



Official Statistics

Main findings: childcare providers and inspections as at 31 August 2021

Published 30 November 2021

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This is the main findings report for the [childcare providers and inspections as at 31 August 2021](#) release. The following are also available:

- [underlying data](#)
- [methodology](#)
- [pre-release access list](#)

Summary

This release contains:

- the number of Ofsted-registered childcare providers and places and their most recent inspection outcomes on 31 August 2021
- the number of providers that have registered with Ofsted (joiners) and the number that have left (leavers) between 31 March 2021 and 31 August 2021

Summary of findings

The number of childcare providers has continued to decline. Most of this overall decrease is due to a fall in the number of childminders.

The number of childcare places offered by providers on the Early Years Register (EYR) has remained broadly stable since August 2015.

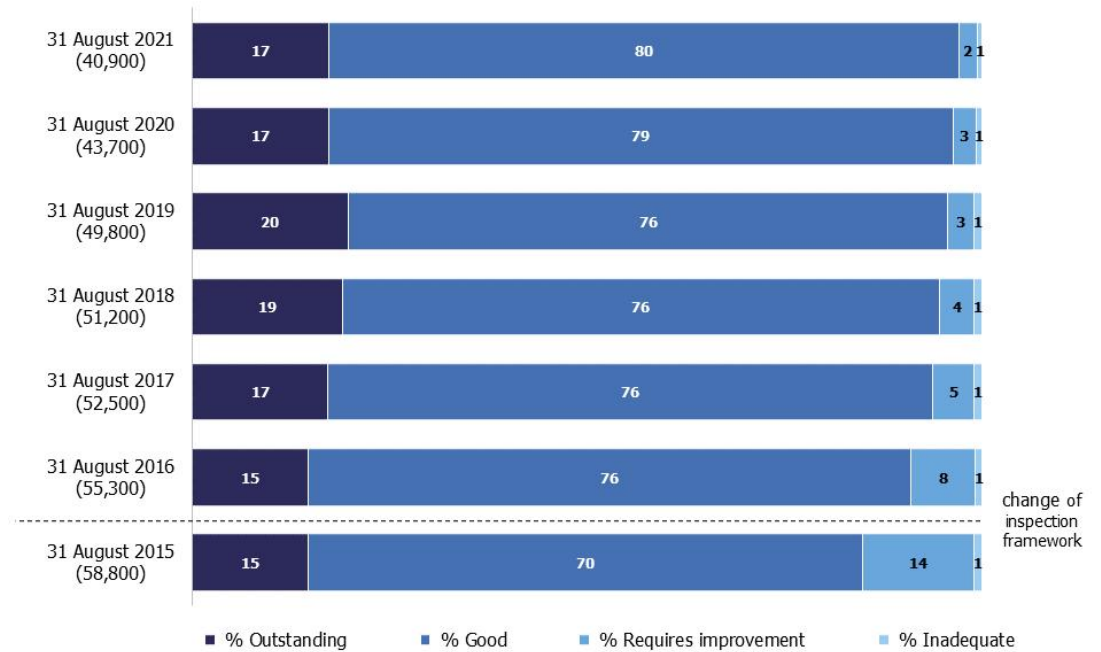
Since 31 March 2021, the proportion of providers judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection has increased by 1 percentage point, to 97% (see [Figure 1](#)).

Impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) on this release

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we paused our routine inspections in mid-March 2020. We restarted Childcare Register (CR) inspections in September 2020 and full EYR inspections in May 2021. Regulatory activity and registration of providers have continued throughout the pandemic.

Figure 1: Overall effectiveness of registered early years providers at their most recent inspection over time

Number of inspected providers in brackets (rounded)



Note: numbers are rounded to the nearest 100.

View [data in an accessible table format](#).

Introduction

The early years and childcare sector is primarily made up of private nurseries, pre-schools and childminders. There are 4 types of early years provision:

Childminders

These are people who look after one or more children who they are not related to for payment or reward. The care takes place in a home that is not the child's own. The majority register on the EYR because they look after children aged 0 to 5, but those who look after 5- to 7-year-olds need to register on the CR.

Childcare on non-domestic premises

These are nurseries, pre-schools, holiday clubs and other group-based settings, usually registered on the EYR because they look after children aged 0 to 5.

Home childcarers (nannies)

These are individuals who care for children aged 0 to 18 wholly or mainly in the child's own home. They are not required to register with Ofsted, though they may choose to do so on the voluntary part of the Childcare Register (VCR).

Childcare on domestic premises

These are providers where 4 or more people look after children together in a home that is not the child's. The majority are registered on the EYR and some are registered on the CR, depending on the age of the children they look after.

Further information about provider types is available in the [glossary](#).

Childminders have the option to register either with Ofsted or with a childminder agency. Childminder agencies are responsible for completing quality assurance visits to the childminders registered with them. There is more information about childminder agencies in the [childminder agencies](#) section of this page.

Childcare in early years also occurs in the schools sector. This takes place in state-funded schools and independent schools. For more information, see the [early years provision in the schools sector](#) section of this page.

Providers, registers and places

Number of providers

There were 71,000 childcare providers registered with Ofsted on 31 August 2021, down by 1% (1,100) since 31 March 2021. [\[footnote 1\]](#) Since 31 August 2015, the number of providers has fallen by 19% (16,100). This continues the decline observed over a much longer period.

Figure 2: Childcare providers registered with Ofsted as at 31 August 2021, by provider type



33,700
childminders



27,400
childcare on
non-domestic premises



9,700
home childcarers



200
childcare on
domestic premises

as at 31 August 2021

Note: numbers are rounded to the nearest 100.

View [data in an accessible table format](#).

Childminders

There were 33,700 providers on 31 August 2021, down by 1,100 (3%) since 31 March 2021. This continues a downward trend, with 14,100 (31%) fewer providers than on 31 August 2015.

Childcare on non-domestic premises

There were 27,400 providers on 31 August 2021, an increase of 1% (200) since 31 March 2021. Numbers are fairly stable over time, with a drop of less than 1% since 31 August 2015.

Home childcarers

There were 9,700 providers on 31 August 2021, a decrease of 2% (160) since 31 March 2021. Although the number of home childcarers has fluctuated over time, there are now 14% fewer than there were on 31 August 2015.

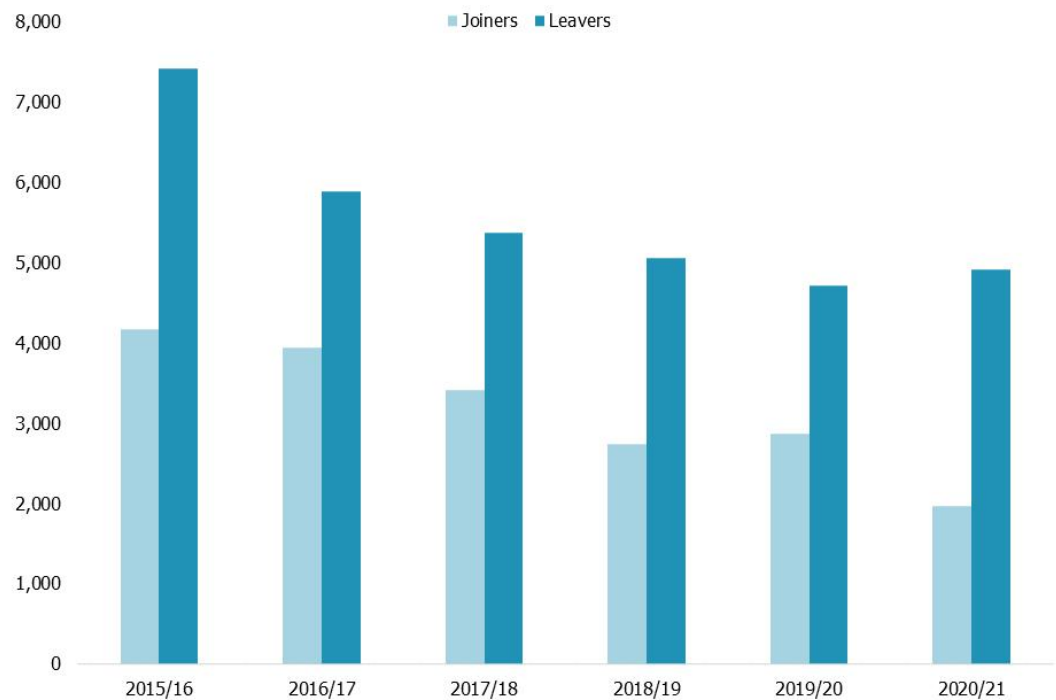
Childcare on domestic premises

There were 200 providers on 31 August 2021. Numbers have remained broadly stable since 31 August 2015.

Childminders joining and leaving the sector

The decline in the number of childminders is due to a trend of more providers leaving than joining the childcare sector (see [Figure 3](#)).

Figure 3: Childminder joiners and leavers in the childcare sector over time



Note: most leavers are provider resignations and most joiners are new provider registrations, but some will be providers moving between the EYR and the CR.

View [data in an accessible table format](#).

The rate of childminders leaving the childcare sector slowly decreased over time until 2019/20. The number leaving the sector then increased slightly, from 4,700 in 2019/20 to 4,900 during 2020/21. The number of joiners has also decreased over time, except during the 2019/20 academic year. In 2020/21, the number of joiners declined by around a third, from 2,900 (2019/20) to 2,000 (2020/21).

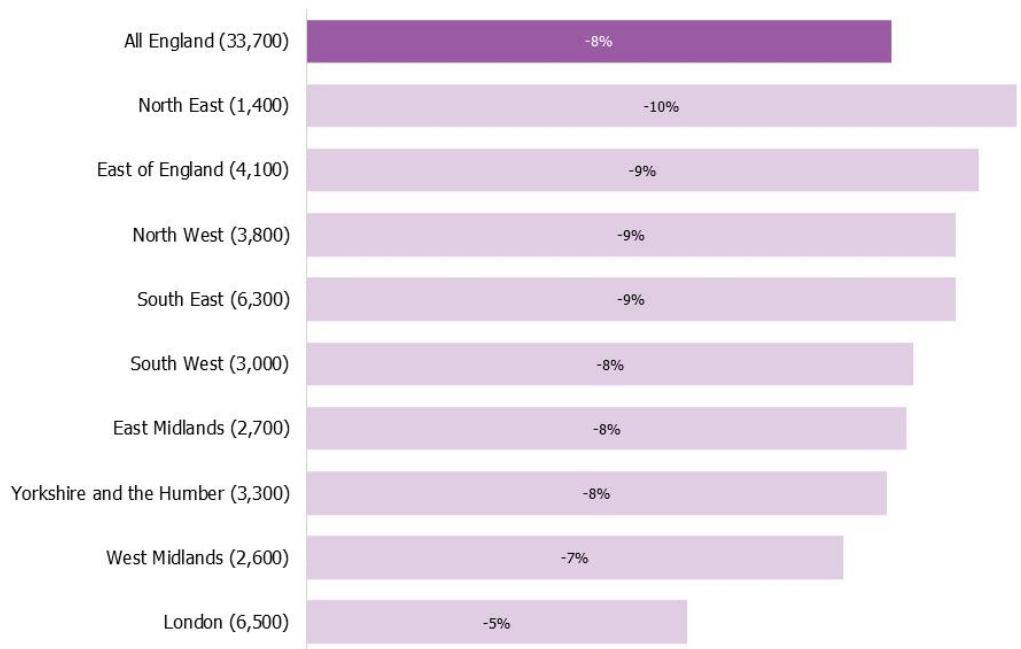
Looking at the net difference between joiners and leavers, the overall decline in the number of childminders has been steady since 2016/17, except in 2019/20. In 2020/21, the net decrease was 2,900 providers, representing the biggest decrease since 2015/16.

Although the number of childminders registered with us has been falling, it is worth noting that childminders can also register with childminder agencies. Agencies vary considerably in size, from being quite small, to having hundreds of childminders registered with them. There is more information about childminder agencies in the [childminder agencies](#) section of this page.

Across England, each region saw a fall in provider numbers between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021. London had the smallest percentage decrease (-5%), while the North East had the largest decrease (-10%) (see [Figure 4](#)).

Figure 4: Percentage change in the number of childminders since 31 August 2020

Number of childminders as at 31 August 2021 in brackets (rounded)

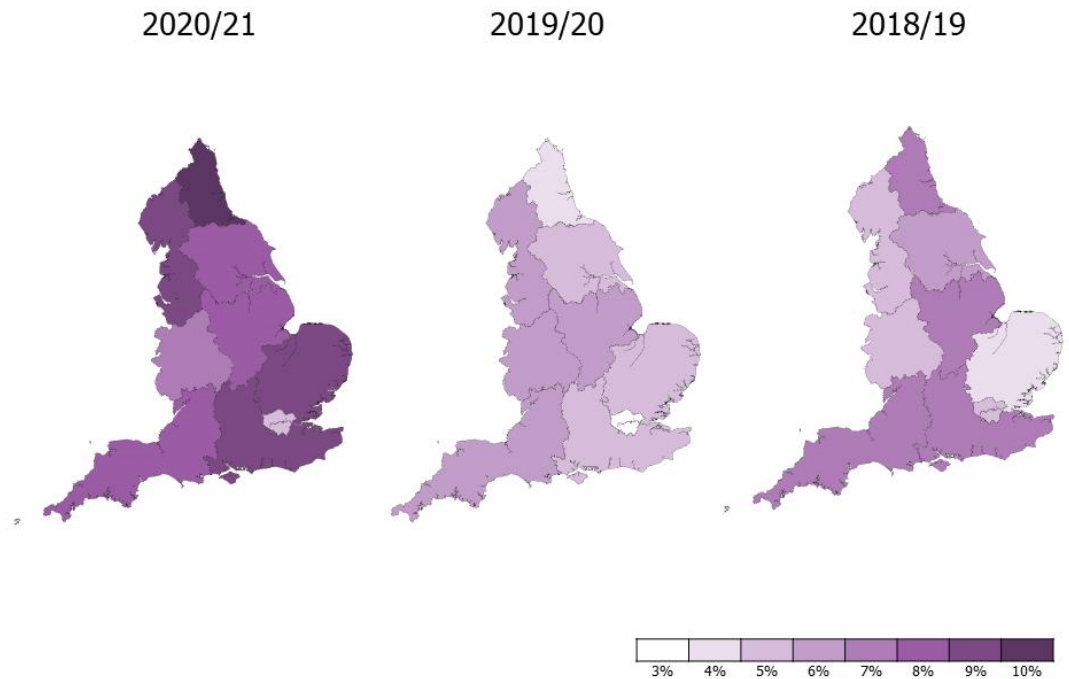


Note: numbers are rounded to the nearest 100.

View [data in an accessible table format](#).

In 2020/21, most regions had a similar or higher percentage decrease in the number of childminders compared with the 2 previous years (2018/19 and 2019/20) (see [Figure 5](#)). The only exception was London, where the percentage decrease in 2020/21 was in line with that observed in 2018/19. In the North West, West Midlands and East of England, the percentage decrease in the number of childminders in the last 3 years has accelerated. In the other regions, the percentage leaving slowed during 2019/20 before returning to 2020/21 levels or greater.

Figure 5: Percentage change in the number of childminders between 2018/19 and 2020/21 by region



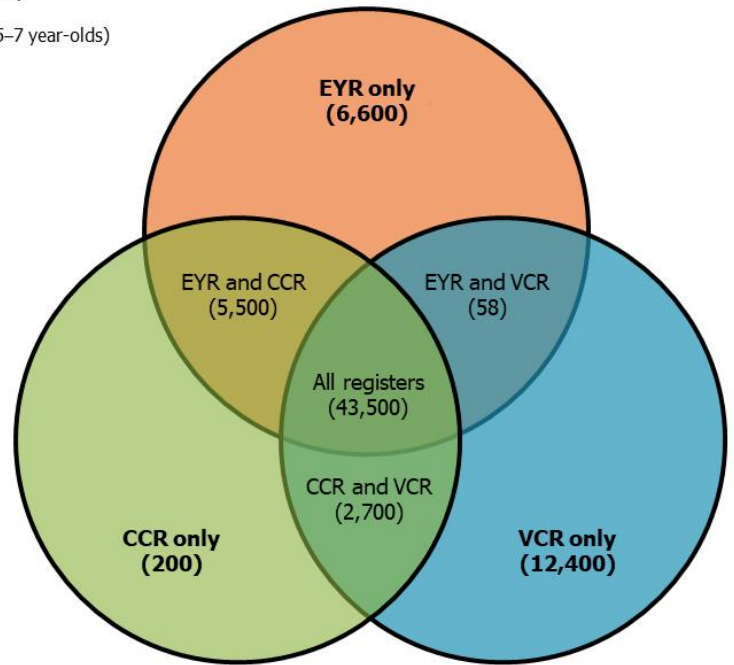
View [data in an accessible table format](#).

Registers

On 31 August 2021, 79% (55,700) of Ofsted-registered childcare providers were on the EYR (see [Figure 6](#)). The remaining 21% were only on the CR, which has 2 parts: the compulsory part of the Childcare Register (CCR) and the VCR (which providers may choose to register on). More information about the different registers is available in the [glossary](#).

Figure 6: Venn diagram of Ofsted-registered providers by the different registers for childcare

EYR: Early Years Register (0–5 year-olds)
CCR: Compulsory Childcare Register (5–7 year-olds)
VCR: Voluntary Childcare Register



Note: numbers are rounded to the nearest 100.
View [data in an accessible table format](#).

Data on places is reported for the 55,700 providers registered on the EYR. A high proportion of these providers (88%) are also registered on the CCR or VCR.

When considering data on places, it is important to note that it covers all places for children up to the age of 8 in providers registered on the EYR. This data includes all EYR places for children under 5 and CCR places for 5- to 7-year-olds in these providers. For more methodological notes on places data, see the [methodology and quality report](#) that accompanies this release.

Places

Figure 7: Number of childcare places offered by providers on the EYR as at 31 August 2021, by provider type



1.1 million places (84%)
offered by childcare on
non-domestic premises



206,100 places (16%)
offered by childminders



5,300 places (<1%)
offered by childcare on
domestic premises

as at 31 August 2021

Note: places numbers of less than one million are rounded to the nearest 100.

Places numbers of more than one million are rounded to the nearest 100,000.

View [data in an accessible table format](#).

Childcare on non-domestic premises

Providers on non-domestic premises offered 84% (1.1 million) of all childcare places, an increase of 4 percentage points since August 2015. [\[footnote 2\]](#) On average, each provider offered 46 places.

Childminders

Childminders offered 16% (206,100) of all places, a decrease of 4 percentage points since August 2015. The average number of places offered by childminders was between 6 and 7. This average takes into account childminders with assistants, who are permitted to offer more than 6 places.

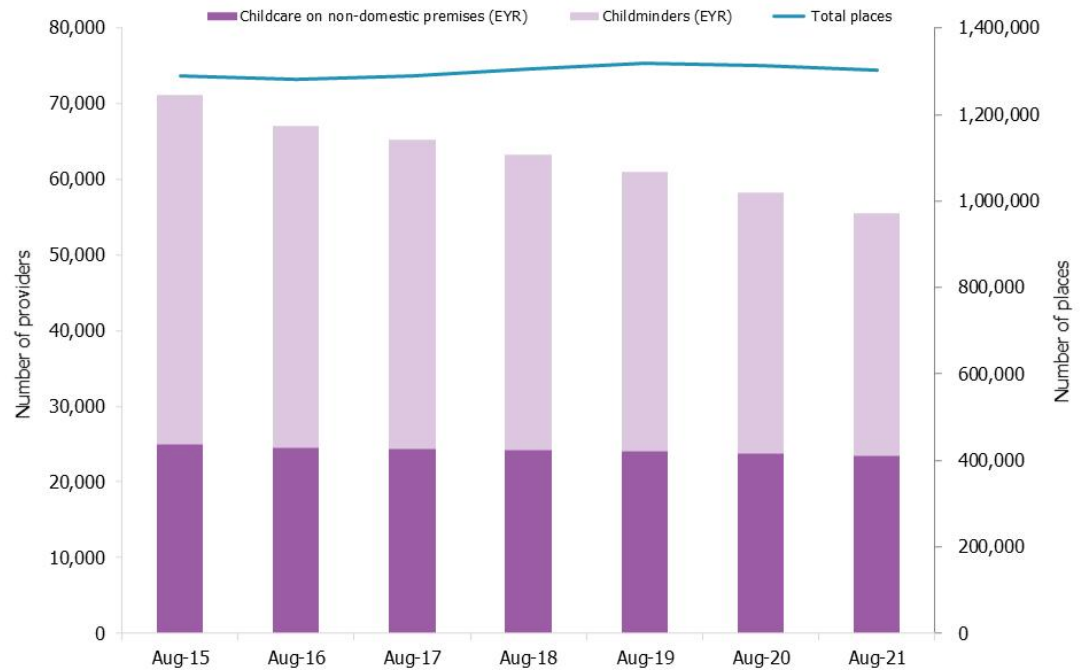
Childcare on domestic premises

Providers on domestic premises offered less than 1% (5,300) of places. On average, each provider offered 23 places.

Despite decreasing numbers of childminders, the number of childcare places has remained broadly stable since August 2015 (see [Figure 8](#)). This is due to an increase in the number of places offered by each provider over time. Since March 2021, the number of childcare places has increased by around 4,500 (less than 1%). On 31 August 2021, there were 1.3 million childcare places offered by providers on the EYR.

Figure 8: Childcare providers and places on the EYR over time, by

provider type



Note: places data from August 2018 onwards is recorded in an updated administrative system and captures slightly more childcare places than previously.

View [data in an accessible table format](#).

Inspections and regulatory activity

Most recent inspections of providers on the EYR

On 31 August 2021, 73% (40,900) of eligible providers on the EYR had received a full inspection.^[footnote 3] At their most recent inspection, 97% of all childcare providers on the EYR were judged either good or outstanding, up by 1 percentage point since 31 March 2021. This represents a substantial increase from 31 August 2015, when the proportion was 85% (see [Figure 1](#)). However, the proportion of outstanding providers has dropped by 1 percentage point to 17% since 31 March 2021.

The quality of those leaving the sector may have contributed to the rise in the proportion of providers judged good or outstanding. Providers leaving the sector are more likely to have been judged requires improvement or inadequate at their most recent inspection than those that remain. Of the 2,500 providers that left the EYR since March 2021, 1,500 had received a full inspection. Of these, 8% had received a judgement of requires improvement or inadequate at their most recent

inspection, compared with only 3% of active providers.

Childcare on non-domestic premises

At their most recent inspection, 98% of childcare providers on non-domestic premises were judged good or outstanding. This was made up of 22% of providers judged outstanding and 76% of providers judged good.

At the regional level, there was some variation in the proportion of childcare providers on non-domestic premises that were judged outstanding. This ranged from 20% in the East Midlands to 25% in the North East (see [Figure 9](#)).

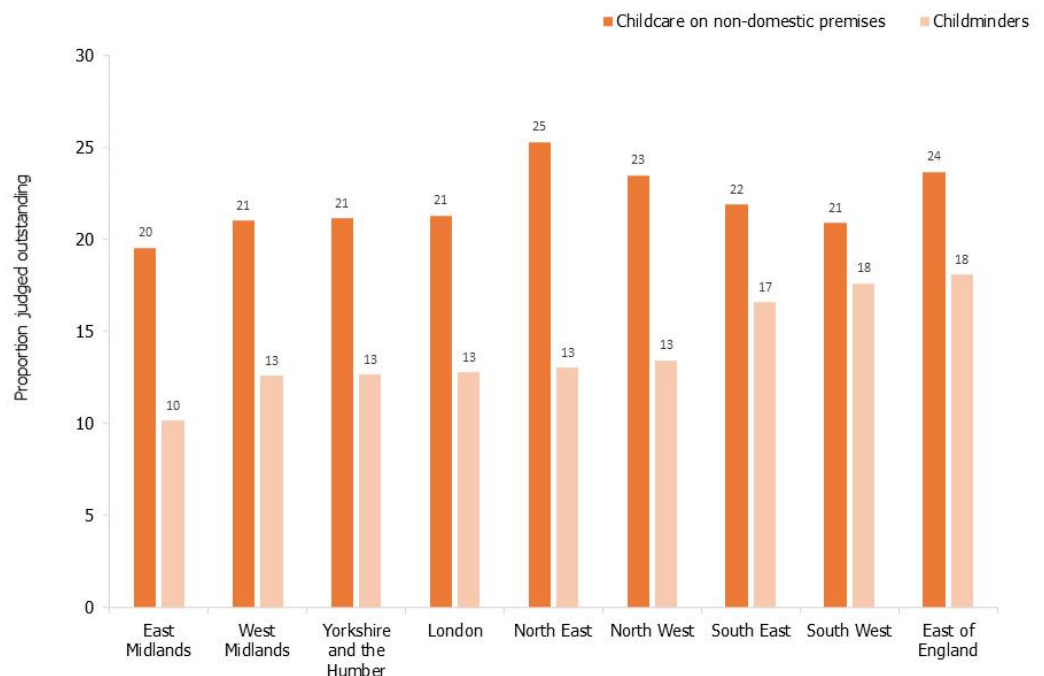
Childminders

The proportion of childminders who were judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection was 96%. This was made up of 14% judged outstanding and 82% judged good.

At the regional level, the lowest proportion of childminders that were judged outstanding was in the East Midlands (10%), while the highest proportion were in the East of England and South West (both 18%).

In all regions, a higher proportion of childcare on non-domestic premises was judged outstanding compared with childminders. The differences in proportion ranged from 3 percentage points in the South West to 12 percentage points in the North East.

Figure 9: Percentage of childminders and non-domestic providers judged outstanding as at 31 August 2021, by region



View [data in an accessible table format](#).

You can find additional information on local authorities and Parliamentary constituencies in the [provider-level data file accompanying this release](#).

Inspections and regulatory activity between 1 April 2021 and 31 August 2021

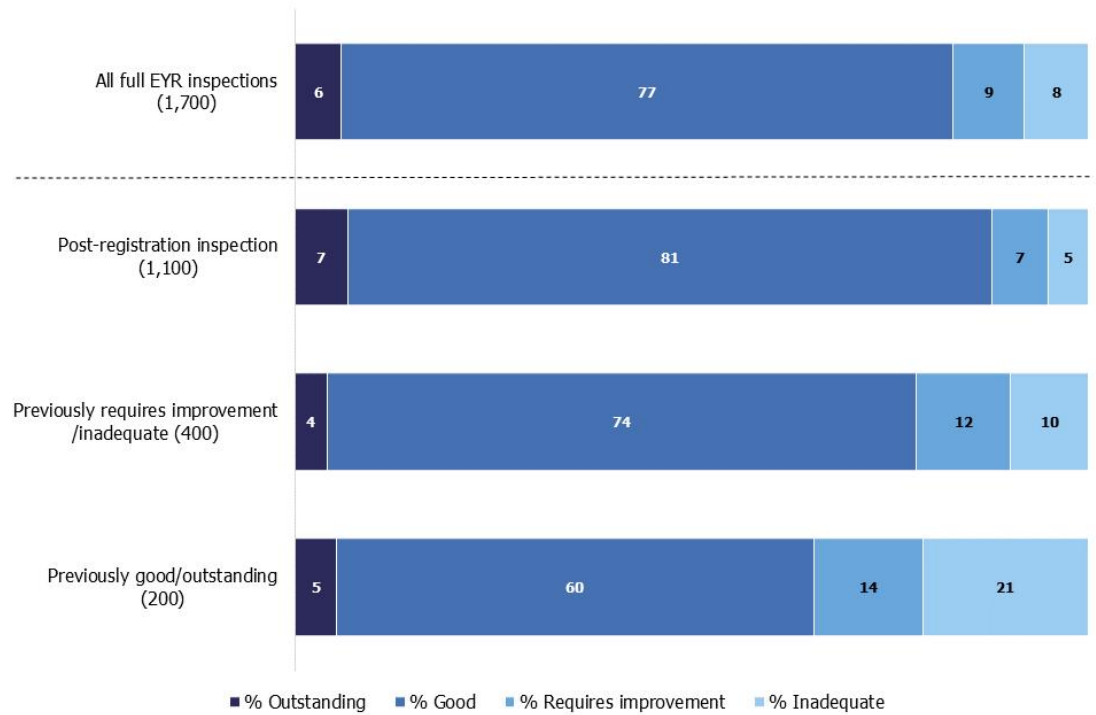
EYR inspections

We restarted routine EIF inspections in May 2021. We prioritised providers with lower judgements at their last inspection, those that Ofsted had recent concerns or notifications about and those that had not been inspected for a significant amount of time.

Between 1 April 2021 and 31 August 2021, we carried out around 2,100 inspections of providers registered on the EYR. Of these, 1,700 providers had a full inspection. Of the full inspections, most (1,100) were of providers that had not yet had a first full inspection. Of these, 88% were judged good or outstanding.

The remaining 600 providers had previously had a full inspection. Of these, 200 providers received a good or outstanding grade at their previous inspection, while 400 providers were reinspected following a requires improvement or inadequate judgement. Of the providers that received a requires improvement or inadequate judgement at their previous inspection, 78% improved to good or outstanding at reinspection. In contrast, only 65% of providers that were good or outstanding at their previous inspection continued to be good or outstanding following inspection (see [Figure 10](#)).

Figure 10: Overall effectiveness of registered early years providers inspected between 1 April 2021 and 31 August 2021



Note: numbers are rounded to the nearest 100.

View [data in an accessible table format](#).

CR inspections

Our inspection of providers registered on the CR has continued throughout the latest reporting period. These inspections do not result in a quality (graded) judgement but a judgement as to whether the provider has met or not met the legal requirements for registration. Between 1 April 2021 and 31 August 2021, we carried out around 1,200 CR inspections. Of these, we found that 81% met the requirements of registration.

Registration visits

Our regulatory and enforcement activity, including registration of new providers, has continued during the latest reporting period (1 April 2021 to 31 August 2021). During this time, we carried out around 1,200 registration visits. The majority of these were to prospective childminders.

Regulatory visits

We have carried out around 3,200 regulatory visits and telephone calls during the reporting period. The large majority of these visits were to childminders or childcare on non-domestic premises on the EYR (94%).

Childminder agencies

Childminder agencies were introduced in September 2014, enabling new childminders to choose to register with Ofsted directly or register with an agency. Existing childminders could also choose to de-register with Ofsted and register instead with a childminder agency. Childminder agencies are responsible for completing quality assurance visits to the childminders who are registered with them, with Ofsted inspecting the childminder agencies.

Childminder agencies are only eligible for inspection when they have childminders on roll. There are only 2 overall effectiveness inspection outcomes: 'effective' and 'ineffective'. On 31 August 2021, 9 childminder agencies were registered with Ofsted. Of these, 5 had childminders on roll and were therefore eligible for inspection. Of these 5 childminder agencies, we have inspected 3 to date and all have been judged 'effective'.

Data for childminder agencies is available in the [provider-level data file accompanying this release](#).

Early years provision in the schools sector

Early years provision is also provided in the schools sector. It takes place in state-funded and independent schools. If nurseries within schools are only looking after children aged 2 and over, they are exempt from registration on the EYR. Nurseries looking after children aged younger than 2 are still required to register on the EYR and are therefore covered in the previous sections.

In state-funded schools, other than nursery schools, early years provision is given its own judgement as part of the overall inspection of the school. On 31 August 2021, there were around 10,700 state-funded schools with an early years judgement at their most recent school inspection. Of these, 82% were judged good or outstanding for overall effectiveness and 89% were judged to be good or outstanding for early years provision.

On 31 August 2021, there were 388 state-funded nursery schools in England. We have inspected all of these and 98% were judged to be good or outstanding at their most recent inspection (see Table 1). This was made up of a very large proportion (63%) of nursery schools judged outstanding and 35% judged good.

Table 1: Overall effectiveness of open state-funded nursery schools on 31 August 2021

All inspected	Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate
---------------	-------------	------	----------------------	------------

	nursery schools				
Number of nursery schools inspected	388	245	137	6	0
Percentage of inspected nursery schools	100	63	35	2	0

For more information on school inspections and outcomes, refer to [our official statistics on state-funded schools inspections and outcomes](#).

Many independent schools also provide nursery provision. On 31 August 2021, there were 220 non-association independent schools with an early years judgement at their most recent standard inspection. Of these, 79% were judged good or outstanding for their early years provision. For more information on non-association independent schools inspections and outcomes, see [our statistics on non-association independent schools](#).

Ofsted only inspects non-association independent schools. The [Independent Schools Inspectorate \(ISI\)](#) inspects association independent schools.

Notes

There is an explanation about the main uses of this data, further contextual information and the arrangements for quality assurance in the [methodology and quality report](#) accompanying this release.

The methodology and quality report also provides information on the strengths and limitations of the statistics.

Revisions to previous release

The [provisional data in the previous release](#) related to inspections that took place between 1 September 2020 and 31 March 2021 and were published by 30 April 2021. A revised list of inspections in this period is provided in Tables 14 to 19 of the [‘Childcare providers and inspections charts and tables’ document for this release](#). This revised data includes no additional inspections that were published by 30 September 2021 (that were not published by 30 April 2021).

We publish revisions to data in this publication in line with [our revisions policy for official statistics](#).

Education inspection framework (EIF)

We carry out inspections from 1 September 2019 under the [EIF](#). The EIF supports consistency when carrying out inspections of early years and childcare providers, maintained schools, academies, non-association independent schools, and further education and skills providers in England. We evaluate the overall quality and standards of the early years provision in line with the principles and requirements of the [early years foundation stage statutory framework](#). Inspectors judge the overall effectiveness of the early years provision, taking into account 4 judgements:

- quality of education
- behaviour and attitudes
- personal development
- effectiveness of leadership and management

We were required to inspect all providers that were on the EYR on 1 August 2016 at least once by 31 July 2020. We will normally inspect providers that have registered after this date within 30 months of registration. However, due to the impact of COVID-19, we paused our routine inspections in mid-March 2020. We started these in May 2021.

Common inspection framework

Between 1 September 2015 and 31 August 2019, we carried out inspections under the [common inspection framework](#). Inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the early years provision, taking into account the following judgements:

- quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- personal development, behaviour and welfare
- effectiveness of leadership and management
- outcomes for children

Glossary

Definitions of terms are in our [statistical glossary](#).

Further information

We publish the following information on the inspection of early years providers:

- [early years and childcare statistics](#)
- [EIF](#)
- [framework for the regulation of provision on the childcare register](#)

Contact for comments or feedback

If you have any comments or feedback on this publication, you should contact Anita Patel on 03000 130 914 or Anita.Patel@ofsted.gov.uk.

Annual Report

We will publish findings from our forthcoming [Annual Report](#) on 7 December 2021.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the following for their contribution to this statistical release: Richard Smith, Lucy Conway, Helen Woodley and Austen Norris.

Annex: data tables for figures

This section contains the underlying data in an accessible table format for all figures.

Data for figure 1: Overall effectiveness of active early years registered providers at their most recent inspection over time

Date (number of providers in brackets)	% providers judged outstanding	% providers judged good	% providers judged requires improvement	% providers judged inadequate
31 August 2021 (40,900)	17	80	2	1

31 August 2020 (43,700)	17	79	3	1
31 August 2019 (49,800)	20	76	3	1
31 August 2018 (51,200)	19	76	4	1
31 August 2017 (52,500)	17	76	5	1
31 August 2016 (55,300)	15	76	8	1
31 August 2015 (58,800)	15	70	14	1

See [Figure 1](#).

Data for figure 2: Childcare providers registered with Ofsted as at 31 August 2021, by provider type

Provider type	Number of providers as at 31 August 2021
Childminders	33,700
Childcare on non-domestic premises	27,400
Home childcarers	9,700
Childcare on domestic premises	200

See [Figure 2](#).

Data for figure 3: Childminder joiners and leavers in the childcare sector over time

Academic year	Joiners	Leavers
2015 to 2016	4,180	7,430
2016 to 2017	3,943	5,886
2017 to 2018	3,412	5,376

2018 to 2019	2,749	5,056
2019 to 2020	2,877	4,718
2020 to 2021	1,964	4,912

See [Figure 3](#).

Data for figure 4: Percentage change in the number of childminders since 31 August 2020

Number of childminders as at 31 August 2021 in brackets	Percentage change in 2020 to 2021
All England (33,700)	-8
North East (1,400)	-10
East of England (4,100)	-9
North West (3,800)	-9
South East (6,300)	-9
South West (3,000)	-9
East Midlands (2,700)	-8
Yorkshire and the Humber (3,300)	-8
West Midlands (2,600)	-8
London (6,500)	-5

See [Figure 4](#).

Data for figure 5: Percentage change in the number of childminders between 2018/19 and 2020/21 by region

Region	% Net overall change 2020 to 2021	% Net overall change 2019 to 2020	% Net overall change 2018 to 2019
North West	-9	-6	-5
North East	-10	-4	-7
Yorkshire	-8	-5	-6

and the
Humber

East Midlands	-8	-6	-7
West Midlands	-7	-6	-5
East of England	-9	-5	-4
London	-5	-3	-5
South East	-9	-5	-7
South West	-8	-6	-7

See [Figure 5](#).

Data for figure 6: Venn diagram of Ofsted-registered providers by the different registers for childcare

Register combination	Number of childcare providers by register combination
EYR, CCR and VCR	43,500
EYR and CCR	5,500
EYR and VCR	58
EYR only	6,600
CCR and VCR	2,700
CCR only	200
VCR only	12,400

See [Figure 6](#).

Data for figure 7: Number of childcare places offered by providers on the EYR as at 31 August 2021, by provider type

Provider type	Places offered by providers on the EYR, as at 31 August 2021	% of all places on the EYR
Childcare on non-	1.1 million	84

domestic premises

Childminders	206,100	16
Childcare on domestic premises	5,300	<1

See [Figure 7](#).

Data for figure 8: Childcare providers and places on the EYR over time, by provider type

Date	Childminders on the EYR	Childcare on non-domestic premises on the EYR	Total number of childcare places offered
31 August 2015	46,044	25,065	1,288,184
31 August 2016	42,563	24,483	1,281,604
31 August 2017	40,827	24,382	1,290,556
31 August 2018	39,013	24,224	1,304,902
31 August 2019	36,831	24,101	1,319,465
31 August 2020	34,535	23,801	1,312,215
31 August 2021	31,957	23,538	1,302,300

See [Figure 8](#).

Data for figure 9: Percentage of childminders and non-domestic providers judged outstanding on 31 August 2021, by region

Region	% of childcare on non-domestic premises	% of childminders
East Midlands	20	10
West Midlands	21	13
Yorkshire and the Humber	21	13
London	21	13
North East	25	13
North West	23	13
South East	22	17
South West	21	18
East of England	24	18

See [Figure 9](#).

Data for figure 10: Overall effectiveness of active early years registered providers inspected between 1 April 2021 and 31 August 2021

Inspection type (number of providers in brackets)	% providers judged outstanding	% providers judged good	% providers judged requires improvement	prov ju inade
All full EYR inspections (1,700)	6	77	9	
Post-registration inspection (1,100)	6	77	9	
Previously requires improvement/inadequate (400)	5	76	9	
Previously good/outstanding (200)	2	69	18	

See [Figure 10](#).

1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 100. [↵](#)
2. Places numbers of less than one million are rounded to the nearest 100. Places numbers of more than one million are rounded to the nearest 100,000. [↵](#)
3. A small proportion of providers may have only received a no children on roll (NCOR) inspection. These are excluded from the total number of providers on the EYR that have received an inspection. We have also excluded providers that, under the EIF, are now classed as out-of-school day care providers but may have previously had a full EYR inspection. [↵](#)

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