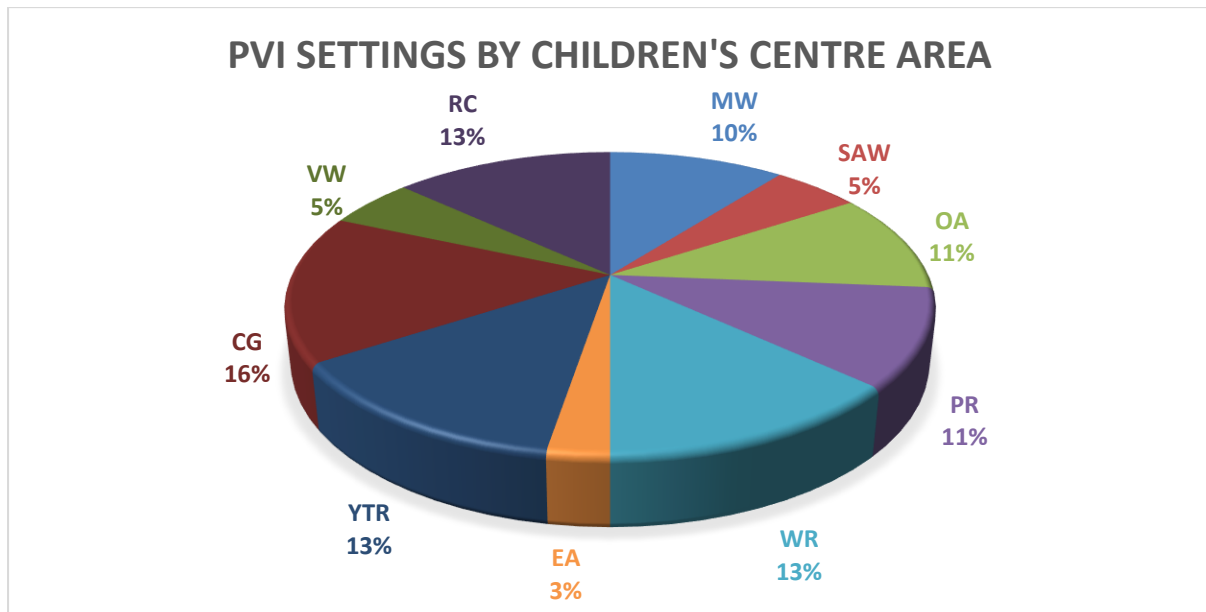
Summer: As in Autumn and Spring, we have not reached the numbers of children in receipt of all types of funded childcare as pre-COVID. From 2021, universal funding is down slightly, but extended and 2 year old funded childcare is up.



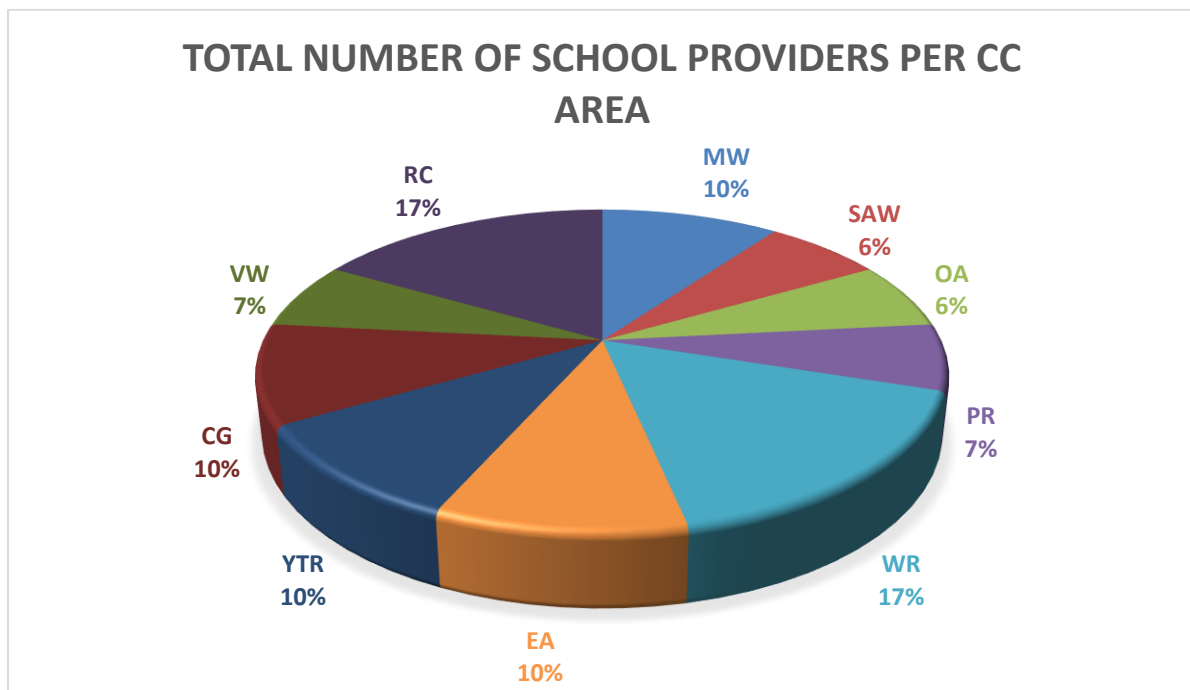
Early Years Annual Provider Audit Analysis

Setting by CCA by type of provider

There were 39 PVI settings in Slough during Autumn 2022, with the highest number of providers 16% in the Chalvey Grove Children’s Centre area, followed by Yew Tree Road, Romsey Close and Wexham Road Children’s Centre Areas. This is reflective of the number of under 5 year olds in these areas.



There were 25 schools with nursery classes and 5 maintained nursery schools across Slough in the autumn term 2022. The highest number of school based providers can be found in the Wexham Road, Yew Tree Road and Romsey Close Children’s Centre areas 17%.



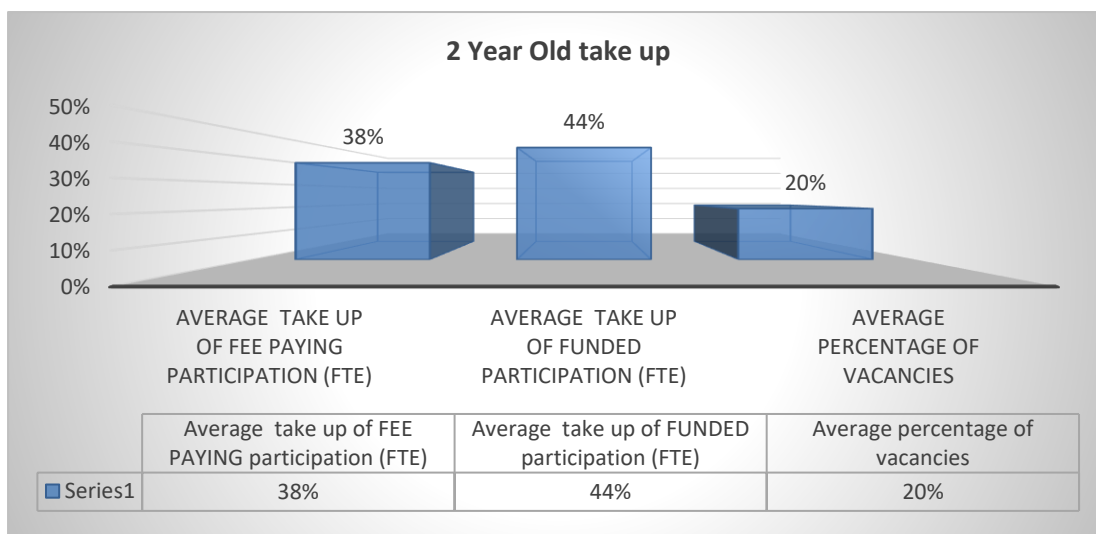
The highest number of childminders are in the Monksfield Way and St Andrews Way CCA, 19.77%. The lowest numbers are in Vicarage Way CCA, 2.33%.

The highest number of childminders are in the Monksfield Way area (21.13%), with the lowest number in Vicarage Way area (2.82%), closely followed by Elliman Avenue and Penn Road areas (4.23%)

Take up of provision

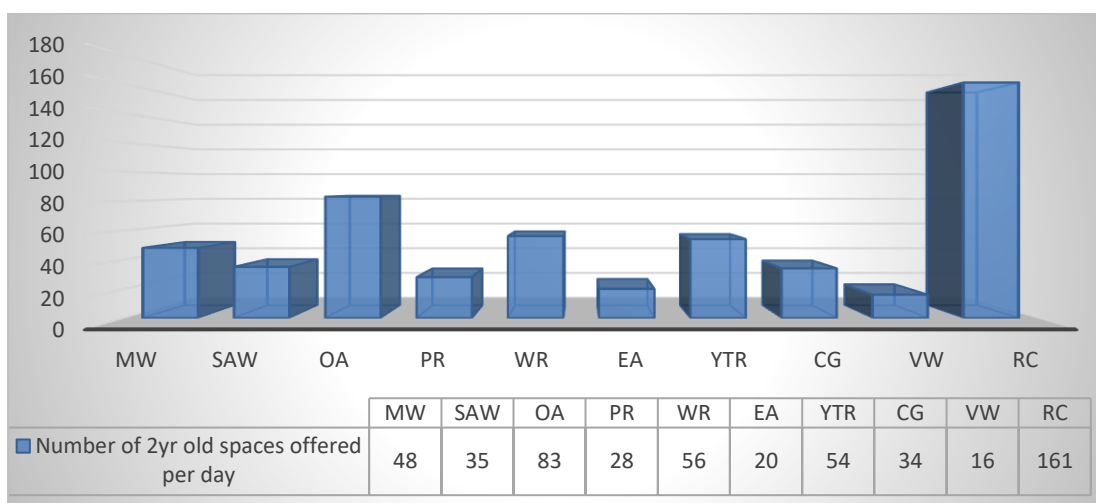
Providers were asked questions around the take up of provision.

PVI Settings

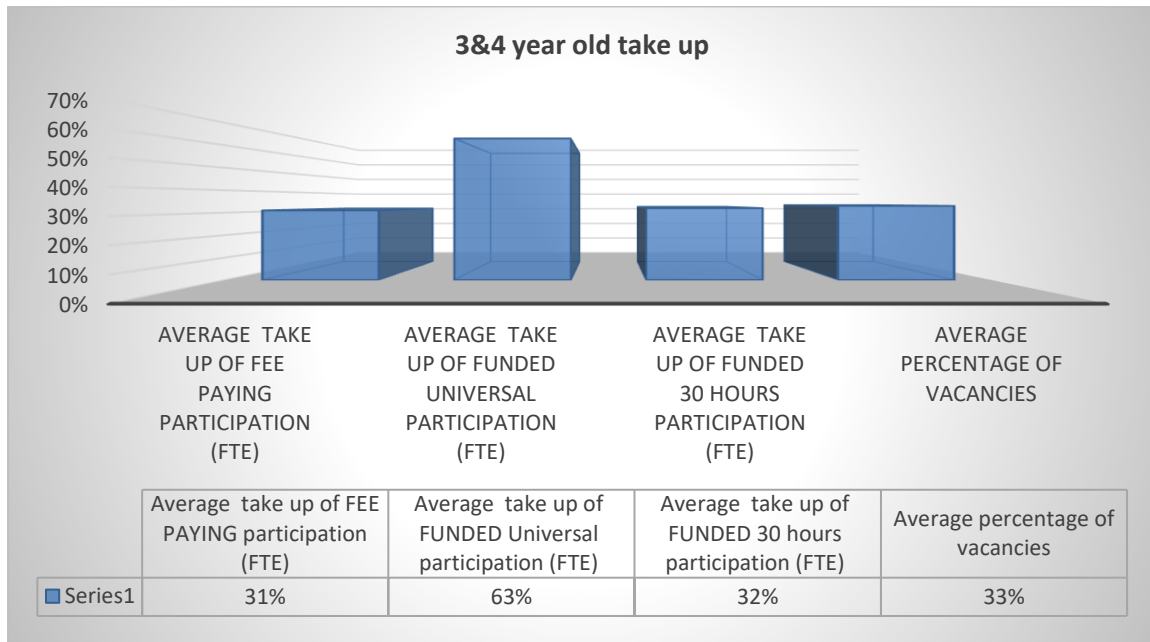


There are more places available in PVIs for funded children than fee paying, although there is a high percentage of vacant places 20%. Further work needs to be carried out by the Early Education team to ensure that families with eligible 2 year olds can access these places through brokerage.

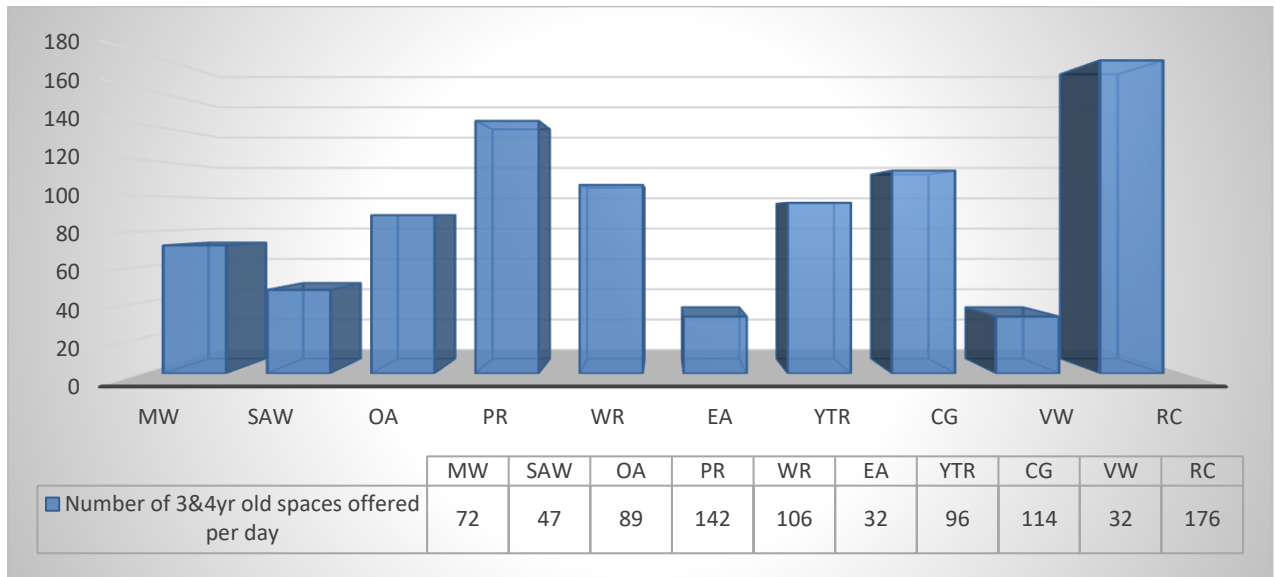
Broken down by CC Area



The highest number of 2 year old places is in Romsey Close CCA, the lowest in Vicarage Way

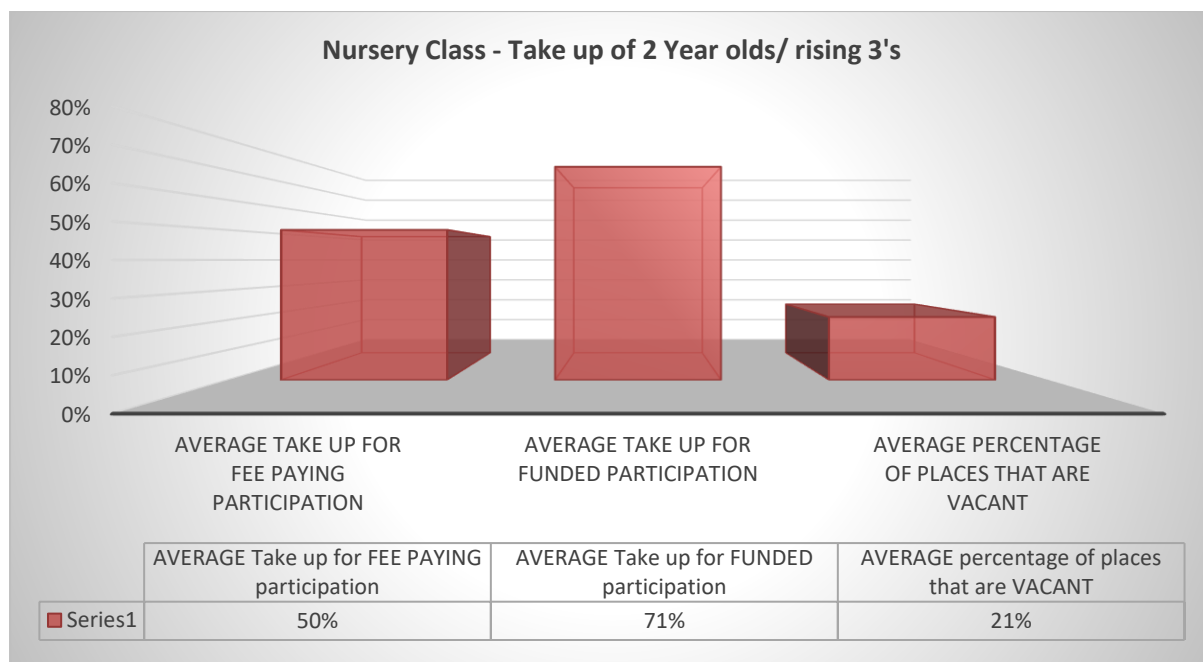


All children are eligible for 15 hours of Free Early Education per week, for 38 weeks of the year (570 hours per year). Fee paying participation is likely to be wraparound and/or holiday care. The total take up of universal and extended entitlement is 95%

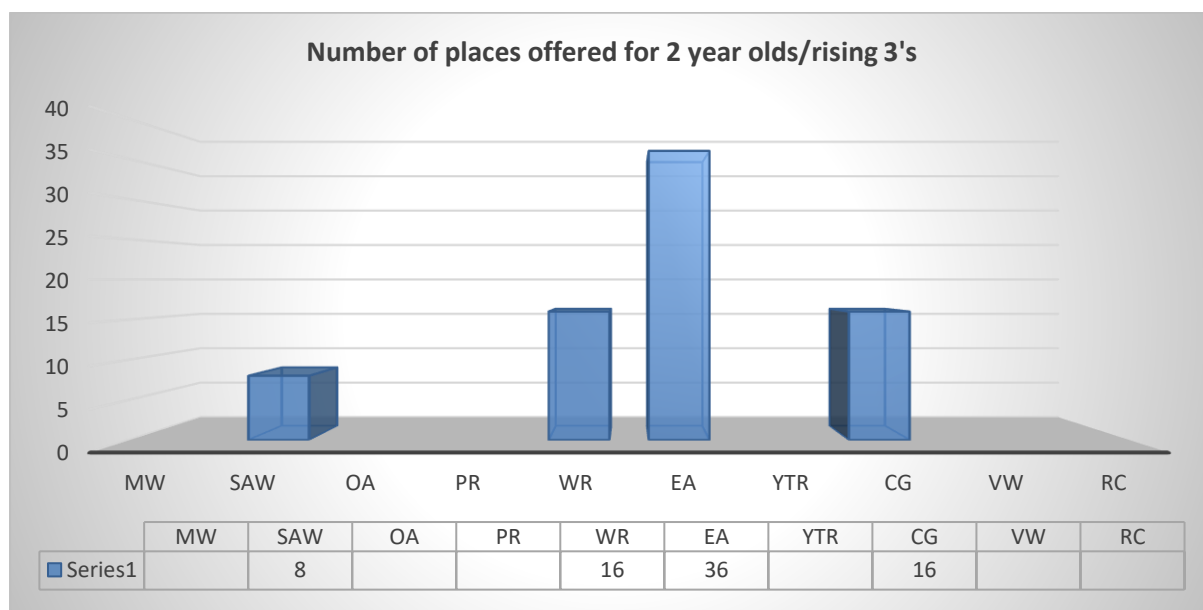


The highest number of 3 and 4 year old places is in Romsey Close CCA, the lowest in Vicarage Way and Elliman Avenue

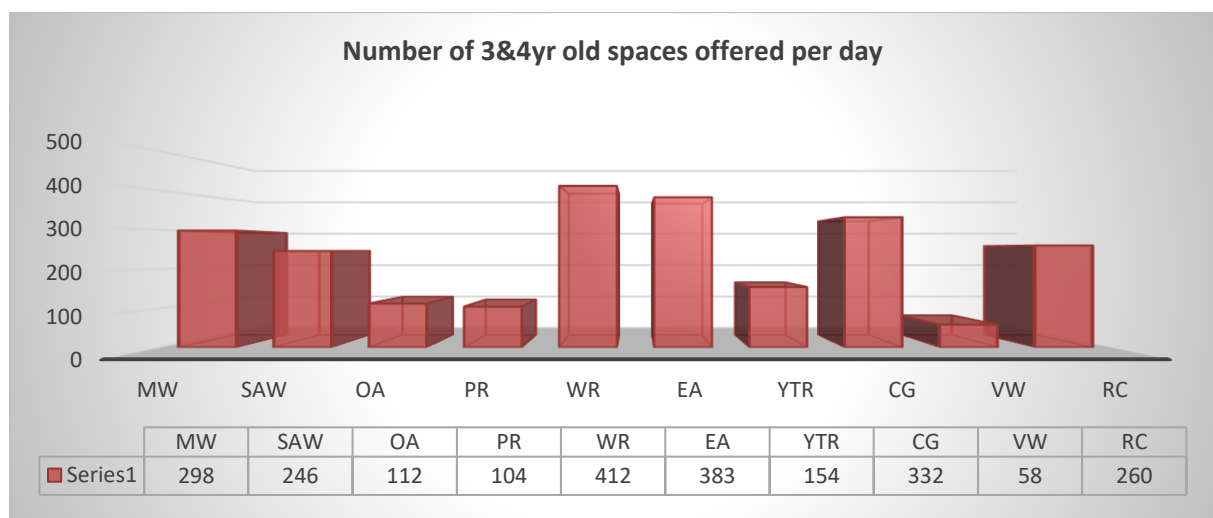
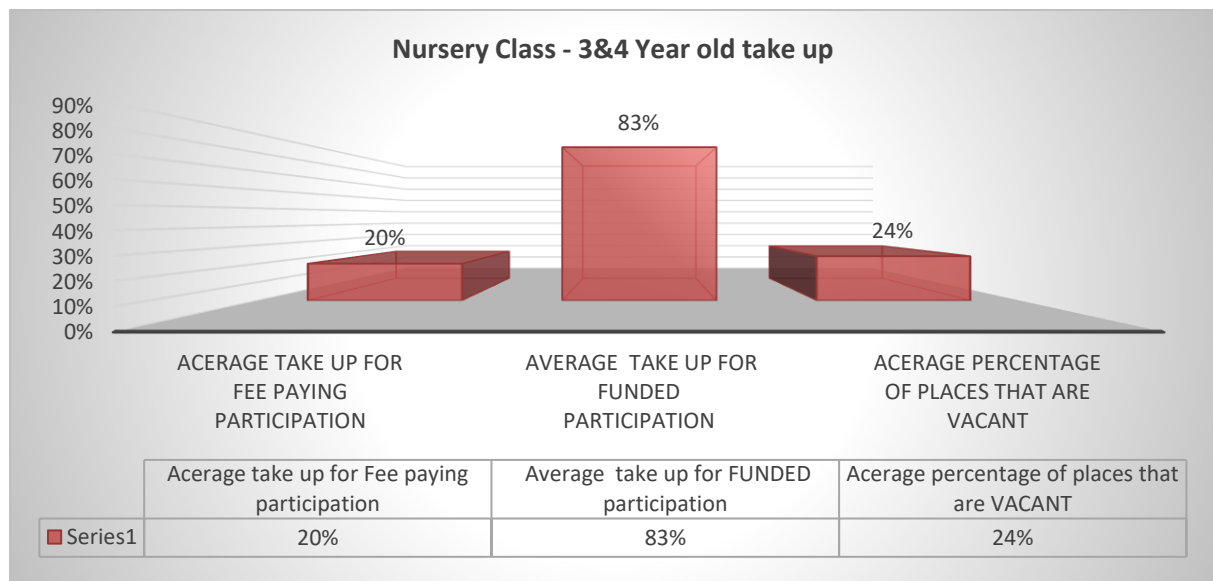
Nursery Class



Nursery classes are offering more places for rising 3s (2 year olds) than in previous years

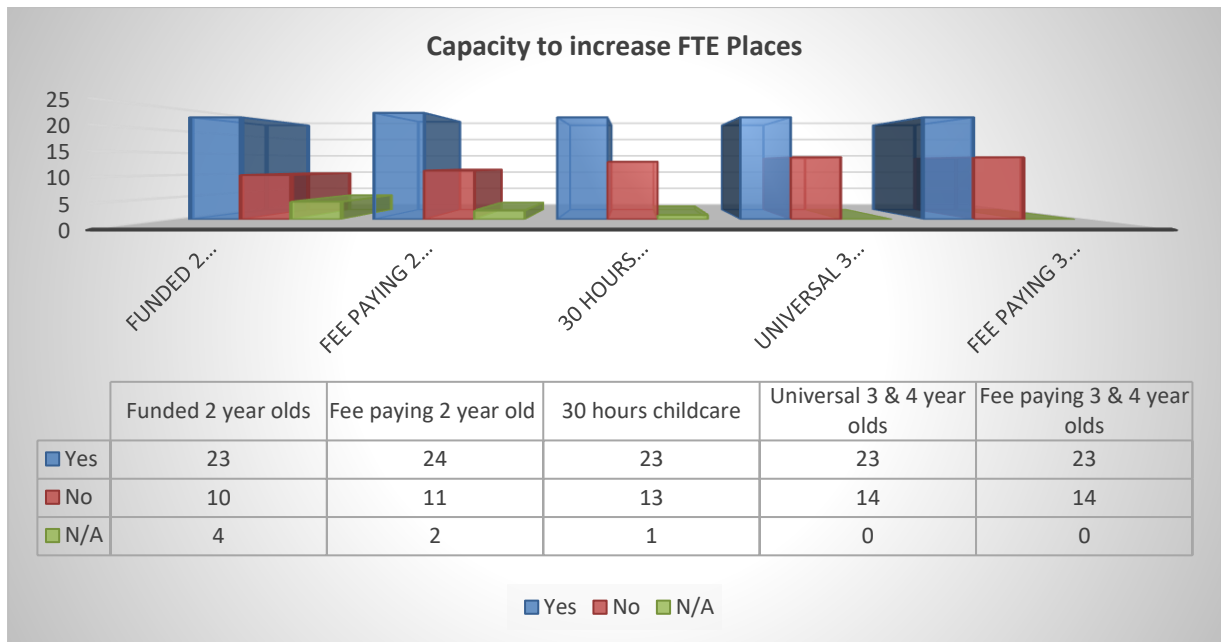


There is a total of 76 2 year old places available in maintained nursery schools across Slough.



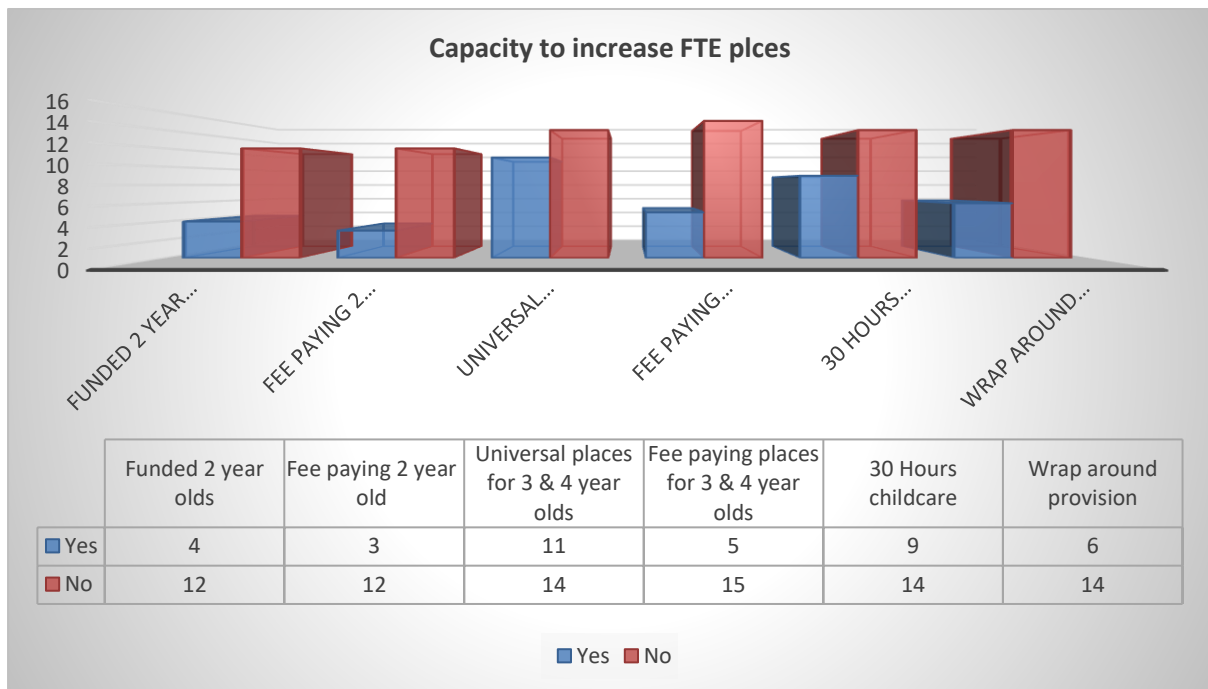
Capacity

Providers were asked if they could increase capacity if there was a need for doing so.



This clearly shows that PVI's have additional capacity to provide more spaces across all areas, but there are other considerations such as the additional staff required.

Nursery Classes



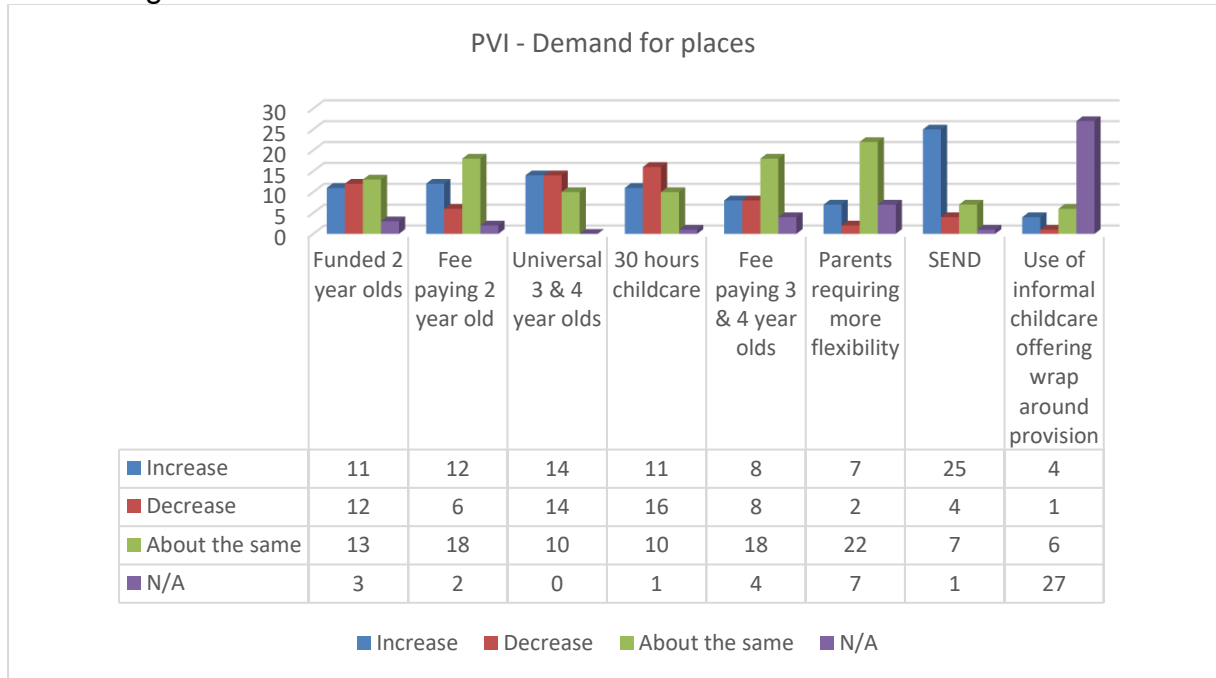
Nursery classes are not in a position to increase FTE places, based on the graph above.

Demand for places autumn term 2022

Providers were asked if they felt there had been an increase or decrease in demand for places during the autumn term.

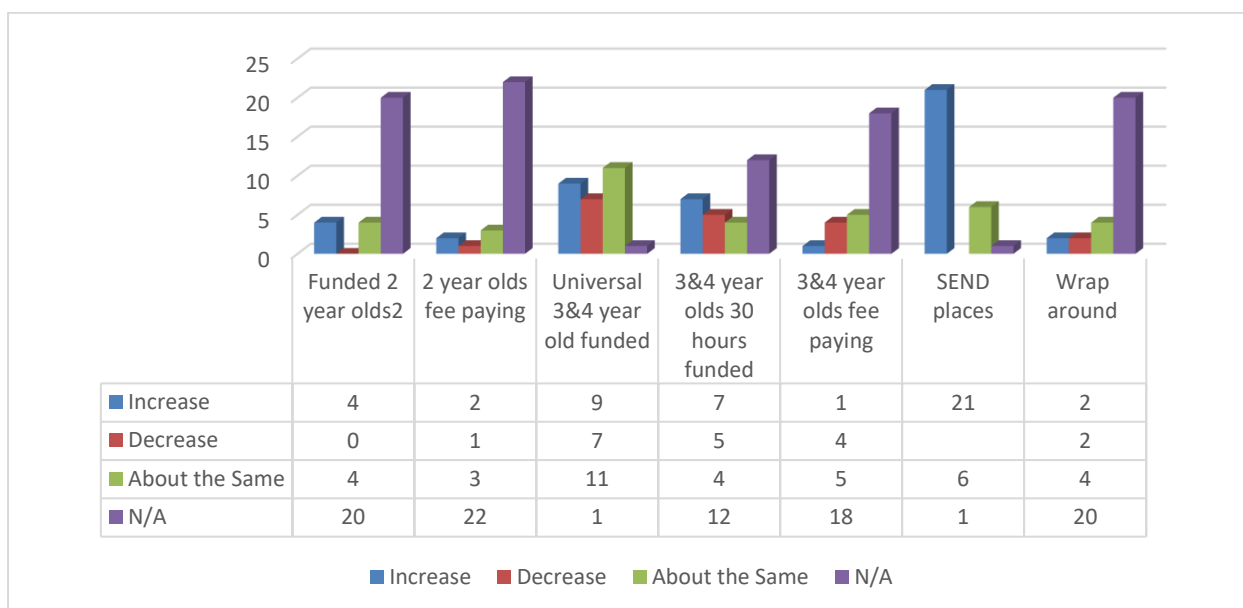
PVI settings identified that there had been an overall decrease in demand for both 30 hour extended entitlement places, and private fee paying places for 2, 3 & 4 year olds. 26% of PVI providers also identified an increase in demand for places for children with SEND.

PVI settings

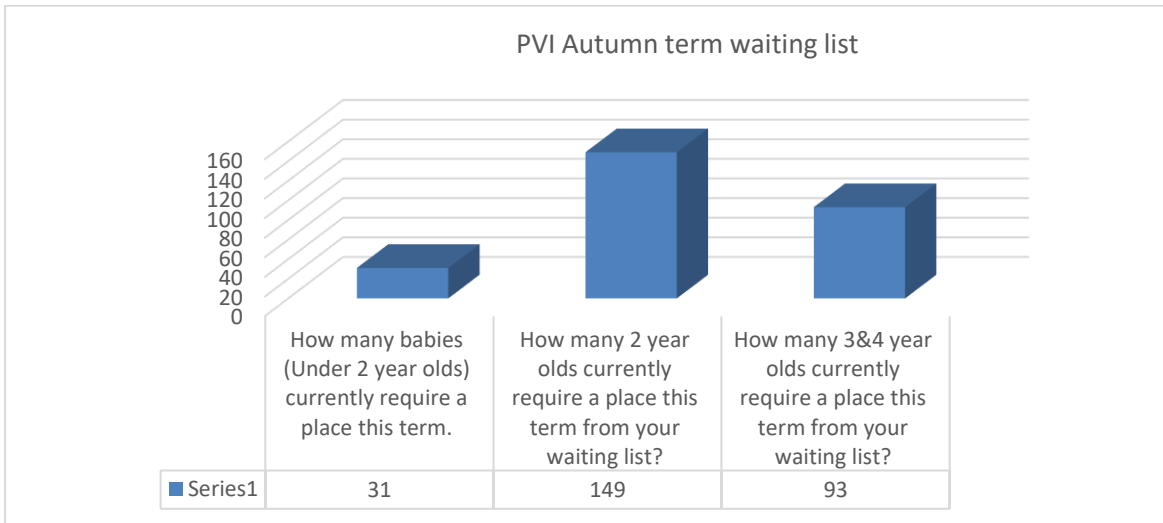


Schools with nursery classes

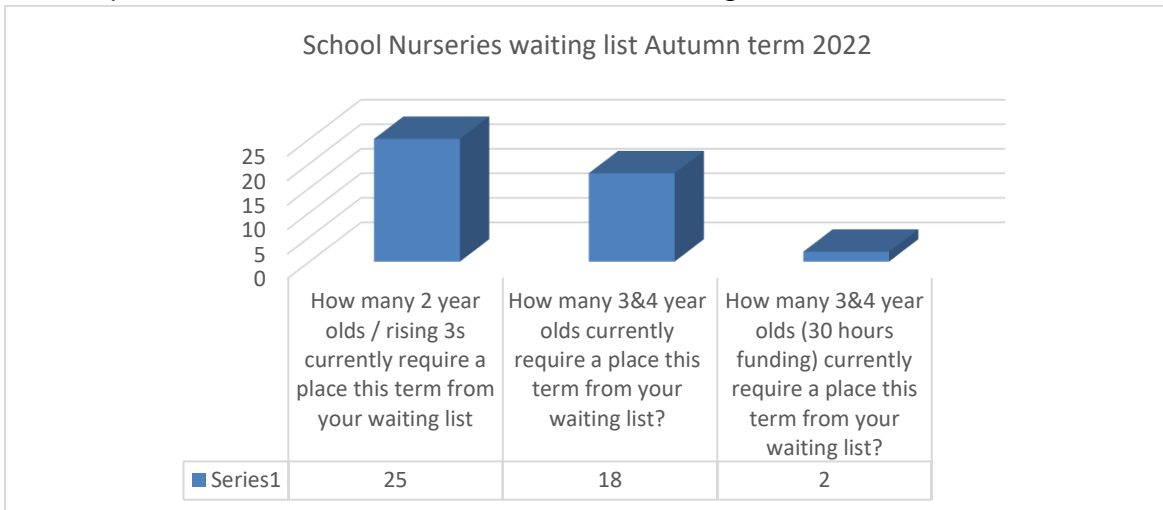
21 school nurseries reported an increase of children with SEND, but there was no decrease in SEND numbers at any school.



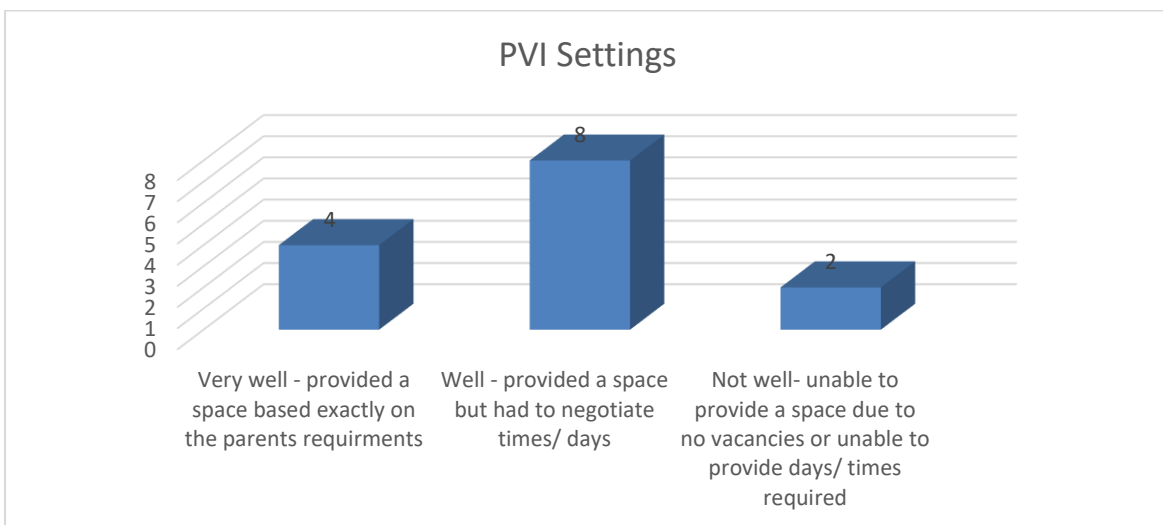
Waiting Lists



PVIs reported a total of 273 children on their waiting lists.



School nurseries have a total of 45 children currently on their waiting lists across rising 3s, universal and extended entitlement places

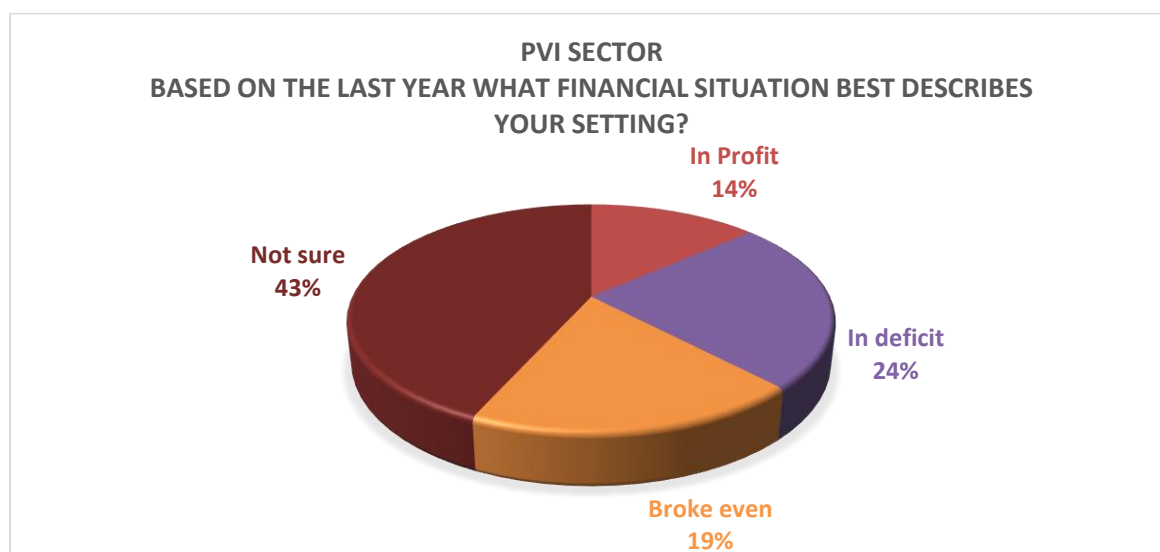


PVI settings were asked how well they felt they met the needs of parents and carers based on enquiries they had over the last year

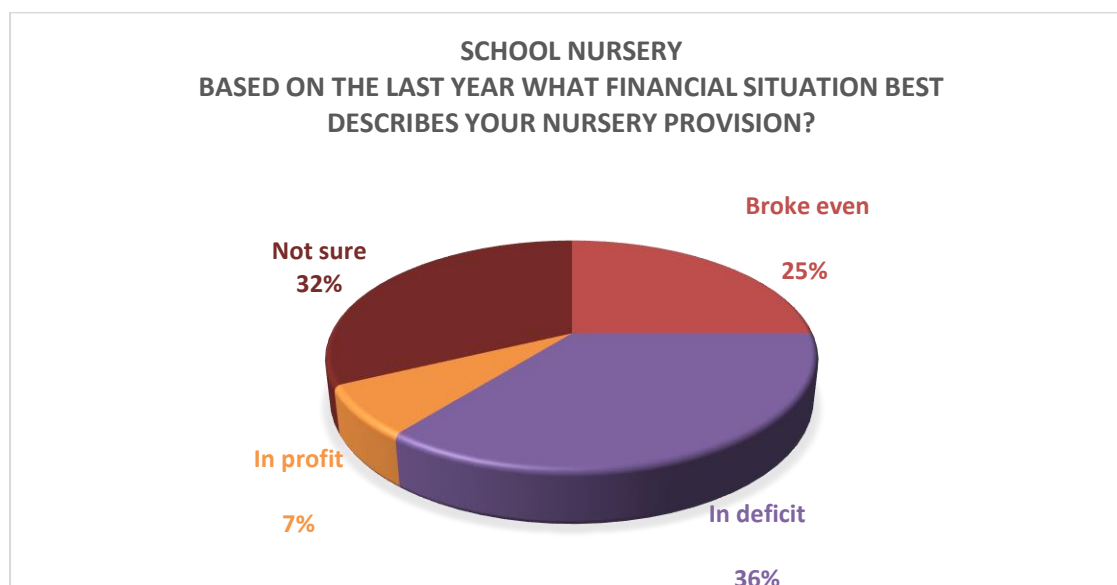
Two settings reported that they felt they have not met the needs of parents and carers well. The reason for this was that they were unable to offer a place due to staffing levels. Settings reported that there were insufficient staff numbers to keep up with demand.

Finances / business sustainability

Settings were asked to assess their financial position in the last year.

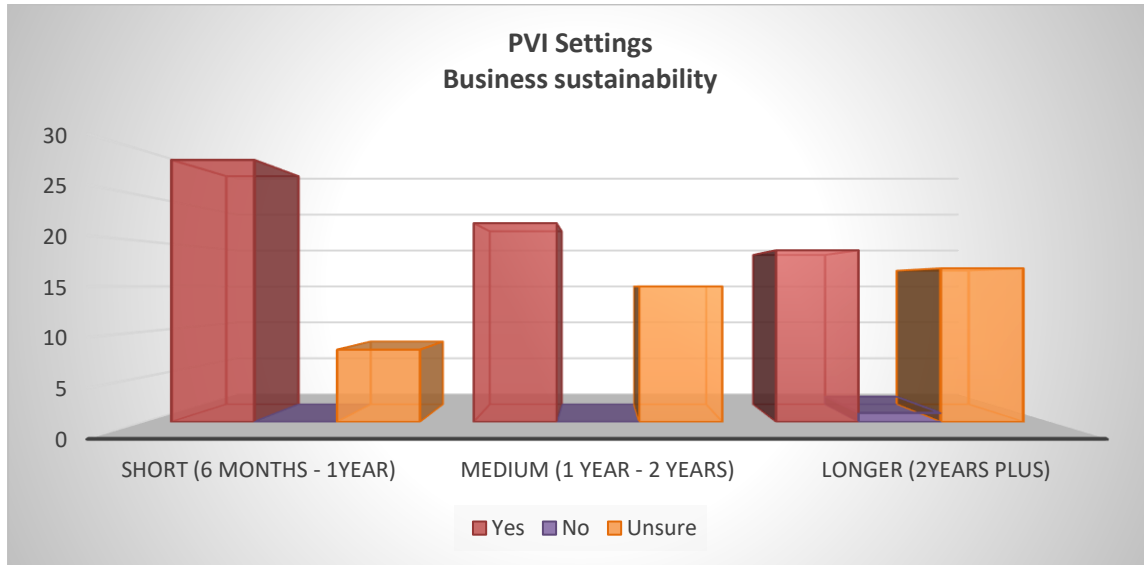


In the PVI sector, 14% stated they were in profit and 19% broke even. However, 24% stated they were in a deficit position and 43% were not sure of their financial position. Workshops are being organised to address this, with business support being a focus for the coming year.



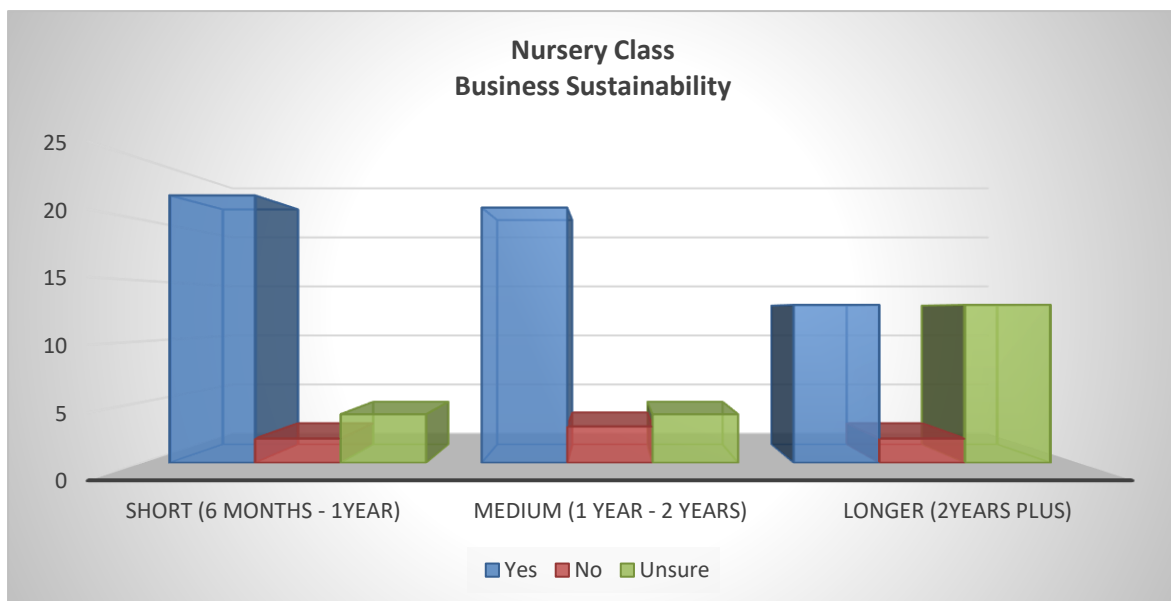
School nurseries reported a similar picture, but those in profit were even lower, at just 7%, although the break-even was higher than that in the PVI sector at 25%

PVI providers were less certain about the longer term sustainability of their business, but this is expected due to the current situation concerning recovery from the pandemic, rising fuel charges and inflation for consumables. However, 78% of providers felt that their business was sustainable in the short term.



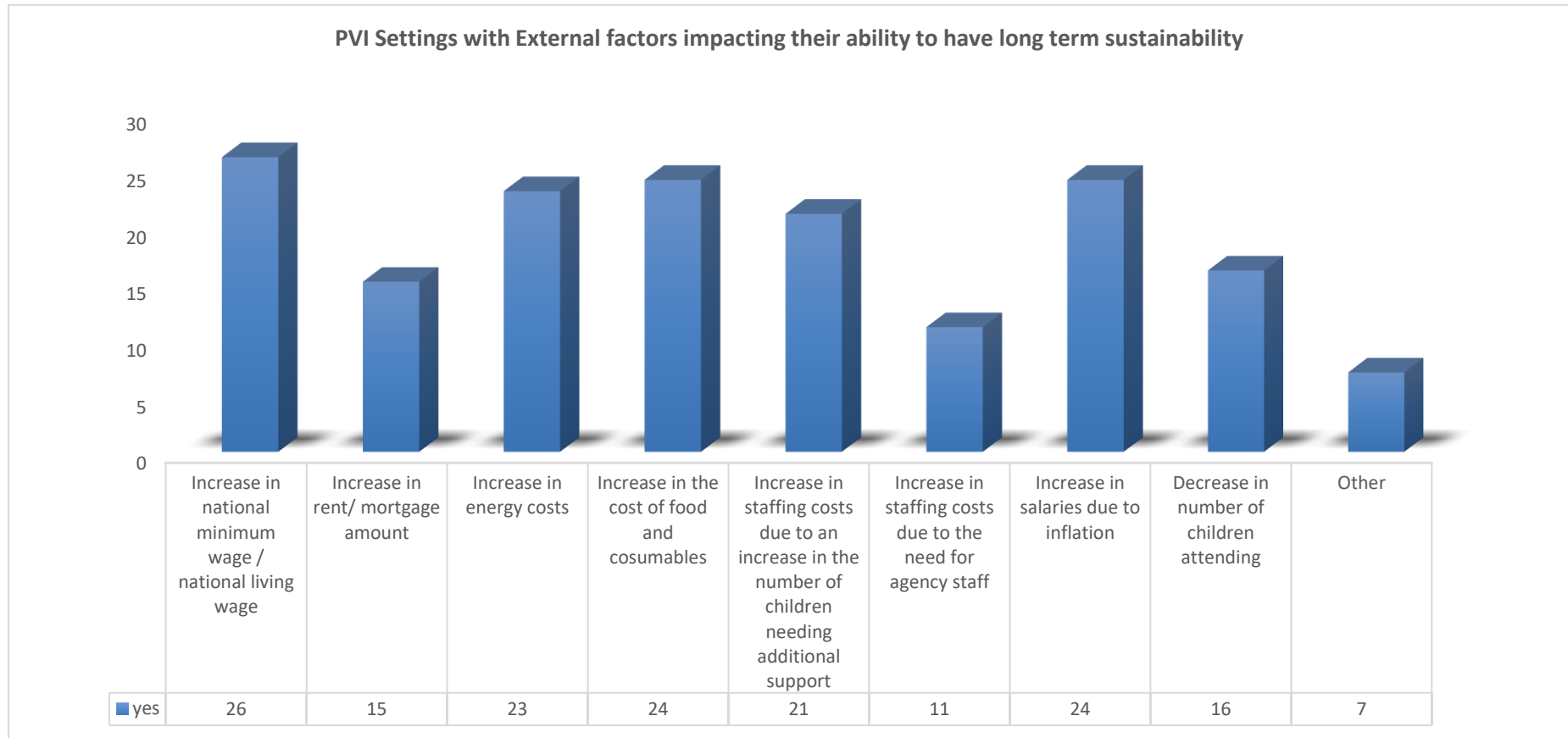
Nursery Class

Nursery classes were less certain about the longer term sustainability of their business, but this is expected due to the current situation concerning recovery from the pandemic, rising fuel charges and inflation for food and consumables. However, 79% of school nursery classes felt that their business was sustainable in the short term.

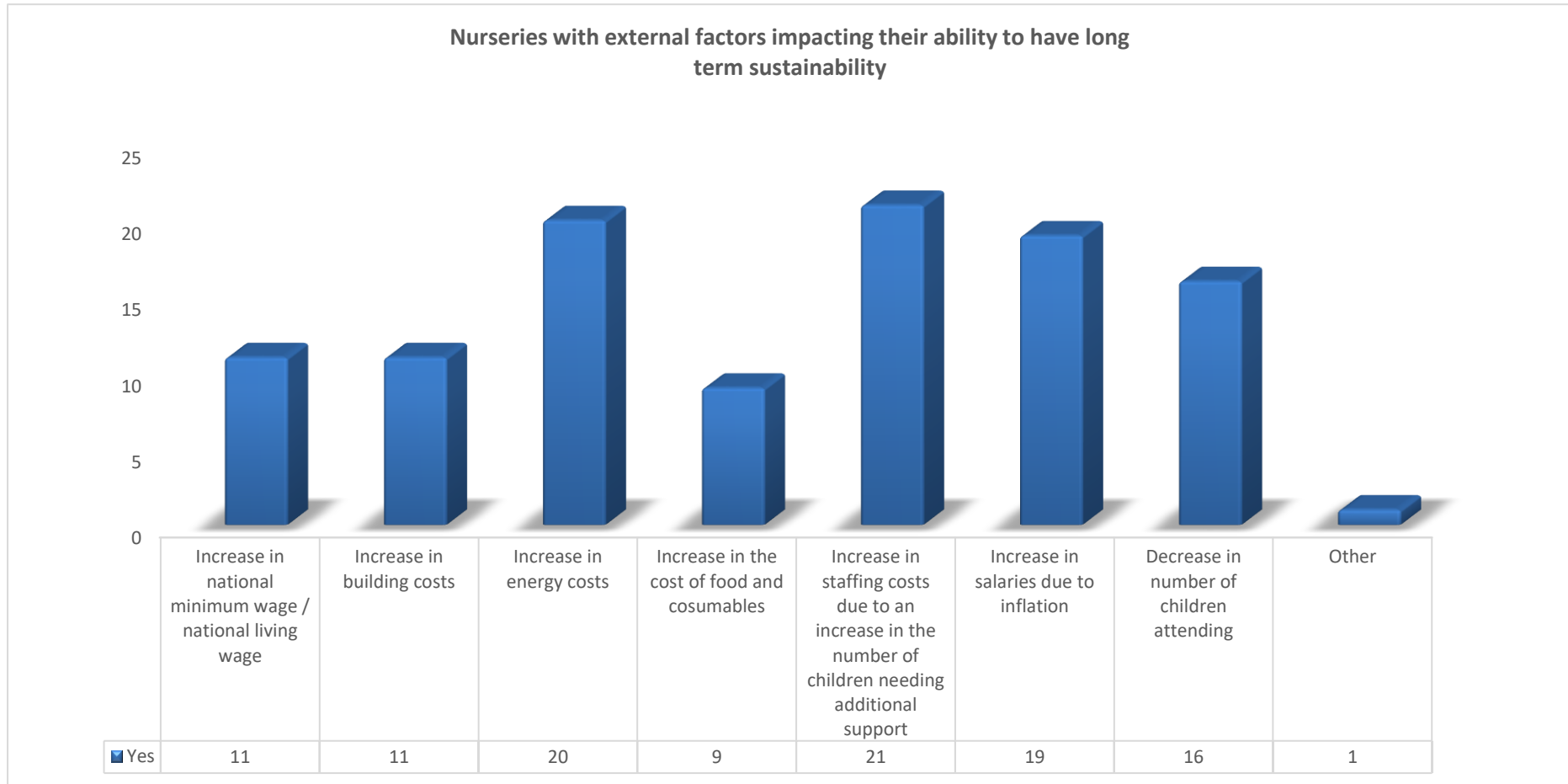


External Factors impacting long term sustainability - PVI

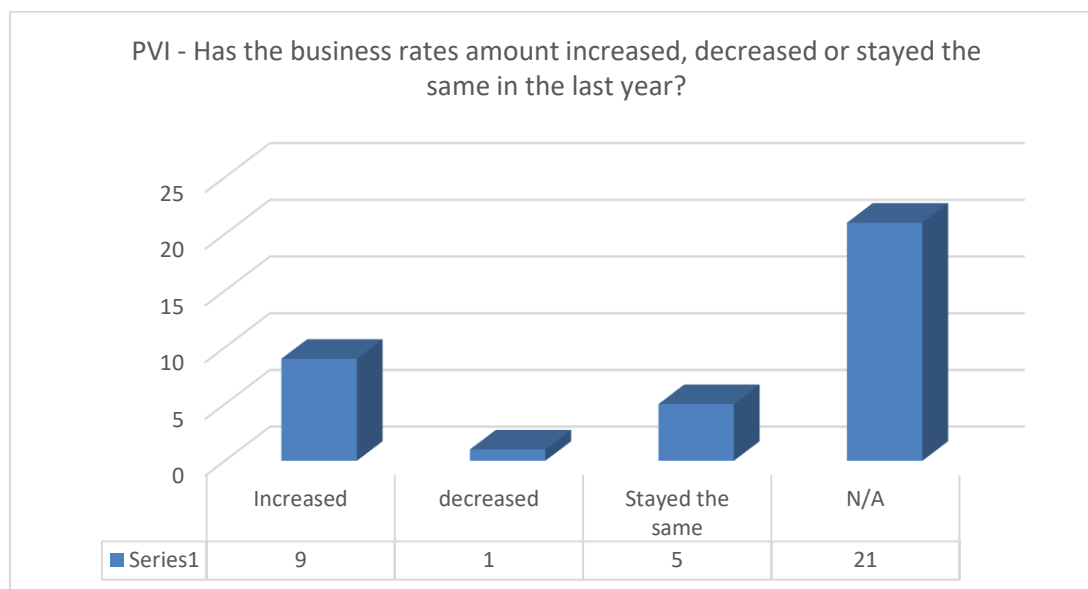
Providers were asked if there were any external factors impacting their settings ability to have long term sustainability.



Settings were concerned about the national minimum and living wage rises, along with the rising energy costs and the cost of food and consumables.



PVI settings were asked about their business rates. The average cost for PVI settings in business rates was £13,410.00, with the highest being £20,000 per annum. Looking at this data only, it appears that a large proportion of settings would not be affected. However, it should be expected that rent costs will increase in line with rising business rates.



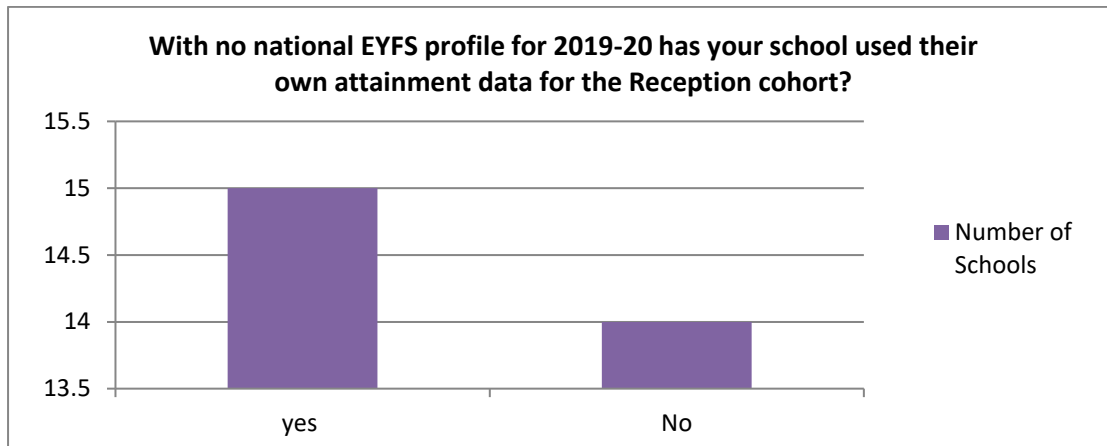
Attainment and data

100% of the PVI sector and 90% of schools reported having a system that provided them with individual child and/or cohort attainment data.

37% of the PVI sector share children’s attainment levels with parents and carers every term. Others reported that they share the information:

- as required by parents.
- twice yearly currently.
- daily feedback and on-entry assessment meetings and on-going sharing of progress trackers.
- every 3 months
- as and when assessments and observations are published.
- only baseline data shared.
- key persons and records always available for parents.
- 2 year old progress checks.
- twice a year January and July.

School based nurseries were also asked about attainment data for reception aged children as the 2019/20 and 2020/21 data collections were cancelled due to the pandemic.



Costs

Providers were asked to share their average hourly rates based on age groups and hours less than 25 hour per week and more than 25 hours per week.

Comparisons to national averages are sourced from Coram’s Childcare Survey 2021

Costs: Under 2 years: PVI settings



The average hourly cost of an under 2 year old place in a PVI setting in Slough for less than 25 hours per week is **£7.33** and the average cost of an under 2 year old place in a PVI setting in Slough for more than 25 hours per week is **£7.10**.

The national average for a part time place £5.61, full time £5.36

The south-east average for a part time place £5.84, full time £5.68

Average cost for childminders is £5.50- £6.50p per hour.

59% of childminders charge between £5.00 - £5.50 per hour for a place for a child under 2 years old taking up less than 25 hours per week. 75% charge £5.00 - £5.50 per hour for an under 2 year old place for more than 25 hours per week. Most childminders (86%) felt that this rate had not changed due to the COVID pandemic.

Childminders- the national average for a part time place £4.76, full time £4.58

Childminders- the south-east average for a part time place £4.78, full time £4.64

Costs: 2 years old

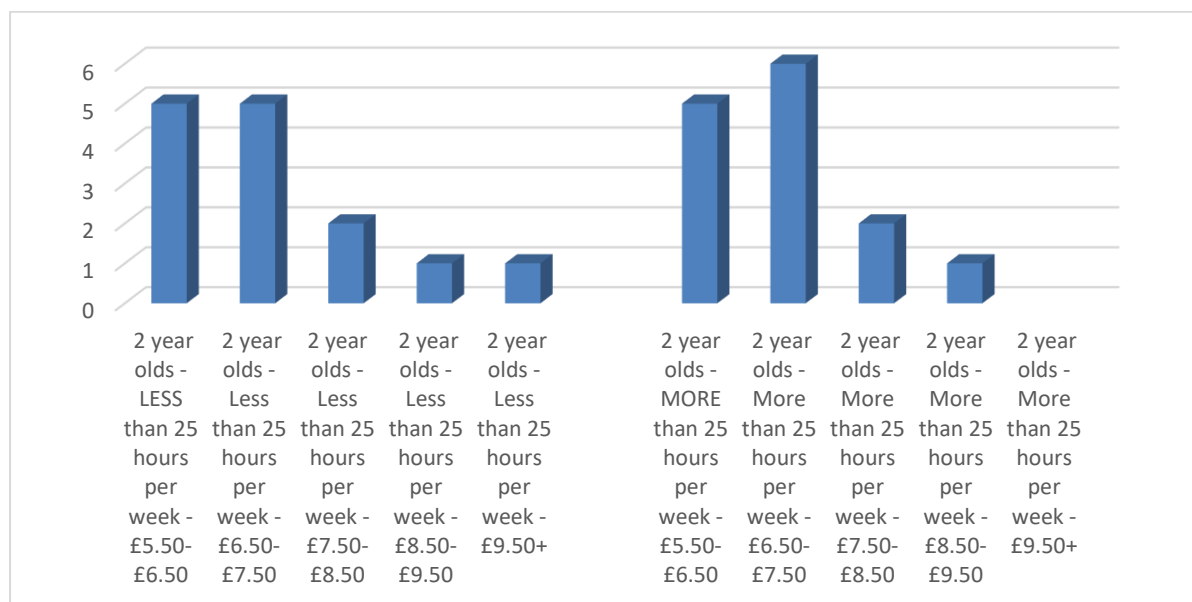
The average cost of a 2 year old place in a PVI setting in Slough for less than 25 hours per week is approximately **£7.15** and the average cost of a 2 year old place in Slough for more than 25 hours per week is also approximately **£6.89**.

The national average for a part time place £5.39, full time £5.16

The south-east average for a part time place £5.60, full time £5.37

Childminders- the national average for a part time place £4.71, full time £4.57

Childminders- the south-east average for a part time place £4.75, full time £4.74



Costs: 3 & 4 years old

The average cost of a 3 & 4 year old place in a PVI setting in Slough for less than 25 hours per week is approximately **£6.06** and the average cost of a 3 & 4 year old place in Slough for more than 25 hours per week is approximately **£6.03**.

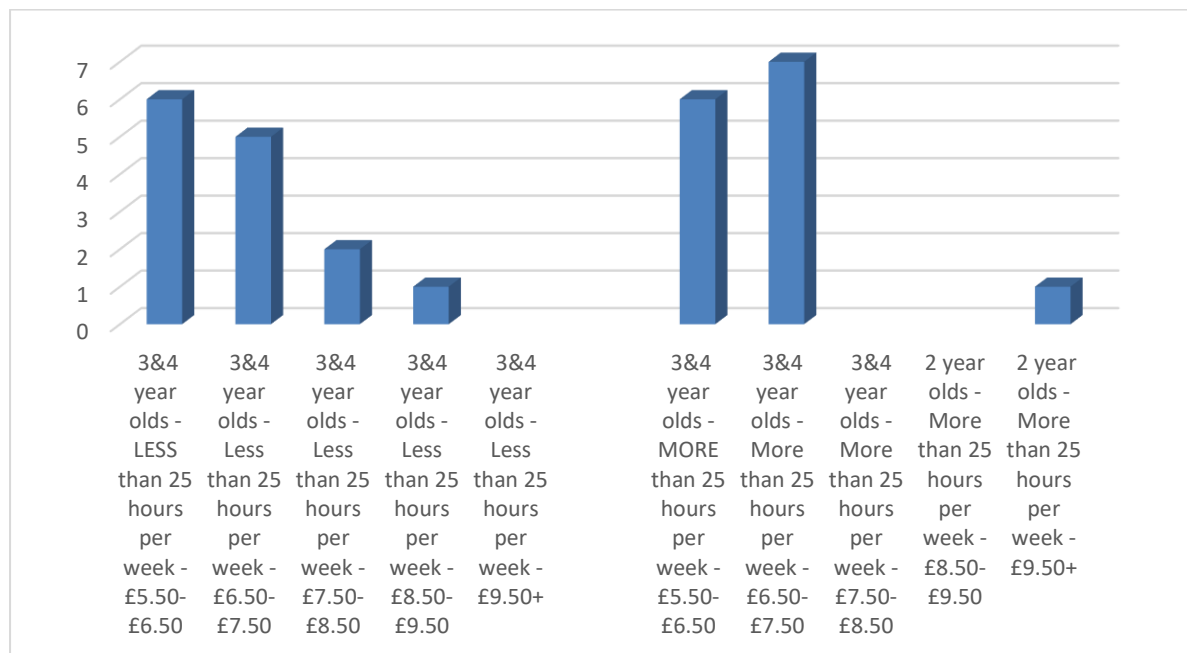
The national average for a part time place £5.24, full time £5.08

The south-east average for a part time place £5.28, full time £5.24

Childminders- the national average for a part time place £4.83, full time £4.58

Childminders- the south-east average for a part time place £5.02, full time £4.70

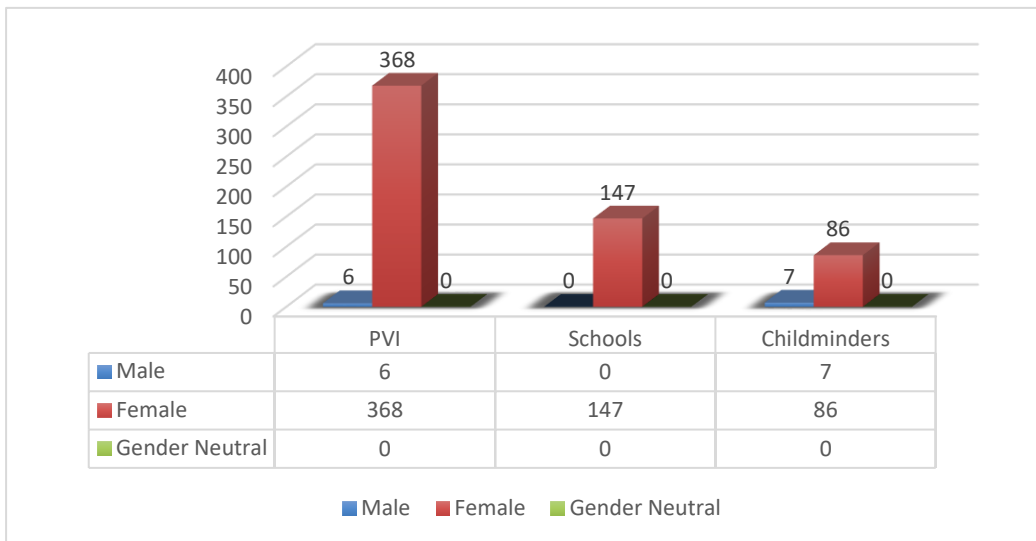
The hourly rates for 3 and 4 year olds are based on 10 hours per week for part time and 20 hours per week full time, as universal and extended entitlement have been removed from the calculation.



Workforce Development: Recruitment and Retention

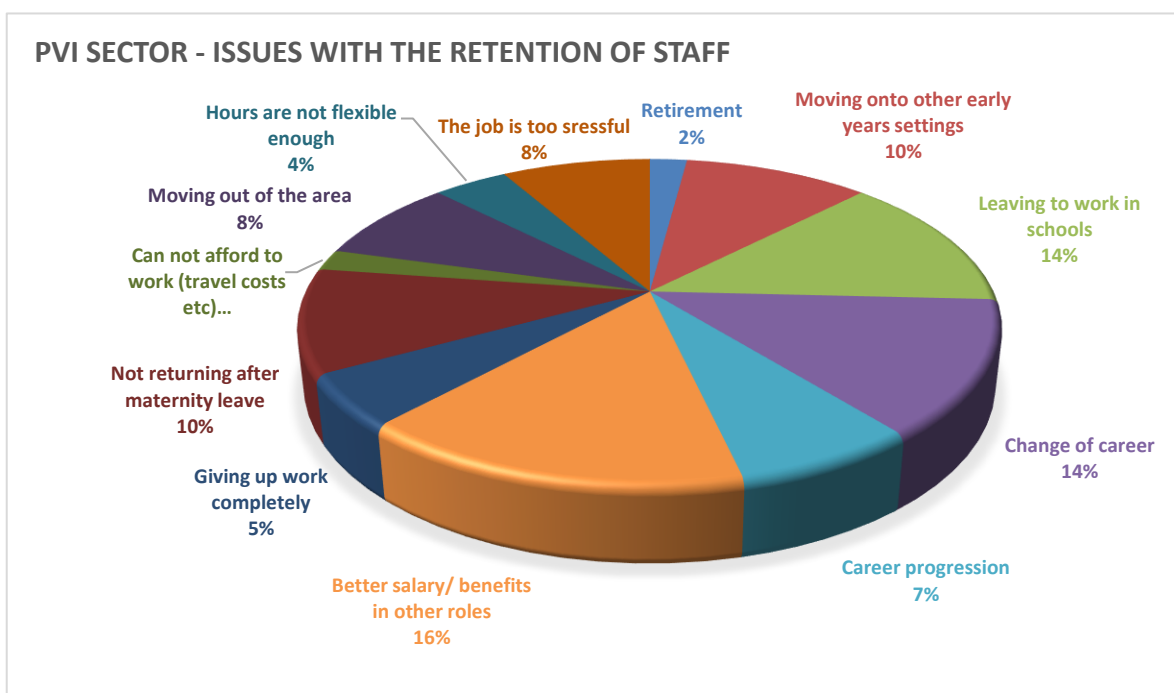
In Slough there is currently

- 374 practitioners in PVI settings,
- 147 practitioners in school based settings and
- 93 practitioners working as childminders or assistants in a childminder setting.
- The percentage of male staff in the sector is 2.1% of the total workforce. This was previously 2.8%
- There are currently no staff identifying as gender neutral.



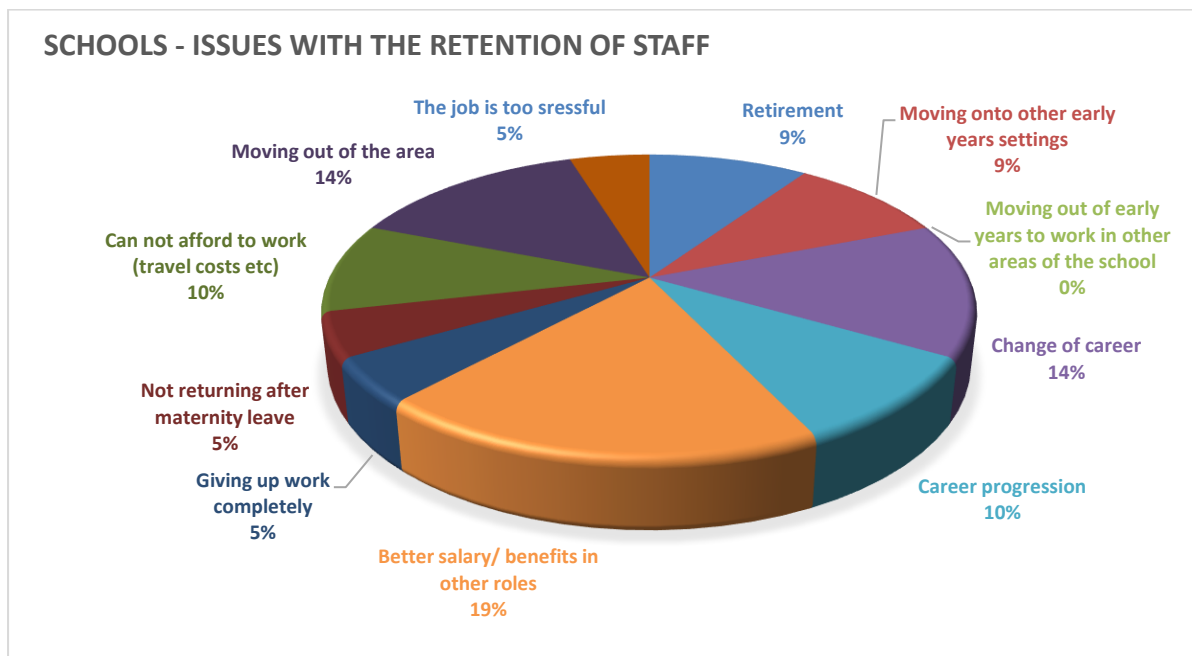
There have been problems across the sector for several years with the recruitment and retention of staff. This issue was further exacerbated by the pandemic when childcare staff chose to leave the sector altogether. With vacant posts rising, settings are forced to close childcare rooms to stay within Ofsted ratios, thereby reducing numbers of children and associated income.

Providers were asked to identify what the issues with staff retention were. PVI settings reported that 16% of staff were finding better salary/ benefits in other roles, 14% citing a change of career and 14% staff moving on to work in schools. A further 10% of staff across the sector were choosing not to return to work after maternity leave.

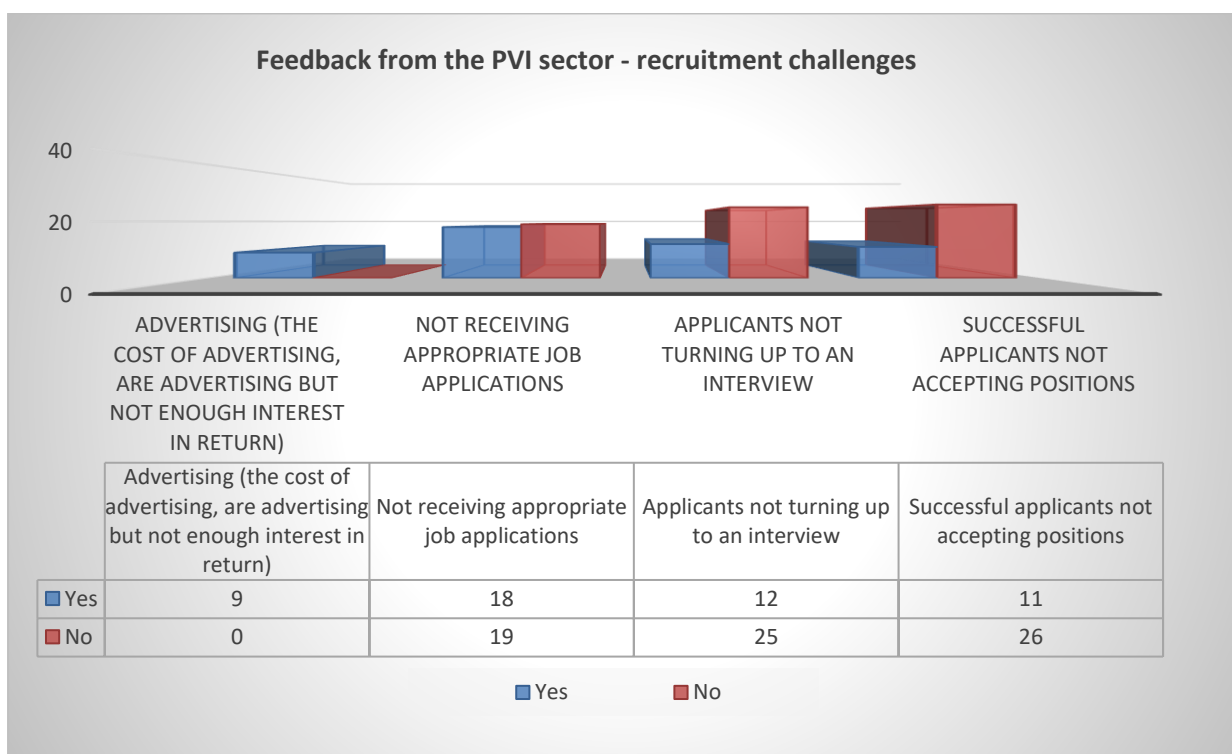


19% of staff were finding better salary/ benefits in other roles, 14% citing a change of career and 14% staff moving out of the area. A further 10% of staff said they could not afford to work, citing travel costs etc.

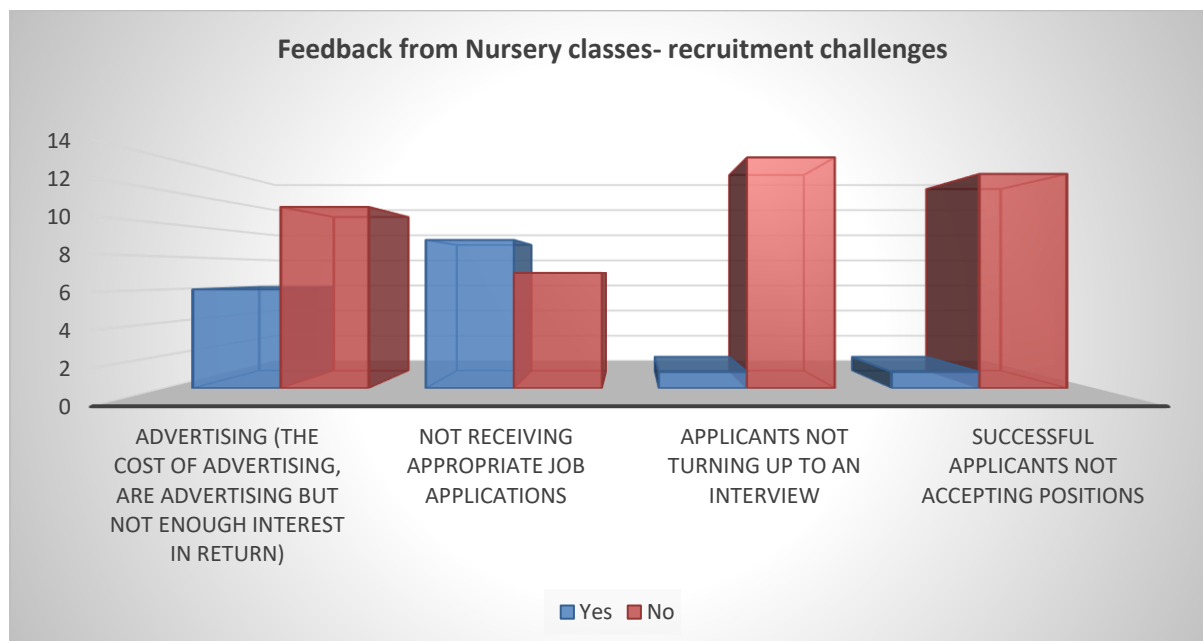
Schools also reported challenges with retention and recruitment of staff.



49% of settings felt they were not receiving appropriate job applications, 44% reported that candidates failed to turn up for interview and 30% stated that successful candidates did not accept the position.



Nursery classes stated that the main reason for recruitment challenges was a lack of applications from the labour market.



The Autumn term provider audit looked at vacant posts where the sector was experiencing recruitment challenges. The numbers in the tables below show the number of staff vacancies, with the PVI sector having a deficit of staff five times greater than school nursery classes.

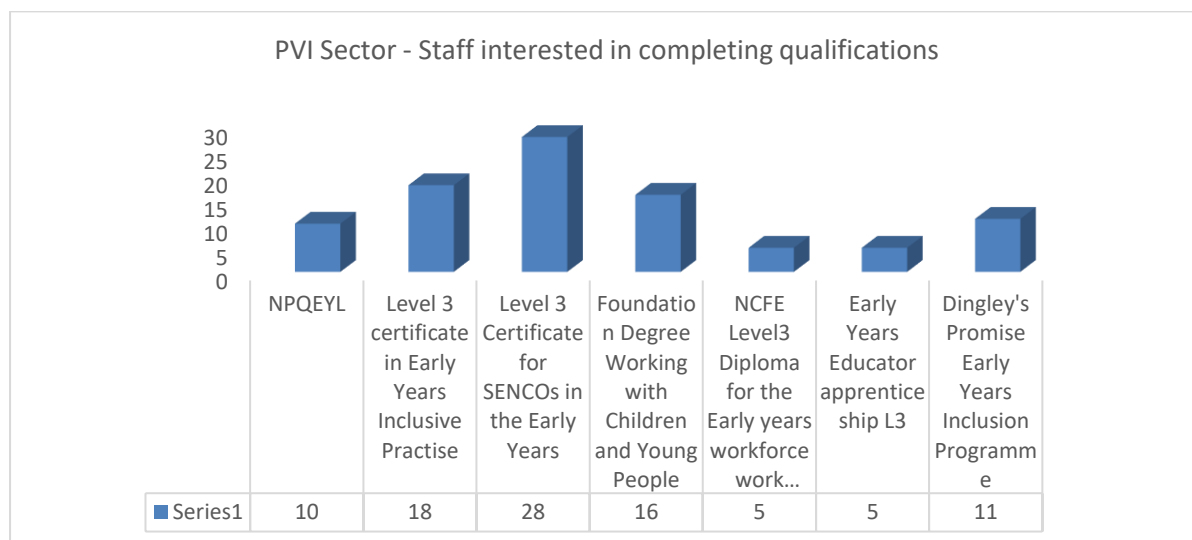
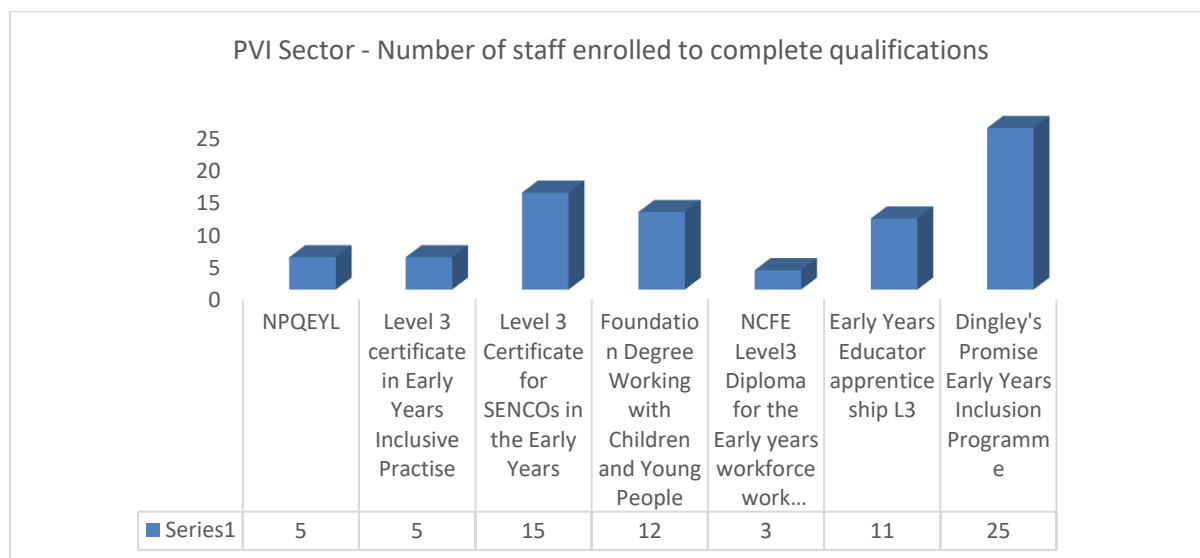
PVI Settings staffing vacancies.

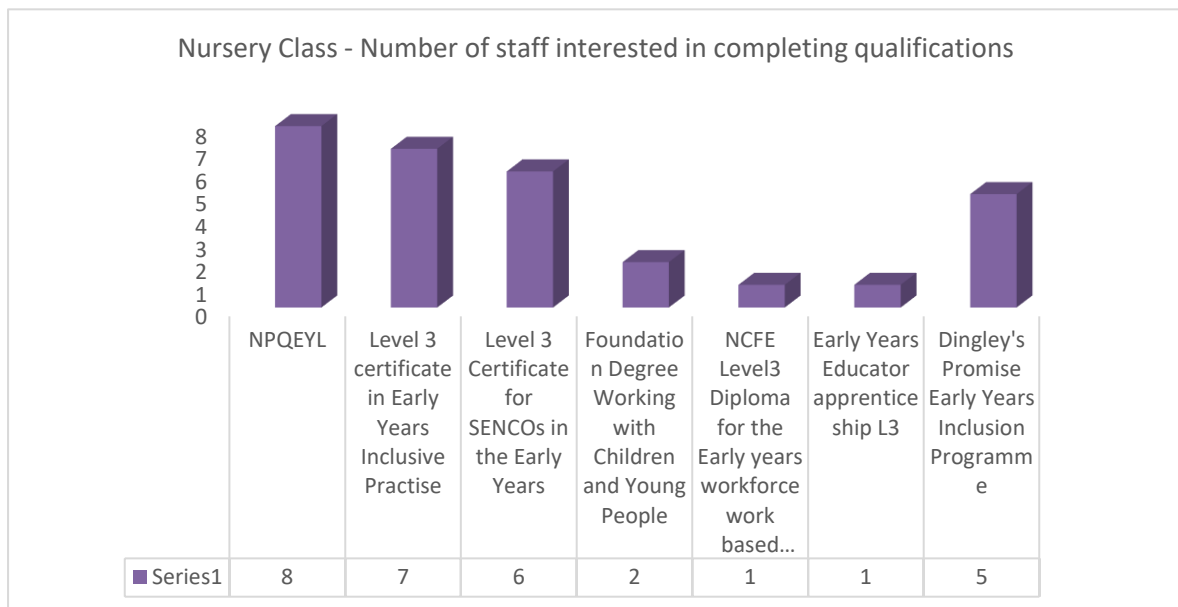
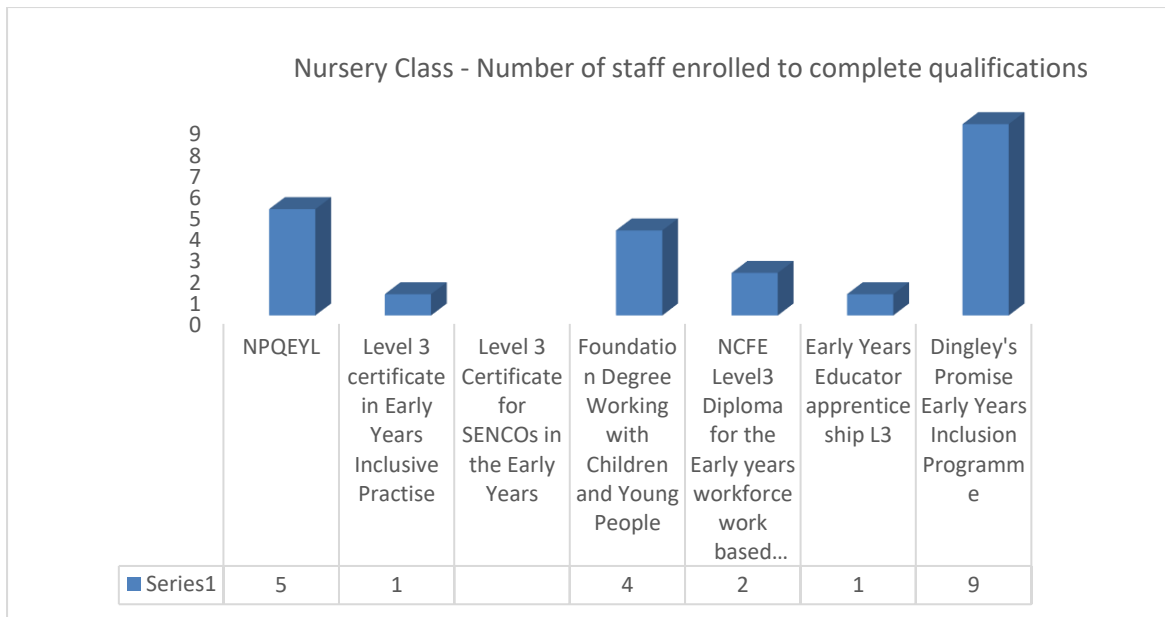
Role	Number of vacancies
Unqualified part time	4
Unqualified full time	3
Level 2 part time	3
Level 2 full time	7
Level 3 part time	7
Level 3 full time	13
Lunch time cover	3
SENDCo part time	3
SENDCo full time	4
Administrator	1
Catering	1
Manager	2
Deputy	3
Other	0
Total	54

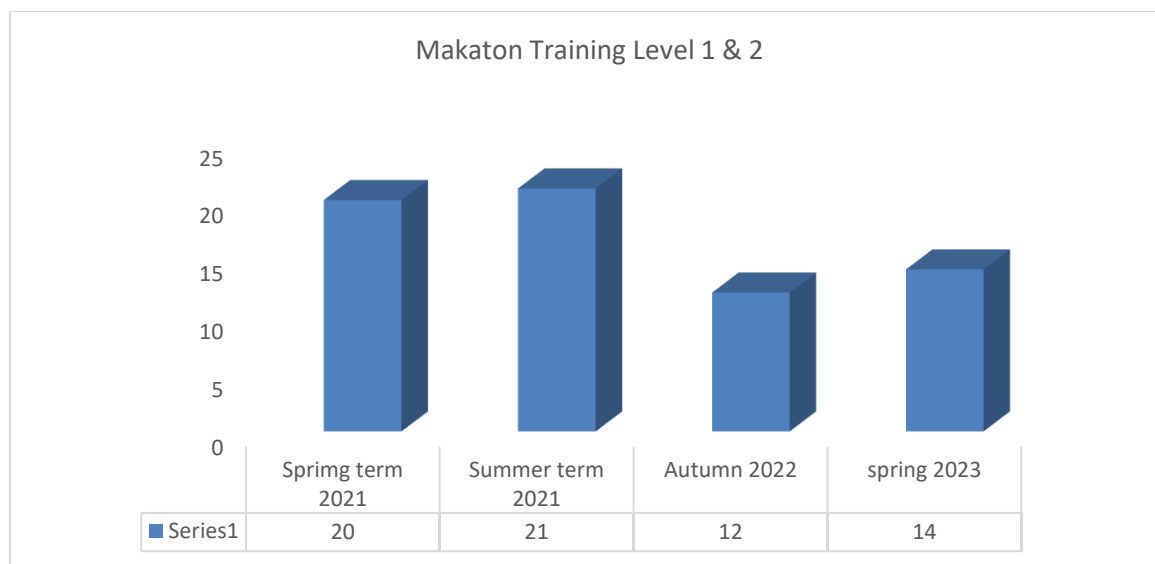
Nursery Classes staffing vacancies.

Role	Number of vacancies
Unqualified part time	0
Unqualified full time	0
Level 2 part time	1
Level 2 full time	0
Level 3 part time	0
Level 3 full time	0
Lunch time cover	0
SENDCo part time	2
SENDCo full time	2
Teacher	2
LSA/TA	2
Other	2
Total	11

Qualifications and training







Slough is committed to its training & CPD offer and has provided Makaton training since the Spring term 2021.

In total 67 early years workforce members across the sector have been trained in Makaton levels 1 & 2.

Makaton level 3 training will be rolled out to the sector in the spring term 2023.

Apprentices, Volunteers and work placements

PVI Providers

- 14% stated they had apprentices.
- 28% had vacancies for apprentices.
- 14% offer volunteering positions.
- 17% had or were planning to have students on work placements.

Schools

- One member of staff is completing an apprenticeship.
- 6 schools working with volunteers.
- 3 schools working with student placements.

Continuing Professional Development and Training

- 76% of PVI providers have a training and CPD budget for the year and
- 21% said that this was an increased budget compared to the previous year.
- 75% of school based nurseries reported having a training and CPD budget and
- 84% said that this has stayed the same compared to the previous year.
- 24% of PVI providers report that they don't have a training and CDP budget.

- 11% said their budget had reduced in comparison to the previous year.
- 25% of school based nurseries reported that they don't have a training/CPD budget and 5% report a decrease

There is a willingness across the sector to engage with further training of staff, accessing qualifications for staff which will then increase capacity in the market particularly for children with SEND. This will in time support retention of staff and inclusive practice (providing more skilled staff to work with children with SEND) and upskilling staff to adapt whole provision to be truly inclusive.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Level of need	% of children with SEND supported by the early years sector 2018 - 2019	% of children with SEND supported by the early years sector 2020 - 2021	% of children with SEND supported by the early years sector 2021 - 2022	% of children with SEND supported by the early years sector Autumn term 2022
1-Based on the academic year September 2021 - August 2022, how many children attending your provision required UNIVERSAL SUPPORT / additional support e.g. ITALK small language group...	37%	59%	53%	56%
2-Based on the academic year September 2021 - August 2022, how many children attending your provision required TARGETED support such as IEP's and other agencies involved e.g. SALT	29%	26%	25%	25%
3-Based on the academic year September 2021 - August 2022, how many children attending your provision could be identified as having COMPLEX NEEDS	23%	11%	16%	15%
4-Based on the academic year September 2021 - August 2022, how many children did you have attending your provision who could be identified as having SPECIALIST EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT	12%	4%	6%	4%
Total	585	866	2380	1924

The number of children presenting with SEND has risen from 866 in 2020-21 to 2,380 in the whole of 2021-22, an increase of 175%

This table relates to September 2021-August 2022

Level of need	% of children with SEND supported by the early years sector
1	1430
2	646
3	410
4	182
TOTAL	2380

The number of children presenting with SEND in Autumn 2022 only currently stands at 1,924. Should this level continue into the spring and summer terms we could be expecting the annual number to be well over 5,000.

Schools were asked in the annual provider audit for the number of children identifying with SEND or vulnerabilities.

Number of children on roll Autumn 2022

Monksfield Way	Orchard Avenue	St. Andrews Way	Chalvey Grove	Elliman Avenue	Penn Road	Wexham Road	Yew Tree Road	Romsey Close	Vicarage Way	TOTAL
396	318	472	525	436	329	556	585	937	327	4881

SEND September 2021- August 2022

Based on the academic year *September 2021 - August 2022*, how many children did you have attending your provision who required **UNIVERSAL SUPPORT / additional support** e.g. ITALK small language groups, small group work / adaptations to support accessing certain activities?

Monksfield Way	Orchard Avenue	St. Andrews Way	Chalvey Grove	Elliman Avenue	Penn Road	Wexham Road	Yew Tree Road	Romsey Close	Vicarage Way	TOTAL
179	67	82	160	208	80	161	156	268	69	1430
45%	21%	17%	30%	48%	24%	29%	27%	29%	21%	29%

This shows that 1430 of children attending an early years setting required universal or additional support when accessing certain activities, this is 29% of the total number of children attending in the period September 2021- August 2022. The highest percentage is seen Elliman Avenue with 48%

Based on the academic year *September 2021 - August 2022*, how many children did you have attending your provision who required **TARGETED support** such as IEP's and other agencies involved e.g. SALT?

Monksfield Way	Orchard Avenue	St. Andrews Way	Chalvey Grove	Elliman Avenue	Penn Road	Wexham Road	Yew Tree Road	Romsey Close	Vicarage Way	TOTAL
53	29	44	84	68	47	72	69	125	55	646
13%	9%	9%	16%	16%	14%	13%	12%	13%	17%	13%

This shows that 646 of children attending an early years setting required Targeted support, this is 13% of the total number of children attending in the September 2021- August 2022. The highest percentage was in Chalvey Grove and Elliman Avenue 16%

Based on the academic year *September 2021 - August 2022*, how many children did you have attending your provision who could be identified as having **COMPLEX NEEDS** which could have meant they had: Early Years Inclusion Funding, IEP's, other agencies e.g. SALT, Paediatrician, Ed Psych, ASD Service?

Monksfield Way	Orchard Avenue	St. Andrews Way	Chalvey Grove	Elliman Avenue	Penn Road	Wexham Road	Yew Tree Road	Romsey Close	Vicarage Way	TOTAL
53	27	25	50	57	27	42	38	63	28	410
13%	8%	5%	10%	13%	8%	8%	6%	7%	9%	8%

410 of children attending an early years setting in September 2021- August 2022 could be identified as having complex needs (8%), the highest percentage in Monksfield Way and Elliman Avenue, 13%

Based on the academic year *September 2021 - August 2022*, how many children did you have attending your provision who could be identified as having **SPECIALIST EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT** and were in receipt of an Education Health and Care Plan?

Monksfield Way	Orchard Avenue	St. Andrews Way	Chalvey Grove	Elliman Avenue	Penn Road	Wexham Road	Yew Tree Road	Romsey Close	Vicarage Way	TOTAL
13	6	11	52	8	5	22	9	37	19	182
3%	2%	2%	10%	2%	2%	4%	2%	4%	6%	4%

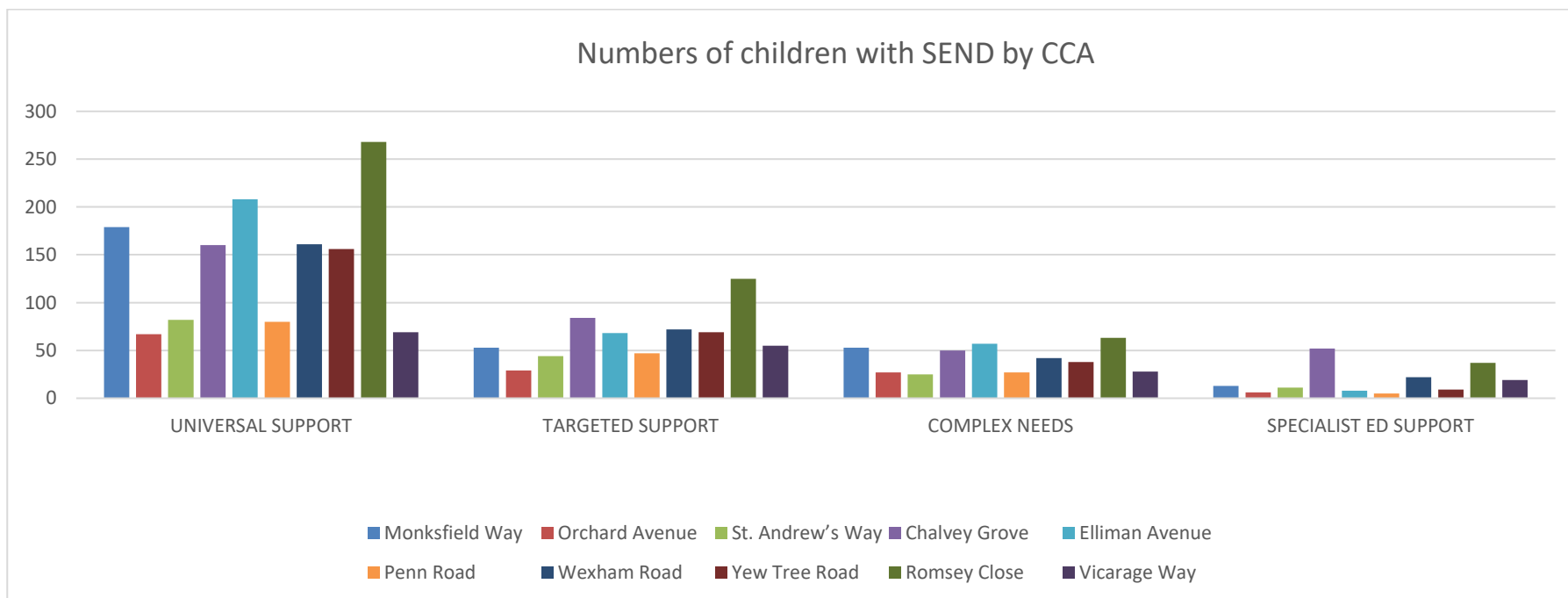
182 children attending an early years setting could be identified as having Specialist Educational Support (4%), the highest percentage in Chalvey Grove, 10%

39% of children attending an early years setting in the Autumn 2022 were identified by settings as having a range of special educational needs or disability.

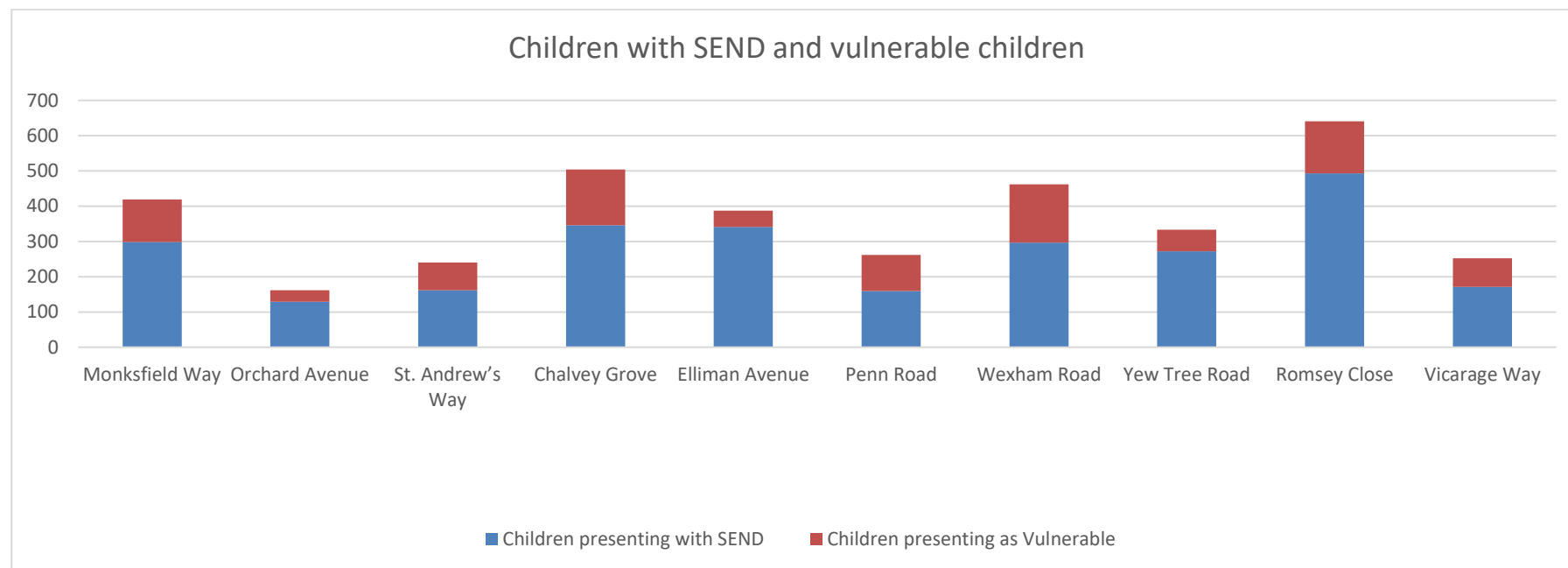
	Monksfield Way	Orchard Avenue	St. Andrew's Way	Chalvey Grove	Elliman Avenue	Penn Road	Wexham Road	Yew Tree Road	Romsey Close	Vicarage Way
Total on roll	396	318	472	525	436	329	556	585	937	327

UNIVERSAL SUPPORT	179	67	82	160	208	80	161	156	268	69
TARGETED SUPPORT	53	29	44	84	68	47	72	69	125	55
COMPLEX NEEDS	53	27	25	50	57	27	42	38	63	28
SPECIALIST ED SUPPORT	13	6	11	52	8	5	22	9	37	19
Vulnerable- universal support	91	24	60	111	26	86	111	35	69	47
Vulnerable- targeted	30	9	18	47	20	17	54	26	79	34

The Romsey Close Children’s Centre Area has the largest number of children on roll (937) and is dealing with the highest number of children with varying degrees of SEND, 493.



Vulnerabilities September 2021 - August 2022



The highest number of vulnerable children overall are in Wexham Road CCA, 165

Based on the academic year (September 2021 - August 2022) how many families were you supporting who were classed as vulnerable and required **universal support** such as EYPP, Family Information Services, Health Visitor support, CYPIT, access Early Help? The numbers of children forming part of this question include children in reception classes.

Monksfield Way	Orchard Avenue	St. Andrews Way	Chalvey Grove	Elliman Avenue	Penn Road	Wexham Road	Yew Tree Road	Romsey Close	Vicarage Way	TOTAL
91	24	60	111	26	86	111	35	69	47	660
23%	8%	13%	21%	6%	26%	20%	6%	7%	14%	14%

660 children attending an early years setting in September 2021- August 2022 were classed as vulnerable requiring universal support (14%). The highest percentage against number on roll was Monksfield Way, 23%

Based on the academic year (September 2021 - August 2022) how many families were you supporting who were classed as vulnerable and required **targeted support** such as families with Child Protection Plans, Children in Need, targeted family support from Early Help?

Monksfield Way	Orchard Avenue	St. Andrews Way	Chalvey Grove	Elliman Avenue	Penn Road	Wexham Road	Yew Tree Road	Romsey Close	Vicarage Way	TOTAL
30	9	18	47	20	17	54	26	79	34	334
17%	13%	22%	29%	10%	21%	34%	17%	29%	49%	23%

334 children attending an early years setting in September 2021- August 2022 were classed as vulnerable requiring specialist support (23%). The highest percentage based on number on roll was Vicarage Way with 49%

37% of the total number of children attending an early years setting in September 2021- August 2022 were classed as having a vulnerability.

Out of School Survey Overview

Most of the Out of School care was supplied through the Holiday Activities and Food programme, a government initiative to coordinate and provide free holiday provision including healthy food and enriching activities. Research has shown that school holidays can be pressure points for some families which may lead to a holiday experience gap, with children from low-income households being:

- less likely to access organised out-of-school activities.
- more likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition and physical health.
- more likely to experience social isolation.

(source DfE Guidance Holiday Activities and Food programme 2022)

HAF ran in the Easter 2022 and Summer 2022 school holidays, offering activities and food to 1,654 children, 1,114 primary aged and 540 secondary aged.

HAF 2022	Primary	Secondary
Easter 2022	448	271
Summer 2022	666	269

Since the pandemic a high number of out of school providers have closed, stating that the demand for afterschool and holiday care had decrease that it was no longer viable to operate.

Many schools continue to offer afterschool activities and breakfast club provision.

The Family Information Service has not reported significant enquires for out of school provision, therefore assuming demand is currently met.

Housing Development

New Housing: place planning

Slough is a growing community with an increasing demand for additional housing. It is estimated that Slough will require an additional 17,000 homes over the next 19 years, creating a pressure on land and local services including early years provision. The tables below show the additional homes completed in recent years and expected to be completed by 2023/24. The increase in the proportion of flats completed in recent years is a combined result of many 'Office to Residential' conversions and a minimal number of new homes being built on greenfield sites. Flats are expected to dominate completions in the future.

	Net Additional Homes	Houses	Flats
2015/16	778	34%	66%
2016/17	521	23%	77%
2017/18	846	35%	65%
2018/19	534	19%	81%
2019/20	503	10%	90%
2020/21	501	10%	90%
2021-22	532	6%	94%

	Expected completions
2022/23to 2023/24	500 per year

The level of new housing is closely monitored due to its potential impact on demand for early years places. Where new housing completions are forecast to exceed recent trends then adjustment factors will be applied to place forecasts.

In order to measure the impact on demand for early years and school places the LA carries out a survey every 5 years or so to assess the number of pupils that live in newly built housing in Slough. The output from this survey is a series of tables showing the number and age of children produced by each dwelling type and size. The numbers in the output tables are called the Pupil Product Ratios.

It is often the case that families moving into new housing developments already reside in the borough and new families to Slough move into the vacated properties. This can mean that planning early years provision as a result of new housing is not straightforward as growth can be across the town as well as in the area of the development. This can also mean that there is a lag before local early years provider see the full impact of new housing developments, as some children can remain at their previous provider.

Details of Slough’s current Local Plan and progress to date on an update of the plan can be found here: <https://www.slough.gov.uk/planning-policy/emerging-local-plan-slough-2016-2036>

Developer Contributions – When planning applications are received for new housing developments the Local Authority considers whether there is a shortage of early years provision for children moving into the new homes. Calculations of the numbers of children forecast to be produced are based on the Pupil Product Ratios mentioned above. For any shortfalls the developer is asked to contribute the capital cost of building the new places via Section 106 planning obligations, to address the impact new development will have on public infrastructure.

Due to the existing pressure on early years provision across the town accommodation for a nursery may be requested as part of the development for both medium and large sites.

Centre of Slough – Over the next 15-20 years SBC expects that up to 9000 new homes will be built in the central area of Slough, around the High Street and beyond the current edge of the town centre. A detailed piece of work will be required to assess the impact on school places of such a large number of new homes in a relatively small area.

Using the assumption that 9000 new flats are built with a split as follows: 3000x 1-bed, 5000x 2-bed and 1000x 3-bed, this would generate:

- 2170 early years children or a high number of large new nurseries

This doesn't mean this many places need to be built as:

- SBC's forecasts already include an assumption that 600+ homes will be built across Slough each year based on recent experience (totalling 9000+ over 15 years)
- The reduced birth rate will continue to increase the number of surplus places in existing provision.

The main issue for Slough is the lack of providers and suitable premises within or close to the Centre. Without new nurseries being built there will be a large increase in movement from the town centre each day, this will add to congestion and a lack of convenient places could possibly affect the sale of new homes.

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment – Children’s Centre Early Years and Childcare spring 2023

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment has been updated to show the position in Slough if the preferred option for the future of the Children’s Centres is agreed.

Preferred option

- Keep Chalvey Grove, Romsey Close and Penn Road Children’s Centres open for Hub services and provision of Early Years and Childcare.
- Deliver Early Years and Childcare and Spoke services at Monksfield Way and Yew Tree Road Children’s Centres.

Spring term 2023 supply of early years and childcare provision

Type of formal childcare	Number of registered providers 2020	Number of registered providers 2023
Nursery class in a Maintained school	25	25
Nursery class in an Independent sector setting	3	3
Day nursery – full or part-time	13	14
Pre-School/Playgroup sessional childcare	14	14
Children’s Centres nursery full daycare	4	4
Children’s Centres nursery sessional daycare	4	4
Maintained Nursery School	5	5
Registered Childminder	86	85
Total	154	154

There is 1 new day Nursery and 1 childminder has resigned, so the current position is 154 providers, the same as autumn 2022. Home childcarers have been removed from this data.

Changes to the registered number of providers if preferred option is adopted.

Option Type of formal childcare	Number of registered providers 2022	Number of registered providers 2023
Nursery class in a Maintained school	25	25
Nursery class in an Independent sector setting	3	3
Day nursery – full or part-time	13	14
Pre-School/Playgroup sessional childcare	14	14
Children’s Centres nursery full daycare	4	3
Children’s Centres nursery sessional daycare	4	2
Maintained Nursery School	5	5
Registered Childminder	86	85
Total	154	151

Type of formal childcare by Children's Centre Area (CCA)

Option Children's Centre Area	NCMS	MNS	DN	PSP	CC	NCIS	CM	Total
Monksfield Way	3		1	2	1		17	24
Orchard Avenue	2		2	1			7	12
St. Andrew's Way	1	1		2			16	20
Chalvey Grove	2	1		4	1	1	4	13
Elliman Avenue	1	2	1				4	8
Penn Road	2		2	2	1		3	10
Wexham Road	4	1	2	2			9	18
Yew Tree Road	3		1	1	1	2	12	20
Romsey Close	5		4		1		11	21
Vicarage Way	2		1				2	5
Total	25	5	13	14	5	3	86	151

Early years childcare and registered childminder places for 0 – 4 year olds

Changes to early years childcare and registered childminder places for 0 – 4 year olds if preferred option is adopted will result in a decrease of 80 PT places offered in children's centres with a net decrease of 40 places.

Option Type of formal childcare	Offered places PTP 2022	Offered places PTP 2023	Change in places
Nursery class in a Maintained school	1,735	1,735	0.00%
Nursery class in an Independent sector setting	132	132	0.00%
Day nursery – full or part-time	1032	1062	2.91%
Pre-School/Playgroup sessional childcare	382	382	0.00%
Children's Centres nursery full daycare	154	154	0.00%
Children's Centres nursery sessional daycare	56	16	-71.43%
Maintained Nursery School	745	745	0.00%
Registered Childminder	500	496	-0.80%
Total	4,736	4,722	-0.30%

Ofsted Registered Places

Early Years providers are registered to offer a maximum number of places but for various reason they may choose to cap their numbers.

Number of Ofsted registered places by provider type

Type of provider	Registered Part Time Places – autumn 2022	Registered Part Time places – option
------------------	---	--------------------------------------

Preschool (PSP)	917	917
Day Nursery (DN)	1940	1940
Children's Centres (CC)	650	534
Childminder	520	520
Nursery class in maintained school	1348	1348
Maintained nursery school	575	575
Total	5950	5834

If preferred option is adopted there will be a reduction of 116 registered places in Slough.

Number of Ofsted registered places by CCA

Children's Centre Area	Registered Part Time places – autumn 2022	Registered Part Time places – preferred option
Chalvey Grove	702	702
Elliman Avenue	516	516
Monksfield Way	483	483
Orchard Avenue	626	586
Penn Road	396	396
Romsey Close	1241	1241
St Andrews Way	540	540
Vicarage Way	192	160
Wexham Road	782	738
Yew Tree Road	472	472
Total	5950	5834

Orchard Avenue, Vicarage Way and Wexham Road CCAs will see a reduction in places.

Supply of places by age group

If preferred option is adopted there will be no change in the number of places for children under 2 years old.

Under 2s - Option

Option 1 Under 2s	Provider Type			TOTAL
	CC	Day Nursery	CM	
Monksfield Way		12	17	29
Orchard Avenue		60	7	67
St. Andrew's Way			15	15
Chalvey Grove	6		4	10
Elliman Avenue		12	4	16
Penn Road	6	6	1	13
Wexham Road		18	8	26
Yew Tree Road		12	12	24
Romsey Close	6	110	12	128
Vicarage Way		9	2	11
TOTAL	18	239	82	339

2 year olds – if preferred option is adopted

There will be a decrease of 16 places, leaving a total number of 845 available

Option 2 year olds	Provider Type							
CC AREA	CC	DN	NCIS	MNS	NCMS	PSP	CM	TOTAL
Monksfield Way	8	18			7	22	38	93
Orchard Avenue		71				4	15	90
St. Andrew's Way		12		8		20	38	78
Chalvey Grove	12	6		16	30	22	9	95
Elliman Avenue		20		36			9	65
Penn Road	8	0				20	7	35
Wexham Road		40		16	4	12	20	92
Yew Tree Road	8	24	22				26	80
Romsey Close	12	137			16	12	24	201
Vicarage Way		12					4	16
TOTAL	48	340	22	76	57	112	190	845

3 & 4 year olds – if preferred option is adopted

There will be a decrease of 24 places, leaving a total of 3518 available.

Option 3 & 4 yr olds	Provider type							
CC AREA	CC	DN	NCIS	MNS	NCMS	PSP	CM	TOTAL
Monksfield Way	24	22			220	26	45	337
Orchard Avenue		65			112	16	18	211
St. Andrew's Way		18		156	90	32	45	341
Chalvey Grove	24	40	30	104	156	98	11	463
Elliman Avenue		32		279	104		11	426
Penn Road	24				164	58	8	254
Wexham Road		74		130	282	24	24	534
Yew Tree Road	8	48	80		154		32	322
Romsey Close	24	136			338	16	29	543
Vicarage Way		24			58		5	87
TOTAL	104	459	110	669	1678	270	228	3518

Sufficiency

If preferred option is chosen it will reduce the percentage of childcare places available from 40.38% of the relevant population to 40.04% and a drop of 40 places

Children's Centre Area	NCMS	MNS	DN	PSP	CC	NCIS	CM	Total Places	Birth Data 0-4 years	% of children to places	Weighting of CCA **	Conclusion- is childcare sufficient?
Monksfield Way	227	0	52	48	32		100	459	750	61.20%	50.00%	
Orchard Avenue	112	0	196	20	0		40	368	1032	35.66%	33.33%	
St. Andrew's Way	90	164	0	82	0		98	434	1012	42.89%	33.33%	
Chalvey Grove	186	120		166	42	30	24	568	1797	31.61%	33.33%	
Elliman Avenue	104	315	64	0	0		24	507	1188	42.68%	33.33%	
Penn Road	164	0	0	78	38		16	296	922	32.10%	33.33%	
Wexham Road	286	146	94	74	0		52	652	1308	49.85%	33.33%	
Yew Tree Road	154	0	52	32	16	102	70	426	1750	24.34%	50.00%	
Romsey Close	354	0	411	0	42		65	872	1436	60.72%	50.00%	
Vicarage Way	58	0	45	0	0		11	114	534	21.35%	20.00%	
Total	1735	745	914	500	170	132	500	4696	11729	40.04%		

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

In spring term 2023 there were 128 children attending children's centre provision with an identified special educational need and disability.

Children's Centre	Levels of SEND			Total
	Low	Significant	Specialist	
Penn Road	14	10	7	31
Wexham Road	1	1	3	5
Monksfield Way	8	12	5	25
Orchard Avenue	3	1	1	5
Romsey Close	11	3	4	18
Vicarage Way	3	4	1	8
Chalvey Grove	11	8	5	24
Yew Tree Road	6	6	1	13
TOTAL	57	45	26	128

If preferred option is adopted, 18 children with SEND could be impacted and required to find alternative provision.

Children's Centre	Levels of SEND			Total
	Low	Significant	Specialist	
Wexham Road	1	1	3	5
Orchard Avenue	3	1	1	5
Vicarage Way	3	4	1	8
TOTAL	7	6	5	18

Overview of childcare places

Initially there appears to be deficit of places in 5 CCA, as shown in the table below.

However when consideration is given to offered places versus Ofsted registered places there are only three areas that could need further development, Penn Road, Yew Tree Road and Vicarage Way, although Orchard Avenue is very close to full sufficiency with only 2 additional places.

Children's Centre Areas that have a deficit of 2 and/or 3&4 year old places	Surplus/Deficit of 2 year old places by area	Surplus/Deficit of 3&4 year old places by area	Total number of places by area	Actual places available	Number of registered places**	Variance-additional places not currently being offered	Surplus/Deficit overall
Monksfield Way	31	147	146	459	483	24	170
Orchard Avenue	6	-222	-216	368	586	218	2
St. Andrew's Way	17	28	45	434	540	106	151
Chalvey Grove	-33	-79	-112	568	702	134	22
Elliman Avenue	-36	58	22	507	516	9	31
Penn Road	-1	-87	-120	296	396	100	-20
Wexham Road	-2	261	259	652	738	86	345
Yew Tree Road	-38	-264	-302	426	472	46	-256
Romsey Close	103	274	377	872	1,241	369	746
Vicarage Way	-15	-71	-86	114	160	46	-40
Total	16	-3	13	4,626	5,717	1,091	1,151

Children's Centre	Risks/ mitigations
Monksfield Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is in one of the most deprived wards in Slough • There is a significant percentage of children presenting with SEND, with little to no places available outside of the children's centre • Sufficiency seems to show a healthy surplus of places, but waiting lists for 2 year olds are very high, as other settings are not offering these places in the numbers required. As 30.8% of families in this area are classed as vulnerable, the benefits of 2 year old funded places cannot be understated
Chalvey Grove	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deficit in both 2 year and 3&4 year old places • Further development required across all age ranges • There is a surplus of registered places not being offered- could be due to staff recruitment and retention issues
Penn Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified as an area with relatively high SEND • Deficit in both 2 year and 3&4 year old places • Further development required across all age ranges
Yew Tree Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest deficit of registered places in Slough, 256 • Development of all age ranges required. • Continuing to work with Planning on S.106 applications where large housing developments being built, currently Horlicks, Thames Valley University site and High Street regeneration. There will be partnership working with the PVI sector to open more childcare settings
Romsey Close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High numbers of places available in this area, alongside high levels of demand • There are waiting lists at all settings, showing demand outweighing places available
Elliman Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a shortage of 2 year old places • Providers may need to look at converting some 3 and 4 year old places into 2 year old places to enable sufficiency
St Andrew's Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This area shows a low take up of 2 year olds • Providers may need to look at converting some 3 and 4 year old places into 2 year old places to enable sufficiency
Wexham Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This area shows a small shortage of 2 year old places • Providers may need to look at converting some 3 and 4 year old places into 2 year old places to enable sufficiency

Orchard Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This area is showing an overall surplus based on registered places of 2, but the actual number of places for 3 and 4 year olds being delivered shows a deficit of 222 places. • Any loss of provision from this area will need a considered approach to ensure sufficiency, working with potential providers on sustainable business models
Vicarage Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This area shows a deficit in both 2 year old and 3&4 year old places, but local schools are looking to drop their PAN. • More detailed analysis is required to ascertain why families are not accessing places locally, or if they are choosing to go out of borough.

Strategic work will continue in all CCA to ensure that sufficient places can be made available. However, this will need to be looked at in conjunction with the current position of the Early Years workforce in Slough.

The key focus and actions as detailed below will form part of the strategic programme to future-proof childcare requirements in Slough

Key focus 2023/24	Key actions 2023/24
Ensure Sufficiency Information is maintained and current	To continue to carry out termly sufficiency tracking (supply and demand), identifying areas where sufficiency may be at risk and reporting to the Divisional Leadership Team.
Increasing the take up of 2 year old FEE places and the take up of 15 and 30 hour places for 3 & 4 year olds in all areas.	To continue to work with Corporate Communications to continually develop and promote 'the support with childcare costs marketing strategy' and social media posts. Broker vacant places, supporting parents to find suitable early years and childcare provision for their children.
To improve expertise in SEND by increasing the number of staff with an accredited SENCO qualification in early years settings.	To promote the Level 3 SENCO Qualification and supporting setting SENCOs to obtain this qualification which was a proposal within SEND Green Paper - SEND Review: Right support, Right place, Right time: March 2022. Develop and establish the delivery of an Early Years Inclusion and Transition tool kit to support the early years sector.
To promote the different ways all childcare providers can make their fees more affordable to parents at all income levels. This will include providing information to parents and providers about Tax Free Childcare, the Childcare Element of Universal Credit and Tax Credit.	Secure business support training and CPD opportunities for all providers, including workshops and one to one support. Market 'Help with Childcare Costs' to the sector and families.
The expansion of funded childcare for working parents with children aged between 9 months and two, announced in the spring budget 2023. This offer is currently only available to 3 and 4 year olds.	Work with providers to ensure that there are sufficient places available, especially with the lower worker to child ratios and the current staff recruitment and retention issues. Working with potential providers on sustainable business models, using current knowledge of the sector and difficulties with the recruitment and retention of staff
To continue aiming for 100% of all types of settings to have a good or better Ofsted judgment, with an increased percentage of outstanding provision.	To continue to provide information, advice and training to childcare providers.

<p>Continue to raise awareness of the HAF programme with families, stakeholders and partners.</p>	<p>To explore how the HAF programme can continue its growth within the allocated budget. This would include ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the amount of provision by area is determined upon demand and by areas of deprivation • the best use of funding is made when agreeing on future premises and their associated rental costs. <p>Whilst continuing to promote the Holiday, Activities and Food programme for eligible families and support providers to offer 'childcare' places where there is demand.</p>
<p>Continue to support childcare providers to deliver high quality, sustainable provision. Monitor national and local developments to support market management information, including new development opportunities.</p>	<p>Target areas in need of childminder development. Work with the out of school sector, early years sector and new providers to ensure provision meets parents' needs, offering greater choice and flexibility. Approach providers where sufficiency gaps are identified to explore expansion of existing provision, especially in central Slough. Work with the sector to explore new development opportunities particularly when vacant and appropriate spaces become available. To work with colleagues in school place planning and the council's planning department to identify Section 106 Education contributions to support the development of early years provision.</p>
<p>Increase GLD in Slough</p>	<p>To work more closely with providers to improve outcomes for children in respect of GLD.</p>
<p>Increase the workforce including qualified staffing capacity</p>	<p>Develop an Early Years workforce strategy that supports the sector, to recruit appropriately qualified staff and encouraging "home grown" staff in partnership with local FE colleges, schools and training providers, work-based learning and apprenticeships.</p>
<p>Support the increasing numbers of children with SEND accessing provision in Slough</p>	<p>Provide additional and targeted support for providers who need to change their operating models to accommodate changing parents' needs, such as the rising numbers of children with SEND, to remain viable.</p>

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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Completing an EIA is the simplest way to demonstrate that the Council has considered the equality impacts of its decisions and it reduces the risk of legal challenge. EIAs should be carried out at the earliest stages of policy development or a service review, and then updated as the policy or review develops. EIAs must be undertaken when it is possible for the findings to inform the final decision.

SECTION 1:

What are you analysing, What is the policy/project/activity/strategy looking to achieve?

Who is it intended to benefit? Are any specific groups targeted by this decision?

What results are intended?

This equalities impact assessment (EIA) seeks to assess the impact of options for change to Children's Centres in Slough on children, families and staff who have protected characteristics. The council has consulted on options for change, with the result of that consultation informing this updated EQIA.

The consultation related to proposed changes to the Children's Centre delivery model and the Early Education and Childcare delivered through them.

Slough has 10 Children's Centres operating across the borough.

A Children's Centre is defined in the Children Act 2006 as a place or a group of places: which is managed by or on behalf of, or under arrangements with, the local authority with a view to securing that early childhood services in the local authority's area are made available in an integrated way; through which early childhood services are made available (either by providing the services on site, or by providing advice and assistance on gaining access to services elsewhere); and at which activities for young children are provided.

The core statutory function of Children's Centres is:

- To improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in:
 - child development and school readiness,
 - parenting aspirations and parenting skills; and
 - child and family health and life chances.

Review work has been undertaken in relation to both the Children's Centre model and the directly delivered early education and childcare provision offered via the centres.

This review work and the drivers informing it, have identified options for change for consideration and consultation.

It is anticipated that all disadvantaged groups including those with protected characteristics within the target demographic of 0 – 19 year olds and up to 25 year olds with special educational needs and disabilities SEND and their families could both benefit and be negatively impacted by the changes referenced in the options. This is because the modified service will seek to improve the identification and targeting of family support to those most in need with a view to improving outcomes for young children and their families and reducing inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers whilst also discontinuing aspects of services currently provided.

The draft options aim to achieve the dual outcome of creating a new model that improves the targeting of support to vulnerable families whilst reducing the overall cost of the services in question.

Related review outcomes are summarised as follows:

Summary of key review findings

Children’s Centres component	Early Education and Childcare component
Capacity to provide key children’s centre functions has diminished overtime with resource reduced and / or reassigned to address other areas of need	Directly delivered offer via Children’s Centres being provided at cost to the Council
The model has evolved to be primarily concerned with the provision of early education and childcare, resulting in capacity to deliver key core children’s centre functions being constrained	Directly delivered offer via Children’s Centres provided in areas with surplus capacity.
Core functions and offer have been maintained but spread thinly and unevenly across the range of centres and associated localities	Directly delivered offer provided in areas with sufficient capacity to meet requirements.
Capacity to identify and target those most in need of support is limited within the service itself with broader targeted work undertaken via the Targeted Early Help Service.	Operational management required to provide management and coordination for both early education and childcare offer and management and leadership of Children’s Centres. This present a significant challenge to enabling both needs to be adequately met

Summary of the case for change	
Children's Centres component	Early Learning and Childcare component
The need to consolidate limited resources to enable children's centre sufficiency.	The need to ensure Council resources are not deployed for the provision of early education and childcare unless there is a clear and agreed business case for doing so
The need to enable key Children's Centre functions to be fulfilled and focused on core Children's Centre requirements	The need to ensure that the sufficiency of early education and childcare offer is maintained without the Council necessarily providing the service itself.
The recognition that resources and associated approach needs to enable and ensure the coordination and targeting of early childhood services at the most vulnerable	The need to continue to enable the provider market to maintain the offer so it may meet need and address gaps.

Summary of headline options for change

Children's Centre Options	Potential benefits	Potential constraints
1. To close 8 of the existing 10 Children's Centres and establish a new 2 centre model which maintains 3 early learning and childcare provisions (Recommended)	Reduces cost and allows for the consolidation of Children's Centre resources to enable greater targeting of those most in need	80% reduction in the number of physical Children's Centre outlets and the associated contact / service access points for families in affected areas, particularly vulnerable children, and families. Impact of resultant discontinuation of directly delivered childcare on sufficiency and family access.
2. To close 8 of the existing 10 Children's Centres and establish a new 2 centre model which maintains 2 early learning and childcare provisions	Reduces cost and allows for the consolidation of Children's Centre resources to enable greater targeting of	80% reduction in the number of physical Children's Centre outlets and the associated contact / service access points for families in affected areas, particularly vulnerable children, and families. Impact of resultant discontinuation of directly delivered childcare on sufficiency and family access.

	those most in need	
3. To close 9 of the existing 10 Children's Centres and establish a boroughwide Children's Centre model and discontinue all directly delivered early education and childcare	Reduces cost and allows for the consolidation of Children's Centre resources to enable greater targeting of those most in need	90% reduction in the number of physical Children's Centre outlets and the associated contact / service access points for families in affected areas, particularly vulnerable children, and families. Impact of resultant discontinuation of directly delivered childcare on sufficiency and family access.

Details of the lead person completing the screening/EIA	(i) Full Name: Neil Hoskinson (ii) Position: Associate Director for Education and Inclusion (iii) Unit: Education and inclusion (iii) Contact Details: neil.hoskinson@slough.gov.uk
Date sent to Finance	
Version number and date of update	V2.0 (post consultation update)

SECTION 2: Do you need to complete a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)?

Not all proposals will require a full EIA, the assessment of impacts should be proportionate to the nature of the project/policy in question and its likely impact. To decide on the level of detail of the assessment required consider the potential impact on persons with protected characteristics.

2.1
Please provide an overview of who uses/will use your service or facility and identify who are likely to be impacted by the proposal.

- *If you do not formally collect data about a particular group then use the results of local surveys or consultations, census data, national trends, or anecdotal evidence (indicate where this is the case). Please attempt to complete all boxes.*
- *Consider whether there is a need to consult stakeholders and the public, including members of protected groups, to gather information on potential impacts of the proposal.*

The changes being considered relate to the development of a new Children’s Centre delivery model. The new model aims to benefit the 19,873 households with dependent children in the borough with a particular focus on families with 12,415 children aged 0-4.

<p>How many people use the service currently? What is this as a % of Slough’s population?</p>	<p>3,010 residents attended a session from January 2021 – November 2022. This is 1.9% of Slough’s population (158,500 in the 2021 census).</p> <p>410 people completed the survey. 374 respondents live in Slough (0.2% of Slough’s population). 241 respondents stated that they use Children’s Centres to access services (0.2% of Slough’s population and 8.0% of the estimated 3,010 users from the EIA).</p>
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<p>Gender</p>	<p>Male - 1051 Female – 1927 Not Known – 32</p> <p>Both the EIA and survey had an overrepresentation of female users/respondents compared to the population in the 2021 Census. The results of the survey align with the EIA.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Sex</p> <table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Sex</th> <th colspan="2">EIA</th> <th colspan="2">Survey</th> <th colspan="2">2021 Census</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Total</th> <th>%</th> <th>Total</th> <th>%</th> <th>Total</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td>1,051</td> <td>34.9%</td> <td>69</td> <td>18.5%</td> <td>78,495</td> <td>49.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>1,927</td> <td>64.0%</td> <td>276</td> <td>74.2%</td> <td>80,005</td> <td>50.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not known</td> <td>32</td> <td>1.1%</td> <td>27</td> <td>7.3%</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> <p><i>Gender identity</i> The service does not hold data on the gender identity of its users, therefore there was no data included in the EIA.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Gender identity</p>	Sex	EIA		Survey		2021 Census		Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Male	1,051	34.9%	69	18.5%	78,495	49.5%	Female	1,927	64.0%	276	74.2%	80,005	50.5%	Not known	32	1.1%	27	7.3%	-	-
Sex	EIA		Survey		2021 Census																														
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%																													
Male	1,051	34.9%	69	18.5%	78,495	49.5%																													
Female	1,927	64.0%	276	74.2%	80,005	50.5%																													
Not known	32	1.1%	27	7.3%	-	-																													

Gender same as sex assigned at birth	Survey		2021 Census	
	Total	%	Total	%
Yes	340	91.4%	107,503	90.4%
No	23	6.2%	1,081	0.9%
Not known	9	2.4%	10,351	8.7%

Please note, most respondents who selected “no” in the survey did not specify a gender – this was the same in Slough and nationally in the 2021 census. 3 respondents specified in the survey.

Race

Any Other Ethnic Group	66
Any Other Mixed Background	43
Asian - Any Other Asian Background	126
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	21
Asian or Asian British - Indian	556
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	714
Asian or Asian British - Sikh	66
Asian Pakistani	2
Black - Any Other Black Background	18
Black Caribbean	1
Black or Black British - African	69
Black or Black British - Caribbean	11
Chinese	14
Gypsy / Roma	2
Traveller of Irish Heritage	1
White - Any Other White Background	356
White and Asian	44
White and Black African	39
White and Black Caribbean	24
White British	320
White European	1
White Irish	5
White Other	1
White/Black Caribbean	1
Not Known	509

Ethnicity

The proportion of users from different ethnic groups in the EIA mostly aligns with the 2021 Census, but the EIA had a higher representation of Asian ethnic groups and a lower proportion of White ethnic groups. The survey, on the other hand, had a higher representation of White ethnic groups and lower representation of Asian ethnic groups than both the EIA and 2021 census.

Broad ethnicity

Ethnicity	EIA		Survey		2021 Census	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%

White: Total	683	27.4%	157	42.2%	57,134	36.0%
Mixed: Total	151	6.1%	12	3.2%	6,311	4.0%
Asian or Asian British: Total	1,485	59.7%	121	32.5%	74,093	46.7%
Black or Black British: Total	88	3.5%	34	9.1%	11,992	7.6%
Chinese or other ethnic group: Total	82	3.3%	1	0.3%	7,144	4.5%
Not known	509	20.4%	47	12.6%	-	-

Please note, the 2021 census used different categories to the survey and EIA, so only data for the broad ethnic groups has been included here.

Disability

Yes – 8
No – 2883
Not Known – 119

The EIA noted there were 886 children under 5 with SEND (0.6% of Slough's population).

The online survey did not specifically ask about children under 5 with SEND using Slough's Children's Centres. 63 survey respondents (16.9% of respondents, 0.04% of Slough's population) had a child under 18 with a disability. Differences in age groups between the EIA and survey data prevent accurate comparison.

Children with a disability

Disability/SEND	EIA (age 0-5)		Survey (age 0-17)	
	Total	%	Total	%
Yes	8	0.3%	40	10.8%
No	2,883	95.8%	295	79.3%
Not known	119	4.0%	37	9.9%

Sexual orientation

The service doesn't currently securing monitoring information re: sexual orientation.

The service does not hold data on the sexual orientation of its users, therefore there was no data in the EIA. The results of the survey mostly align with the

2021 Census, but with a lower proportion of straight or heterosexual respondents and higher proportion of respondents not stating their orientation.

Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation	Survey		2021 Census	
	Total	%	Total	%
Straight or Heterosexual	283	76.1%	104,943	88.2%
Gay or Lesbian	2	0.5%	806	0.7%
Bisexual	4	1.1%	1,095	0.9%
Other	0	0.0%	1,507	1.3%
Not known	83	22.3%	11,677	9.8%

Age

0 – 5 = 1367
 6 – 10 = 35
 11 – 20 = 24
 21 – 30 = 424
 31 – 40 = 910
 41+ = 213
 Not Known = 37

Slough has a young population, with 25% of the population aged 0-15. There were 14,350 residents aged 0-5 in the 2021 census (9% of the population). However, this is a decrease of 8% since the 2011 census and other recent ONS data has also shown that birth rates have been decreasing. The EIA used the age of registered service users, which includes children aged 0-5 using the services. Therefore, there is a disproportionately high representation of children aged 0-5 but that is to be expected given the nature of the services.

Age of registered service users (EIA)

Age of service user	EIA	
	Total	%
0 – 5	1,367	45.4%
6 – 10	35	1.2%
11 - 20	24	0.8%
21 – 30	424	14.1%
31 – 40	910	30.2%
41 and over	213	7.1%
Not Known	37	1.2%

The largest age group of respondents to the survey were aged 25-39 (48.4%). This is a disproportionately high representation, however this is also to be expected given the nature of the services the survey was consulting on, where it would be expected that most responses would be from parents of young children, who would typically be around this age range. 30.2% of service users in the EIA were aged 31-40, so this higher representation of ages 25-39 in the survey also aligns with the EIA.

Age of survey respondents				
Age of respondent	Survey		2021 Census	
	Total	%	Total	%
0 – 15	9	2.4%	39,568	25.0%
16 – 24	11	3.0%	16,587	10.5%
25 – 39	180	48.4%	38,001	24.0%
40 – 49	96	25.8%	24,839	15.7%
50 – 59	35	9.4%	17,548	11.1%
60 – 69	13	3.5%	11,754	7.4%
70 and over	2	0.5%	10,201	6.4%
Not known	26	7.0%	-	-

Religion or belief	Total
Agnostic	2
Atheist	1
Catholic	6
Christian	26
Church of England	3
Hindu	1
Ismail'lis	1
Muslim	56
None	18
Roman Catholic	4
Sikh	14
Not Known	2878

The religion, faith, or belief of respondents to the online survey aligns with the proportions of Slough's population in the 2021 Census. The religion, faith, or belief was not known for most service users in the EIA, therefore it cannot accurately be compared with the survey or Census.

Religion, faith, or belief

Religion, faith, or belief	EIA		Survey		2021 Census	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Muslim	56	1.9%	88	23.7%	46,661	29.4%
Christian	39	1.3%	139	37.4%	50,664	32.0%
Buddhist	-	-	2	0.5%	776	0.5%
Hindu	1	0.0%	15	4.0%	12,343	7.8%
Jewish	-	-	1	0.3%	85	0.1%
Sikh	14	0.5%	24	6.5%	17,985	11.3%
Other	4	0.1%	1	0.3%	716	0.5%
None	18	0.6%	49	13.2%	20,726	13.1%
Not known	2,878	95.6%	53	14.2%	8,544	5.4%

Marriage and civil partnership

The service does not hold comprehensive data on the marital or civil partnership status of its users, therefore there was no data included in the EIA.

The survey had a lower representation of single respondents than Slough's population. However, it is to be expected, given the topic of the survey, that most respondents would be parents and the 2021 Census showed that 19% of households in Slough with dependent children (aged 0-17) were single parent families. Therefore, this lower representation in the survey is to be expected. The proportion of co-habiting respondents in the survey also aligns with the 8% of co-habiting families with dependent children in the 2021 Census.

Marital status

Marital status	Survey		2021 Census	
	Total	%	Total	%
Single	64	17.2%	41,898	35.2%
Married	208	55.9%	60,001	50.4%
Co-habiting	27	7.3%	-	-
Civil Partnership	6	1.6%	158	0.1%
Separated	8	2.2%	2,925	2.5%
Divorced	13	3.5%	8,799	7.4%
Widowed	2	0.5%	5,151	4.3%
Not known	44	11.8%	-	-

Pregnancy and maternity

The service does not hold comprehensive data on the pregnancy and maternity status of its users, therefore there was no data in the EIA. The 2021 Census data also did not include data on pregnancy or maternity.

Pregnancy

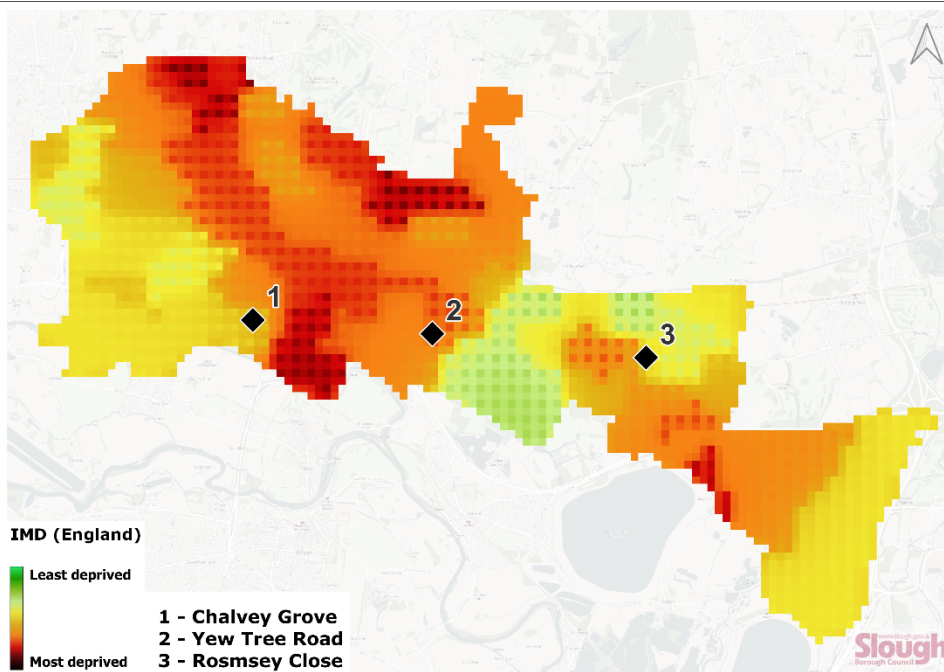
Pregnant	Survey	
	Total	%
Yes	4	1.2%
No	296	88.1%
Not known	36	10.7%

Maternity

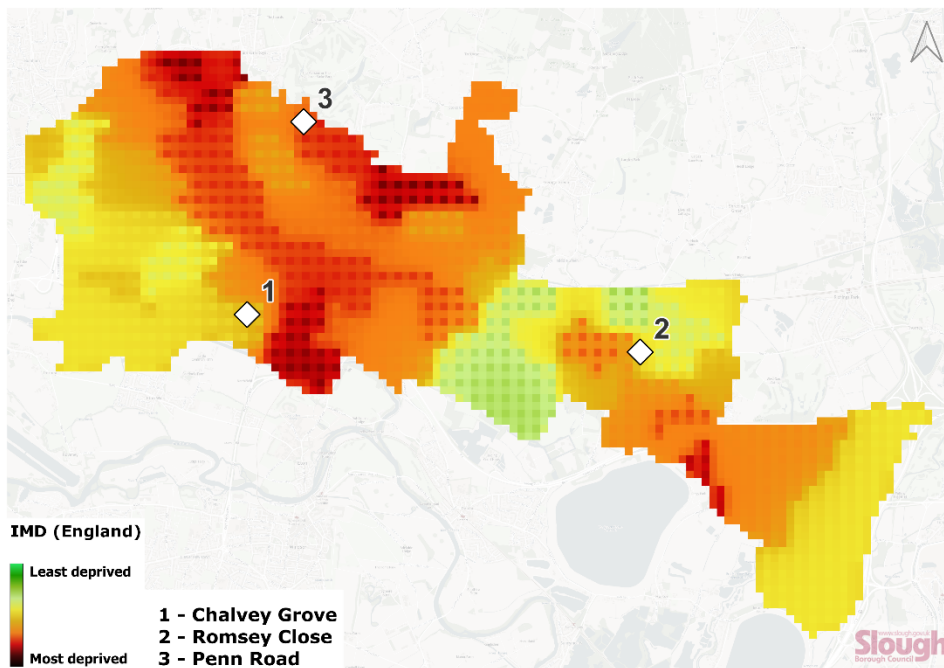
Had a baby in the last 12 months	Survey	
	Total	%
Yes	39	11.8%
No	261	78.9%
Not known	31	9.4%

Deprivation

Map of the proposed centres remaining open in Option 1 that would provide childcare services, compared to levels of deprivation (as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation).



Map of the proposed centres remaining open in Option 1 that would provide family services, compared to levels of deprivation (as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation).



2.2 Are there any groups with protected characteristic that are overrepresented in the monitoring information relative to their size of the population? If so, this could indicate that the proposal may have a disproportionate impact on this group even if it is a universal service.

The current model provides services for children 0-5 and their families only. If approved, the model ultimately aims to provide the basis from which a wider family network and hub model is developed offering support for children and young people aged 0 – 19 and up to 25 for young people with SEND. Given the nature of the proposed development, it is anticipated that the new model will have a positive, future impact from an equality’s perspective including benefits from those with protected characteristics in general and specifically in terms of age, disability, race and sex. It

recognised however, that there may also be an adverse impact in the short term as there is a need for work to be undertaken to enable families to access alternative provision that may be discontinued by the Council should any of the draft options be agreed for implementation following consultation.

Age

Slough has an overall population of 158,500 (Census 2021). Slough's population is significantly younger than England's profile with Slough's average age at 34, compared to 41 for the South-East and 40 for England. Slough has the second highest proportion of children aged 15 or under in England and Wales, behind only Barking and Dagenham, with 25% of the population of Slough are aged under 16.

There are currently 1,367 0-5s recorded as using the service between Jan-21 to May-22. This represents 45% of total users compared to 0-5s making up 9.1% of the population whole. This is a comparative over-representation but one you would expect given the nature of the service. There are 1,547 service users over the age of 20 recorded for the same period.

There are now 52,423 households in Slough containing at least one person.

Slough has a mean household size of 3 people per household and is the largest mean household size in England and Wales. The mean for England and Wales is 2.4.

Slough is the third most densely populated LA in the South-East, with 4,871 usual residents per square kilometre (48.7 per hectare). This is the equivalent of around 35 people living on each football pitch-sized area of land, compared to an average of just 3 across England.

There are 54,116 occupied dwellings in Slough of which 23,156 (43%) are households with dependent children.

Monitoring information therefore suggests that there is disproportionately high representation of 0-5 year-olds which is in keeping with the terms of reference of the service.

Disability

A total of 886 children under 5 have been identified as having a with a special educational need or disability (SEND) according to the SEND Summer Survey 2021. This represents 0.6% of the total population of Slough.

Gender reassignment

The services does not hold data on gender reassignment or gender self-identification.

Marriage and civil partnership

The service does not hold comprehensive data on the marital or civil partnership status of its users.

Pregnancy and maternity

The service does not hold comprehensive data on the pregnancy and maternity status of its users. This information is held by the partner Maternity Service.

Race

The following information provides a summary of the broad ethnic groups resident in Slough, population numbers and percentages.

Category	Count	%
Asian/Asian British	74,093	46.7
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	11,992	7.6
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	6,311	4.0
Other ethnic group	7,144	4.5
White	57,134	36.0
Arab ethnic groups	1,826	1.2

Service monitoring information suggests that children and families from the Asian community are over-represented as service users and black and white children and families under-represented.

Religion and belief

The following information provides a summary of the religions followed by residents of Slough.

The volume and detail of Service monitoring information in relation to religion and belief is not sufficient to allow for meaningful comparative analysis to determine under or over representation of users.

Sex

Slough population: 158,500



Females
80,005
(50.5%)



Males
78,495
(49.5%)

Service monitoring information shows that there is over representation of female. users when compared to overall population.

Sexual orientation

Census 2021

Sexual Orientation	Slough		England
	Count	%	%
Straight or Heterosexual	104,943	88.2%	89.4%
LGB+ orientation (total)	2,313	1.9%	3.2%
Gay or Lesbian	806	0.7%	1.5%
Bisexual	1,095	0.9%	1.3%
Pansexual	335	0.3%	0.2%
Asexual	29	0.0%	0.1%
Queer	7	0.0%	0.0%
All other sexual orientations	41	0.0%	0.0%
Not answered	11,677	9.8%	7.5%

Service monitoring information is does not include the sexual orientation of service users.

2.3 Are there any groups with protected characteristics that are underrepresented in the monitoring information relative to their size of the population? If so, this could indicate that the service may not be accessible to all groups or there may be some form of direct or indirect discrimination occurring.

Race
The following information provides a summary of the broad ethnic groups resident in Slough, population numbers and percentages

Category	Count	%
Asian/Asian British	74,093	46.7
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	11,992	7.6
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	6,311	4.0
Other ethnic group	7,144	4.5
White	57,134	36.0
Arab ethnic groups	1,826	1.2

Service monitoring information suggests that children and children and families white and black communities are under-represented as service users.

2.4 Does the project, policy or proposal have the potential to disproportionately impact on people with a protected characteristic? If so, is the impact positive or negative?

	None	Positive	Negative	Not sure
Men or women	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People of a particular race or ethnicity (including refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and gypsies and travellers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disabled ¹ people (consider different types of physical,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

¹ Disability discrimination is different from other types of discrimination since it includes the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

learning or mental disabilities)				
People of particular sexual orientation/s	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
People in particular age groups (consider in particular children, under 21s and over 65s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People who are intending to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Impact due to pregnancy/ maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People of particular faiths and beliefs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
People on low incomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Themes from focus groups that inform the equalities impact assessment.

Families with children who have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities.

There were concerns raised by both parents and health professionals that the changes would reduce the access for children with Special Educational Needs or a Disabilities. This feedback cited four potential impacts:

- Specialist childcare places would no longer be available, removing services that support needs now and the ability to refer onto other services that might be needed.
- Additional travel time would reduce the ability of families to attend.
- Families who can no longer walk to a centre might face challenges using public transport depending on the needs of the child.

- The market challenge of recruiting and retaining trained childcare staff could mean that there were insufficient numbers of workers available in Private and Voluntary Sector providers.

Families with children under the age of 1.

A set of comments mentioned possible impacts on families with children under the age of 1.

The focus group held with health professionals mentioned specific clinics and drop-in sessions that are targeted at families with babies and are well attended. The health professionals raised two potential risk areas:

- Possible reduction in families accessing postnatal services.
- If provision had to be delivered to homes instead of centres, this would reduce the number of families that health staff can reach.

Focus groups with parents and carers mentioned that they valued the services on offer at centres during their child's first year, and that reducing access could result in greater levels of mental and physical health problems for parents and babies.

Vulnerable mothers or female carers.

It was mentioned within the health professionals and headteachers focus groups that some parents or carers use the children's centres in part as a safe space away from home where they can make friends and find out about support services. The parents and carers being referred to are usually female. There is a risk that reducing access to centres could increase those risks by preventing people from accessing networks and support and not enabling professionals to spot safeguarding issues as early as possible.

In addition, health professionals mentioned that moving services back from centres to homes could reduce the ability to talk to mothers or female carers in a safe space. There would also be a need to double-up on health staff visiting a home, to reduce the risk to staff.

Families on low incomes and/or living in areas of high deprivation.

Across the focus groups, a theme emerged from respondents that focused on the potential impact on families on low incomes and living in high deprivation. The categories of potential impacts mentioned by respondents included:

- Reduced provision of advice and services that inform families on debt, welfare support, employment.
- Potential additional costs of finding a childcare place at a Private or Voluntary Sector provider.
- Additional costs of travel to a new centre if that is located further away from their home. Some parents mentioned that they would need to get two buses to reach one of the centres that remained in Option 1.
- Reducing access for families living in areas of high deprivation, including deprivation regarding high existing barriers to housing and services.

Ethnicity, Religion, Faith, or Belief, Sexual Orientation and Age

There were no comments recorded in focus groups that specifically referenced possible impacts on people based on their ethnicity, religion, faith, or belief, sexual orientation, or age.

If any of the answers to the questions above is, "negative" or "unclear" you will need to undertake a detailed impact assessment.

2.5	Based on your responses, should a full, detailed EIA be carried out on the project, policy or proposal
	Yes X No
2.6	Provide brief reasons on how have you come to this decision?
	<p>Given that this project has the potential to disproportionately impact people with protected characteristics a full detailed EIA has been carried out and consultation undertaken. This will continue to be updated throughout the process as the operating models are further developed.</p> <p>There are two main dimensions to the project, consideration of options for change to Children’s Centres and associated change to early education and childcare provision delivered through them. Both recommended options include a level of reduction to both aspects which in the short term presents risks of negative impact to those children and families who currently use them. The recommended options seek to mitigate those negative impacts and enhance the targeting of services for vulnerable children and families. Section 3 references the potential positive impact of the new model options as they will be charged with targeting vulnerable children and families, including those with protected characteristics to enable access to early childhood services. It also references the potential negative impact and associated mitigation given that options include discontinuation of some services.</p> <p>Update following Consultation Responses:</p> <p>The following issues were raised during the consultation that relate to equalities considerations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concerns about access to services and continuity of support/advice for children with special educational needs. The need to ensure availability of and access to specialist childcare places and referrals to help. 2. Concerns around access to centres regarding travel times/access to public services and the future location of services. 3. Specific support for children and parents of children under 1 years of age and the availability of parents to access a centre rather than only have the option of home visits. 4. The need for accessible safe places for vulnerable women to access further support and services away from the home.

SECTION 3: ASSESSING THE IMPACT

In order to be able to identify ways to mitigate any potential impact it is essential that we know what those potential impacts might be. Using the evidence gathered in section 2, explain what the potential impact of your proposal might be on the groups you have identified. You may wish to further supplement the evidence you have gathered using the table below in order to properly consider the impact.

Protected Group		Positive impact?			Negative impact? If so, please specify the nature and extent of that impact	No specific impact	If the impact is negative how can it be mitigated? Please specify any mitigation measures and how and when they will be implemented	What , if any, are the cumulative effects of this decision when viewed in the context of other Council decisions and their equality impacts
		Eliminate discrimination	Advance equality	Good relations				
Gender	Men	x	x	x	Access to and benefit from early childhood services including early education and childcare (family and children)		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with the wider network of service providers including the private, voluntary and independent early years sector to encourage and enable alternative provision as required. 2. Ensure any new model agreed effectively targets vulnerable children and families, including those with protected characteristics to enable access to services. 3. Work with external providers to support and enable inclusion. 	The effect of any decision of implement any of the current options, would need to be considered within the wider context of other council decisions to related services.

	Women	x	x	x	As above		As above	As above
Race	White	x	x	x	As above		As above	As above
	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	x	x	x	As above		As above	As above
	Asian/Asian British	x	x	x	As above		As above	As above
	Black/African/Caribbean / Black British	x	x	x	As above		As above	As above
	Gypsies / travellers	x	x	x	As above		As above	As above
	Other ethnic group	x	x	x	As above		As above	As above
Disability	Physical	x	x	x	As above		As above	As above
	Sensory	x	x	x	As above		As above	As above
	Learning Difficulties	x	x	x	As above		As above	As above
	Learning Disabilities	x	x	x	As above		As above	As above
	Mental Health	x	x	x	As above		As above	As above

Protected Group		Positive impact?			Negative impact?	No specific impact	What will the impact be? If the impact is negative how can it be mitigated? (action)	What are the cumulative of effects
		Eliminate discrimination	Advance equality	Good relations				
Sexual Orientation	Lesbian, gay men, bisexual	x	x	x	As above		As above	As above
Age	Older people (50+)	x	x	x	As above		As above	As above
	Younger people (16 - 25)	x	x	x	As above		As above	As above
Gender Reassignment		x	x	x	As above		As above	As above
Impact due to pregnancy/maternity		x	x	x	As above		As above	As above
Groups with particular faiths and beliefs		x	x	x	As above		As above	As above
People on low incomes		x	x	x	As above		As above	As above

SECTION 4: ACTION PLAN

4.1 Complete the action plan if you need to reduce or remove the negative impacts you have identified, take steps to foster good relations or fill data gaps.

Please include the action required by your team/unit, groups affected, the intended outcome of your action, resources needed, a lead person responsible for undertaking the action (inc. their department and contact details), the completion date for the action, and the relevant RAG rating: R(ed) – action not initiated, A(mber) – action initiated and in progress, G(reen) – action complete.

NB. Add any additional rows, if required.

Page 168	Action Required	Equality Groups Targeted	Intended outcome	Resources Needed	Name of Lead, Unit & Contact Details	Completion Date (DD/MM/YY)	RAG
	<i>Enter additional rows if required</i>						

THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY THE RELEVANT SERVICE MANAGER

SIGNATURE:

FULL NAME:

UNIT:

EMAIL & TELEPHONE EXT:

DATE (DD/MM/YYYY):

WHAT NEXT?

It is the responsibility of the service to complete an EIA to the required standard and the quality and completeness of EIAs will be monitored by Strategic Finance Board.

All EIAs for proposed changes to levels of service arising from budget proposals must be completed by (insert date).

All completed EIAs should be sent to TO BE INSERTED

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Children's Centre Consultation PVI Early Years Settings focus Group – Monday 6th February 2023

This focus group was split into 4 subgroups covering the different areas in Slough. Representatives were grouped according to the location of their existing Early years setting.

Overall feedback

- The PVI sector are happy to host services in their settings and some are already doing so. For example; one setting in the Wexham Road Children's Centre area provides a food bank for their parents to donate to and also access parcels, a nursery in the Romsey Close Children's Centre area has a health visitor attending to carry out 2 year old checks. A nursery based at the Wexham Road Children's Centre would be happy to run a parent and toddler stay and play session if they wouldn't incur additional costs for use of the space and almost all representatives said they would be happy to host a speech and language session.
- When asked 'how can we do things differently in our children centre's and how can we improve our service provision on a continual basis?' the focus group shared that they would need to be better informed about the different services that run out of the children's centres. As a result of not feeling informed they don't currently signpost many parents to access service.
- The PVI settings feel that they support the whole family and offer a holistic approach, this mainly occurs because they have the relationship already to work with the family
- Children's Centres are seen as a competitor to the PVI sector because they run their own early years and childcare provision. This often deters a PVI setting from referring a family to the services available.
- Currently across all PVI providers there is a concern regarding the long waiting lists for children to access speech and language support.
- Suggested use of any vacant buildings included; family support, safe spaces where people can go for social contact, casual meetings, meet for a cuppa, friendship, support, used more by charities

Sub-group Romsey Close and Vicarage Way

1 participant – 1 PVI setting represented RC

- 99% of parents can travel to reach services with most coming from Langley and Iver
- Services in this area need to be provided in the evenings and at weekends for meeting the needs of working parents
 - Current challenges in this area include higher numbers of children with SEND, children's wait time to see a paediatrician or other professionals, waiting list are extortionate and look to the setting for answers as the health services are not there.
 - Having the staff available with the knowledge to support children with SaLT
 - Some setting considering looking to employ a private Speech and Language Therapist to overcome the wait time.
 - When asked 'What capacity does the wider early years sector have to meet the demand for funded early education and childcare, if any of the options were implemented?' This setting in the Romsey Close CCA would be happy to take on more children with SEND and vulnerable children /families but staffing continues to be a problem recruiting at Level 3 qualified, they currently have a big waiting list mostly babies, staffing – rooms have been closed. Have closed a 2-3year room due to lack of qualified staff however the retention of staff is good
 - Pros and cons on both sides and having the right structures in place. If Romsey Close CC does shut, they may not be able to offer places to those families as they currently have a big waiting list

Sub-group Penn Road, Wexham Road, Elliman Avenue

6 participants (5 PVI settings represented) x3 PR and x2 WR

- Initially the group were unsure about how the consultation would impact their provision
- Mixed feelings about referrals to the children's centres services, some refer families as and when the need arises whilst others feel that they offer the support the families need and therefore a referral to a children's centre is not necessary
- Settings in WR have vacancies and could take on additional children
- Setting in WR would be happy to facilitate a parent and toddler stay and play session as long as not costs where incurred by the nursery
- Settings in the PR area are looking to relocate to bigger premises and would be interested if the PR site became available
- Parents know about the satellite library at WR children's centre and often ask the PVI nursery about how they can access it
- Concerns about overall sufficiency levels of early years and childcare with new housing development

Sub-group Chalvey Grove, Yew Tree Road

2 participants (2 PVI settings represented) x2 CG

- Families come to the nurseries for support because of the trusting relationships already established.
- It is key to keep the PVI sector up to date with information to support the families
- The needs of families in this area are increasing.
- Services need to go out to the community.
- There is a need for parenting classes in this area, Informal parenting groups – expectations, childcare, routines, eating, sleeping, toilet training, language etc
- Engagement with health visitors, speech and language therapists
- Provide services in rooms but cannot afford rental charges
- Impact of parents requiring above support and advice impacts on staffing/time
- Suggestion open sessions where nursery staff can come to CC with parents to access services/find out more

Sub-group Monksfield Way, St Andrews Way, Orchard Avenue

4 participants (4 PVI settings represented) x1 MW, x1 SW, x2 OA

- Concerns around the high numbers of children with SEND and the capacity in MW to recruit specialist staff to work with children with SEND
- Value speech and language therapy drop in sessions and health visitor groups, often sign post families to these.
- Home Start has been a valued service in this area.
- It was felt that services could be delivered in a different way and services could come to the PVI nurseries instead of parents going to another venue.
- There needs to be more communication so parents know what services are available and where.
- Suggestion that the PVI sector could be funded to provide services to early years families.
- From a business point of view if the children's centres closed then the PVI's would have more of a competitive market in terms of early years and childcare and in terms of services the sector would 'cope'
- It was discussed that the overall savings of the consultation has very little impact on the overall impact on the loss of services to families. It was stated that the consultation should have talked more about the savings to reinvest into other services.
- A PVI would possibly be interested in relocating the provision if a space become available

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Have your say:

- Complete online questionnaire – Add link
- Fill in paper questionnaire: these are available from all Children’s Centres during the 6 weeks consultation or email Childrens.Centres@slough.gov.uk to request a copy.
- Attend a consultation focus group where questions and views can be recorded

Date / Time	Activity	Location	Address
Monday 6 th February 6:30- 8pm	Private and independent sector early years providers	On line	Teams
Thursday 9 th February 23 – 10am – 11:30pm	Service users and residents	Penn Road Children’s Centre	Penn wood School, Penn Road, SL2 1PG
Monday 20 th February – 9:30 - 11am	Key Partners focus group (schools)	Online	Teams invite
Tuesday 21 st February – 10am- 11:30am	Key Partners Focus Health and wellbeing	Chalvey Grove Children’s Centre	Chalvey Grove Montem School, Chalvey Grove, SL1 2TE
Wednesday 1 st March – 10-11:30	Voluntary Sector partners / Adult learning	Monksfield Way Children’s Centre	Monksfield way, Britwell, SL2 1QX
Monday 6 th March - 12pm – 2pm	Service users / residents	Vicarage Way Children’s Centre	Vicarage Way, Colnbrook,
Thursday 9 th March 10-11:30	Early years providers PVI, Nursery class, reception schools	Romsey Close Children’s Centre	Romsey Close SI3 8PE
Wednesday 15 th March 9-10.30	Service users/residents / Britwell partnership group (requested additional meeting)	Monksfield Way Children’s Centre	Monksfield Way Britwell SI2 1QX
Wednesday 15 th March 4pm-6pm	Service users/ residents	Yew Tree Road Children’s Centre	St Marys School, Yew Tree road SL1 2AR

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Slough Borough Council

Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	24 May 2023
Subject:	Electric Vehicle Charge Point Tariffs
Portfolio:	Transport & The Local Environment
Chief Officer:	Richard West
Contact Officer:	Savio DeCruz / Jason Newman
Ward(s):	Britwell & Northborough; Central; Chalvey; Cippenham Green; Farnham; and Langley St Marys
Key Decision:	YES
Exempt:	NO
Decision Subject To Call In:	YES
Appendices:	<p>Appendix A – Map of Council EV Charge Points</p> <p>Appendix B – Details of Council EV Charge Points</p> <p>Appendix C – Council Public Charge Points Usage 2016 to 2022</p> <p>Appendix D – Council Public Charge Points Usage 2022</p>

1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 This report sets out the current infrastructure, usage and costs of the Council's public electric vehicle (EV) charging network and proposes application of a consistent tariff structure across the network together with incorporation of dormant workplace assets ahead of a comprehensive EV infrastructure strategy being drafted later in 2023. It also updates on recent funding allocations under the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure scheme.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- a) Authorise the existing electric vehicle charge point fee tariff structure to be rolled out to all charge points on the Council's public EV charging network; and
- b) Agree the switch of EV workplace charge points in the basement level at Herschel Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) to public EV charging on the Council's network.

Cabinet is asked to note that:

- c) A report will be brought to Cabinet in December 2023 with a draft EV infrastructure strategy to consider how future charging needs can be enabled by the Council through on-street, destination and enroute charge points. The Council will also work with the other Berkshire authorities in 2023/24 to also develop a Berkshire wide EV Infrastructure Strategy.

Reason:

- 1.2 Agreement to these recommendations will enable the Council's EV public charge point network to move towards a cost recovery basis, so that users of the EV network are paying for the electricity and operational costs. This will also fund the maintenance agreements needed to improve the reliability of the current network. Development of an EV infrastructure strategy will enable the Council to meet Government expectations and access further funding; to meet the future charging needs of residents and businesses; and where possible develop the network to generate an income.

Commissioner Review

Commissioners are content with the recommendations.

2. Report

Introductory paragraph

- 2.1 The council's Corporate Plan includes priorities which are supported by the decisions described in this report:

- **A council that lives within our means, balances the budget, and delivers best value for taxpayers and service users** – the proposal in this report seeks to ensure that we recovery all costs associated with our provision of a public EV charging point network with the potential to generate a surplus.
- **An environment that helps residents live more independent, healthier and safer lives** – facilitating transition to electric vehicles reduces exhaust emissions of air pollutants and represents key actions in the Council's adopted Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, Air Quality Action Plan and Low Emission Strategy. Within this second priority the Corporate Plan pledges to continue to promote sustainable transport, reduce Slough's carbon footprint and work to bring down local air-pollution and greenhouse gas emissions targeting reducing the number of air quality management areas in the Borough.

Options considered: -

Option	Description
1	Option 1 – No Change – continue to offer some 'free' vend EV charge points The Council currently provides a public EV charge point network of 42 sockets. This has been developed in phases over the past decade. In the infancy of electric vehicles, charge points were offered to early adopters of the technology

	<p>at no cost for the electricity to promote uptake of low emission vehicles. Offering free charging in underutilised Council car parks was also a way to increase parking income and compete with other town centre parking options. Eleven of the existing Council public charge points currently do not levy a tariff for charging. The electricity cost to the Council in 2022 from the free charge points was £16,890. The Council could opt to continue to offer some ‘free’ vend charge points.</p> <p>While increasing the uptake of low emission vehicles in the local fleet brings a reduction in road transport emissions in the Borough with corresponding air quality and health benefits, the cost of charge point electricity from non-tariff charge points is currently borne by Council tax payers and not EV users. Without user tariffs in place across the network, the Council has not been able to prioritise funding to retain maintenance contracts on any of the charge points, which has led to significant down time and reliability issues on the network, negatively impacting on user experience and damaging local EV uptake. In addition, having regard to the Council’s current financial situation, it is not reasonable to prioritise free charging points to private vehicle owners.</p> <p>Over the past 18 months the unit price of electricity (p/kWh) has approximately tripled. While the cost of wholesale electricity has started to fall the market remains very volatile and unit prices are expected to remain high in the medium term and may never return to pre-pandemic/ Ukraine war levels. Therefore, the cost of electricity is likely to remain high.</p> <p><i>This option is not recommended.</i></p>
<p>2</p>	<p><i>Option 2 – Tariff across the Council’s existing Public Charging Network</i></p> <p>This option would be to levy a consistent tariff across the Council’s existing public charging network. The tariff would be set on a cost recovery basis to cover energy costs, operator charges (payment handling and software operations), and maintenance and repairs. This would enable maintenance contracts to be put into place to improve the reliability, user experience and uptake of the network.</p> <p>Usage of EV charge points have risen year on year as the number and proportion of EVs in the UK vehicle fleet has risen sharply. This will continue in the coming years as we head closer toward the ban on sale of cars and vans solely powered by petrol and diesel in 2030. This means that electricity consumption of ‘free’ vend charge points will also continue to rise, escalating the cost to the Council of electricity to these non-tariff charge points. There were previously other ‘free’ vend charge points offered by businesses in the Borough to encourage custom. However, the charge points at Tesco Extra on Wellington Street, for example, now levy a tariff of 28p/kWh for a 7kW charger, 40p/kWh for 22 kW fast charging and 50p/kWh for a rapid 50kW charger. This option would set the Council in line with other charge point operators in the Borough.</p> <p><i>This option is recommended.</i></p> <p><i>It is also recommended that we</i> switch existing unused workplace charge points in the basement level of the Herschel MSCP to the Council public charge point network. This would enable these dormant assets to be used for</p>

the benefit of local residents, workers and businesses (as EV drivers and owners) by immediately extending the Council's network without any capital investment or lengthy procurement.

Background

- 2.2 In the UK from 2030 the sale of new cars and vans fuelled wholly by petrol or diesel will be banned, with a ban on the sale of hybrid cars and vans to follow in 2035. Nationally at the end of September 2022 over 19% of all new car registrations were plug-in hybrid or battery electric cars. The total number of plug-in vehicles in the UK climbed past 1 million, accounting for 2.5%, or 1 in 40, of all registered vehicles on the road.
- 2.3 Slough has been consistently reported by Department for Transport vehicle statistics over recent years to be in the top three local authorities in England for total numbers of plug-in vehicles registered to the Borough. However, statistics have now been disaggregated for company and private vehicles confirming that the overwhelming majority of these ultra-low emission vehicles are company vehicles, mostly likely to be associated with major vehicle leasing companies head quartered in the Borough. While 18.5% of the company fleet registered to Slough is comprised of ultra-low emission vehicles, only 0.56% of the private fleet registered to Slough were battery or plug-in hybrid electric vehicles as at the end of September 2022.
- 2.4 Access to sufficient, reliable and reasonably priced public charge points remains to be one of the main barriers, both real and perceived, to EV uptake. This is particularly relevant as the price of new EV cars and vans (relative to petrol and diesel models) begins to fall and the supply of second hand EVs increases, thereby alleviating the barrier of high initial purchase costs. The above figures on the number of private vehicles registered to Slough highlight that EV uptake lags the national and regional average and that more needs to be done to ensure that residents are supported to make the transition from combustion fuelled vehicles to electric or alternative fuels.

Existing Public Charge Point Network

- 2.5 There are currently 39 electric vehicle charge points owned by the Council – of these 23 charge points (with 42 sockets) are on the public charging network. These have been installed over the past decade at some Council facilities such as public car parks, leisure centres, libraries or community centres. A map showing the location of the Council charge points is provided in Appendix A. Details of all existing EV charge points, public and workplace, are tabled in Appendix B. These are located in the Britwell & Northborough, Central, Chalvey, Cippenham Green, Farnham and Langley St Marys wards. About half of the public charge points (11 no.) do not currently levy a charge to the driver for use, though parking charges and restrictions apply at some locations.
- 2.6 Since 2016 there have been over 20,500 charge events of the Council's public EV charge point network. Usage of the charge points has been growing year on year, including during the COVID-19 pandemic (see graph in Appendix C), though implementation of parking stay restrictions and reliability issues have impacted on usage at a number of the sites, particularly at Langley Leisure Centre. In 2022 there were 7,060 charge events on the network drawing 131,038 kWh of energy.

- 2.7 The 11 charge points offering free electricity accounted for just under 40% of the charge events and 44% of the electricity usage by the network (see Appendix D). The remainder of the Council's public charge points are operated on a user tariff basis which covers the cost of electricity.

Herschel Multi-Storey Car Park Basement

- 2.8 The basement level of the Herschel Multi-storey Car Park (MSCP) is not part of the public car park. A total of 50 spaces are within the legal agreement of Observatory House to provide workplace car parking associated with the offices. This agreement would need to be amended in the future should the Council wish to sell Observatory House but wish to use the ground floor for public parking.
- 2.9 When purchasing Observatory House, the basement car park was intended to house a fleet of electric pool cars which were to be purchased for use by Council Officers and Members (known as the Fleet Challenge Scheme). This was to replace the employee cost per mile scheme (known as grey fleet mileage) for use of a private car for business usage and was intended to bring cost savings to the Council while significantly reducing our carbon footprint. The full implementation of the Fleet Challenge Scheme was delayed due to the Covid lockdowns. The Covid lockdown has changed the concept of workplaces for many businesses and many staff are now able to work from different locations and provide some services virtually via use of technology, which means the Council's accommodation needs and Fleet Challenge Scheme requires review.
- 2.10 The basement parking level was intended to only be accessible via a separate entrance accessed via the Observatory House service yard but this has not in fact the case. In consequence, the workplace (PodPoint) EV charge points on the basement level have been accessible to public car park users. Heras fencing has now been erected to prevent this access in the interim period. Energy usage by the electric vehicle (EV) charging points will have been free to the user, as is the case with all EV charging points in Hershel MSCP and Hatfield MSCP however, parking fees would still apply to all spaces in the car park.
- 2.11 In 2022 the basement charge points were utilised for 766 charge events, drawing 12,440 kWh of power. If a parking fee of £5 were paid by each driver (for a 5 hour + stay) while charging, the parking income from use of these bays would have been £3,830, compared to an electricity cost of £3,608.
- 2.12 From 24 January 2023, the basement was re-fenced off and returned to be solely a storage area and car park for building maintenance contractors' vehicles pending a decision about whether to formally open the basement PodPoint charge points to the public.
- 2.13 The location of the charge points was not advertised by the Council and they did not appear on any EV charging applications, though usage grew by word of mouth. The back-office software on the charge points mean that the charge points can be 'switched' to public charge points within 24 hours, at a tariff set by the Council, and would appear on the PodPoint app and website, as Charge Point Operator. As with our existing network, their location could also be advertised at no cost on Zap Map - the market leading website and app providing searchable maps of EV charge points across all charge point operators.
- 2.14 If the basement charge points were made available and advertised to the public, based on the 2022 usage this could generate £5,500 of additional income.

- 2.15 If any decision were taken to sell or lease Observatory House with car parking the charge points could be removed from the public network again within 24 hours via settings on the back-office system. This can be done for all the charge points or selected charge points if some charging bays were required to be reserved for SBC fleet or pool cars.
- 2.16 No change is proposed to car park operating hours. Therefore, charge points would only be accessible when the car park is open: 07.00 to 22.00 – though public and or residents could choose to leave their vehicles charging overnight whilst the car park is closed. Overnight parking is already permitted in the Herschel MSCP, subject to an increased parking fee of £8.
- 2.17 To ensure that public access to the Observatory House service yard is restricted, and that public could not inadvertently exit the car park this way, the two shutter doors into the basement level from the service yard would need to be left permanently closed.
- 2.18 Within the Observatory House service yard, at surface level adjacent to the office building, there is also a rapid EV charger and one dual fast charging point. The rapid charge point has not been used and the bays for the fast charger are used by the remaining three Council electric pool cars. These bays were originally intended to be used by SBC Building Management electric vehicles and no tariff is charged. The implementation of this scheme was delayed due to Covid lockdown but is now being revisited. The Council's Building Maintenance service, which recently (as of 1 March 2023) returned in-house following the end of the contract with Bouygues, will need vans to be procured by the Council for use by directly employed officers.

Brunel Way Charge Point

- 2.19 The rapid charger at Brunel Way has been out of service since October 2020, is beyond economic repair, and requires replacement. The Council will explore options for its replacement as part of the new EV infrastructure Strategy that will be developed and presented to Cabinet later in the year.

3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 Financial implications

- 3.1.1 There are no costs to switch 'free vend' to 'chargeable vend' and this will prevent the Council incurring unbudgeted electricity costs. These costs are variable depending on the cost per unit of electricity and the number of uses but are currently approximately £17,000/year. This is funded by an existing budget of £30,000.
- 3.1.2 The projected income is subject to demand but is estimated to be £22,500 per annum. The estimated income is based on applying the 2022 usage tariff charges. This income will need to cover both the cost of electricity and the cost to provide reliable maintenance arrangements to prevent down time. At this stage the assumption is that we will achieve full cost recovery with a nominal surplus. Once we have trend data then we will be able to determine the extent to which this service will generate a net income to the Council for 2024/25 and beyond.
- 3.1.3 In March 2023, the Council was awarded £72,180 from the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Capability Fund for additional officer resource to develop an

EV Infrastructure Strategy for Slough, to contribute towards a Berkshire-wide Strategy, and project manage EV infrastructure projects.

3.1.4 At the end of March 2023, the Council was provisionally allocated a further £328,820 from the Capability Fund across financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25, and up to £2,233,000 from the LEVI Capital Fund. This funding is discussed further in sections 3.6, 3.7 and 3.8.

3.2 *Legal implications*

3.2.1 In November 2020 Government brought forward the date that sales of all new cars and vans wholly powered by petrol and diesel would end to 2030. The Government plans to introduce targets for sales of clean vehicles from 2024 and they expect a minimum of 300,000 public chargers by 2030.

3.2.2 There is currently no statutory duty on the Council to provide public electric vehicle charging, although the Council has other overarching duties in relation to air quality, planning, transport and environmental standards.

3.2.3 The UK electric vehicle infrastructure strategy (DfT, 25 March 2022, [Taking charge: the electric vehicle infrastructure strategy](#)) outlines that the Government will transform local on-street charging by putting an obligation on local authorities (subject to consultation) to develop and implement local charging strategies to plan for the transition to a zero emission vehicle fleet.

3.2.4 Ahead of any legal obligations, to support local authorities the Government has introduced the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund comprising a Capability Fund for additional resources and a £400m Capital Fund for deployment. All local authorities in England have been allocated a maximum funding amount from each pot, rather than being required to competitively bid¹. To receive the funding, the Council will be required to demonstrate how the funding will be used to meet the scheme objectives. This funding is discussed further in sections 3.6, 3.7 and 3.8. These grant payments will be made under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

3.3 *Risk management implications*

3.3.1 The following key risks have been assessed: -

No.	Potential Risk	Mitigation
1	Fleet need for charge points and or spaces at Herschel MSCP basement level	Individual charge points can be programmed back to workplace use only within 24 hours.
2	Lease or sale of Observatory House requiring car parking bays	

¹ Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding amounts: Capital Fund <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-ev-infrastructure-levi-funding-amounts/local-electric-vehicle-infrastructure-levi-funding-amounts-capital>
 Capability Fund: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-ev-infrastructure-levi-funding-amounts/local-ev-infrastructure-levi-capability-funding-amounts>

	to be transferred to new occupiers/ owners.	
3	Lack of use of Herschel MSCP basement level chargers by public	There are no costs associated with switching the charge points from workplace to public. If there is no usage, no energy costs will be incurred by the Council. The tariff will be set on a cost recovery basis to cover energy, operational and maintenance costs.
4	Lack of use by public of existing chargers where tariffs newly applied.	Two locations (Salt Hill and Montem Lane) have operated for a number of years with one free charge point and one levying a tariff. Usage of the tariff charge points even in these locations demonstrate that the public are willing to pay a reasonable tariff when free charging is not available (i.e. due to being in use or out of order). It is anticipated that there may be an initial drop in usage, but it is considered that usage will return and then continue to grow if charge points are reliably maintained.
5	Lack of Officer resource to manage the network and develop the EV Infrastructure Strategy	The Council has been allocated ring-fenced funding under the LEVI Capability Fund for officer resource (through to the end of 2024/25) to drive forward EV projects.

3.4 *Environmental implications*

- 3.4.1 The proposals align with the Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and Low Emission Strategy.
- 3.4.2 The Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, adopted December 2021, evidences that emissions from transport represent 30.8% of Slough's emissions profile, with 23.2% of emissions from on-road transport. The Climate Change Strategy outlines that one of the most important steps to reducing transport emissions in Slough is the transition to electric vehicles.
- 3.4.3 A key aim of the Council's Low Emission Strategy is to improve air quality and health outcomes across Slough by reducing vehicle emissions through the accelerated uptake of cleaner fuels and technologies. The Strategy supports home and workplace charging as the primary charging locations utilising the local planning process, corporate social responsibility and private sector investment, but recognises the need for a strategic Slough public charge point network and ensuring charging opportunities are available for residents with and without private driveways.
- 3.4.4 Addition of charge points in Herschel MSCP basement to the public network and securing the financial sustainability and reliability of the existing charge points on the network are short-term actions to maximise charging opportunities for residents and businesses. The proposed EV Infrastructure Strategy later in 2023 will update the electric vehicle objectives and actions from the 2018 Low Emission Strategy and work

towards the landowner, policy and strategy objectives of actions for the Council in the Climate Change Strategy to enable the switch to electric vehicles.

3.4.5 The Council's electricity supply contract is from 100% renewable energy sources to minimise the Council's carbon footprint.

3.5 *Equality implications*

3.5.1 The Equality Act 2010 outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty and under s.149 it requires Public Bodies as decision makers to have 'due regard' to achieving several equality goals, which includes the need to:

a. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.

b. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

c. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

3.5.2 Relevant protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

3.5.3 The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day-to-day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design policies and the delivery of services.

3.5.4 Accessibility to EV charging infrastructure is an issue impacting upon disabled people, particularly as EV drivers and prospective users of charge points, due to need to connect cables to vehicles, trailing cables, weight of cables, lack of space around bays to circulate, height of user interfaces with the charge point and any kerbs or anti-vandalism barriers around charge point units.

3.5.5 The current proposals relate only to use and tariff structure of existing charge point units. No new charge point units are to be installed as part of these proposals.

3.5.6 There is no step-free pedestrian access to the charge points in the basement level of Herschel MSCP. Those unable to use steps would be required to ascend the vehicular ramps to the ground floor to exit the car park. There is no designated pedestrian walkway on these ramps. The lack of step-free access to these charge points can be added to the information on the operator's app and on Zap Map. The charge points on the top floor at Herschel MSCP do have lift access.

3.5.7 Within the proposed EV Infrastructure Strategy to be developed for Cabinet approval later in 2023, equality implications for disabled people will need to be fully considered to follow legal requirements, as well as best practice wherever possible, to try to ensure that through procurement requirements that future EV charging infrastructure is as accessible to all as possible. The draft strategy would be supported by an equality impact assessment.

3.5.8 Motability, the charity, have worked with the UK Government Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) to sponsor a new accessibility standard for public EV charge points (PAS 1899:2022, Electric vehicles – Accessible charging – Specification), developed by the British Standards Institute (BSI). Research from the charity Motability predicts that by 2035, 1.35 million disabled people will rely on public electric vehicle (EV)

charging points either some or all the time. The Publicly Available Specification (PAS) sets out the minimum accessibility requirements for EV charge points, and includes settings where more enhanced accessibility measures can be used.

3.6 *Procurement implications*

- 3.6.1 The EV charge points in the basement of Herschel MSCP will continue to be operated by PodPoint, who supplied the charge points. The charge points remain under manufacturer warranty and are covered by existing maintenance contracts through to June 2024.
- 3.6.2 The existing charge points on the Council's public charging network are currently operated by BP Pulse, a subsidiary of BP, which acquired the Charge Your Car and Chargemaster (branded as Polar) networks under which the Council's public charge points were installed. There are no data management or maintenance contracts currently in place with BP Pulse.
- 3.6.3 In 2023 officers will develop a draft EV Infrastructure Strategy, one of the objectives of which will be to review the current public charge point operating model and potential commercial opportunities to look at income generation from this network asset. This is likely to culminate in a procurement exercise in late 2023/24, in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, to identify the best value Charge Point Operator to meet the Borough's needs. In the interim a one-year contract would be entered into to provide maintenance to improve the reliability of the charge points.
- 3.6.4 On 30 March 2023 the Council was provisionally allocated £2,233,000 grant funding from the LEVI Capital Fund for deployment of electric vehicle charging infrastructure for the primary benefit of residents without off-street parking. The funding will be provided in one of two tranches, either in financial year 2023/24 or 2024/25. The first stage of the application process is to complete an Expression of Interest outlining the Council's proposal for this funding by 26 May 2023. It is anticipated that the Council will be assigned to Tranche 2 requiring a Stage 2 application, involving a full business case and detailed deployment plans (based on the Council's forthcoming Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy), post November 2023. Following approval of the Stage 2 application, 90% of the Capital Fund allocation would be released to the Council and the Council could open procurement. In line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, if the expected value of the contract for works is greater than £1,000,000 Cabinet approval will be required for contract award, and therefore a Cabinet report specific to the LEVI Capital Fund procurement will be brought to Cabinet at the appropriate time, currently anticipated as Spring 2024. The procurement will also be subject to mini business case approval by the Strategic Procurement Review Board and following this, full business case and quotation paperwork submission to the Review Board (Procurement, Legal and Finance), as well as Capital Monitoring Board Approval.

3.7 *Workforce implications*

- 3.7.1 The Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) has recently launched the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) scheme. This is aimed at supporting local authorities in England to work with the charging infrastructure industry to enable deployment of local charging infrastructure, particularly low power on-street charging infrastructure. The LEVI scheme includes an offer of both funding for additional dedicated EV officer resource (under the Capability Fund) and capital funding for

deployment of on-street EV charging (via the Capital Fund). The Capability Fund will provide funding for additional officer resource through to the end of 2024/25.

- 3.7.2 As outlined above, the Council was initially allocated £72,180 from the Capability Fund. To claim the funding officers were required to demonstrate how the funding will be used to improve capacity and capability for the planning and delivery of EV infrastructure, including the preparation of an EV infrastructure strategy and how the additional resource will help deliver EV infrastructure projects. Part of the funding, up to £10,000, will be set aside to fund development of a Berkshire EV Infrastructure Strategy in partnership with the other Berkshire authorities.
- 3.7.3 At the end of March 2023, a further allocation of £328,820 capability funding for the Council for financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25 was announced by the Department for Transport. To secure and access this allocation, officers will be required to complete a further proforma (by 26 May 2023) to demonstrate how the funding will be used to meet the scheme objectives.
- 3.7.4 The capability funding allocation is based upon a methodology where higher levels of funding have been awarded to Local Authority areas with a greater proportion of properties without access to off-street parking, where current dedicated officer resource for electric vehicle infrastructure is low, and where indices of multiple deprivation and or rurality are high. Consequently, Slough Borough Council has received the highest capability fund allocation¹ in Berkshire and on a comparable level to Buckinghamshire Council.
- 3.7.5 Recruitment for officer resource, based on the initial allocation of £72,180, through to the end of 2024/25 is now underway. This new resource will be used to help develop an EV Infrastructure Strategy and project manage EV infrastructure projects. The resource will be within the Carbon and Sustainability service, which will continue to lead on EV strategy and infrastructure projects. Additional dedicated officer resource will be pursued upon successful receipt of funds from the further allocation, currently anticipated in Summer 2023. Further revenue receipts from the Capability Fund allocation are expected in Spring 2024.

3.8 *Property implications*

- 3.8.1 The charging bays in the basement of the Herschel Multi-storey Car Park are within the 50 parking spaces associated with the Observatory House office and are not part of the public car park. If in the future the Council decided to lease or sell office space at Observatory House or require use of the charge points for its own fleet, the charging bay spaces may need to be withdrawn from the public charging network. Accessibility to the charge points is controlled by back-office software. Making the charge points available to, or withdrawing them from, public use can be achieved within 24 hours. This means that adding them to the Council's public charging network can be easily and quickly reversed, if required.
- 3.8.2 If the basement area of Herschel MSCP is opened to the public, the shutter doors between the Observatory House service yard and the basement will need to be kept closed to prevent public access to the service yard and any circumventing of paying on exit.
- 3.8.3 The existing charge points on the Council's public charging network are located on Council owned land and the infrastructure is owned by the Council. The charge points are currently operated by BP Pulse. In 2023 officers will develop a draft EV Infrastructure Strategy, one of the objectives of which will be to review the current

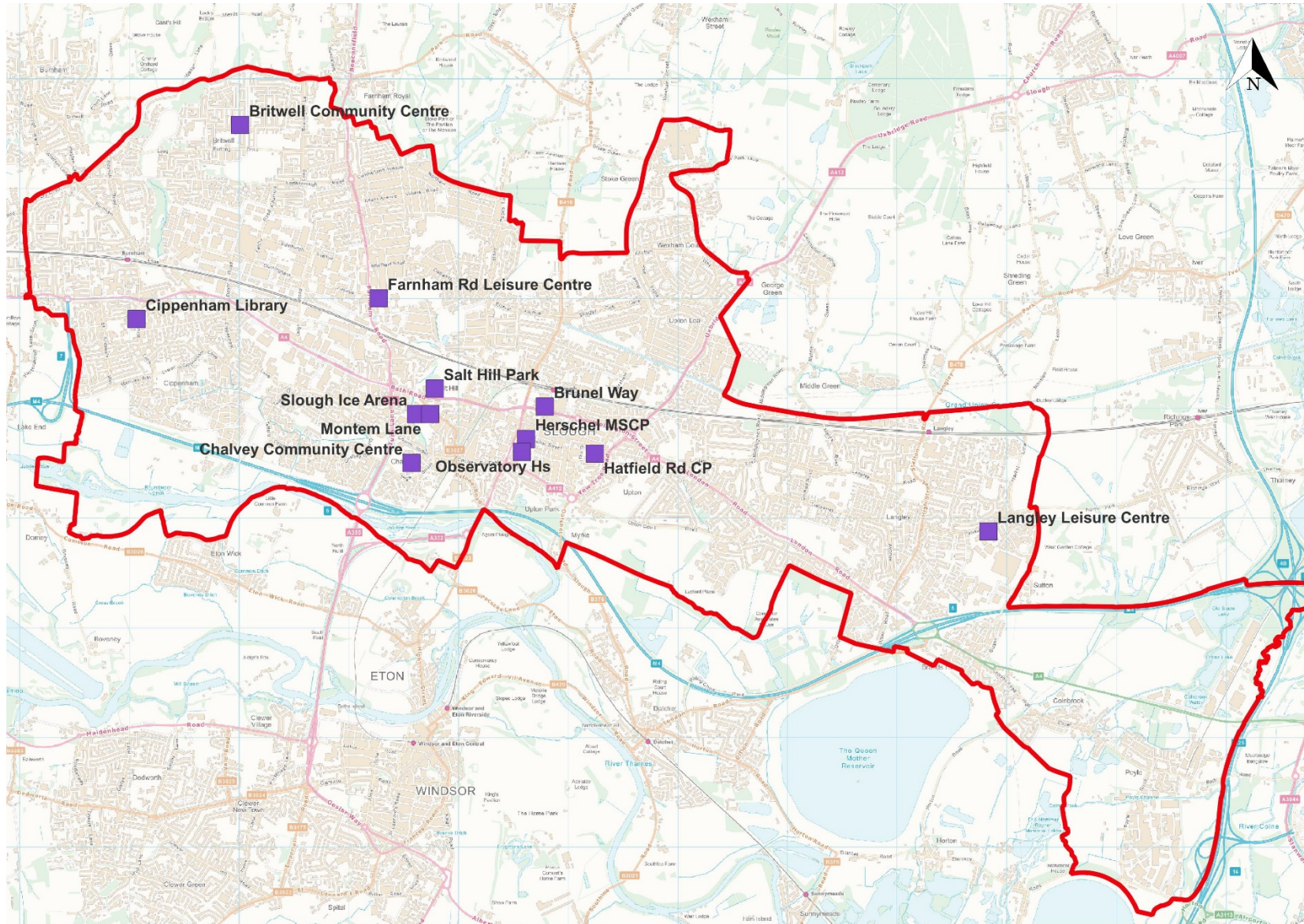
public charge point operating model and potential commercial opportunities to look at income generation from this network asset. The Strategy will also consider opportunities for expansion of the Council's network to other Council assets and on-street charging on the public highway. Property implications of any expansion will be considered when the draft Strategy comes to Cabinet.

- 3.8.4 On 30 March 2023 the Council was provisionally allocated £2,233,000 grant funding from the LEVI Capital Fund. The allocation methodology provides more funding to areas with low levels of residential off-street parking combined with less developed charging networks, higher indices of multiple deprivation and or rurality. The allocation to Slough is significantly higher than other Berkshire authorities and more than that to neighbouring counties of Buckinghamshire and Surrey¹. The Capital Fund aims to accelerate the deployment of local, primarily low power, on-street charging infrastructure across England. LEVI funded projects must therefore primarily benefit residents without off-street parking, though it can also benefit other groups like commuters, taxis and commercial vehicles (excluding at the businesses' addresses) and can include establishment of local authority supported car clubs. Charge point powers greater than 22kW (i.e. rapid or ultra-rapid) are acceptable in the minority.
- 3.8.5 Given the objectives of the funding, deployment of charge points under Capital Fund projects will be required on Council owned highway land to facilitate on-street charging infrastructure and is also likely to include deployment (or further deployment) in Council owned car parks and Council owned community-based assets (such as leisure centres, libraries, community centres and hubs). Property implications will therefore need to be considered in the forthcoming Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy, and through close working with the Transport Planning team and the Property & Housing Directorate.
- 3.8.6 Compulsory conditions of the LEVI Capital Fund require that the Council must finish any contractual term with a charge point installer or operator with ownership of the Local Connection Assets. This will ensure that the funding invested into deployment of charge points will yield income generation assets for the Council beyond the initial contract term.

4. Background Papers

None.

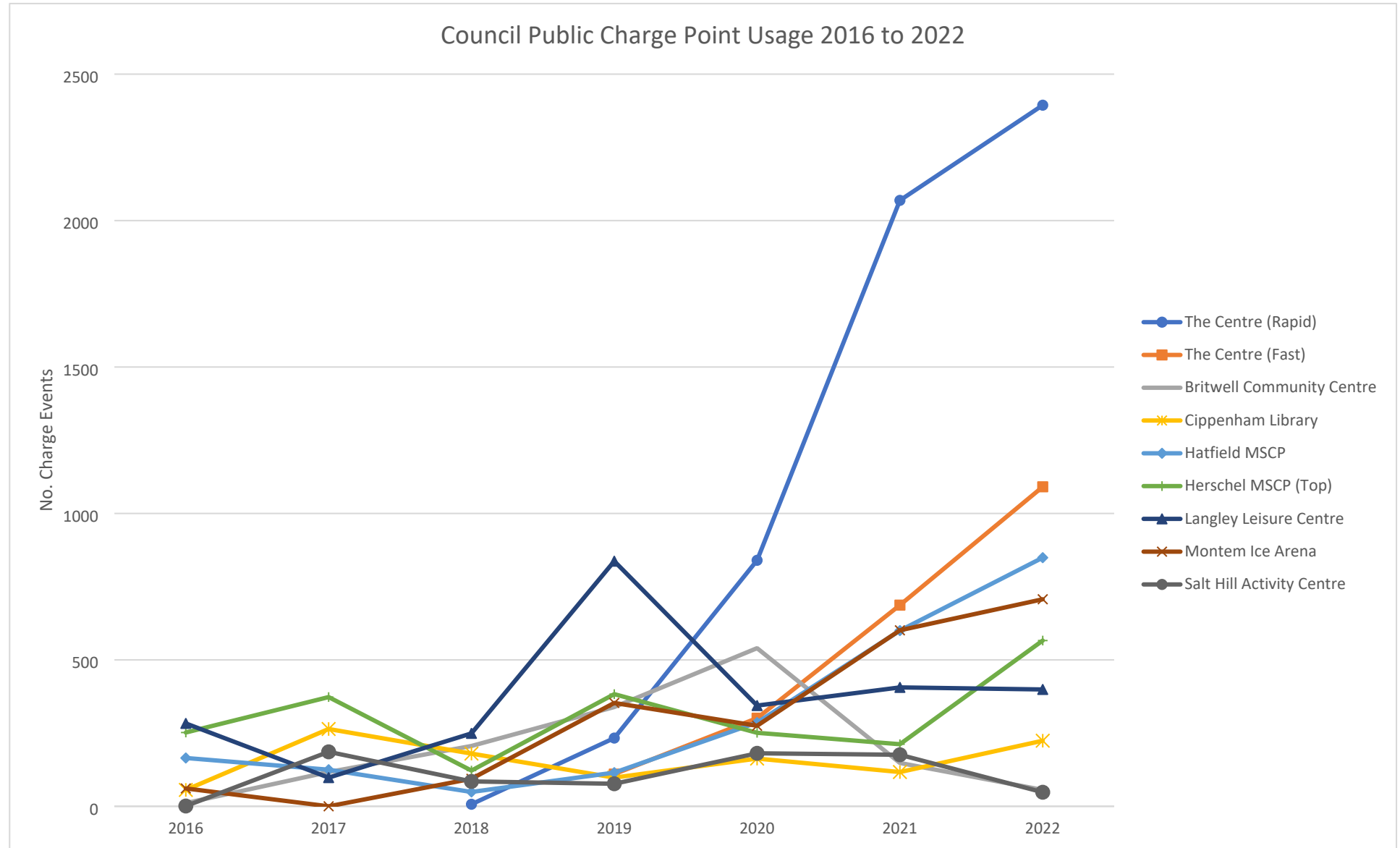
APPENDIX A Location Map of Council EV Charge Point Network



APPENDIX B - Details of Council Electric Vehicle Charge Points as at 31 March 2023

Serial	Location	Type	Sockets		Tariff	Status
1313	Salt Hill Activity Centre Salt Hill Park Bath Road SL1 3SR	Fast - 7kW	1	Public	Free	Unavailable
10326	Salt Hill Activity Centre Salt Hill Park Bath Road SL1 3SR	Fast - 7kW	2	Public	36.7p/kWh	Available
11629 - 11633	The Centre Farnham Road Slough SL1 4UT	Fast - 22kW	10 (5x dual)	Public	36.7p/kWh	Available
24547	The Centre Farnham Road Slough SL1 4UT	Rapid	1	Public	45.8p/kWh	Available
10317 & 10319	Langley Leisure Centre Parlaunt Road Slough SL3 8BA	Fast - 22kW	4 (2x dual)	Public	36.7p/kWh	Available
10511	Langley Leisure Centre Parlaunt Road Slough SL3 8BA	Fast - 22kW	2	Public	36.7p/kWh	Unavailable
1517	Montem Lane Ice Arena Slough SL1 2QG	Fast - 7kW	1	Public	Free	Unavailable
10295	Montem Lane Ice Arena Slough SL1 2QG	Fast - 7kW	2	Public	36.7p/kWh	Available
438	Herschel Car Park Herschel Street Slough SL1 1XS	Fast - 7kW	2	Public	Free	Unavailable
3239 & 3240	Herschel Car Park Herschel Street Slough SL1 1XS	Fast - 7kW	4 (2x dual)	Public	Free	Available
477 & 3238	Hatfield Road Car Park Hatfield Road Slough SL1 1QE	Fast - 7kW	4 (2x dual)	Public	Free	Available
2843	Slough Borough Council 51 Bath Road Slough SL1 3UF	Fast - 7kW	4 (2x dual)	Workplace	N/a	Workplace Charging: Not in use – site closed.
2748	Britwell Community Centre Goodwin Road SL2 2ES	Fast - 22kW	2	Public	Free	Unavailable
2746	Cippenham Library Elm shot Lane Cippenham SL1 5RB	Fast - 22kW	2	Public	Free	Available
2747 & 2749	Chalvey Community Centre, The Green, Slough, SL1 2SP	Fast - 7kW	4 (2x dual)	Public	Free	Available
	Herschel Car Park – OH Basement Car Park	Fast – 22kW	24 (12 x dual)	Workplace	Free	Not in use – site closed.
	Observatory House – Surface Car Park	Rapid	1	Workplace	Free	Workplace Charging: Available to SBC Fleet only
	Observatory House – Surface Car park	Fast – 22 kW	2	Workplace	Free	Workplace Charging: Available to Pool Cars only
	Brunel Way, Slough	Rapid	1	Public	£5/ charge	Unavailable

APPENDIX C – Council Public Charge Point Usage 2016 to 2022



APPENDIX D Usage of Council's Public Electric Vehicle Charge Points in 2022

Location (Charge Point Serial Number)	Tariff/ Free	No. of Charges	Energy Used (kWh)	Total Duration (hh:mm:ss)	Average Duration (hh:mm:ss)	Cost of Electricity	Notes
Britwell Community Centre, (2748)	Free	56	1450.3	324:42:00	5:47:54	£421	Reliability issues in 2022: only operational in June & July 2022
Cippenham Library, (2746)	Free	224	6049.6	796:41:00	3:33:24	£1,754	Car park is only open when library is open.
Hatfield MSCP, (477 & 3238)		849	22324	6067:52:00	7:08:49	£6,474	
Herschel MSCP, (3239 & 3240)	Free	566	11982.3	2258:46:00	3:59:27	£3,475	
Herschel MSCP, (Basement)	Free	726	12440			£3,608	
Montem Lane Ice Arena (1517)	Free	334	3996.1	1241:45:00	3:43:04	£1,159	Only worked Jan to Apr 2022
Salt Hill Family Activity Centre (1313)	Free	0	0	0:00:00	0:00:00	£0.00	Not operational in 2022
Chalvey Community Centre (2747 & 2749)	Free	0	0	0:00:00	0:00:00	£0.00	
	Sub Total - Free units	2,755	58,242.3	10,689:46:00		£16,890	
Langley Leisure Centre, (10137, 10319 & 10511)	Tariff	399	3638.8	713:55:00	1:47:21	£297 *	Reliability issues in 2022: Parking stay restriction (3hrs), Charging restricted to 2 hrs
Montem Lane Ice Arena, (10295)	Tariff	373	3684.5	1106:27:00	2:57:59	£934 *	Reliability issues in 2022: only available for 9 months
Salt Hill Family Activity Centre, (10326)	Tariff	48	362.7	96:31:00	2:00:39	£4.40 *	Reliability issues in 2022: only available for 5 months
The Centre, (11629 to 11633) [FAST]	Tariff	1091	13105.7	2422:09:00	2:13:20	£8,185 *	Parking stay restriction (3hrs), Charging restricted to 2 hrs
The Centre, (24547), [RAPID]	Tariff	2394	52004.4	1925:50:00	0:48:16		
Brunel Way	Tariff	-	-	-	-	-	Not operational since October 2020
	Sub-Total - Tariff units	4,305	72796.1	6264:52:00		£9,420 *	Income of £9,501 received from BP Pulse
Grand Total		7,060	131,038.4	16954:38:00	2:40:36		

* For tariff charge points electricity costs available for January to August 2022 only, all other data for whole 2022 calendar year.

Slough Borough Council

Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	24 May 2023
Subject:	Implementation of NEC Housing Phase 2
Portfolio:	Housing and Planning
Chief Officer:	Pat Hayes, Executive Director Housing and Property
Contact Officer:	Chris Stratford, Interim Director of Housing Simon Sharkey Woods, Associate Director, Chief Digital, and Information Officer
Ward(s):	ALL
Key Decision:	No
Exempt:	No
Decision Subject to Call In:	Yes
Appendices:	None

1. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1. This report seeks funding approval to complete the delivery of Phase 2 of the NEC housing management project.
- 1.2. In March 2019, Slough Borough Council entered a five-year contract with NEC for their Northgate housing management system. Expected benefits for the council include: a single application which can handle all the council's housing management casework; an effective digital offering to residents and improved staff productivity.
- 1.3. A two-phase project was approved for delivery. Phase 1 delivered the core platform and went live in October 2022 with limited success. Some remedial actions are required to complete Phase 1.
- 1.4. Phase 2 delivers the end-to-end case management capability, key online access for residents and integrated housing repairs functionality.
- 1.5. Failure to complete Phase 2 would place significant stress on an already stretched service area, with little prospect of the council being able to meet its statutory housing obligations and would leave the system only partially complete.
- 1.6. The additional maximum funding sought to complete the project is in the region of £700,000. This will cover anticipated development, implementation, project team costs and consultancy support from the supplier.

Recommendations

1.7. It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) Approve funding of up to £700,000 for Phase 2 of the housing management project, including remediation works outstanding from Phase 1 which will be provided through a virement from the Housing Revenue Account reserves creating an earmarked reserve of £609,000 and utilising existing monies within the General Fund of £91,000.

Reason

- 1.8. Funding approval will allow the project to remediate outstanding Phase 1 activities and complete the design, development, testing, deployment and adoption of new Phase 2 functionality. This will protect the council's investment in the platform to date and provide the end-to-end case management capability required.
- 1.9. It will support better resident and tenant interaction with the council and deliver improved staff productivity.

Commissioner Review

- 1.10. Commissioners are content with the recommendations.

2. REPORT

Introductory paragraph

2.1. The NEC application was bought to support the housing service's business transformation. With an incomplete deployment of the application the council is struggling to:

- effectively support residents - both tenants and those seeking council accommodation, reviewing cases, undertaking repairs and processing benefits claims;
- comply with statutory reporting requirements - significant manual work is being undertaken to deliver reporting;
- effectively manage its housing stock - incomplete integrations means that is no connection between repairs being logged and repairs being carried out, again, manual intervention is required; and,
- engaging digitally with residents and tenants.

2.2. Completion of Phase 2 and addressing the Phase 1 issues provides the council with the IT foundations to help the service meet our obligations, improve staff productivity, and deliver a service whereby residents and tenants can digitally transact with the council.

2.3. This is a significant business change for the service and staff. Staff are accustomed to the existing IT application and the NEC application has a very different interface. A key element of the Phase 2 work will focus on training and adoption.

Options considered

2.4. Three options have been considered:

Option 1 – RECOMMENDED: complete the project.

- 2.4.1. Completing the project presents the council with the best opportunity to protect its current investment and deliver the benefits outlined earlier in this report. It is recognised that errors were made in the Phase 1 delivery including:
- a) incomplete design and testing;
 - b) ineffective service area involvement and acceptance; and
 - c) poor application involvement and adoption by end users.
- 2.4.2. Improvements are being made to the governance and delivery of the project. Ownership for delivery has moved to ICT & Digital Services. Two governance forums have been established, a project board led by the AD Chief Digital Information Officer with both the Director of Housing and Head of Transactions and Revenues as board members; and a user forum – cross service membership with direct input to the design, testing and business change required for implementation.
- 2.4.3. The timetable below shows the expected delivery plan for Phase 2. these dates are indicative only. A new project manager has been recruited and a key task will be developing the detail below these milestones.
- 2.4.4. Key delivery stages will be reported widely across the council with an improved communications strategy in place to ensure that all impacted stakeholders are aware of the progress being made.

Milestone	*Delivery Date/ Duration
Remediate Phase 1 issues – including housing register	May 2023
Housing demand (integration)	4 months
Service charges	6 months
Housing online	6 months
Property purchase	2 months
Private sector lease	2 months

- 2.4.5. The table above provides an estimated time to build, test and deploy each module. The project plan will need to be developed to take account the service area’s priorities, staff availability and peak business periods. It is expected, based on typical deployments carried out by the supplier, that the project will take 12 months to deliver all in-scope functionality.
- Option 2 – NOT RECOMMENDED:** only address Phase 1 issues, no further development carried out.
- 2.4.6. If the council chooses to address the phase 1 issues there will still be financial, quality and productivity impacts for the council to absorb. The council will still have to pay for all modules for the duration of the contract with NEC. There will be little improvement in business processes and staff

productivity will be hit hard due to the requirements to manually process casework and prepare statutory reports.

Option 3 – NOT RECOMMENDED: cancel the project.

- 2.4.7. The council has a five-year contract with NEC for the full platform. These fees are payable and with no break in the contract until year 5 is an unavoidable cost of cancelling the project.
- 2.4.8. If the project were cancelled, the council would need to source an appropriate replacement application to meet the outstanding needs. This would be both time consuming and costly.

Background

- 2.5. The council bought the Northgate housing management system in March 2019 on a five-year contract. The project was to be delivered in two phases. Phase 1 went live with October 2022 with limited success and some functionality unavailable.
- 2.6. In December 2022 the Executive Director for Housing and Property requested that future delivery of the project be undertaken by ICT & Digital Services. To support the move to ICT & Digital Service delivery, a series of discovery workshops were held in January and February 2023.
- 2.7. Lessons learned from the Phase 1 implementation included:
- incomplete design and testing – key integrations and modules were not fully designed and tested by service representatives;
 - ineffective service area involvement and acceptance – communication to service areas was inconsistent and requests for staff to participate in testing did not effectively take account of staff availability; and
 - poor application adoption by end users – improvements in training support are required.
- 2.8. Key elements which were missing included: functionality related to financial year end activities, a fully functional housing register, management reporting and a complete suite of letter templates for staff to use. It is worth noting that the project team carried vacancies as it proved difficult to recruit and retain project staff.
- 2.9. Focus for the project team through February and March has been in ensuring that our tenants received timely notification of rent and direct debit increases, migration of data to provide the housing register and enabling allocations functionality.
- 2.10. Ahead of starting Phase 2 it is proposed that the project team may work with a housing consultant to undertake a stock take of where the programme of work is, especially functionality delivered in Phase 1 and provide recommendations on how the second phase should be delivered.
- 2.11. Once this review has completed, the delivery of activities will be prioritised with input from the service areas to ensure agreement on when functionality is delivered. This will help the service areas to participate fully in the planning, testing and adoption activities for each module.
- 2.12. The Phase 2 activities include:
- Integrate housing demand;

- Service charges;
- Repairs Implementation;
- Temporary accommodation management;
- Housing online portal; and
- Private Sector Lease.

2.13. A key part of the Phase 2 activities will be the delivery of the online functionality/ portal for residents. This work will provide a significant improvement to the way in which residents, tenants and staff can interact – submitting applications, updating information, submitting documentation, logging repairs via an online portal.

3. IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Finance implications

3.1. The cost for funding phase 2 of this project is to be funded from the projected HRA underspend in 2022/23. An earmarked reserve of £0.609m is being created from the 2022/23 underspend to fund this project. The projected underspend prior to the creation of the earmarked reserve is expected to be circa. £3.5m. It should be noted that about 87% of the cost is chargeable to HRA while the 13% balance is chargeable to General Funds. The 13% is coming from existing budgets in 2023/24 in the General Fund and will cover the other £91k of expenditure required.

3.2. The HRA Reserves based on the 2020/21 accounts had a balance of £12.688m and based on the yet to be published accounts for 2021/22 and 2022/23 accounts, the HRA Reserves balance is set to increase even further.

3.3. In terms of context, the NEC project was originally deemed a capital programme at its inception but following the section 114 notice issued in 2021, all capital projects were reviewed, and the NEC project was declassified as capital and is now deemed to be revenue expenditure in nature.

Legal implications

3.4. The contract with NEC was awarded following a compliant procurement process under a CCS Framework Agreement. The scope of the contract covered the implementation of the full platform.

3.5. The Service have indicated they may instruct NEC to carry out some additional services up to a value of £100,000 to facilitate the successful implementation of Phase 2 and the contract provides for a change control and call-off mechanism to deal with such variations. The extent of the variation to the contract would not be so substantial as to trigger procurement implications under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Any necessary variation to the NEC contract would, in the circumstances be permissible under Regulation 72 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

Risk management implications

3.6. The table below highlights four risks which will need to be managed:

Description	Mitigation
Better and more effective engagement with staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish user forum which meets regularly, at least monthly • Improve staff communications • host show and tell sessions to launch new functionality
Improved testing and sign-off of new functionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear requirements are collected from end users • Staff are actively included in the design, testing and sign-off of all functionality developed
Better training and adoption support for staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of training approach, through the user forum • Review of training materials – different approaches used including: videos, help notes and online support group/champions
Improve governance which effectively includes key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • project board drawing members from service areas established • clear sign-off process by project board ahead of all go-lives • oversight through the modernisation programme board and improvement review board

Environmental implications

3.7. None

Equality implications

3.8. None

Procurement implications

3.9. See Legal Implication (paragraph 3.4)

Workforce implications

3.10. All staff who will have access to the application will be provided with adequate support and training to support successful adoption.

Property implications

3.11. None

4. BACKGROUND PAPERS

4.1. None