



Spring 2022  
Childcare Sufficiency Duty Report



## Annual Childcare Sufficiency Duty Report Spring 2022

### Contents

1. Rationale for Childcare Sufficiency Duty
2. Methodology
3. Funded Early education Entitlements (FEEE)
4. Early Education and Childcare Providers
  - i. Childcare Places: Supply and Demand
  - ii. Vacancies
  - iii. Flexibility of Childcare
  - iv. Accessibility
  - v. Affordability
  - vi. The Quality of Early Years Provision in Rutland
5. SEND and Inclusion
6. Wrap Around and Holiday Childcare including the Holiday Activities and Food Programme
7. Parental Views of Childcare in Rutland
8. Business Views
9. Conclusion

### Appendices: Action Plan 2022-23

The Rutland Early Years Childcare Sufficiency Duty contributes to Rutland's Corporate plan and to the achievement of Rutland Children's Offer. The priority themes within this plan include emotional health and wellbeing, protecting children at risk of harm, tackling domestic abuse and supporting children who may become vulnerable in their education, including children with SEND.

Through this duty we promote the vision for all children and young people in Rutland to be happy, safe and successful. They will be supported and empowered to be the best they can be.

Please note any reference to 'parents' in this report reflects parents, carers or those with parental responsibility for children.

This publication is the copyright of Rutland County Council. At the time of reporting, Feb 2022, Rutland County Council believed the information to be correct. The County Council does not accept any liability for any direct or indirect loss or damage or other consequences arising from the use of information supplied.

## **1. FOR CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY DUTY**

The Childcare Act 2006<sup>1</sup> requires all Local Authorities (LA) in England to secure sufficient childcare, so 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 statutory duty requires Rutland County Council by law to report annually to Elected Council Members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and the report must be made available and accessible to parents.

The Childcare Acts 2006 and 2016 place a duty on English Local Authorities to secure funded childcare for qualifying 2, 3 and 4-Year-Olds<sup>2</sup> Whilst Rutland County Council is not responsible for providing childcare itself, it is responsible for managing the market to ensure that these duties are met.

### **Summary**

The last Childcare Sufficiency report was written in May 2019 and identified a 76.4% occupancy (750 places) with 23.6% vacancies (231 places). At that time no identified pressure was evident in any cluster area, and whilst there was less capacity for childcare in the Childminder sector this did not result in any reports of parents being unable to find childcare for their child. The 2020 and 2021 sufficiency assessments were postponed because of the impact of COVID-19 on the availability and take-up of places; however, throughout the pandemic, the provision of childcare places and the sustainability of the early years providers has been monitored carefully by the Local Authority and the Department for Education, with regular reporting from the sector on take-up. At no point during this period were concerns over sufficiency identified. The long-term effects of parental demand for places and the financial stability of the sector remains unknown but continued monitoring will provide the Local Authority with early indicators of any potential capacity concerns.

Since March 2020, one nursery provider permanently closed with no impact on sufficiency of childcare places. Over the last 2 years the number of childminders has fluctuated with 7 childminders deregistering, 2 moving out of area, 3 moving into new roles and 2 retiring from childminding. During the same period 5 new childminders joined the Early Years workforce.

At this current time, Spring 2022, Rutland continues to maintain sufficient childcare places with 76% occupancy (691 places) and 24% (213 places) vacant.

### **Proposed Actions**

From analysis of the Childcare Sufficiency surveys, areas which would further support meeting the Duty to manage the childcare market were identified and the following actions proposed:

#### **Action 1**

To reduce parental concerns raised over affordability of childcare by ensuring parents are well-informed, through a well-planned communication strategic approach, about the range of Early Education and Childcare financial entitlements that are available to them.

#### **Action 2**

To increase accessibility to a childcare place for all children through a programme of support which provides confidence and capability to the sector so that there is a consistent approach to inclusion of children with additional needs within the Universal childcare offer.

#### **Action 3**

To mitigate risk of future insufficient Early Education and Childcare places through identifying and promoting opportunities which support Providers in developing their own business models which are financially viable and meeting the requirements of Rutland families.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Childcare Act 2006](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Childcare Act 2016](#)

## 2. METHODOLOGY

Between 7<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February 2022, childcare sufficiency questionnaires for Rutland families, businesses and Early Education and Childcare Providers were hosted on Engagement Headquarters, an online portal. In addition, with the aim of identifying whether their current childcare offer was sufficient in meeting their needs, face to face and phone call consultations captured parental views.

The findings from the audit have been collated with areas for development recognised. Key information has been shared with providers which will enable them to manage the future childcare market.

## 3. FUNDED EARLY EDUCATION ENTITLEMENTS (FEEE)<sup>3</sup>

The Funded Early Education Entitlements (FEEE) are available to eligible two-year-olds and all three and four-year-olds. Rutland County Council pays early years funding directly to providers on a monthly basis.

To offer funded places, Nursery providers must be registered with Ofsted; childminders may register with Ofsted or a Childminder Agency (CMA) which is registered with Ofsted. Providers must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and must meet the terms and conditions set in Rutland's Provider Agreement.

All funded entitlements can be used flexibly either during term time or all year round as a stretched offer. This is arranged between the parents and their childcare provider. Parents can also use their funded childcare hours across different settings to ensure they are able to get the most out of their funded hours if one provider can't offer what they need.

Parents and families are supported in accessing their funded entitlements through recommendation by Rutland County Council officers, social media<sup>4</sup> and promotion materials<sup>5</sup>.

### Funded two-year-olds

Two-year-old funding is a scheme for eligible two-year-olds to receive 570 hours of funded early education and childcare over the year.

Children aged two whose families receive certain benefits (including low-income families in receipt of in-work benefits), or those who meet additional non-economic criteria, are entitled to this funding stream.

### Three and four-year-old Universal Funding

The funding for three and four-year-olds is a Universal entitlement which is available for all three and four-year-olds children. The Universal entitlement allows for each child to access 570 hours of funded early education and childcare over a minimum of 38 weeks of the year (15 hours per week) until they start compulsory education.

### Three and four-year-old Extended Entitlement Funding (additional 15 hours)

Three and four-year-old children of working parents in England may be entitled to an additional 570 hours per year on top of the Universal Entitlement, meaning these families will be able to claim up to a total 1,140 hours of funded early education and childcare per year. This funding is sometimes referred to as the 30-hour entitlement. Parents must apply through HMRC for the extended entitlement.

---

<sup>3</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/718179/Early\\_education\\_and\\_childcare-statutory\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/718179/Early_education_and_childcare-statutory_guidance.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [Rutland Funded Early Education Entitlements](#)

<sup>5</sup> Time for you -Two Three, Four and a little more

#### 4. EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE PROVIDERS

Current Early Years provision is delivered by 36 registered providers across Rutland. Early Years providers are often referred to as the Private, Voluntary and Independent sector (PVI) and is inclusive of childminders, pre-schools and day nurseries. There are no maintained nursery provisions in Rutland.

This map shows the locality of operational childcare providers in Rutland.



During the assessment period, each provider was asked to identify how many places offered through their provision were secured or vacant (used or readily available for a parent to access for their child). A place that is available for one afternoon a week was not considered as a vacancy but availability of a minimum of 15 hours in total would be considered a vacant place because this would enable a parent to take up their universal entitlement.

Early Years Provisions	Group providers (Nurseries and Pre-Schools)	Childminders registered with Ofsted	Childminders registered with a Childminder Agency (CMA)	Nursery Provision in Schools	Independent School Nursery
Across Rutland	15	17		3	1
Oakham Cluster	5	6	2	1	1
Casterton Cluster	7	2	4	0	0
Uppingham Cluster	3	1	2	2	0

A childcare place describes the number of children that can attend a provision at any one time. It is important to note that each place can be accessed by numerous children during the day. For example, one place could be accessed by up to 4 children during the day therefore creating 4 sessions from a single place.

#### Childcare Place: Supply and Demand

Ofsted will confirm the number of places an individual provider can provide during the initial registration process (Table A). The registered number of places is the maximum number of places a childcare provider can offer at any one time, however, the actual number of available places a provider decides to offer may be lower. This is

because, from an operational perspective, managers will take into consideration the demand for childcare, compliancy with the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and their overall business sustainability (Table B). Table C shows the number of places accessed across Rutland at the time of the childcare sufficiency survey.

<b>Table A</b> Number of Ofsted and CMA registered places across Rutland	PVI	Nursery Provision in Schools	Independent School Nursery	Childminders
	681	73	48	141
	Total number of registered places available at any one time			943

<b>Table B</b> Number of available places across Rutland	PVI	Nursery Provision in Schools	Independent School Nursery	Childminders
	677	67	48	112
	Total number of available daily places per day			904

<b>Table C</b> Number of accessed places across Rutland	PVI	Nursery Provision in Schools	Independent School Nursery	Childminders
	537	40	22	92
	Total number of available places per day			691

Through the provider questionnaire it was noted that more babies and children under the age of 2 were accessing childcare places compared to previous years with 11% (4) of providers having 3 or more children aged 0-3 on a waiting list. It is thought that the increase to demand may be a result of parents now working from home and hybrid working.

### Vacancies

Vacancy information is changeable and therefore difficult to track, some providers have a vacancy which is only available for a specific age group, or for a particular part-time arrangement. Generally, there are more vacant places in the autumn term because 4-year-old children attending pre-schools begin school therefore creating more places at the pre-school.

The information provided in this report is a Spring 2022 snapshot. Each identified place would allow a child to attend for 15 hours.

Number of vacant places across Rutland	PVI	Nursery Provision in Schools	Independent School Nursery	Childminders
	140	27	26	20
	Total number of vacancies			213

### Supply and demand of childcare places by cluster areas

	Casterton	Uppingham	Oakham	Total number accessed places	Total number of vacant places
Number of available places	72% full	81% full	77% full		
Number of accessed places	220	148	323	691	
Number of vacant places	83	35	95		213

### Flexibility of Childcare

The Early Education and Childcare provisions offer parents a variety of childcare options.

- 46% (7) of nursery provisions and 52% (7) of childminders are open 51 weeks of the year.

- Childcare is most commonly delivered during the typical working day – between 8am and 6pm on weekdays.

Since March 2020, as an outcome of the impact of COVID-19, 39% (14) providers have changed their operational times by shortening the length of specific days; on average this is between approximately 30-60 minutes at the end of the day. The reasons offered for this include:-

- Lack of parental demand,
- Parents working hours changed with many working from home,
- Financial viability linked to low take up, and
- Covid restrictions.

Those that had made changes were unsure if the changes would be permanent and would reconsider operational times if required by parental demand.

Details of providers and their operational times can be found at [Early Education and Childcare | Rutland information Service](#)

## Accessibility

Early Years Census Comparative January 2020 and 2022	Total number of children accessing a funded childcare place.			Total number of accessed funded hours.		
	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022
Eligible 2 Year Olds (15 hours)	43	28	38	566.50 **(13.17)	379.50 (13.6)	465.70 (12,25)
3 & 4 Year Olds Universal funding (access to maximum of 15 Hours)	445	408	363	5832.25 (13.10)	5426.15 (13.29)	4850.70 (13.36)
3 and 4 Year Olds Extended Entitlement ( 30 hours in total) ( 15 Universal hours plus 15 additional hours)	215	213	207	2728.64 (12.69)	2848.54 (13.37)	2832.32 (13,68)
*Note the first 15 hours are captured in the Universal figure as shown above						
<b>Total</b>	703	649	608	9127.39	8654.19	8148.72

\*\*The figures in brackets provide an overall average of the hours accessed.

At the time of the Early Years Census January 2022 a total of 608 funded children accessed a childcare place. In Rutland there are 1,776 children aged birth to 5 years of age. This includes children who have become 5 years of age and are in their first year at school, and therefore early education places are only required for approximately 1400 children. Children may also be accessing unfunded places, including those children under 2 years of age and 2 year old children who are not entitled to access early years entitlements.

A dedicated email address enables parents to notify the Early Years' service if they are struggling to find childcare and require additional signposting to childcare providers. To date, the LA has not been made aware of any parents unable to access childcare.

The impact of Covid on the economy is unknown; a revised communication programme is planned to ensure families who may become eligible are aware of their additional entitlement offer, such as 2-year-old funding and Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)<sup>6</sup>

## Affordability

From April 1<sup>st</sup> 2020, the following funding rate was paid to registered providers delivering the Funded Early Education Entitlements.

- For eligible 2-year-olds £5.36 per hour, an increase of 16p per hour from the previous 2020 rate of £5.20.

<sup>6</sup> [Get extra funding for your early years provider – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

- For all 3 and 4-year-olds £4.25 per hour, the rate remains unchanged.

The Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) aims to ensure that early years' funding is distributed fairly and transparently across the England. Central government allocates early funding to local authorities and the allocation Rutland receives for all the Funded Entitlements is set through the National Funding Formula<sup>7</sup> and agreed through Rutland's Schools' Forum.

The following table illustrates the typical cost of a childcare place for children who are not accessing a government funded place. Providers are not obliged to share their rates with local authorities. Rutland County Council does not have a duty to intervene where parents choose to purchase additional hours of provision over and above a child's funded hours or the costs of additional services, providing that this does not affect the parents' ability to take up a funded place and as long as the rules with the statutory guidance are adhered to<sup>8</sup>.

	April 2019	March 2022	
<b>Average Rutland Fee Nursery Provider (per hour)</b>			
Under 2 Years	£5.06	£5.47	↑ 41p
2-3 Years	£4.92	£5.53	↑ 61p
3-5 Years	£4.83	£5.51	↑ 68p
Average fee per Hour	£4.93	£5.59	↑ 66p
<b>Average Rutland Fee Childminder (per hour)</b>			
Under 2 Years	£4.30	£4.86	↑ 56p
2-3 Years	£4.30	£4.86	↑ 56p
3-5 Years	£4.30	£4.86	↑ 56p
Average fee per Hour	£4.30	£4.86	↑ 56p

The Early Years' Service continue to work closely with Rutland County Council Finance Team to support the sector in a proactive and equitable way. This work is further supported through the Early Years' Working Group which discusses specific issues for consideration at the Schools' Forum.

## The Quality of Early Years Provision in Rutland

Inspection judgements of the provider either by Ofsted or a Childminder Agency (CMA) provide the LA with the benchmark of quality of provision. Following an outcome of less than good the LA will engage with the provider for assurances that any Ofsted or CMA concerns are addressed swiftly.

### March 2022 Ofsted and CMA Inspection Outcomes

Early Years Provisions	PVI	Nursery Provision in Schools	Childminders
Outstanding	1		3
Good	14	3	11
Requires Improvement <i>Will be reinspected within 12 months</i>	0		0
Inadequate <i>Will be reinspected within 6 months</i>	0		0
Met	<i>The Outcome of 'met' applies when at the time of the inspection no children are on roll or present. The inspection will not be a 'full' inspection but will be a check that the provider continues to be suitable to remain registered.</i>		1

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-funding-2021-2022>

<sup>8</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/718179/Early\\_education\\_and\\_childcare-statutory\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/718179/Early_education_and_childcare-statutory_guidance.pdf)



New	<i>Newly registered providers will normally be inspected within 30 months of their registration date</i>	3
-----	--	---

Providers on the Early Years register will normally be inspected at least once within a 6-year timeframe. More information on the inspection process can be found in the Ofsted Early Years Inspection Handbook<sup>9</sup>

[Click this link to find an Ofsted report](#)

## 5. SEND and Inclusion

Early Years providers who receive government funding from the local authority are required to have due regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2015).

The Parks School <https://www.oakhamcofeprimary.co.uk/the-parks> is an LA maintained specialist provision based in Oakham for children aged 2 to 5 years; whilst there isn't any dedicated specialist SEND provision in PVI early years settings, many practitioners are highly skilled and experienced in supporting children with SEND and promoting inclusion.

The local authority has funded 26 practitioners to access a Level 3 Certificate for SENCOs in Early Years (PVI) (Certsey). The qualification meets the Department for Education (DfE) SENCO specification and designed to give participants confidence on how to achieve the very best practice. Eighteen practitioners have achieved the qualification and eight more are currently accessing the programme.

Regular training opportunities through termly Early Years, SEND and Inclusion Forums are offered to address staff development needs in relation to SEND skills, knowledge and confidence, with further programmes developed to support early identification of additional need with the aim of children remaining in a mainstream setting wherever this is the best option for the child. LA Early Years Inclusion staff support settings in making reasonable adjustments and delivering bespoke support for individual children.

Though sufficient places are available which could offer childcare for children with additional needs, there are still some inconsistencies across the county which will be addressed through ongoing support and guidance for the sector.

Recent local authority activities include engaging with the education sector and families to further explore more flexible and inclusive ways of working. This work will contribute to further opportunities for families to receive excellent early years education and childcare for their children.

## 6. WRAP-AROUND AND HOLIDAY CHILDCARE INCLUDING THE HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME - Childcare for 5-14 Years

Childcare for school-aged children is mostly provided in the form of wrap-around provision before and after school and holiday childcare. The provisions are either organised through school provision or privately run. Availability and take-up of wrap-around and holiday childcare has been significantly impacted by COVID-19. Responding to changing guidance and information from Public Health England and Department for Education (DfE) has been a challenge for providers and, with a combination of parental furlough or unemployment, increased home-working and concerns about infection, the demand for wrap-around and holiday childcare provision has significantly reduced.

45.7% (42) families responding to the childcare sufficiency audit said they used childcare, with take-up more focused within after-school provision as opposed to breakfast and holiday childcare. Parents cited that this offer allowed them to work or study.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspection-handbook-eif/early-years-inspection-handbook-for-ofsted-registered-provision-for-september-2021>

Parents reported a key reason for not using childcare was the cost; the local authority continues to promote Tax-Free Childcare with working families<sup>10</sup> which subsidises the cost of childcare for working families.

	April 2019	March 2022	
<b>Average Wrap-around Childcare (per hour)</b>			
Wrap-around Childcare (Where children are looked after before and after school. This includes breakfast or after school clubs)	£4.00	£5.33	↑£1.33p (33.25%)
<b>Average Holiday Childcare (per day) 9 hours</b>			
	£27.10	£34.90	↑£7.80 (22.7%)
<b>Average Holiday Childcare (per week) 9 hours a day for 5 days</b>			
	£136	£182	↑£46.00 (33.8%)

Availability of holiday childcare for 5-14 Years has been augmented through the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF).

The Department for Education (DfE) provided Local Authorities with funding to offer holiday provision for children who receive benefits-related free school meals. The programme initially took place in 2021 for one week during the Easter Holidays, four weeks during the Summer Holidays and one week during the Christmas Holidays. The HAF programme for that period was specifically targeted to offer provision for four hours a day, four days a week during the identified holiday periods with the aim that the children who attend the provision would be supported:

- to eat more healthily over the school holidays;
- to be more active during the school holidays;
- to take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with their wider educational attainment;
- to be safe and not to be socially isolated;
- to have greater knowledge of health and nutrition; and
- to be more engaged with school and other local services.

The four-day Easter 2021 HAF offer was impacted by COVID-19 and was delivered online by 9 providers<sup>11</sup>, the sixteen-day summer 2021 HAF offer was delivered across Rutland by 12 providers<sup>12</sup>, the four-day Christmas 2021 HAF offer was delivered across Rutland by 9 providers<sup>13</sup>. The 4-day Easter 2022 HAF offer will be delivered across Rutland by 11 providers<sup>14</sup>. Government funding for the HAF programme to 2024 should contribute to the sustainability of Rutland’s holiday childcare.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-and-education-for-2-to-4-year-olds>



HAF Brochure  
Final.pdf

11



HAF Brochure - Final  
Version.pdf

12



HAF Brochure - Final  
Version.pdf

13



Main Brochure.pdf

14

## **7. PARENTAL VIEWS OF CHILDCARE IN RUTLAND**

During February 2022, opportunities were provided for parental opinions to be gathered through Rutland County Council officer attendance at support groups for parents, including those with children with additional and/ or complex needs, families of MOD personnel and young parents.

These discussions, sometimes one-to-one and sometimes in small groups, augmented the information gathered through the Childcare Sufficiency survey and identified that whilst there is sufficient childcare overall parents were not always sure of what childcare was actually available. Nearly all parents reported that they had found childcare through word of mouth and few had visited more than one provider which indicates that the current system for informing parents of the range and locality of childcare available across Rutland requires review to ensure that it is communicated more effectively. This includes the promotion of holiday childcare, particularly for events other than sporting activities. Provision for those children with more complex additional needs was also felt to be limited both for children under school age and for school-aged children during school holidays.

Feedback also indicated that cost was a key issue and that whilst much has been done by the LA to publicise the range of financial entitlements available, there was still lack of clarity about the availability of options to support parents with childcare costs. It is a national issue that the uptake of Tax-Free childcare is lower than expected with only 1 in eligible 5 families accessing the scheme. Working parents are encouraged to set up a government account hosted through HMRC which then allows them to pay for childcare. For every £8 parents pay in, the government adds £2, up to a maximum of £2000 a year until a child is 11 and up to £4000 for disabled children until they turn 17. Parents also fed back that they were confused of the entitlement to 'free childcare' and other financial support available if their child had additional needs. As an outcome, it has been identified that more needs to be done to ensure more easily accessible information about entitlements and funding is available and promoted through early years settings and support groups, as well as being available online.

Parents welcomed the opportunity to express their views and contribute to further development and it is planned to continue to consult through attendance at groups and parent sessions as part of the Childcare Sufficiency action plan review process.

## **8. BUSINESS VIEWS OF CHILDCARE IN RUTLAND**

Access to childcare is an important part of the infrastructure that employees and their staff rely on, and is key within the development of an economic strategy. Although not surveyed across the whole of Rutland, during the Childcare Sufficiency assessment discussions were undertaken with a range of small, medium and large businesses. Initial feedback indicates that access to childcare was not currently considered to be an issue; however, to better understand employer preferences and to support the development of the childcare market across Rutland, further work is planned to engage with the business sector to establish whether there is a requirement for wider provision of childcare.

### **8. Conclusion**

From analysis of responses to the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment activity, it is evident that Rutland continues to offer sufficient childcare and parents have access to a wide and varied range of childcare providers. However, the impact of the additional pressures placed on the sector during Covid and the potential change in childcare requirements as parents move to new ways of working, has yet to be fully realised and therefore careful monitoring will be maintained by the Local Authority in addition to the planned actions to support affordability, availability and accessibility of childcare to Rutland families.

Since completing the Childcare Sufficiency duty assessment activity, 2 new providers, 1 nursery provider and 1 childminder, have opened new provisions in the Casterton Cluster area, In total this has created an additional 38 places per day.

## Appendix 1 Rutland Childcare Sufficiency and Early Education Action Plan 2022-23

Aim; to ensure sufficient, high quality early education and childcare places including wraparound and holiday childcare are available to meet the needs of all Rutland children and their families.

Outcome: Parents and carers report that there are sufficient childcare places available, accessible and affordable. Places are delivered flexibly in a range of high quality settings to meet the need of parents and enabling them to work or study.

1 Affordability - To reduce parental concerns raised over affordability of childcare by ensuring parents are well-informed, through a well-planned communication strategic approach, about the range of Early Education and Childcare financial entitlements that are available to them.				
Issue	Actions	Measurement of Success (Milestones)	Target Dates	Progress/ Evidence location
Parents are not sufficiently well-informed of all Early Education and Childcare financial entitlements available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review current communication processes and resources for families to ensure information on Early Education financial entitlements is accurate, relevant and readily accessible</li> <li>Implement a regular review of the content of Rutland Information Service (RIS) through a mystery shopper approach to ensure information remains current and readily accessible</li> <li>Develop and implement a parent advocate approach of advice and information sessions to be delivered termly.</li> </ul>	<p>Mystery shopper approach confirms information on education entitlements and packages of government led financial support to help pay for childcare is current and accessible.</p> <p>Feedback from parents that information is easier to understand and they have increased their knowledge.</p>	S: April 2022 E: July 2023	<p>Attendance at parent support groups for twice yearly feedback.</p> <p>Mystery shopper feedback</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable Early Education and other service providers who work with families to become more confident in providing financial information to parents through training and regularly updated resource packs</li> <li>Refine the Rutland provider agreement processes to include compulsory attendance at least one of the termly funding training updates per financial year.</li> </ul>	Providers are confidently supporting families in accessing financial support for childcare.	S: April 2022 E: July 2023	Attendance at training events Feedback from parents through childcare Sufficiency Duty (2023): parental engagement survey

2 <b>Accessibility</b> - To increase accessibility to a childcare place for all children through a programme of support which provides confidence and capability to the sector so that there is a consistent approach to inclusion of children with additional needs within the Universal childcare offer.				
Issue	Actions	Measurement of Success (Milestones)	Target Dates	Progress/ Evidence location
Parents are reporting that not all childcare providers can meet the needs of children with special educational needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a provider mapping activity to support parents in locating suitable childcare providers. Live links to provider websites and/or RIS will help to inform parents of individual offer</li> <li>• Promote an inclusive childcare offer, which is available during term time and holiday periods, through a programme of professional development, guidance and resources</li> <li>• Support SEND and Inclusion Service activities to promote inclusion of children with additional needs within the universal education offer when this can best meet need</li> <li>• Promote early identification of need through improved take up of the 2 year Healthy Child Programme and Early Years Foundation Stage Progress Check.</li> <li>• Develop a more robust approach to promoting an inclusive holiday childcare provision across Rutland</li> <li>• Promote HAF funding as an additional funding stream for early education providers to increase accessible holiday childcare for all children</li> </ul>	<p>Providers are confident in delivering an inclusive offer which is based on a good understanding of a child's needs and utilises additional funding streams as appropriate.</p> <p>Provision is supported through an effective multi-agency approach which reflects a child's individual requirements.</p> <p>Evidence of increased take-up of funded hours for children with additional needs.</p>	<p>S: April 2022 E: July 2024</p>	<p>Parent feedback on accessibility of childcare</p> <p>Census data (2023 &amp; 2024) (hours of attendance)</p>

3 <b>Availability</b> - To mitigate risk of future insufficient Early Education and Childcare places through identifying and promoting opportunities which support Providers in developing their own business models which are financially viable and meeting the requirements of Rutland families.				
Issue	Actions	Measurement of Success (Milestones)	Target Dates	Progress/ Evidence location
Potential risk of future insufficient Early Education and Childcare places as a result of business failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and promote opportunities which support business development across the Early Education sector</li> <li>Ensure the Early Education sector is kept well informed of the take- up of places and hours accessed to enable businesses to be adjusted to reflect market need.</li> <li>Promote HAF funding as an additional funding stream for early education providers.</li> </ul>	<p>Evidence of early education and childcare providers developing their own financially viable business models which are meeting the requirements of working parents or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).</p> <p>HAF activity is utilised by existing providers to augment childcare offer</p> <p>Sufficiency of places across Rutland is maintained</p>	<p>S: April 2022 E: Jan 2024</p>	<p>Schools' Forum Early Years Working Party meeting notes</p> <p>Employer Engagement outcomes</p> <p>HAF attendance data</p> <p>Parent feedback</p>

Acknowledgment: Front page image: <https://www.istockphoto.com/search/2/image?phrase=children+playing>

