



**The Rt Hon Baroness Jacqui Smith  
Minister for Skills**

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The Rt Hon Baroness Coffey DBE  
House of Lords  
London  
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11 March 2025

Dear Thérèse,

I am writing to follow up the question you raised during the recent Oral Statement on Breakfast Clubs Early Adopters on 27 February regarding local authorities which are underserved with childcare places.

Under Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006 Local authorities in England are responsible for ensuring that the provision of childcare is sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in their area, for children aged 0 to 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children). The statutory guidance on Early Education and Childcare sets out that local authorities must report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and make this report available and accessible to parents.

However, there remain differences in the availability of childcare depending on where you live in England. The issue is historic, and in some places, it is worse than others. The latest data from the Office of National Statistics and Ofsted ([Childcare accessibility by neighbourhood - Office for National Statistics](#)) show variations in the level of access to Ofsted-registered childcare places across the country with the most deprived local authorities the most likely to be areas with persistently low access to Ofsted-registered childcare. Caution should be applied when interpreting this analysis however, due to the absence of non-Ofsted registered provision, such as nurseries in schools, which may affect results. ([Childcare accessibility by neighbourhood, England: Ofsted's methodology - GOV.UK](#))

Thank you again for taking the time to engage on this important topic. A copy of this letter with this information will also be deposited in the House Library.

Yours sincerely,

**The Rt Hon Baroness Jacqui Smith  
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