

# Luton Council childcare sufficiency assessment 2022

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## About this report

The Childcare Act 2006<sup>1</sup> places a duty on all local authorities to secure sufficient childcare, so far as it is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 to 14 (or up to 25 for disabled children). The Childcare Act 2016<sup>2</sup> places a further duty to secure funded childcare for qualifying children of working parents following the introduction of the 30 hours extended entitlement.

Luton Council has a statutory duty to work with providers from the private, voluntary, independent and maintained sector to create sustainable, accessible, affordable and high quality childcare, sufficient to meet the needs of all parents and carers.

## Methodology

This report provides an overview of childcare sufficiency using qualitative and quantitative data from a number of sources:

- Department for Education (DfE) statistical data of childcare providers and inspections<sup>3</sup>
- Luton 2020 ward-level population estimates<sup>4</sup>
- Luton Council two, three and four year old funding data 2022
- funding and childcare provision data from the Early Years Census January 2022<sup>5</sup>
- The Coram Family and Childcare Trust – Childcare Survey 2022<sup>6</sup>
- analysis of 56 responses to the Provider Sustainability Survey June 2022

## Limitations

The number of registered places and the percentage take-up is based on January 2022 published data and may not reflect the latest number of children registered or take-up across the whole academic year.

DfE data calculates the number of part time equivalent places (PTE), therefore this may be slightly lower than the actual number of children accessing all or part of their entitlement.

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

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

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childcare-providers-and-inspections-as-at-31-march-2022>

<sup>4</sup> [Ward-level population estimates \(Experimental Statistics\) - Office for National Statistics](#)

<sup>5</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-provision-children-under-5>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.coram.org.uk/sites/default/files/resource\\_files/Coram%20Childcare%20Survey%20-%202022.pdf](https://www.coram.org.uk/sites/default/files/resource_files/Coram%20Childcare%20Survey%20-%202022.pdf)

## Executive summary

Luton saw a rise in the percentage of children registered for all early years entitlements in 2022 following the falls recorded in 2021.

The rise in the proportion of children accessing two year funded places and the universal entitlement have been driven not only by increases in the number of children registered, but also by the decreases in the relevant populations, and the number of children meeting the eligibility criteria for two-year-old funding.

The number of children in receipt of Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) in 2022 is the highest on record both for Luton and nationally.

The number of private, voluntary and independent providers (PVI) offering the early years entitlements in Luton has increased since 2019 with an additional five registered providers.

In the same period there has been a 25% reduction in the number of childminders delivering universal funded early years provision, however the number of childminders overall has only fallen by 10%, which indicates that some are choosing not to accept funded children.

Luton has seen a fall in the number of early years settings registered as good and outstanding since Ofsted inspections resumed after the pandemic. The early years team has been working with settings to ensure that the quality of education and safeguarding is maintained, and are providing additional support to those settings judged to be less than good.

The January census reported 91% of children in Luton were attending an Ofsted graded good or outstanding early years setting and 92% of all childcare was at least good in March 2022.

Early years providers in Luton and nationally continue to face additional challenges, in particular recruitment in the sector and also the number of children presenting with limited language and social skills.

This is a situation that is recognised nationally and is being supported by the DfE Early Years Education Recovery Programme, which is providing additional support to settings most in need and looking to review and reform Level 3 qualifications.

Data indicates that currently Luton has sufficient childcare spaces to meet demand across the town, and enough vacant spaces to manage an increase in the take up of early education funding.

As Luton's projected population data<sup>7</sup> suggests a possible decrease of five per cent in the 0 to 4 year old age group between 2017 and 2027 demand for childcare in Luton may decrease. However, any changes to the early years entitlements or eligibility criteria could also affect the demand for places.

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<sup>7</sup> Luton's Projected Population Growth 2017 – 2037 - Source Luton Council POPGROUP software

## Recommendations

Despite the percentage of children registered for early years entitlements increasing since 2021, and returning close to pre-COVID levels, the percentage still remains below the national level – strategies to increase the take-up include:

- continuing the Golden Ticket marketing approach for families with two year old children, providing a one-step application process
- developing a strategy to contact families with two year old children using the email and phone numbers provided by the DWP from September 2022
- distributing flyers, some in community languages, to neighbourhood groups, retail outlets, children’s play areas and medical centres
- increasing the use of community and partner social media sites to promote the early years entitlements
- continuing to work with social care and health to promote funding, especially to Luton’s most vulnerable children

To promote Tax Free Childcare to parents, carers and providers to support families with the cost of childcare.

To support early years settings to maintain the quality of childcare in Luton, continuing to help those still impacted by the pandemic and offering advice to improve practice.

To continue to support those early years settings that have concerns around their sustainability.

To monitor the out of school childcare sector and holiday care to ensure that adequate provision remains available for working parents.

To continue to support Luton’s 2020-2040 Vision by ensuring that children are given the best start to their education by being able to access high quality early years education across the town.

# Summary of the previous 2021 CSA

## Main findings

Some early years providers may require business support to remain sustainable.

Guidance around safeguarding and changes to practice in early years education will be needed following the pandemic.

Advice and support will be required to maintain the quality of childcare in Luton following the changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage in September 2021.

Practitioners should be encouraged to access funded Level 3 Early Years courses to ensure a skilled workforce is maintained.

Social media and community partners will be used to promote parental confidence in early years education, with the use of promotional materials in different languages.

Closer working with social care and health is required to promote early years entitlements to Luton's most vulnerable children.

The effects of COVID-19 on the out of school childcare sector are currently unknown and will need assessment.

## Responses

Luton Council has continued to support providers by providing advice on available financial support and how to maximise funding opportunities and reduce costs - a sustainability questionnaire in June 2022 indicated that 78% of providers were feeling positive about the sustainability of their business.

Luton Council has provided support and guidance around safeguarding, risk assessments, changes to practice and regaining parental confidence in childcare following the pandemic.

Luton Council has worked closely with providers to maintain the quality of childcare throughout the pandemic, although visits to settings were sometimes limited due to restrictions - help and advice continues to be available to improve practice and support within the new Ofsted education inspection framework.

The Golden Ticket application process for two year funding eligible children has been introduced, removing some of the barriers of an online or paper application.

Early years entitlement information is now part of the social work academy induction program and continues to be regularly shared with local health visiting teams.

Practitioners have been provided with information and attended a presentation regarding courses offered by Luton Adult Learning, including Level 3 childcare courses and the funding available.

Information indicates that some holiday provision has not re-opened or is operating with reduced sessions since the pandemic, however there are an additional 3,500 places available for summer 2022 on the Energise Luton Holiday Camps programme, run by Active Luton, which provide children with a range of physical activities and the opportunity to have a good, nutritious meal during the day



# Introduction

This report provides an analysis and evaluation of the childcare sector and childcare sufficiency in Luton during the 2021/2022 academic year. Take-up of the early years entitlements use the January census 2022 published data.

## Luton summary

**Population of Luton – 225,300<sup>8</sup>**

### Childcare type in Luton

Childminders	Day Nurseries	Pre-schools	Maintained Nursery	Nursery in a school
107	46	29	6*	16

\*over 7 sites

### Early education funding

Early education funding is available to eligible two, three and four year olds and is paid directly to approved childcare providers by Luton Council.

### Funded two year old places

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 15 hours funded early education per week.<sup>9</sup>

Non-economic criteria include if the child:

- is a looked after child
- has an adoption, residence order or special guardianship order
- has a special educational need or disability (SEND)
- is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- is from specific groups of non-EEA families who cannot claim benefits

### Eligible children taking up their two year funded place (for at least some of the available hours) in Luton and nationally as at January 2022.<sup>10</sup>

Two year old funding	% of eligible children in Luton	% of eligible children nationally
Take up	65%	72%

<sup>8</sup><https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationandhouseholdestimatesenglandandwalescensus2021>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-2-year-olds>

<sup>10</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-provision-children-under-5>

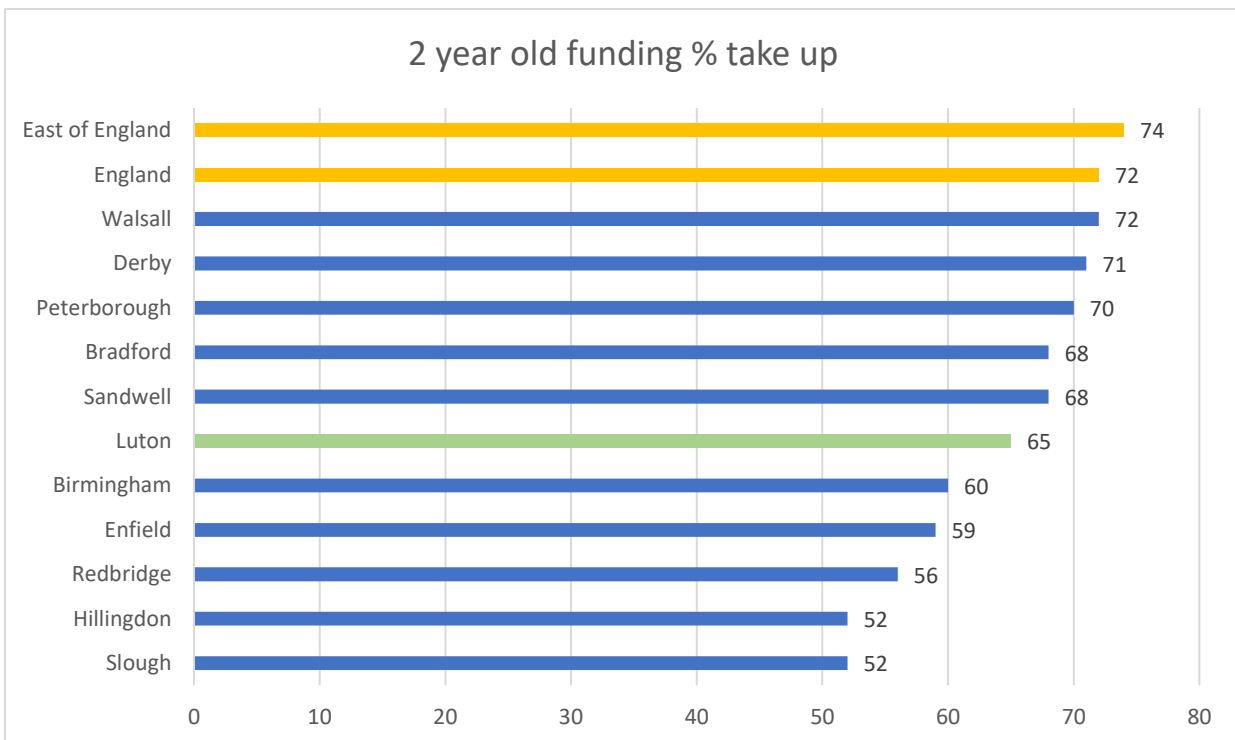
## Statistical neighbour comparison

Luton has ten statistical neighbours when comparing Ofsted and Department for Education (DfE) data and these range from being “very close” to “somewhat close” to various statistical aspects of Luton.

The “closeness” of these statistical neighbours has been decided by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)<sup>11</sup> who was commissioned by the DfE to identify and group similar local authorities in terms of their socio-economic characteristics. Each local authority was assigned 10 such neighbours.

These socio-economic characteristics include among others; the mean weekly pay, the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, the percentage of residents from different ethnic backgrounds, and the general health of those in the area.

In January 2022 Luton ranked sixth (previously eighth in 2019) out of its eleven statistical neighbours with the take up of two year old funding in these local authorities ranging between 52% and 72%.

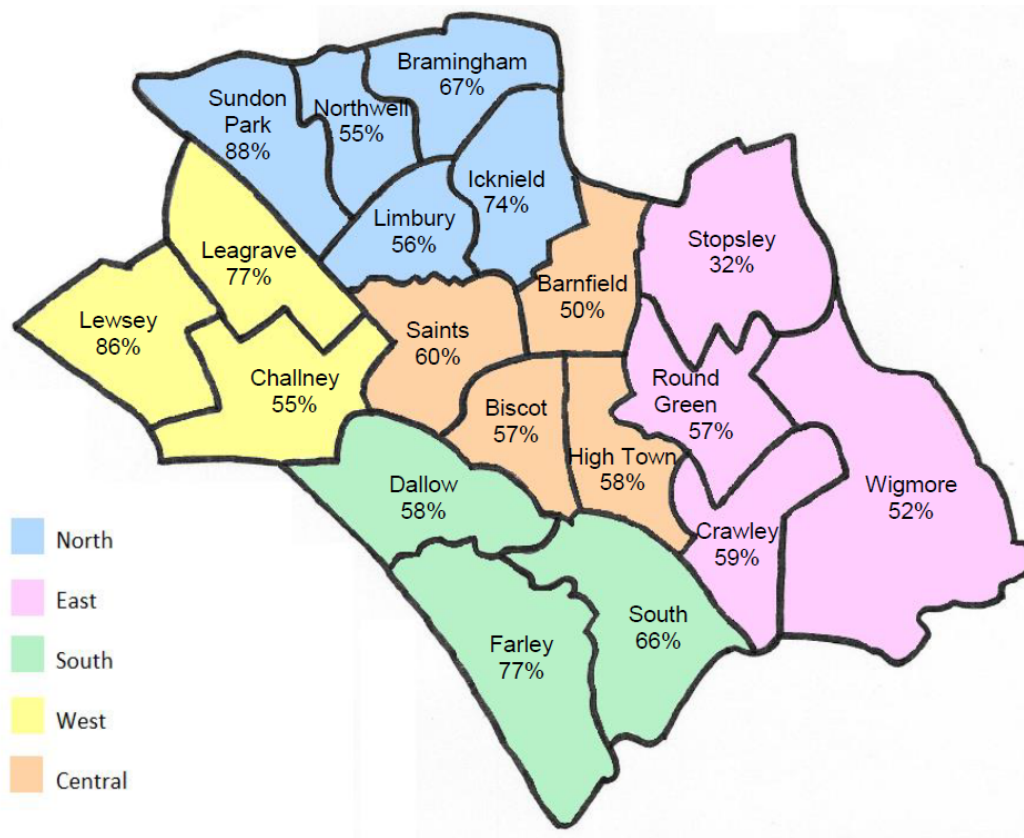


<sup>11</sup> [Statistical neighbours](#)

### Ward level take up of two year old funding

The following map shows the estimated take-up by ward based on the November 2021 DWP list and spring 2022 headcount data<sup>12</sup>. Not all children will access funding within the ward of their home address or within Luton. Some children will be eligible for funding on a non-economic basis and therefore will not be on the DWP list.

### Ward level take up of two year old funding



### Area level take-up of two year funding

Area	North	East	South	West	Central
Take-up	65%	53%	65%	71%	58%

<sup>12</sup> Appendix Table 1

### Three and four year old universal funding

All children aged three and four are entitled to 15 hours funded early education per week until they start reception class in school.

Parents do not have to use all the hours of their child’s funded entitlement and can choose to split the hours between providers. With the agreement of their provider, parents may also spread them across the year – for example, rather than taking 15 hours for 38 weeks a year they could take just under 12 hours for 48 weeks a year.

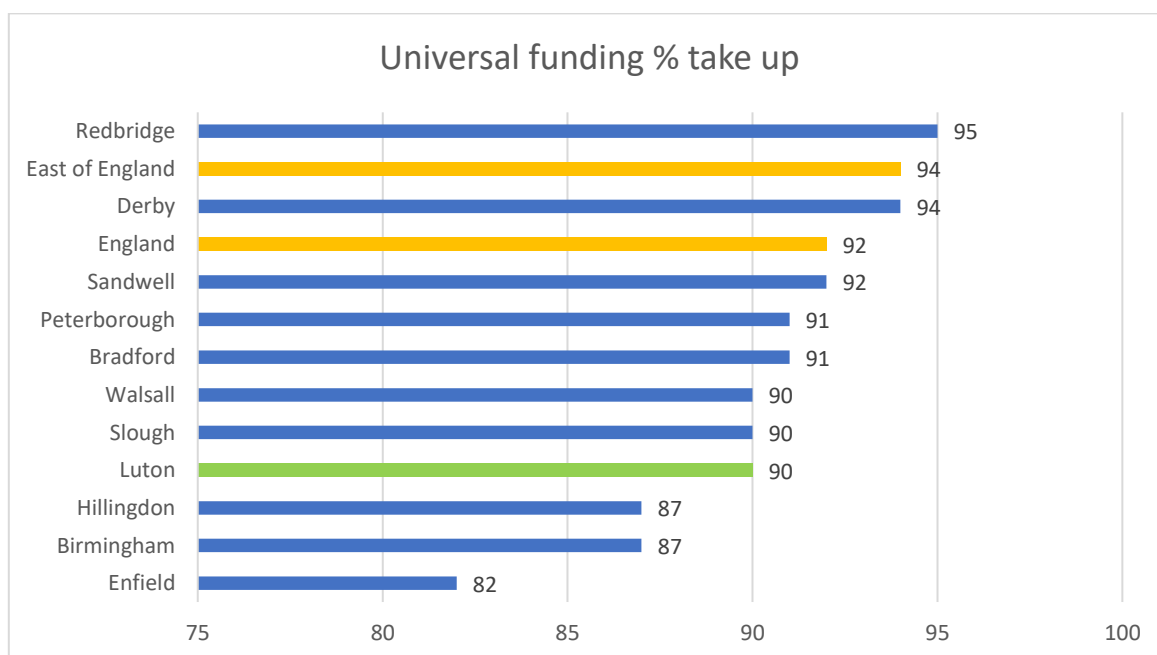
Take up percentages for universal funding include the 2,090 reception class children attending in January 2022

### Eligible children taking up their universal funded place (for at least some of the available hours) in Luton and nationally as at January 2022.<sup>13</sup>

Universal funding age 3 and 4	% of eligible children in Luton	% of eligible children nationally
Take up	90%	92%

### Statistical neighbour comparison

In January 2022 Luton ranked eighth (previously tenth in 2019) out of its eleven statistical neighbours with the take up of universal funding in these local authorities ranging between 87% and 95%.



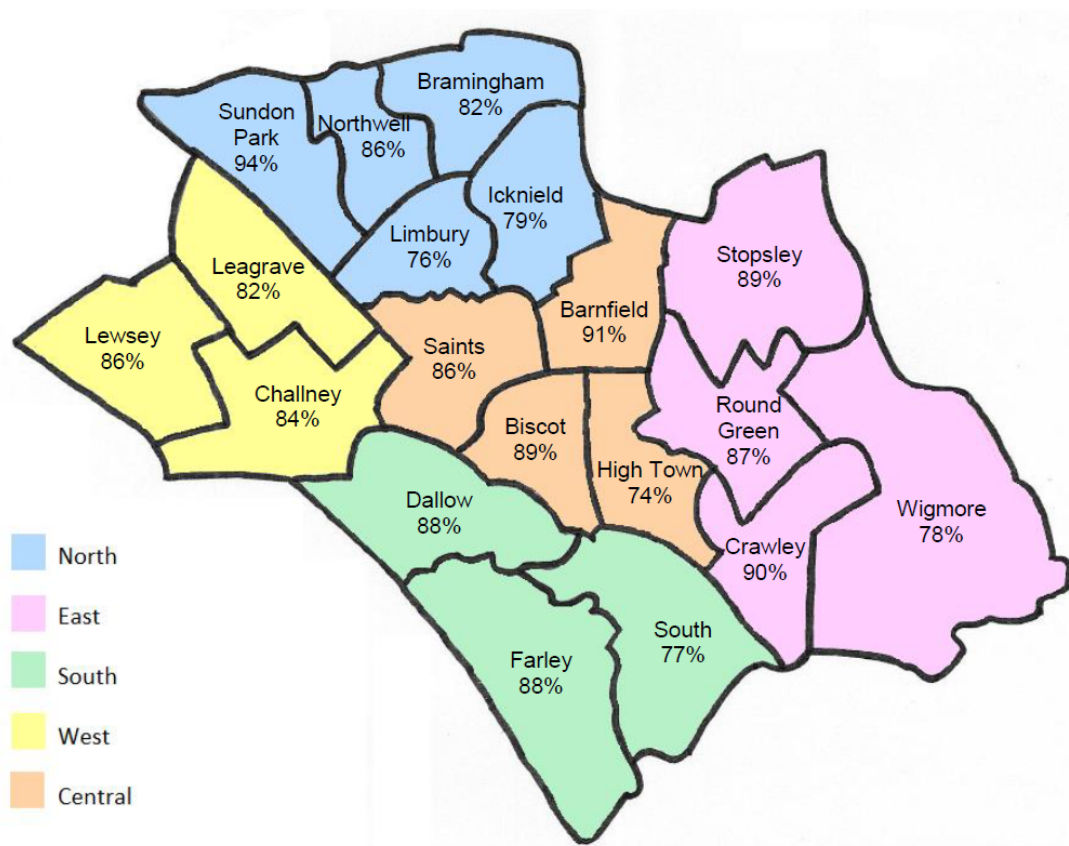
<sup>13</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-provision-children-under-5>

## Ward level take up of universal funding

The following map shows the estimated take-up by ward based on population estimates and spring 2022 headcount data.<sup>14</sup> Not all children will access funding within the ward of their home address or within Luton. Children from other local authorities may also choose to access their funding in Luton.

The take-up percentages assume an average attendance in reception classes across all wards. This data does not include the 3 per cent of children who attend a Luton early years setting but have a home address outside the town. Children may also attend an early years setting outside of their home ward or within another local authority.

## Ward level take up of universal funding



## Area level take-up of universal funding

Area	North	East	South	West	Central
Take-up	83%	85%	84%	84%	85%

<sup>14</sup> Appendix Table 2

### Three and four year old extended (30 hours) funding

Since September 2017, children aged three and four from eligible working families are entitled to 30 hours funded early education per week until they start in a reception class in school.

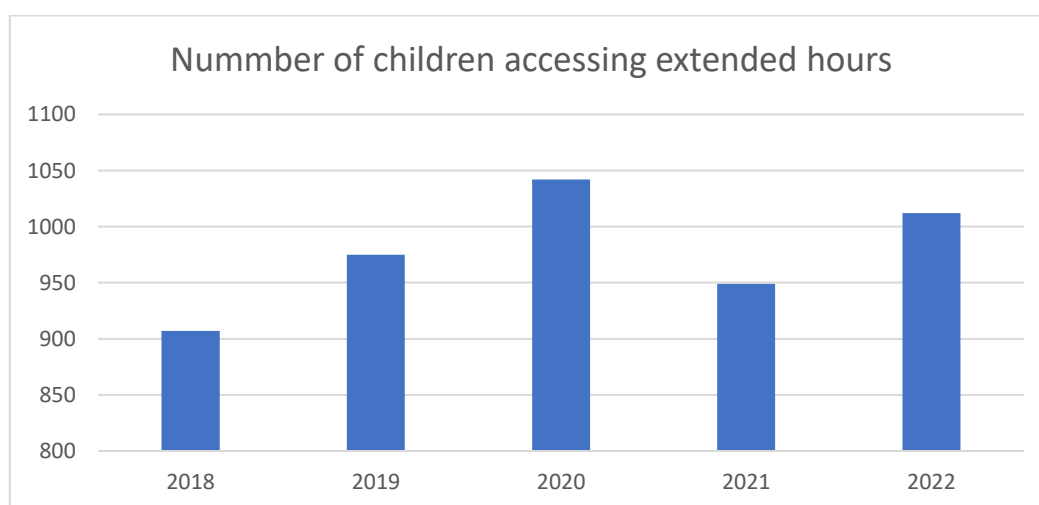
To qualify parents must each expect to earn (on average) at least £125 per week (equal to 16 hours at the National Minimum or Living Wage) and less than £100,000 per year. Parents may still qualify if they are on maternity, paternity or adoption leave, or are unable to work because they are disabled or have caring responsibilities.

Parents who think they are entitled to a 30 hours extended hours place apply for this online through the government’s Childcare Support website [Childcare Choices](#). The same website is used to apply for tax free childcare and parents can apply for either or both. If a parent is eligible, the system creates a code which they can use with their chosen childcare provider. If they are ineligible, they will still be entitled to the universal 15 hours of funded childcare.

### Eligible children taking up their extended hours funded place (for at least some of the available hours) in Luton and nationally as at January 2022.<sup>15</sup>

Extended 30 hours 3 and 4 year old funding	% of eligible children in Luton	% of eligible children nationally
Take up	64% <sup>16</sup>	80%

Based on the indicative number of families that may be eligible for extended hours provided in September 2017, the take up in Luton remains significantly lower than the national average. The number of children accessing extended hours in Luton in 2022 has almost returned to pre-pandemic levels following the decrease in 2021.



<sup>15</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-provision-children-under-5>

<sup>16</sup> Based on 2017 DfE estimate of potential eligible families in Luton - 1580

## Providers offering funded early education places

The percentage of providers offering early education funding is show in the following table:

Type of provision	Number of providers	2 year old funding	3 and 4 year old universal 15 hours	3 and 4 year old extended 30 hours
Childminders	107	39%	65%	36%
Nursery classes in schools	16	0%	100%	6%
Maintained nursery schools	6	100%	100%	100%
Private, voluntary and independent nurseries	75	95%	100%	95%

Luton providers currently receive £5.45 per hour for a funded two year old and £4.67 for a funded three or four year old. They are not required to offer funding to parents, but parents may choose to use a different provider if they do not. Some providers offer a restricted number of funded places.

Data suggests that there are currently sufficient childcare places to provide the 30 hours extended entitlement in Luton. This is monitored by the Family Information Service (FIS) who record vacancies as well as applications and enquiries made by parents. Some childminders have chosen not to offer the 30 hours funding due to the impact the hourly funding rate has on their income.

## Early education funding by provider type

The number of two, three and four year olds accessing early education funded places in Luton as at the January 2022 Early Years census<sup>17</sup> is shown below.

Type of provider	2 year old funded children	Universal funded children
Private and voluntary	600	2654
Childminders	22	62
Maintained nurseries	146	536
Nursery classes in schools	2	606
Independent schools	7	40
Special schools	0	9
Total children	777	3,907

<sup>17</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-provision-children-under-5>

## Early Years Pupil Premium

Disadvantaged 3 and 4 year olds registered for the 15 hour entitlement are eligible for [early years pupil premium \(EYPP\)](#) funding. Early years education providers can receive up to £342 per year to help with a child's education.

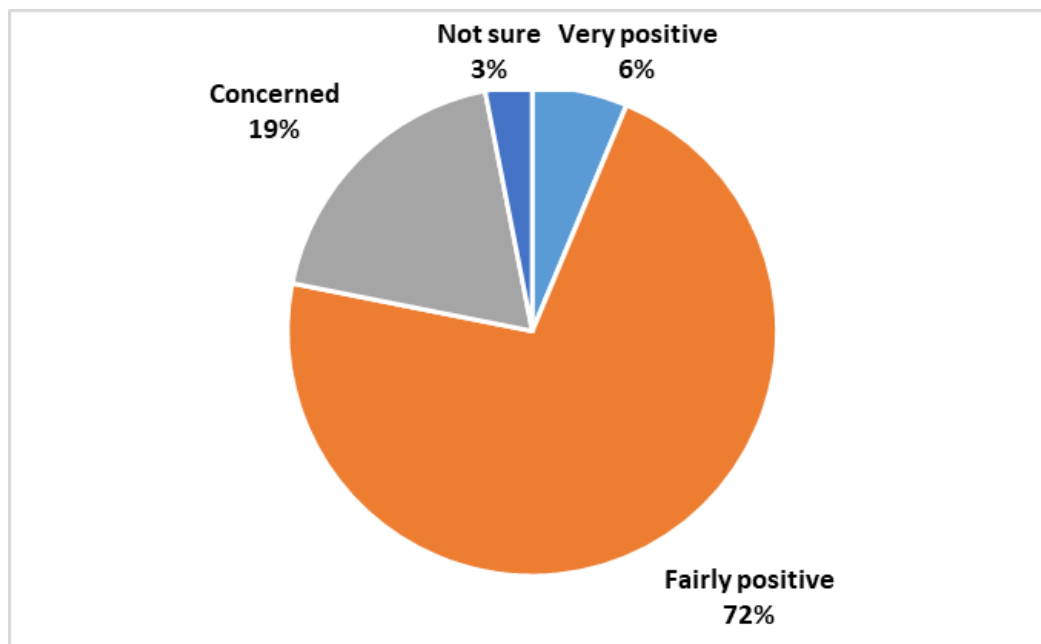
There has been a 6 per cent increase in children identified to be eligible for EYPP in Luton since 2021, this compares with a national increase of eight per cent and an East of England regional increase of three per cent. In January 2022 18% of children accessing the universal entitlement were identified as eligible for EYPP.

## Provider views on sustainability

In June 2022 private, voluntary and independent (PVI) early years settings and childminders were asked how positive they were feeling about their financial situation in summer 2022 and for the next 12 months, and whether they felt their business was sustainable.

Approximately half of PVIs responded to the survey, with 78% of providers feeling positive or very positive, although a few expressed some concerns.

**PVIs assessment of sustainability June 2022**



Providers listed recruitment of practitioners and a higher number of children with social, communication and language delays as their main challenges.



Providers were slightly less confident about their sustainability over the next twelve months with 72% being either positive or very positive, 19% being concerned and a further three per cent feeling very concerned.

Childminders were also asked the same questions around sustainability, but the response was low with only 20 childminders (19%) answering the survey.

Of these, 75% were either positive or very positive about the summer term, however 20% were concerned or very concerned and five per cent were not sure. Childminders were also concerned about the next twelve months with only 70% being positive or very positive, and 25% being concerned or very concerned.

There were seven resignations by childminders in 2021, which is lower than in 2019 when there were 13, and there were six new registrations.

## Childcare to meet the needs of children of working parents

### Cost of childcare

Each year the Coram Family and Childcare Trust<sup>18</sup> carry out a national childcare cost survey and publish a report on their findings, by contacting the FIS in each local authority. This survey compares the cost of childcare in each local authority with the average cost in the region and nationally.

The 2022 report indicates that in Great Britain, childcare prices have continued to rise steadily. Price increases since 2021 for a part time (25 hours) place in a nursery for children in Great Britain, were 2.5 per cent for those aged under two, two per cent for two year olds and 3.5 per cent for three to four year olds using the free entitlement.

### Children under three years of age with no early education entitlements

Hours	Childminder	Day Nursery	Pre-school
Luton 25 hour week	£131.25	£119.63	£108.66
East of England 25 hour week	£130.48	£143.59	Data not available
England 25 hour week	£122.33	£135.28	Data not available

Parents pay considerably less for childcare for three and four year olds due to the early education entitlements. The following table shows the average cost for 25 hours childcare for a three and four year old including the 15 hours universal entitlement. This does not include families who are eligible for the extended 30 hours.

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.coram.org.uk/sites/default/files/resource\\_files/Coram%20Childcare%20Survey%20-%202022.pdf](https://www.coram.org.uk/sites/default/files/resource_files/Coram%20Childcare%20Survey%20-%202022.pdf)

### Children aged three and four accessing 25 hours per week (including 15 hours universal early education funding)

Area	Childminder	Nursery/Pre-school
Luton	£52.50	£47.13
East of England	£46.69	£57.11
England	£48.67	£54.10

Although Luton has not seen a significant rise in childcare costs since the pandemic, the rising cost of living is likely to affect both families and providers. It is essential that parents are aware of the different types of childcare support available depending on their circumstances: the three free entitlements, childcare vouchers (no longer available to new applicants from October 2018), Tax-Free Childcare, Universal Credit and Tax Credits.

### 30 hours early education funding for working parents

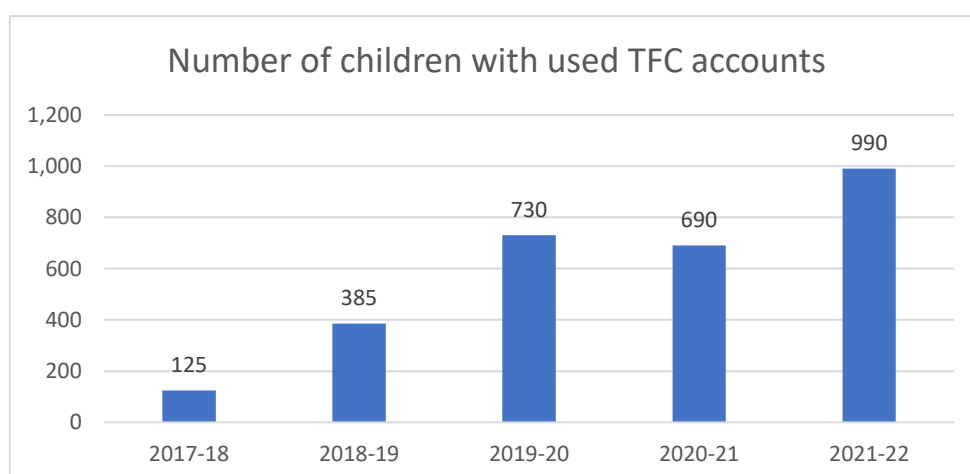
Since September 2017 children of eligible working parents are entitled to [30 hours](#) per week early education funding. In January 2022, 1,012 families in Luton were accessing an extended hours childcare place.

### Tax-Free Childcare

Working parents can receive up to £2,000 per child per year towards childcare costs for children under 12, or 17 if disabled. With Tax-Free Childcare, parents get a government top-up of £2 for every £8 paid in. It is available to working parents including the self-employed, who earn (on average) at least £139 per week and less than £100,000 per year.

Tax-Free Childcare payments can go towards a whole range of regulated childcare including nurseries, childminders, before and after school clubs and holiday clubs. Parents can take advantage of the offer at the same time as 30 hours free childcare.

The number of children using Tax-Free Childcare in Luton has risen by 87% since 2017, which is close to both the regional and national increase of 88%.



## Universal Credit and childcare

From November 2018, Universal Credit became available to most residents in Luton. Universal Credit replaces many different benefits including the childcare element of Working Tax Credit.

Through Universal Credit parents may be able to claim back up to 85% of their childcare costs. Parents, and partners if living with them, will usually need to either be working or have a job offer and the childcare must be provided by a registered childcare provider.

The Family Information Service is able to provide advice on all the childcare support available to families within Luton.

## Out of school settings

There is concern that some of the out of school settings that were recorded as open in 2019 may have been impacted by the COVID-19 restrictions and may not have reopened.

Unfortunately, FIS has difficulty obtaining information regarding breakfast and after school clubs that run under individual school registrations. This is most likely because these clubs usually only cater for children from their own school, and therefore do not advertise their services through external means.

However, by researching schools' websites FIS was able to find out that of the 70 educational provisions (maintained schools, independent schools, academies, and alternative provisions) there were 26 breakfast and 27 after school clubs operating in Luton in summer 2022.

## Children needing holiday care

High quality holiday childcare is essential for working families and gives children the opportunity to experience new activities. However, finding suitable childcare can be challenging with some prices being higher than regular childcare and many parents find it difficult to find childcare that covers the hours they require.

Information for every holiday scheme and activity in Luton is not always available, as many of the schemes do not provide their information to FIS.

However to meet parental need FIS compile and publish details of activities, schemes and attractions before each school holiday, including universal services and those that are available for children with disabilities and special educational needs, this information is available on the Family section of the Luton Directory.<sup>19</sup>

Luton Council are not aware of any parents exercising their right to request holiday childcare which allows parents to request that their child's school provides before and after school or holiday childcare, or opens up their facilities for another provider.

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<sup>19</sup> [https://www.luton.gov.uk/Health\\_and\\_social\\_care/children\\_and\\_family\\_services/family-support-guidance/Family%20Information%20Service/Pages/School-holiday-activities-in-Luton.aspx](https://www.luton.gov.uk/Health_and_social_care/children_and_family_services/family-support-guidance/Family%20Information%20Service/Pages/School-holiday-activities-in-Luton.aspx)

## Supply of childcare places in Luton

There was no significant change in the supply of childcare in Luton during 2021, although four out of school clubs resigned their Ofsted registration as shown in the following table:

### Luton provision changes January 2021 to December 2021

Provider Type	Registrations	Resignations	Proposed as at 31 Dec 2021
Childminder	6	7	3
Day Nursery	2	2	1
Holiday Scheme	1	1	0
Out of School	0	4	0
Pre School	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>

Data continues to suggest that currently Luton has sufficient childcare spaces, and enough vacant spaces to manage an increase in the take up of early education funding. Luton's projected population data<sup>20</sup> indicates a possible decrease of 5 per cent in the 0 to 4 year old age group between 2017 and 2027 therefore demand for childcare in Luton may decrease.

## Childcare to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Luton Council is committed to promoting equality and inclusion for children with SEND. We aim to remove barriers that prevent children accessing free places and work with parents, health and social work professionals, and others to ensure that children with SEND are able to access their early education place.

Luton Council meets their duties under the Equality Act 2010<sup>21</sup> and take full account of the SEND Code of Practice 0-25<sup>22</sup> when securing and providing free places. Early Years SEN Advisors work with practitioners to support them to feel confident that they can support a child with SEND to access and enjoy their early years setting.

### Finding inclusive childcare

Parents and carers are able to find inclusive childcare on the Luton Directory's guide to services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities at the [Luton Directory](#).

<sup>20</sup> Luton's Projected Population Growth 2017 – 2037 - Source Luton Council POPGROUP software

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

The recently improved [Luton Local Offer](#) provides further information about local services, support and events for children and young people aged 0 to 25 years who have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

### Provision of places

Luton has a range of providers who are able to support special needs; however, providers have previously reported the following challenges when providing a place for a child because of their complexity of needs:

- recruiting additional qualified staff members with appropriate skills
- managing additional costs for training, First Aid and DBS checks
- funding not covering all the hours attended

### Demand for SEND support

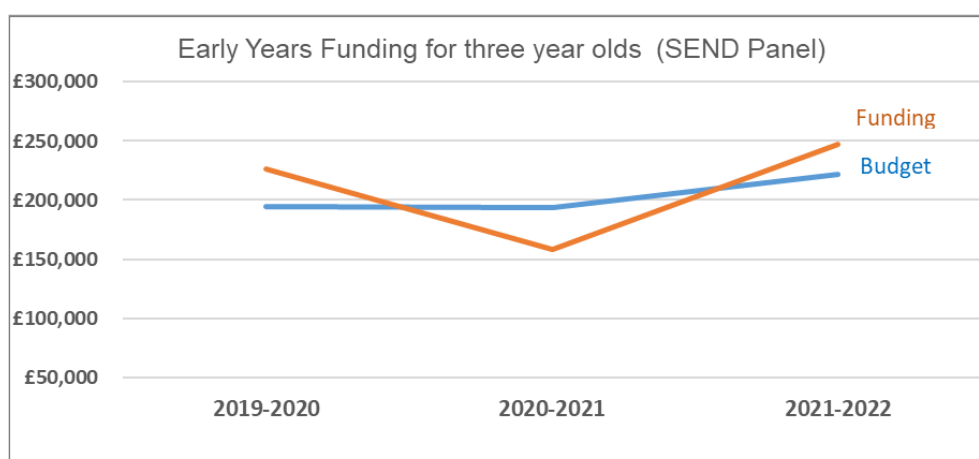
The Luton SEND team has seen a rise in notifications from professionals seeking support for children under five with severe or complex needs who are not in an early years setting since 2019. Notifications can result in specialist provision, assistance to find a setting or support by the Family Service.

Referrals made in the first half of 2022 indicate that the number is still continuing to rise.

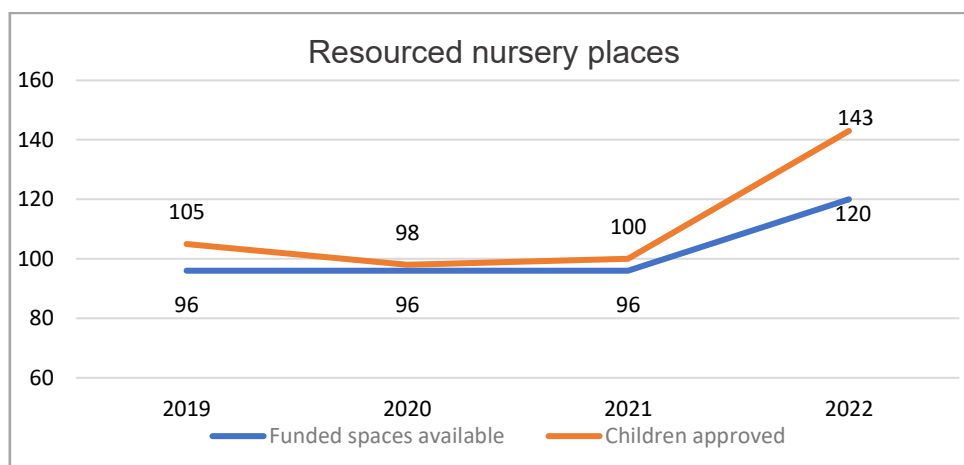
### SEND notifications

	Number of families referred to specialist provision	Number of families supported by SENS/Children Centre/ Family service	Total Notifications
2019	24	38	62
2020	30	48	78
2021	36	58	94

The number of approved applications for SEND funding to the Early Years Panel has increased, and demand continues to exceed the allocated budget.



The number of early years children in an approved resourced nursery place has also increased beyond the number of funded spaces



As the effects of the pandemic on early years children and especially those with SEND become clear, Luton Council will continue to work with education, health and care services and families to achieve the best possible outcomes for children, which will include:

- a review of existing funding to ensure that children with SEND have their needs met in appropriate provision
- the delivery of training to early years settings to maintain and develop the skills of the workforce
- professional advice and support to early years settings to appropriately meet the needs of pre-school children with SEND
- supporting settings in the development of the child's life skills
- continuing to work with families, ensuring their voice and the voice of the child is heard in matters affecting them

### Disability Access Fund

The Disability Access Fund (DAF) helps children with special needs access early years places. The funding available, currently £800 per year, helps providers make reasonable adjustments to their settings, purchase specialist equipment or seek specialist training that helps to meet the child's needs.

Luton Council's Special Educational Needs Service provides advice and support to settings and parents on the funding available and how to apply for DAF. Luton Council provided DAF funding for 53 children during the 2021/22 academic year, an increase from 42 in the previous two years.

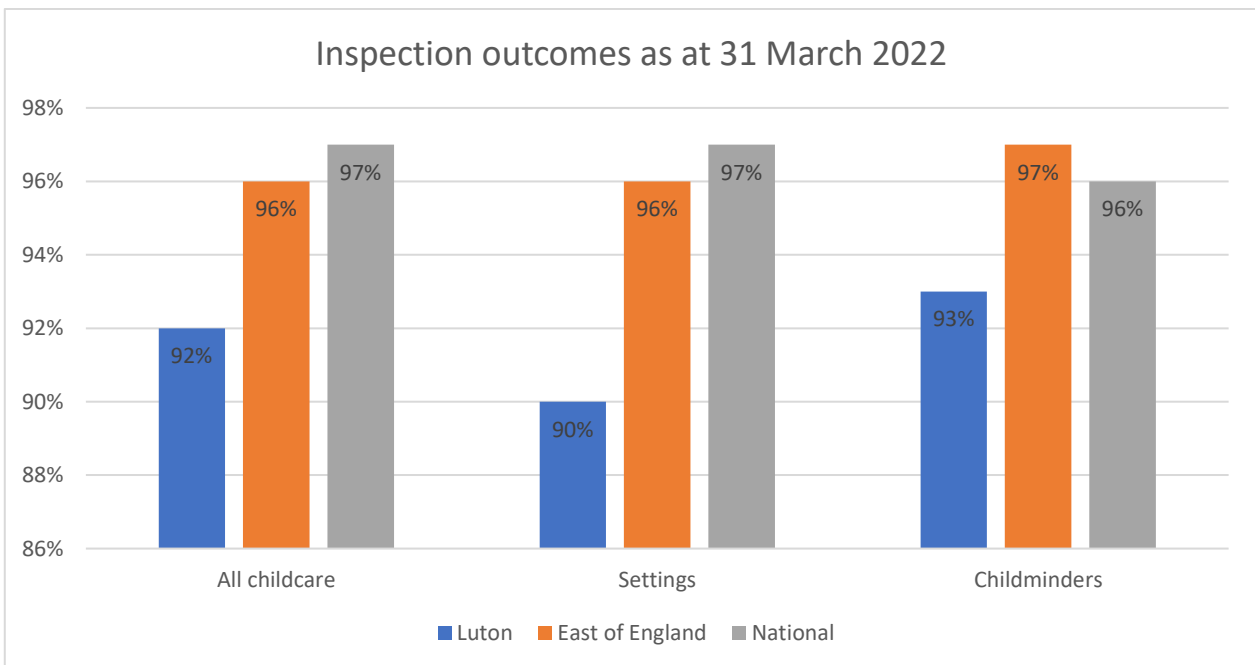
## Specialist holiday schemes

Each year the council publishes a Short Break Service Statement that includes information on how to access residential short breaks and also a directory of services for information on groups, clubs and activities for children with special educational needs and disabilities. The Short Break Service Statement can be found on the council website.<sup>23</sup>

## Quality of providers in Luton

### Latest published inspection outcomes

92% of Ofsted inspected childcare in Luton was judged to be good or outstanding in March 2022. This is below the national average and lower than the 98% reported in August 2021.



The 10% of early years settings offering childcare on non-domestic premises judged at March to be inadequate or requiring improvement represented seven providers. The seven per cent of childminders judged as inadequate or requiring improvement represented five childminders.

In accordance with Ofsted regulations an early years provider will be inspected within the first 30 months of their registration, Luton has 41 providers on the early years register that have not yet been inspected.

When the Local Authority is made aware of an early years provider being judged to require improvement or as inadequate by Ofsted, an Early Years Consultant or Childcare Advice and Support Officer will contact the provider to offer support and advice to help them improve practices and meet the required standards.

<sup>23</sup> [Short Breaks](#)

## Luton 2020-2040 vision

Making Luton a child-friendly town, where children and young people grow up feeling happy, healthy and secure, with a voice that matters and the opportunities they need to thrive is one of the strategic priorities of Luton's 2020-2040 vision.

The vision is that Luton will be a healthy, fair and sustainable town, where everyone can thrive and no-one has to live in poverty. In order to achieve this it is essential that all Luton's children are given the best start to their education, and this begins with early years.

Luton Council must ensure that it continues to provide sustainable, accessible, affordable and high quality early years education, sufficient to meet the needs of all parents and carers.

## Useful links:

[Statutory guidance for local authorities on the provision of early education and childcare](#)

[Family Information Service](#)

[Luton Directory](#)

[Luton Local Offer](#)

[Reports and surveys - childcare in Luton](#)



## Appendix

Table 1

Estimated two-year-old take-up by ward based on the November 2021 DWP list and spring 2022 headcount data

Ward/Area	2 year old children in a setting January 2022	DWP list of eligible 2 year olds	% take-up
Barnfield	11	22	50%
Biscot	77	135	57%
High Town	46	80	58%
Saints	62	103	60%
Central	196	340	58%
Crawley	19	32	59%
Round Green	33	58	57%
Stopsley	6	19	32%
Wigmore	17	33	52%
East	75	142	53%
Bramingham	8	12	67%
Icknield	17	23	74%
Limbury	23	41	56%
Northwell	40	73	55%
Sundon Park	35	40	88%
North	123	189	65%
Dallow	79	137	58%
Farley	55	71	77%
South ward	76	115	66%
South	210	323	65%
Challney	42	76	55%
Leagrave	46	60	77%
Lewsey	54	63	86%
West	142	199	71%
Central Bedfordshire	20	-	-
Other local authorities	23	-	-

Table 2

Estimated take-up by ward based on population estimates and spring 2022 headcount data. Not all children will access funding within the ward of their home address or within Luton. Children from other local authorities may also choose to access their funding in Luton.

The take-up percentages assume an average attendance in reception classes across all wards. This data does not include the 3% of children who attend a Luton early years setting but have a home address outside the town. Children may also attend an early years setting outside of their home ward or within another local authority.

Ward/Area	3 and 4 year old children in a setting January 2022	Estimated 3 and 4 year old population	Estimated reception adjustment	% takeup
Barnfield	122	196	57	91%
Biscot	375	628	183	89%
High Town	181	408	119	74%
Saints	315	551	161	86%
Central	993	1783	520	85%
Crawley	133	218	64	90%
Round Green	194	338	99	87%
Stopsley	92	154	45	89%
Wigmore	148	301	88	78%
East	567	1011	295	85%
Bramingham	85	162	47	82%
Icknield	90	180	52	79%
Limbury	121	261	76	76%
Northwell	153	271	79	86%
Sundon Park	154	237	69	94%
North	603	1111	324	83%
Dallow	381	652	190	88%
Farley	240	410	120	88%
South ward	306	634	185	77%
South	927	1696	494	84%
Challney	277	507	148	84%
Leagrave	205	389	113	82%
Lewsey	208	363	106	86%
West	690	1259	367	84%