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∨ Menu

[Home](#) > [Parenting, childcare and children's services](#) > [Childcare and early years](#) > [Providing childcare](#)
> [Performance and inspection of childcare providers](#)
> [Early years inspections: statistical commentaries 2022 to 2023](#)



Research and analysis

A focus on childminders

Updated 7 September 2023

Applies to England

Contents

[The number of childminders is falling](#)

[Age and registration length of childminders](#)

[Tenure of childminder properties](#)[Age and energy efficiency of childminder properties](#)[Conclusion](#)[Annex: Property data](#)[Annex: Data tables for figures](#) [Print this page](#)

Childminders look after children for payment or reward, in a domestic property that is not normally where the child lives. Childminders have the option to register either with Ofsted or with a childminder agency. This commentary focuses on childminders that are registered directly with Ofsted.

Gaining a better understanding of the characteristics of childminders and the properties from which they operate can help explain the ongoing decline in childminder numbers.

This commentary looks at a range of analysis and trends that might help explain some of the barriers to joining the childminding profession and those that may contribute to childminders leaving. The analysis includes:

- number of childminders over time
- number of childminder places over time
- changes in the average age of active and resigning childminders
- registration length
- linked data on property age, tenure and energy efficiency for the half of active childminders who have an energy performance certificate (EPC) (See [Annex: Property data](#))

The number of childminders is falling

The number of childminders has declined over the past decade, from 56,200 in 2013 to 27,900 in 2023 - a fall of 50%. Over this period, the number of joiners (new registrations) has been falling and is consistently lower than the number of leavers. In the last financial year (2022–23), 5,200 childminders left our registers while 1,700 childminders joined.^{[\[footnote 1\]](#)}

Figure 1: Childminder joiners and leavers, by financial year



Source: [Childcare providers and inspections official statistics](#)

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

The number of places offered by childminders has also declined from 241,000 in March 2019 to 171,000 in March 2023. During the same period, the average number of places offered by nurseries

and pre-schools (childcare on non-domestic settings) has increased. Therefore, the total number of early years places has declined at a slower rate than the total number of early years providers.

Age and registration length of childminders

Age of childminders

In 2022–23, the average age of a childminder registering with Ofsted was 37 years, a small increase from 36 years in 2018–19. In the same period, the average age of an active childminder was 48 years, an increase from 46 years in 2018–19. The average age of a childminder resigning was also 48 years in 2022–23, an increase from 45 years in 2018–19. The ageing cohort of active providers is likely to result in a continuing trend of increasing resignations in the coming years.

Registration length

Childminders who resigned in 2022–23 were registered with Ofsted for an average of 11 years. However, 18% of childminders resigned within their first 3 years of registration. Of those childminders resigning in their first 3 years, 58% were aged under 40.

A net increase in the number of childminder places available will require both an increase in the number of registrations and improved retention of existing providers, particularly in the initial years after registration.

Tenure of childminder properties

Owner-occupied housing

Active childminders are more likely to operate from owner-occupied housing than rented housing. Of all Ofsted-registered childminders with an EPC, 74% live in owner-occupied housing compared with 64% for the national average. [\[footnote 2\]](#)

Rented housing

In comparison to the national average, active childminders are less likely to live in rented housing. In England:

- 13% of childminders live in social rented housing compared with 17% of all households.
- 12% of childminders live in private rented housing compared with 19% of all households.

Some prospective childminders might be discouraged from joining the profession if there are restrictions from their landlords.

Age and energy efficiency of childminder properties

Property age is the single biggest factor associated with the energy efficiency of a home. [\[footnote 3\]](#) Active childminders tend to occupy properties that are older and less energy-efficient than the national average.

Of all childminders who have an EPC rating, 79% live in properties built before 1983 compared with 72% of all properties built in England. [\[footnote 4\]](#) Less than 3% of childminders live in homes built after 2007, compared with 10% of all homes. The median EPC of an active childminder is 65, lower than the national median EPC rating (67). See [Annex: Property data](#).

This suggests that the average childminder lives in a property that may consume more energy and face higher costs than the average property.

Figure 2: Age of properties used by childminders with England comparison



Source: [Valuation Office Agency council tax official statistics, 2021](#) [\[footnote 5\]](#)

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

Conclusion

This combination of demographic and housing data suggests that the childminder profession is reliant on a diminishing cohort of providers who are more likely to operate from older, owner-occupied properties. The childcare sector is not being replenished at a sufficient rate to sustain the current number of childminders. Any solution will need to increase the number of childminders registering and increase the period of time that they work in the profession.

Annex: Property data

To complete this analysis, we linked our Ofsted provider dataset to [EPC data from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities](#) using address information and the unique property reference number for each property.

EPCs indicate the energy efficiency of properties. They are based on data about a building's energy features, for example the building materials used, the heating systems and insulation. The EPC of a property gives an indication of the energy costs used by a household: a higher EPC rating indicates a lower energy cost as less energy is required to maintain the same temperature in the property.

Data on energy efficiency ratings, tenure and age of properties do not cover all properties used by childminders in England because not all properties have an EPC. EPCs were introduced in 2007, and are required when a property is constructed, sold or let. EPCs are valid for 10 years, therefore the certificate may not reflect energy efficiency improvements made to a property since it was issued. Properties may have more than one record within the data. We have only used the most recent EPC rating to prevent double counting. Some properties have an EPC that has expired. These are still included within this dataset. The dataset comprises around 14,500 childminders out of 27,900 who were registered with Ofsted on 31 March 2023. Properties used by childminders who have never received an EPC were either exempt or were built prior to 2007 and have not been rented or sold in the meantime. These properties are more likely to be owner-occupied, older properties.

National comparator figures for property tenure and property age for England were sourced from the [English Housing Survey 2021-22](#) and [Valuation Office Agency data](#), respectively. These figures represent the highest quality national estimates available. Caution is advised in interpreting the magnitude of these differences. Equivalent figures for childminders were sourced from EPC records.

Annex: Data tables for figures

Data for figure 1: Childminder joiners and leavers, by financial year

Financial year	Joiners	Leavers	Total number of childminders
2012–13	6,953	8,261	56,166
2013–14	5,715	8,881	53,000
2014–15	5,323	8,938	49,385
2015–16	4,571	7,669	46,287
2016–17	3,927	6,719	43,495

2017–18	3,774	5,569	41,700
2018–19	2,442	5,189	38,953
2019–20	3,652	5,633	36,972
2020–21	2,003	4,188	34,787
2021–22	1,579	4,993	31,373
2022–23	1,697	5,193	27,877

See [Figure 1](#).

Data for figure 2: Age of properties used by childminders with England comparison

Year	Percentage of properties - England	Percentage of properties - childminders
Before 1900	15.6	4.1
1900-1929	10.3	11.6
1930-1949	13.8	20.8
1950-1966	16.0	21.9
1967-1975	10.1	14.2
1976-1982	6.5	6.6
1983-1990	5.7	6.1
1991-1995	3.7	3.6
1996-2002	5.2	5.4
2003-2006	2.9	3.0
2007-2022	10.3	2.7

See [Figure 2](#).

1. Figures over 100,000 have been rounded to the nearest 1,000. Figures under 100,000 have been rounded to the nearest 100. [↩](#)

2. Based on tenure at the time of the EPC rating. It is possible for tenure to have subsequently changed.

Where data is not available, property tenure data is excluded from this analysis. This sample consists of around 13,100 properties. [↩](#)

3. [Age of the property is the biggest single factor in energy efficiency of homes](#) - Office for National Statistics. [↩](#)
4. Where data is not available, age of property data is excluded from this analysis. This sample consists of around 13,100 properties. [↩](#)
5. To produce a direct comparison of the age of properties across the VOA data and childminder property data, we have estimated the number of properties built in England per year by assuming that properties were built at a constant rate within each age banding. Therefore, these figures should be interpreted with caution. [↩](#)

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