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Research and analysis

A focus on inadequate early years providers

Published 7 February 2023

Applies to England

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This commentary draws on [management information for early years and childcare providers as at 31 December 2022 and 31 December 2021](#).

Inadequate early years providers

This commentary discusses providers on the Early Years Register (EYR) that were active and had been judged inadequate as at 31 December 2022, where the most recent inspection was conducted under the education inspection framework (EIF). [\[footnote 1\]](#)

Once a provider is registered on the EYR, we carry out regular inspections to evaluate the overall quality and standards of its early years provision.

Inspection outcomes

By 31 December 2022, there were 18,400^[footnote 2] providers that had received their most recent full inspection under the EIF. Of these, 400^[footnote 3] providers (2%) were judged inadequate for overall effectiveness.

Key judgements

As part of a full EIF inspection, an early years provider is graded on 4 key judgements:

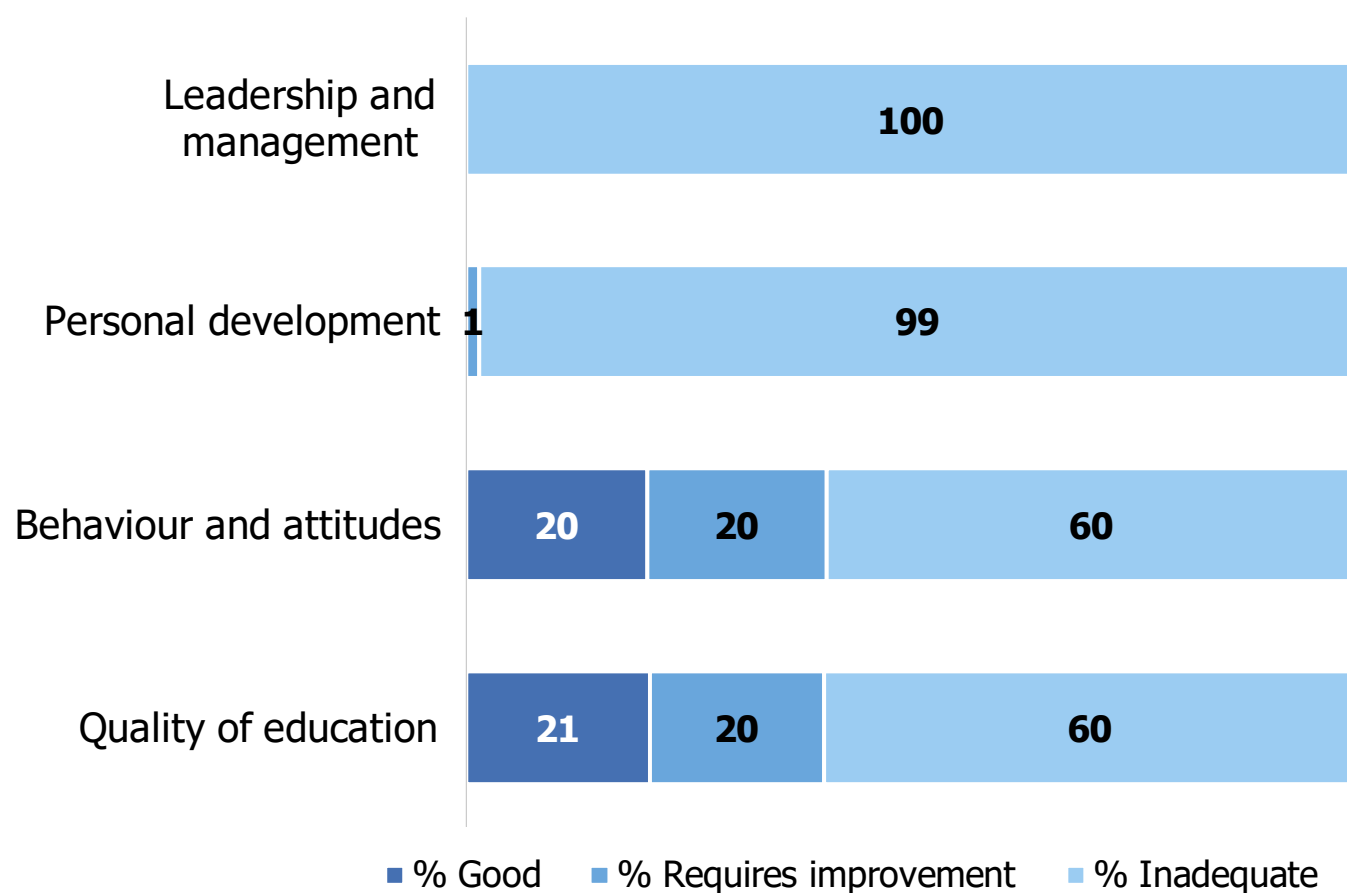
- 'quality of education'
- 'behaviour and attitudes'
- 'personal development'
- 'leadership and management'

A rating of inadequate for any of the key judgements is likely to lead to an inadequate judgement for overall effectiveness.

Of the 400 inadequate providers, all were judged inadequate in 'leadership and management', while 99% were judged inadequate in 'personal development'.

A smaller proportion of providers were judged inadequate in the 'quality of education' (60%) and 'behaviour and attitudes' (60%) key judgements. This indicates that inadequate providers were more likely to achieve better outcomes in these key judgements.

Figure 1: Key judgements of providers judged inadequate as at 31 December 2022



Note: percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.

See the [data in an accessible table](#).

Safeguarding

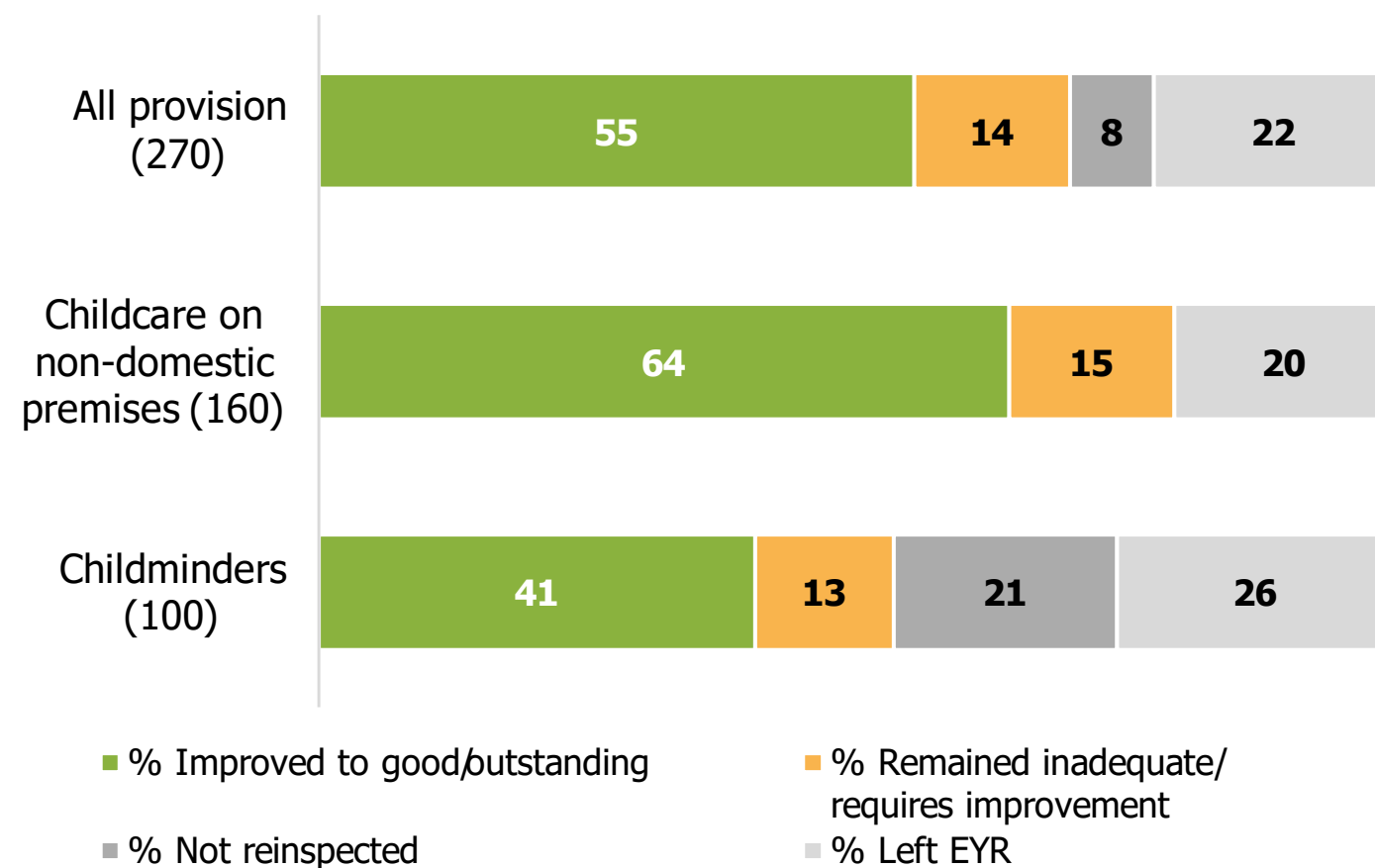
While inspectors do not give a separate grade for safeguarding practice, there is a written judgement in the inspection report on whether or not arrangements for safeguarding children are effective.

Of the 400 inadequate providers, 96% were deemed to have ineffective safeguarding. This often led to an inadequate judgement for 'leadership and management' as well as for overall effectiveness.

Outcomes for early years providers previously judged inadequate

The following section refers to 'previously inadequate EYR providers'. These are providers that were active and judged inadequate (under the EIF) as at 31 December 2021. We used [published management information as at 31 December 2021](#) to investigate the trends that exist for these providers and track if they are still registered, and if they have improved.

Figure 2: Registration status and reinspection outcomes of previously inadequate childcare providers



Note: Figures for childcare on domestic premises have been removed due to low numbers.

Numbers in brackets refer to the number of providers.

Providers that have left the EYR may have been reinspected since 31 December 2021.

Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.

See the [data in an accessible table](#).

Registration on the EYR

The number of providers that left the EYR is used as an estimate for those that have closed. Most EYR leavers are resignations, but some may have had their registration cancelled or may have chosen to change their provision.

Previously inadequate providers are more likely to leave the EYR compared to good or outstanding providers.

22% of previously inadequate providers had left the EYR by 31 December 2022, compared to 9% of good providers and 7% of outstanding providers.

Childminders previously judged to be inadequate are more likely (26%) to have left the EYR than providers of childcare on non-domestic premises that were previously inadequate (20%). This reflects wider trends across the sector, but is more pronounced for inadequate childminders than for those that were not judged inadequate.

Reinspection

When a provider is judged inadequate, we identify where improvements are needed and make recommendations or set actions for the provider to take. We will then conduct a follow-up inspection no later than 6 months after the inspection where they were judged inadequate.

Of the 210 previously inadequate providers that were still active by 31 December 2022, 90% had received at least one full inspection with a published report, and 79% had improved to good. The remaining 10% of providers were all childminders with no children on roll at the time of their reinspection.

Following reinspection, 2% of previously inadequate providers remained inadequate.

A provision with 2 previous 'inadequate' judgements is likely to have its registration cancelled if there is no improvement at the next inspection.

Annex: data tables for figures

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

Data for figure 1: Key judgements of providers judged inadequate as at 31 December 2022

Key judgement	% providers judged good	% providers judged requires improvement	% providers judged inadequate
Leadership and management	0	0	100
Personal	0	1	99

development

Behaviours and attitudes	20	20	60
Quality of education	21	20	60

See [Figure 1](#).

Data for figure 2: Registration status and reinspection outcomes of previously inadequate childcare providers

Provider type	Number of providers	% of providers improved to good/outstanding	% of providers remaining inadequate/requires improvement	% of providers not reinspected
All provision	270	55	14	8
Childcare on non-domestic premises	160	64	15	0
Childminders	100	41	13	21

See [Figure 2](#).

1. From 1 September 2019, we carried out inspections under the education inspection framework (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. [↩](#)
2. Numbers over 1000 have been rounded to the nearest 100 and numbers over 100 have been rounded to the nearest 10. [↩](#)
3. Based on inspections carried out and published by 31 December 2022. [↩](#)

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