

# Early Years Strategy 2018-2021





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## Foreword

We are pleased to introduce the Slough Early Years Strategy 2018-2021.

The Slough Early Years Service delivers key statutory functions for Slough Borough Council, including:

- management of funded free early education including the extended entitlement
- supporting and monitoring standards and provision across early years settings
- the provision of early help support in partnership with Public Health and the Slough Children's Services Trust
- SEND services and support for early years provision
- the moderation of EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) statutory assessment
- Slough's network of children's centres
- Early Help Hub.

As a council we are committed to Slough Early Years Services and acknowledge the significant part our service plays in the early intervention and preventative agendas.

Slough Early Years Service has seen incremental increases in the attainment of a Good Level of Development (GLD) across the EYFS and in 2018/2019; Slough's children exceeded the national figure by 2%. Slough's GLD is currently 73.6%.

There is support from cabinet for Slough's children's centres and development of additional early years and childcare places across the sector.

In the long term, the Slough Early Years Service intends to:

- review and redesign services towards a more sustainable and integrated model, including the network of children's centres
- contribute to reductions in the levels of obesity at the end of the foundation stage
- improve the oral health among under 5's
- increase boys attainment and reduce the gender gap in attainment at the end of the foundation stage
- increase the number of childminders undertaking the I Talk programme
- develop early years and childcare places in order to meet demand through the provision of a sustainable market
- support the development of gender diversity and qualification levels within the early years workforce with a specific focus on recruitment and retention
- ensure inclusive provision for children enables the early identification of specific needs, including SEND and provides access to free early education and appropriate support services.



**Cllr Shabnum Sadiq**  
Cabinet member for children and education



**Cate Duffy**  
Director of children, learning and skills

## Introduction

Welcome to Slough's Early Years Strategy.

International research and policy identifies that: "the period from pregnancy to age three is the most critical, when the brain grows faster than at any other time; 80% of a baby's brain is formed by this age.... This is a window of opportunity to lay a foundation of health and wellbeing whose benefits last a lifetime – and carry into the next generation." Nurturing care for early childhood development, World Health Organisation 2018.

The Slough Early Years Service represents private, voluntary and independent sector provision together with maintained provision across Slough. We have a vibrant economy of provision that includes childminders, private and voluntary day nurseries, children's centres, primary schools, academies, free schools, maintained nursery schools and independent schools who deliver funded early education.

In developing our early years strategy we have taken account of the strategic context in relation to local, regional and national priorities. We have set out the landscape for early years provision across the sector and have identified key priorities for the service, rooted in the corporate agenda. One of these priorities is Ofsted readiness. Establishing high quality provision throughout the early years sector requires collaborative working across a range of partners that include children's centres and wider childrens services.

EYFS Profile attainment in Slough is currently higher than the national average, at 73.6% (2018). We are confident that our offer provides children across Slough with the opportunity to achieve the best possible outcomes and grow up to be happy, healthy and successful. We want Slough's children to have access to the highest quality provision. We can only achieve our vision by working in partnership and our networks are long established.

Slough is undergoing rapid regeneration and this transformation of the town presents the early years and childcare sector with opportunities to develop in order to meet the ever changing demographic needs. Our residents require high quality, accessible and affordable early years and childcare provision and our Workforce Strategy sets out our approach to developing the workforce.

<https://thelink.slough.gov.uk/early-years>

To support the infrastructure, the Early Years service is working with the sector to expand provision and create in excess of 1,000 new places. We have taken a long term strategic view and are working with planning and place development colleagues to predict the levels of demand in localities across Slough.

With a comprehensive offer of early education and a mixed economy of provision, I am proud to be working alongside a vibrant, inclusive and flexible sector to meet the needs of Slough's children and families.



**Michael Jarrett**  
Service lead, early years  
and development

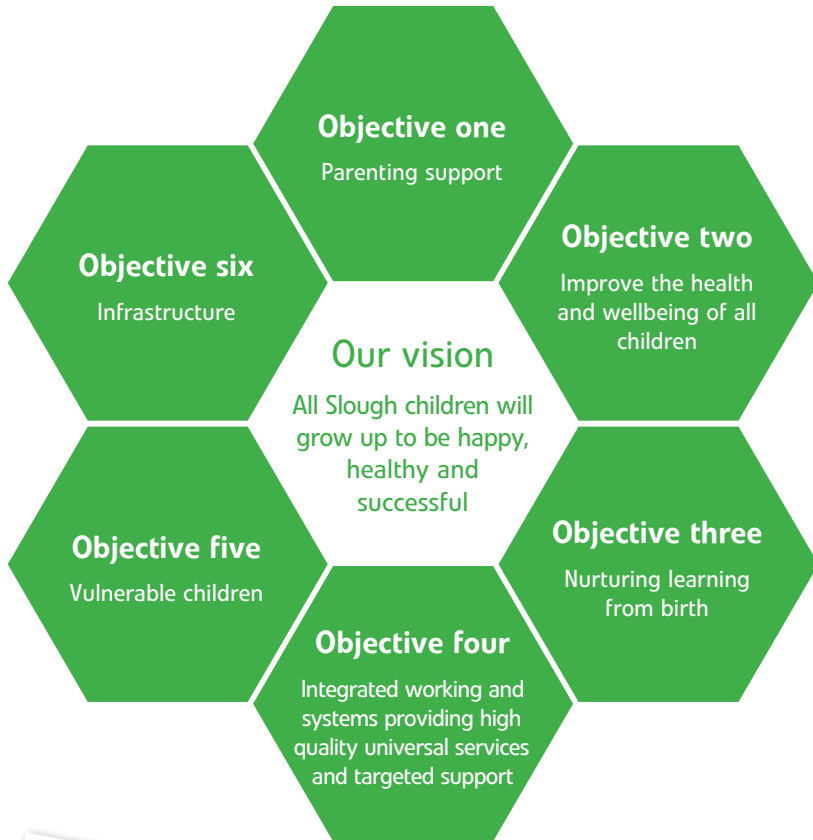
“If we change the beginning of the story  
we change the whole story”

- *Dimitri Christakis*

The World Health Organization 2018

[http://www.who.int/maternal\\_child\\_adolescent/documents/nurturing-care-early-childhood-development/en/](http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/documents/nurturing-care-early-childhood-development/en/)





## Objectives and priorities

### 1. Parenting support

Being a parent is an exciting, complex and challenging role. Positive parenting has a significant impact on children’s emotional, physical and cognitive development. From pregnancy onwards the attachment between the parent and the child influences the child’s ability to reach their full potential.

#### Context

- Antenatal and health services in Slough are covered by Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust.
- Online parent craft sessions are available.
- Universal parenting support is delivered through the children’s centres, including some targeted support, with further targeted parent support offered through Slough Children’s Service Trust (SCST) and Homestart.
- Before housing costs are considered, 19.2% of children in Slough are living in poverty. When we include housing costs, 29.79% live in poverty. This compares with the national figure of 30%.

#### Priorities

- Increase antenatal services offered in partnership with Health and Midwifery through children’s centres in order to support parents and children from the earliest stages.
- Improve levels of access to universal early years services from the earliest stages by increasing registrations via Health, Midwifery and Registry Office and targeted outreach work.
- Create a parenting strategy for Slough in collaboration with multi-agency partners to ensure a fit for purpose strategy which meets the needs of all families, from pregnancy onwards, at both targeted and universal levels.
- Support parents towards employability through programmes developed with partners for both targeted and universal support, linked with the child poverty agenda.





## 2. Improve the health and wellbeing of all children

Good health and wellbeing is vital if children and young people are to enjoy their childhood and achieve their full potential. Establishing good lifestyle habits in childhood provides the basis for lifelong health and wellbeing.

### Context

- The current health visiting offer in Slough is provided by Public Health Nursing 4 Slough, through SBC's contract with Solutions 4 Health.
- Children and Young People's Integrated Therapies Service (CYPIT) provides support services for children through the combination of speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy.
- The percentage of children in Slough deemed to be overweight or obese at both the end of reception and year 6 is higher than both the national averages and our statistical neighbours.
- Public health data indicates that the number of children suffering from tooth decay is substantially higher than the national average, with the main causes identified as unhealthy diet and non fluoridated water in Slough.

### Priorities

- Implement an Early Childhood Services Pathway to ensure a seamless and thorough offer for children and families from conception to school.
- Reduce levels of early childhood obesity through the promotion of active movement and healthy eating.
- Improve dental health in under 5's by increasing the numbers of children registered with a dentist and raising awareness of good oral health practice from birth through the Slough Healthy Smiles programme.
- Inform and support parents in their understanding of the importance of physical and mental wellbeing in early childhood.



## 3. Nurturing learning from birth

Good communication and language skills combined with strong social and emotional development support young children to become effective life long learners. Children who are helped to become resilient, confident and solution focussed are able to reach their full potential and thereby improve their life chances.

### Context

- Outcomes for children in early years are better than the national average, with a Good Level of Development in 2018 of 73.6%. This is 2.1 % above the national figure.
- A greater percentage of girls than boys achieve a GLD at the end of the Foundation Stage.
- Funded early education participation rates for eligible two year olds are low, currently lower than the national average.
- All children with SEND are not yet able to access extended entitlement hours if they require additional one to one support.

### Priorities

- Support parents in their role as their children's first educators, enabling an enriched home learning environment.
- Provide parents and providers with information about language and communication development that supports children to become effective communicators, multilingual where appropriate, with improved literacy.
- Promote good child centred transitions that instil confidence in parents, children and practitioners.
- Encourage the development of young children's self confidence and resilience through the provision of parenting support and effective key person working, with a focus on secure attachment.
- Continue to support boys increased attainment and narrow the gender gap evidenced in EYFSP

data through support for the development of inclusive provision that identifies and responds effectively to the requirements of individual children.

- Encourage all eligible children to participate in funded early learning with a specific focus on raising the number of eligible 2 year olds taking up a place and promoting inclusive practice to meet the needs of children with SEND.
- Raise providers awareness of ways to enable children with SEND to access the extended entitlement.
- Encourage the development of high quality, sustainable early years and childcare provision through effective support and market management information. This includes the workforce development strategy, childcare sufficiency assessment and business planning opportunities .



## 4. Integrated working and systems

Integrated working is integral to the delivery of high quality services and targeted support for vulnerable children and families. Universal services and targeted early interventions support the needs of Slough residents.

### Context

- Cross council and partnership working leads to systems and processes being streamlined, removing duplication, by aiding the identification and addressing of any gaps in the services. We work with a range of service partners to deliver our statutory duties.
- Children’s centre governance ensures the effective shaping of services that meet local and national objectives.
- Children’s social care functions are commissioned through the Slough Children’s Services Trust (SCST).
- Slough Borough Council in partnership with SCST, have developed an Early Help model to support vulnerable children and young people through coordinated support from community partners via the Early Help Hub.
- The Early Help offer in Slough provides support to families experiencing domestic abuse through signposting, referrals to appropriate services and basic safety planning.



### Priorities

- To work strategically with a range of service partners to fulfil our statutory duties.
- Review children’s centre governance arrangements.



## 5. Vulnerable children

We are committed to ensuring inclusion in education and the health and wellbeing of all children and young people in Slough by removing barriers to their opportunities to learn and achieve.

### Context

- Slough's Local Offer launched on 23rd November 2017. The Local Offer contains information about education, health and social care services that are available in Slough for children and young people aged 0 to 25 years, with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families.
- On average, the monthly number of cases held with Slough Children's Services Trust on the following levels of intervention are as recorded:
  - o Child Protection Plan = 62
  - o Child in Need = 202
  - o Children Looked After = 37
  - o Child Protection & Children Looked After = 2
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) is a confidential and impartial support and advice service for parents, carers and children and young people (aged up to 25 years) on issues to do with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Slough has a strategy that sets out how the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) will take action to safeguard children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation or those who are being abused via child sexual exploitation.

<https://www.sloughsafeguardingboards.org.uk/lscb/lscb/professionals/child-sexual-exploitation-and-missing>

- Slough Family Information Service (FIS) offers free impartial information and guidance about a wide range of services for children, young people and their families.
- Slough Prevent Strategy is delivered by Slough

Borough Council and provides a tailored support to vulnerable residents and where safeguarding concerns are serious, support can be provided through Channel. The nominated Prevent Coordinator for Slough is Naheem Bashir.

- Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust provides a dedicated midwife for FGM. Safeguarding procedures relating to FGM for Slough can be found on the Berkshire procedures online website [http://berks.proceduresonline.com/slough/p\\_fem\\_gen\\_mutil.html](http://berks.proceduresonline.com/slough/p_fem_gen_mutil.html)
- There is currently housing support for 11 young pregnant women to provide a place of safety during the post and antenatal period.

### Priorities

- Implementation of the Early Help Hub within the Slough Early Years Service in partnership with Slough Children's Services Trust.
- Embed and extend support, training and advice to providers on all aspects of safeguarding or concerns of a child protection nature.



## 6. Infrastructure

Slough's Five Year Plan sets out the council's five priority outcomes as well as a vision for Slough as a place of opportunity and ambition.

The council recognises many of its priorities cannot be achieved without the support of others and therefore supporting partnership working with the public, voluntary and private sector is integral to effective service delivery.

### Context

- The Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on the Local Authority to secure sufficient funded early education places for every eligible child in Slough. The Slough Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, or annual refresh, provides the Slough Early Years Service with updated local information about the supply of and demand for, early education and childcare places, taking into account housing developments and future population need.
- The Slough Early Years Service reports annually to elected council members about how the LA is meeting its sufficiency duty, highlighting potential place development requirements. The council has made a commitment to ensuring the provision of early years is a priority in Slough. This commitment is incorporated into the 2018-2023 Slough Place Strategy, section 9.
- The Childcare Act 2006 (sections 1-5) places a duty on local authorities to collaborate with Health and Job Centre Plus partners in fulfilling the children's centre core purpose.
- The Slough Early Years Service operates within the context of overarching council policies, procedures and aims as referenced by documents such as Slough Wellbeing Strategy, SBC Partnership Strategy, Multi Agency Early Help Strategy and Children and Adults Mental Health Strategy.
- The Slough Early Years Service co-ordinates the work of Early Years SEND, including home visiting, the Family Information Service, the Children's Services team, including support and advice for families, the children's centres core offer and childcare provision as well as managing and monitoring free education entitlements and early years assessment.
- Referrals in to the Slough Early Years Service are assessed and allocated to appropriate services on a fortnightly basis via the EY Panel.
- Councillor Shabnum Sadiq is the cabinet member for children and education which encompasses the Slough Early Years Service.

### Priorities:

- In 2019/2020 the Slough Early Years Service will launch an Early Years Board to address the strategic issues facing early years and childcare providers across Slough. The board will comprise representation from across the early years sector and will oversee sufficiency developments and future provision planning.
- Children's centres and the wider sector, including all early years providers, will support the council and its partners to address priority issues, directly through the settings' provision and indirectly through information sharing and family involvement with health and development initiatives.



## Appendix 1

These examples of national guidance and legislation illustrate the breadth of materials considered in the creation of the strategy. It is not an exhaustive list.

### National drivers

National reviews and strategies all support service provision and interventions that are focused on prevention and early intervention for children and pregnant women to ensure children get a good start in life and reach their full potential.

A recent Department of Education (DfE) statement clearly illustrates the importance of early education in government strategy, "The first few years of a child's life are critical to shaping their future development, and our ambition is to provide equality of opportunity for every child, regardless of background or where they live, because we know that good early years education is the cornerstone of social mobility." School Nurseries Capital Fund, September 2018.

### Improving social mobility through education

A good early years education is the cornerstone of improving social mobility and is therefore the focus of the first life-stage ambition in this plan. These key years are the opportunity to make sure that all children develop the strong cognitive, social and emotional foundations on which future success is built.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-social-mobility-through-education>

### 0 to 19 agenda / March 2018 Best start in life and beyond child poverty

This document is one of four supporting guides to assist local authorities in the commissioning of health visiting and school nursing services to lead and co-ordinate delivery of public health for children aged 0-19 year olds.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthy-child-programme-0-to-19-health-visitor-and-school-nurse-commissioning>

National agencies are increasingly focussed on the school readiness of young children. It is a measure of how prepared a child is to succeed in school cognitively, socially and emotionally and is impacted by a whole range of indicators: those related to the family (maternal mental health, homelessness, family income and parental education), the child (low birth weight, health status and immunisation rates) and services (quality and availability of funded early education) among many others.

The statistical measures being used to identify school readiness are generated from the EYFS profile data. This data is used by the DfE to monitor changes in the levels of children's development and how ready they are for the next stage of their education





## Two key specific indicators are:

- percentage of children achieving a good level of development at the end of reception
- percentage of children with free school meal status achieving a good level of development at the end of reception.

<https://www.eif.org.uk/report/language-as-a-child-wellbeing-indicator>

## Early Years Workforce Strategy 2017

This document sets out how the DfE plans to support the early years sector to remove barriers to attracting, retaining and developing the early years workforce.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-workforce-strategy>

## Legislation and statutory duties

### 2014 Children and Families Act

A key driver for a range of recent reforms and policy development was the 2014 Children and Families Act. The act made changes to the legislation around safeguarding, child protection, adoption, care plans, SEND provision and family law. The changes placed new duties on councils aimed at improving the lives of children and young people.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>

### Working together to safeguard children

A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

This guidance applies to all organisations and agencies who have functions relating to children including, but not limited to, local authorities, clinical commissioning groups, and police. It provides a child-centred approach to safeguarding aiming to ensure that practitioners will be clear about what is required of them individually, and how they need to work together in partnership with others.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children-2>

## Code of Practice 0 – 25 for children and young people with special educational needs and disabled children and young people

This provides statutory guidance on duties, policies and procedures relating to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations and applies to England.

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

## Statutory guidance for early years and childcare DfE

This statutory guidance from the DfE is for English local authorities on their duties pursuant to section 2 of the Childcare Act 2016 and sections 6, 7, 7A, 9A, 12 and 13 of the Childcare Act 2006. Local authorities must have regard to this guidance when seeking to discharge their duties.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-education-and-childcare-2>



## Model agreement early years provision, free of charge and free childcare DFE 2018

This model agreement from the DfE sets out the department's expectations on what should be included in agreements between local authorities and providers (provider agreements) and refers to early years provision free of charge (sections 7 and 7A of the Childcare Act 2006) and free childcare (section 2 of the Childcare Act 2016) as the 'free entitlement(s)' or 'free hours' or a 'free places'.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-early-years-provision-and-childcare-model-agreement>

## The Early Years Foundation Stage

This document sets out the statutory requirements that early years settings must adhere to.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

## Childcare registration

Early years settings must also fulfil the registration requirements outlined in the childcare register.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/become-a-registered-early-years-or-childcare-provider-in-england>





## Appendix 2

This appendix contains information about some of the data, strategies, policies and plans informing our Early Years Strategy. It is not an exhaustive list.

### Local drivers

#### The Five Year Plan

Slough Borough Council's Five Year Plan defines the council's vision, the priority outcomes against which resources will be allocated in order to achieve this, and the ways of working for the whole council.

<http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/five-year-plan.aspx>

Analysis of both national and local data coupled with detailed knowledge of our statutory duties informs our strategies for the attraction, retention and development of Slough's childcare workforce and the attainment of outcome one in the Five Year Plan.

#### Data analysis

Data on the demographics of the labour market in Slough shows that there are currently a high percentage of people who hold foreign professional qualifications. Our Slough Early Years Workforce Strategy aims to encourage a broader range of people into the childcare workforce by supporting their qualification conversion so that their knowledge can enrich the early years. A further benefit of this strategy is the potential increase to the levels of pay for the residents of Slough. The gross weekly pay for Slough residents is currently lower than the average for households in the south of England. Further information about the local labour supply and economic inactivity underpins not only our workforce strategy but is our focus on increasing funded early education participation rates in order to support families into work.

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157286/printable.aspx>

#### Birth rates

The number of babies being born of course influences Slough's population size. General fertility rates (GFR) allow comparisons in the number of births between different areas. This calculates the number of births in an area as a rate per 1,000 females aged 15 to 44. In 2014, there were over 78.8 births per 1,000 females of reproductive age in Slough. This is much higher than the national and regional average.

<http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/joint-strategic-needs-assessment/births.aspx>

#### Childcare Sufficiency Assessment – section 106

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) annual refresh provides an overview of the childcare market in Slough, identifying place development requirements in specific geographical locations by children's centre area.

<http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/childcare-sufficiency-assessment.aspx>

#### The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

This publication is used to assess the current and future healthcare and wellbeing needs of our residents. These needs will be met by local authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), the NHS and other agencies working in partnership.

<http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/joint-strategic-needs-assessment/>



## Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Every local authority is required to have a Health and Wellbeing Board as a committee of the local authority. However, the task of improving wellbeing is not something that local authorities can do alone and therefore the board includes partner agencies operating in the borough. In Slough we have made a deliberate decision to widen membership beyond the statutory requirements. We have also called our overarching partnership the Slough Wellbeing Board rather than a Health and Wellbeing Board – this is more than a symbolic gesture; it focuses our attention on being able to tackle the wider determinants of health to improve wellbeing rather than being constrained by operational health issues.

<http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/slough-joint-wellbeing-strategy.aspx>

## Early Help Strategy

Providing Early Help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life – from pre-birth, the foundation years through to the teenage years. Early Help can also prevent further problems arising, for example, if provided as part of a support plan where a child has returned home to their family from care.

<http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/slough-multi-agency-early-help-strategy-for-children-young-people-and-their-families-2017-2021.aspx>

## Slough Wellbeing Board (SWB)

This board responsibility for the Child Poverty Strategy. In Slough, the Children and Young People's Partnership Board is taking the lead on child poverty on behalf of the SWB and aims to make child poverty everyone's business.

<http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/sloughs-child-poverty-strategy-2015-2018.aspx>

## Slough Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

This board is a statutory body established under the Children Act 2004, responsible for ensuring that all agencies who work with children and young people in Slough work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the local area.

<https://www.sloughsafeguardingboards.org.uk/lscb>

## Crime rates

For the year ending March 2018, the crime rate in Slough was higher than average for the Thames Valley Police force area.

<https://www.police.uk/thames-valley/N462/performance/compare-your-area/>



## The Developer's guide

The guide aims to assist developers who are proposing to submit planning applications for residential and commercial schemes in Slough. It sets out the Council's requirements and processes, including what to expect from the planning service at various stages.

<http://www.slough.gov.uk/business/planning-and-building-control/developers-guide-and-the-community-infrastructure-levy.aspx>

## Economic strategy for growth

This four year Economic Development Plan for Growth 2014-18, sets out the proposed interventions and commitments which will represent the first phase towards achieving the borough's economic development vision for growth.

<http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/economic-development-strategic-plan-for-growth.aspx>

## Slough provider agreement

This provider agreement sets out how Slough Borough Council and early years providers in Slough will deliver funded early learning entitlements for 2, 3 and 4 year olds. The agreement meets the DfE's expectations regarding the contents of a provider agreement as outlined in: 'Model Agreement: Early years provision free of charge and free childcare'.

<http://www.slough.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/early-years-provider-agreement.aspx>

## Number of under fives in Slough

Regional population projections provide statistics on the potential future size and age structure of the population in England at region, county, local authority, clinical commissioning group and NHS England region levels. They are used as a common framework for informing local-level policy and planning as they are produced in a consistent way.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/bulletins/subnationalpopulationprojectionsforengland/2016based#nearly-all-local-authorities-are-projected-to-grow-by-mid-2026>

## Office for Standards in Education, Children Services and Skills (Ofsted)

Ofsted record and publish details of early years settings registered with them. This includes copies of inspection reports.

<https://reports.beta.ofsted.gov.uk/>

