

Local authority data collection on early years and childcare provision – Frequently Asked Questions

Last updated 24 September 2020

How and when to complete the collection

When does the form need to be completed by? Please complete the form on Thursdays by 6pm.

If my previous entry was incorrect, how do I change it? Previous entries cannot be resubmitted or changed. You can however resubmit a new form and we will use the most recently sent form received.

I haven't got an email confirming receipt, how do I know you got my completed form? If you don't receive a confirmation email by the next day please let us know.

How long will the data collection go on for? The local authority early years and childcare data collection will run in its current format until at least the end of September 2020, at which point we will review its frequency and end date.

Information to include

Should a provider that is closed temporarily (e.g. due to a COVID-19 outbreak), be recorded as closed? Yes, count settings as closed when you know they are shut, even if the closure is temporary. We would like to have the most accurate information we can for your data returns on opening. Please keep information on open and closed settings as up to date as possible.

Should I count settings I don't hear from as closed? No, count providers as closed only where you have confirmation that this is definitely the case. We appreciate that the sum of open and closed providers about which you submit information may be less than the total number of providers you have, but we hope that over the next couple of weeks all providers will be accounted for.

Should the question on the number of children in childcare include school-age children? No. This question refers to early years children (aged 0 to 4) attending Ofsted-registered childminders, nurseries, pre-schools, pre-school provision run by school governing bodies, nursery classes in schools and maintained nursery school provision.

Why am I being asked to provide information on the number of critical worker and vulnerable children? We are continuing to ask about the number of critical worker children and vulnerable children because in the event of local lockdowns in an area at the highest level of restriction, only those children would be able to access childcare. In those circumstances, we would need a timely overview of the numbers of critical worker children and vulnerable children to help monitor sufficiency effectively. We hope that this will not be too burdensome as settings will already have had to acquire this information for some of their children prior to 1 June; any

new children's parents can be asked if they are critical workers when their child joins the setting, as the setting would need to have this information to hand in the event of a local lockdown. We appreciate that this may require some additional work from settings in the first instance; but hope that once the basic information is there it will not need updating too frequently. Here is the [list of which roles count as critical](#).

Do I need to include information on school-based EY provision? Please note that the schools attendance collection asks for the total number of pupils attending schools only, and does not provide details of how many early years children attend. Therefore, we do need you to provide details of the number of children attending school-based early years providers, and the number of these settings which are open and closed.

What do I need to say about sufficiency at LA level? We are particularly interested in any information on the scale of unmet demand for EY childcare at LA level. It would be very helpful if you could include a line or two in the 'concerns about sufficiency of places' box (penultimate box) to state whether you consider there to be a sufficiency issue at LA level, and in particular, whether you are encountering sufficiency issues for vulnerable children/children of critical workers. Our weekly data collection gives us an understanding of whether there is a sufficiency issue at provider level, in terms of how many requests for childcare could not be met by individual providers, but it does not give us data on unmet demand at LA level (as the unmet requests reported by providers may have subsequently been met by other providers, and/or may involve double counting where a parent approaches more than one setting to ask for a place). Any further information you can give in the 'concerns about sufficiency of places' box on whether sufficiency is an issue for your LA is therefore very valuable in putting this provider-level information in context.

Should I provide information of sufficiency challenges with wrap around childcare for school-age children? Yes, we would like to know about sufficiency challenges for both EY and older children, please flag issues raised by providers in the 'Additional information' box at the end of the form.

Should I count school-aged children in the care of childminders before and after school? School-aged children with childminders should not be included, count only those children aged 0 to 4 who are cared for by childminders.

Should childminding agencies be included? If childminders have not replied directly to queries on the numbers of children aged 0 to 4 in their care, the data can be gathered via childminding agencies. We want to avoid double counting though, so please ensure that data is not duplicated.

Now that collection is weekly do you still require daily data on the numbers of children attending or do you want data on the numbers for a whole week? We require approximate numbers of children in attendance for any typical day in the week of your return. We have not specified which day so you can be flexible in how you collect the data, but ideally this should be the same day each week so that each week's data is directly comparable to the previous week's.

For the question on the number of settings unable to accommodate all requests for childcare places and how many children this has affected, this should include all children affected that week.

In the new vulnerable children categories, how should we record children with both an EHCP and a social worker? We are trying to reduce the burden on LAs and settings as much as possible, so with that in mind we are not adding a separate category on vulnerable children with both an EHCP and a social worker. We acknowledge that there will be some overlap in these categories. As we have asked for the total number of vulnerable children we can get an approximation of overlap from the three sub-categories about which we have asked.

Children that have both an EHCP and a social worker should be included in the return under both those categories.

Are LAs expected to continue providing data on the number of childminders that are providing childcare? Yes. We know that it is burdensome to contact all childminders within your local authority area every week. Once you know whether childminders are unable to meet all requests for childcare places and how many children this affects, please ask them to contact you if this changes or if they change status, i.e. they are currently counted as open but intend to close, they are currently closed but intend to open, or if they have a large change in the number of children they are looking after. Unless they inform you of this you can assume their data has not changed, and do not need to contact them every week. Once you have contacted childminders to get the information updated you need only report significant changes after that. As before, the survey will be pre-populated with your previous answers to make future weekly returns simpler.

Do you still want the numbers of all children attending? Yes, you should include all children, including those who are not critical worker or vulnerable children, in the question on how many children are attending settings in total.

What if I don't know how many EY settings are open? We recognise that there may be a limit to the extent of information you are able to return. If you do not know exactly how many settings are open in your area you can include estimates based on the information that you do hold.

Do I have to keep completing it if I don't have any EY settings open? It would be helpful if you could continue to complete the form so that we can be sure that we have the most up-to-date information on the early years and childcare provision in your area.

Do I have to include reception children who are under 5? Please do not count reception-aged children in your data return. This data collection should relate to children age 0-4 only, excluding children in the reception year who are 4.

What is included in the definition of school-based provision? Any pre-school provision run by school governing bodies, nursery classes in schools and maintained nursery schools.

What is included in the definition of group-based early years provision? All settings other than childminders working in their own homes, or school-based provision (e.g. any pre-school provision run by school governing bodies, nursery classes in schools and maintained nursery schools).

Where do we classify any pre-school provision run by school governing bodies which is not Ofsted registered? Please include all governor-run pre-school provision under school-based early years provision.

Should I provide the average daily or weekly figure for numbers attending (as it varies every day)? Please submit approximate numbers for the day on which you are submitting data. We know that attendance at early years settings fluctuates through the week.

How do you class settings that have no children attending due to lack of demand or staff sickness but will open on demand / recovery? Are these closed? Settings should be counted as closed for as long as they are shut, whatever the reason, if reopened they will be counted as open again.

How are settings that are closed meant to submit information to the LA? Settings that are closed will not be expected to provide ongoing data. If they re-open then data can be added then.

If the setting is closed and all staff furloughed under the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, they have been instructed not to undertake any work – how can they not work and submit the required return without contravening guidance? If a setting is closed then you can assume that no children are currently attending, and do not need to request a return from the provider.

Should I count childminders working on non-domestic premises for up to 50% of their working week? Ofsted-registered childminders should be included in the childminder count even if they are working on non-domestic premises for up to 50% of their working week.

Purpose and use of the data

Why do I need to provide this information every week? DfE needs to gather data to gain an accurate understanding of what is happening locally, and provide relevant support and policy solutions. Completing the form is the best and most efficient way for you to let us know about the early years and childcare provision in your area and any availability or other problems that may be arising.

Is the data collection mandatory? This is a crucial data collection, and transparency around the availability of childcare settings is critical to helping decision making at this unprecedented time. While the data collection is not mandatory, completing the form is the best and most efficient way for you to let us know about the early years and childcare provision in your area and any availability or other problems that may be arising. We recognise that you are very busy and under significant pressure at this time, and that this may limit the extent of the information

you are able to return.

Is the form linked to funding? The data is not currently linked to any funding allocation process. We need to gather data to understand any barriers parents experience in accessing the childcare they need for the duration of the pandemic.

Can I see the results? Yes. The Early Years Provision and Childcare Dashboard can be accessed using our secure online dissemination portal, called View Your Education Data (VYED). To access this portal, you will need an IDAMS account with the role called “View Your Education Data – COVID19”.

Registering for an IDAMs account

- Follow the guidance here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-register-for-an-idams-account>
- You will need to specify that UKPRN once you have your account (so step 1 is create an account, step 2 is associate it with an organisation).

Getting the right IDAMs role

- The link also has information about being a super user. The 1st person to create an account at this UKPRN will be that organisations super user. This super user will be able to grant user roles to other users. (see guidance for details)
- The role you need to grant is View Your Education Data – COVID19.
- There are 10 View Your Education Data roles, these relate to other products on VYED. There is nothing to stop you giving yourself those roles, but you won't see anything in them if you do as we've restricted access to them.

Once the dashboard is available (it is now), a user signing into VYED without that role (View Your Education Data – COVID19) will see “No content”, a user with the role will see “Covid-19 Response Monitoring” with a link to a Power BI dashboard.

If you need help setting up your IDAMs account, [please use this link](#).

The data is now considered official statistics; it is therefore published [here](#) (without LA level information).

What have you done to reduce the burden on LAs? From w/c 22 June the frequency of data collection was reduced; we are now collecting data weekly rather than twice weekly. The survey is pre-populated with your previous entries which you can either confirm (if nothing has changed) or overwrite if you have new data. This reduces the burden of having to re-enter the same information if the position has not changed from the previous data collection, but please check that the data is still correct to your knowledge before submitting it.