

Childcare workforce recruitment and retention

**Advice for early years
and childcare providers**

September 2025

Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	Actions to support childcare workforce recruitment and retention	3
2.1	New Childminder Flexibilities	3
2.2	The 'Do Something Big' recruitment campaign and the free 'Find a Job' website... 4	4
2.3	Promote Workforce Development and Career Opportunities	4
2.4	Greater Staffing Flexibilities	6
2.5	New Digital Qualification Checker.....	7
3	Timewise - Childcare Pioneers Project.....	9
3.1	Top five recommendations for providers	11
4	Practitioners' View	14
4.1	An early years and childcare setting's approach	14
4.2	A recruitment specialist experience.....	14
4.3	Offer flexible working	15
4.4	The need for proactivity in recruitment.....	15
4.5	Rethink recruitment strategies	16
5	Background	17
5.1	National picture.....	17
5.2	Staff turnover - early years.....	17

1 Introduction

Childcare workforce recruitment and retention is generally recognised as a significant requirement to ensure the successful and long-term implementation of early years and childcare policy initiatives.

In this paper, Childcare Works shares links to Government support for schools, PVI and childminding settings, and reports on social enterprise Timewise Childcare Pioneers' project to explore the benefits of improvements to flexible working and overcoming barriers to change¹.

This paper concludes with how a nursery owner has been successfully adapting their recruitment and retention strategies and how recruitment specialists Love Childcare has supported providers to reframe childcare employment to attract potential recruits.

2 Actions to support childcare workforce recruitment and retention

In this section we share information about what is available to support providers recruit and retain staff, including new flexibilities for childminders aimed at helping childminders grow their businesses, reduce isolation, and overcome property-related barriers.

2.1 New Childminder Flexibilities

New flexibilities for childminders were introduced on 1 November 2024 with the aims of making it easier to join and stay in the profession. These changes aim to help childminders grow their businesses, reduce isolation, and overcome property-related barriers. Key updates include the option to register as a Childminder Without Domestic Premises and an increase in the number of people who can work together under a childminder's registration - from three to four.

The category of 'childminder without domestic premises' allows people to join the profession who may have previously been unable to, for example, if they are unable to work from home.

- Explore the opportunities these new flexibilities could offer you and your childminding business.

Links

- [Register as a childminder without domestic premises - GOV.UK](#)
- [Newsflash – New Flexibilities for Childminders - Foundation Years](#)
- [New changes for childminders coming soon – Ofsted: early years](#)

¹ <https://timewise.co.uk/article/building-the-early-years-and-childcare-workforce-of-the-future/>
Accessed 210525

2.2 The 'Do Something Big' recruitment campaign and the free 'Find a Job' website.

Launched in February 2024, the Do Something Big recruitment campaign aims to spotlight careers in the early years sector through a national targeted TV, cinema, online, radio, and print advertising campaign. The campaign's goal is to attract new talent by raising awareness of early years as a career option and the meaningful impact of shaping and supporting young lives.

- Look at the dedicated campaign website - [Do something big - Early Years Careers](#) - where potential applicants can explore career opportunities and entry routes into the early years sector.
- Review the website's [recruitment resources](#), including social media graphics, leaflets, and target audience factsheets (with insights/suggested messages to make your recruitment resonate with a variety of candidates).
- **Use the free [Find a Job](#) web page** on the campaign website, where providers can list their early years vacancies for free and ensure they are seen by a wide pool of potential candidates (user support information can be accessed [here](#)).
- **Providers can post job vacancies** by job role, location, work arrangements (remote or hybrid) and that results can be filtered to find disability-confident employers.
- **Providers can also create apprenticeship adverts** using their Apprenticeship Service Account - a free service provided by the Department for Education (DfE). [Creating an apprenticeship advert as an employer - GOV.UK](#)

Links:

- [Do something big - Early Years Careers](#)
- [Creating an apprenticeship advert as an employer - GOV.UK](#)
- <http://www.findajob.dwp.gov.uk>
- <https://earlyyears-careers.campaign.gov.uk/recruitment-resources/>

2.3 Promote Workforce Development and Career Opportunities

Supporting early years and childcare providers in accessing workforce development and career opportunities is vital for building a strong, high-quality workforce. The DfE offers a range of training initiatives and funding opportunities designed to attract and retain talent in the sector.

Graduate pathways

Providers can make use of the funding available for Early Years Initial Teacher Training (EYITT). This programme leads to Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS) and supports graduates in becoming specialists in early childhood development.

- Providers can access financial support available for candidates applying through the graduate employment-based route: up to £14,000 is available - £7,000 for training providers to cover course fees, and up to £7,000 for employers to support trainees through costs such as supply cover or salary enhancements. [<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-initial-teacher-training-2024-to-2025-funding-guidance>]

Links

- [Early years initial teacher training \(ITT\): a guide for employers - GOV.UK](#)
- To find out if you are eligible for funding visit: [Early years initial teacher training: 2025 to 2026 funding guidance - GOV.UK](#)
- A list of ITT training providers: [Early years initial teacher training \(ITT\) providers - GOV.UK](#)
- [Become an early years teacher | Get Into Teaching GOV.UK](#)

Funding for aspiring level 3 leaders

Promote the National Professional Qualification for Early Years Leadership (NPQEYL), aimed at professionals who are, or are aspiring to be, managers of PVI nurseries, head teachers of school-based or maintained nurseries, or childminders with leadership responsibilities.

- The NPQEYL equips leaders with skills in organisational management, staff development, evidence-based teaching, and creating inclusive policies.
- The course is fully funded for Spring 2025 for Level 3 practitioners working in the top 50 percent of settings with the highest proportion of children attracting early years pupil premium and disadvantaged two-year-old entitlement funding.
- The list of eligible early years settings and schools is fixed for the Spring 2025 recruitment period.

Links:

- [Early years leadership national professional qualification - GOV.UK](#)
- [Funding for national professional qualifications \(NPQs\) - GOV.UK](#)

New funded undergraduate route to Early Years Teacher Status

Raise awareness of the Early Years Teacher Degree Apprenticeship (EYTDA), a new route to Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS). This programme, launching in September 2026, allows junior early years staff to senior leaders to obtain a Level 6 qualification with an early years degree and EYTS.

- The EYTDA is open to Level 3 qualified staff with GCSEs in mathematics, English, and science.

- Course fees of up to £9,000 per year are covered by the employer's apprenticeship levy payments or co-funded between the employer and the DfE.
- The three-year programme is designed to be completed alongside day-to-day work in early years settings, supporting staff progression without leaving their roles.

More information:

- [Become an early years teacher | Get Into Teaching GOV.UK](#)
- [Become an early years teacher | Get Into Teaching GOV.UK](#)
- Register your interest: EYTDA.ENQUIRIES@education.gov.uk

2.4 Greater Staffing Flexibilities

Following consultation with the sector, changes to the early years foundation stage (EYFS) framework have been introduced to help nursery managers better utilise the skills and experience of their existing staff.

Here are the two key changes that will have a direct impact on staffing:

1) Ratio changes:

- The removal of the requirement for all Level 3 staff to have a Level 2 maths qualification to count in ratio was introduced in January 2024. While managers must still have the qualification (achieved either prior to or within two years of appointment from 1 January 2024), Level 3 practitioners with an approved, full and relevant Level 3 qualification are now exempt from the maths requirement for ratio purposes.
- These changes aim to increase the available workforce, address staffing shortages, and remove barriers for experienced practitioners to progress their careers.

2) New experience-based route for early years staff:

To support early years providers to recruit and retain sufficient, skilled staff, DfE has introduced an experience-based route for early years staff who do not hold full and relevant qualifications.

- From 3 March 2025, unqualified early years staff working in settings will be able to undertake this route to count in ratios at Level 3 following a period of supervised practice.
- Eligibility includes staff who hold either a full and relevant Level 2 qualification, a Level 3 or above qualification relevant to the care or education of children (but not full and relevant), or those with at least one year of experience working with early years children aged 0 to 5.

- Providers must have received a good or outstanding judgement for overall effectiveness in their most recent Ofsted inspection.
- Early years staff will be able to count in ratios at Level 3 through this route from September 2025, when changes to the EYFS statutory framework are expected to take effect.

3) Flexibilities for apprentices:

To allow more people to earn while they learn as they build their early years career, recently introduced changes aim to empower setting managers so that:

- Apprentices and students on placement can count in staff:child ratios at the level below their level of study if their manager deems them sufficiently competent and responsible. For example, a level 3 apprentice who is judged by their manager to be performing well could count within the level 2 staff:child ratios; equally, a level 6 trainee could be brought into the level 3 staff:child ratios.
- Settings will now be able to decide whether adult learners over the age of 19 when they start their apprenticeship course will need to complete a level 2 English and maths qualification (equivalent to GCSE) in order to pass it.

Links:

- View the non-statutory guidance and eligibility criteria here: [Experience-based route for early years staff - GOV.UK](#)
- Or the Early Years qualifications requirements and standards here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67a4fc4e0e720adbd4f6ae27/Early_years_qualification_requirements-and-standards.pdf
- Government response to the consultation: [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\): regulatory changes - GOV.UK](#)
- Changes to apprenticeships <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/10000-more-apprentices-as-government-slashes-red-tape-to-boost-growth>

2.5 New Digital Qualification Checker

Following a successful pilot, the DfE has launched a new *Check an Early Years Qualification* digital service to help managers approve the status of qualifications held by existing and prospective staff members. The aim of the service is to save managers time and increase their confidence in having sufficiently qualified staff ahead of September 2025 rollout of the of the expansion of the funded hours. Managers can use this service to:

- check if an early years qualification achieved in England is approved as full and relevant by the DfE

- confirm if someone who holds this qualification can count in staff: child ratios at level 2, 3 or 6 in an early years setting in England

More information:

[Start - Check an Early Years qualification](#)

This new online service replaces the existing EYQL (Early Years Qualifications List) spreadsheet.

3 Timewise - Childcare Pioneers Project

Flexibility for the childcare sector: actions to attract and retain staff

Social enterprise Timewise has spent two years working with London Early Years Foundation (LEYF) and the Early Years Alliance to explore how flexible working could help address the workforce challenges currently facing the sector.

Researchers from the Timewise Childcare Pioneers project collaborated with nursery managers and head office staff at three settings within LEYF and the Early Years Alliance to explore the operational barriers to flexible working and identify ways to support nurseries to overcome them.

Managers recognised the potential benefits of offering flexible working but were concerned about continuity of care, maintaining staff-child ratios, meeting training standards, ensuring fairness and managing team dynamics.

To drive change, Timewise designed and delivered a set of activities and tools to support the nurseries to be more consistent in their approach to flexible working and help them trial new approaches to increase the availability of quality flexible work. These include a review of the organisations' recruitment policies and practices with recommendations on how to embed flexible working into the hiring process; workshops on the benefits of flexible working; bite-sized videos and a survey to identify opportunities for flexible working based on staff working patterns.

Enhanced flexibility

A [report](#) of the findings, *Building the Early Education and Childcare Workforce of the Future*, published in November 2024, acknowledges that part-time and flexible working patterns are already part of “existing established practice” in many early education and care settings. But research highlights that levels of part-time work have fallen across the majority of settings since 2018-19, making it “harder for childcare educators who have caring responsibilities of their own to combine work and care”.

Timewise estimates that “just under a third” – 29 to 32% - of childcare jobs are offered on a part-time basis across all providers. However, the use of bank staff and agency workers who have more choice over their shift patterns “potentially further limits” flexible working options for the permanent workforce. The project reinforces the idea that it is possible to improve flexible working in the childcare sector, and that this could be “one part of a solution to current workforce challenges”.

However, it acknowledges that even in settings within relatively large groups – where there is both time and willingness to invest in developing flexible working practices - everyday pressures make it “difficult to create the space” to trial new approaches. Given that two thirds of private and voluntary nurseries are not part of a larger group, and that not all providers will be convinced of the merits of flexible working, the capacity for change is “arguably likely to be more constrained across the wider sector”, researchers conclude.

Nonetheless, the potential impact of flexible working is significant: Timewise estimates that the equivalent of 17,850 childcare workers - half of the 35,000 extra staff needed for the funded hours expansion (according to DfE estimates) - could be recruited if more roles were advertised as flexible or part-time. Timewise recommends that the Government's planned review of early childhood education and care provision and workforce should include improving access to flexible working "as a key strategic pillar" in its plan.

It is also calling on local authorities to prioritise flexible working as a tool for improving recruitment and retention by sharing evidence, guidance, and case studies that support sustainable flexible working practices.

Flexible working approaches

Following the review of its recruitment practices, one provider participating in the Childcare Pioneers project experimented with alternative shift patterns to attract new practitioners, placing adverts for 15 hours per week, term-time only. Another introduced a lunchtime assistant role, working part-time Monday to Friday 11.30am to 2.30pm.

Managers and senior leaders said that being involved in the project helped them understand how the potential benefits of improvements to flexible working could outweigh the operational challenges of implementation.

One head office staff member said: "I think, from some of the managers that I worked with, they think very much of their business needs and their nurseries being open 7:30 to 6:30 and 'I need people in all those hours'... the Timewise work has helped challenge some of this thinking and be a bit more receptive to what flexible working could actually mean and the benefits of it."

Other benefits include boosting staff wellbeing and engagement, and attracting a more diverse range of candidates, including older workers and those with caring or health responsibilities.

For example, Ellie from Storkway Nursery, an Early Years Alliance nursery based in Greenwich, says she jumped at the chance when her manager proposed flexible working of compressed hours, four long days instead of five, because it meant she was able to spend an extra day with her son before he started school. She says her new flexible working pattern has made her less likely to leave the sector. "The way I see it, it's positive all-round. If we can find a working pattern that suits our needs, we're more likely to want to stay in our setting, which in the long run is really beneficial to the children. If we leave, the nursery becomes more reliant on bank staff which means lots of different people and the children can become very distressed," she says.

3.1 Top five recommendations for providers

Drawing on the models developed in the Childcare Pioneers programme, Timewise has produced an [Early Years Roadmap](#) with five actions to improve recruitment and retention through flexible working. These are summarised below:

Action 1: Reframe the meaning of flexible working

- Think beyond part-time or home working - consider staggered shifts, compressed hours, and job shares.
- Think about flexible working in the context of adapting working patterns to balance the needs of children, parents, the nursery setting and the individual.
- Offer informal options, such as letting a staff member leave early once a week or swap shifts.
- *In practice:* Consider if a full shift could be covered by two similarly qualified practitioners or whether children could have a principal and secondary key worker to enable both members of staff to have flexibility while maintaining consistency for the child and parents.

More information: Learn more about what flexibility means in early years in this video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUByRDDSo48. For top tips on managing (flexible) teams, read this guide: [Managing Flexibility in Early Years - A Guide](#)

Action 2: Support and train managers to enable flexible working

- Train managers to confidently identify flexible working opportunities, support staff needs and respond effectively to requests - ensuring flexibility is embedded in day-to-day management, not just handled reactively.
- Ensure managers are up to date with the latest legislation. As of April 2024, employees can request flexible working from day one and are entitled to make two statutory flexible working requests per year. Managers must respond to requests within two months.
- Use tools like the Timewise Flexibility Maturity Curve © to measure current attitudes to flexibility, ranging from “tolerate it when requested” to “encourage and celebrate flex”.
- In practice: assess patterns in daily and weekly demand to identify quieter times in the day and week and use this insight to design more flexible roles – such as part-time, staggered, or term-time shifts - without compromising the quality of care.

More information: Government guidance: [Flexible working: Overview - GOV.UK](#) and the Timewise Flexibility Maturity Curve © (page 5) [here](#).

Action 3: Free-up time to think flexibility

When working to full capacity with staff shortages and increased demands, finding time to think about flexibility can be difficult. But in other frontline sectors, Timewise has proven that introducing more flexibility not only improves employee engagement but has a positive impact on productivity at work.

Here are some examples of activities or roles that could be done differently to allow more flexibility and efficiently:

- Identify admin tasks (planning, reports, handovers) that could be streamlined, digitised or done at home.
- Planning and rostering: for shift-based working, give staff at least two to six weeks' notice of their shifts to improve work-life balance, reduce stress, and minimise last-minute changes or absences.
- *In practice*: consider whether rostering or reports can be written at home or if technology, such as AI, could help. Or look to see if handovers could be shared between two key workers.

More information: to see how flexible working has helped other hard-to-flex sectors, see the Timewise report

Action 4: Open up the conversation

- Shift from one-off requests to a proactive, whole-setting approach.
- Ask staff regularly about preferred working patterns and collaborate on solutions.
- *In practice*: Bring teams together to find solutions for themselves. Staff may agree that one person starts late on Wednesdays, covered by a colleague,

More information: Use the template in the Timewise 'Flexible working a guide for nursery managers' report to structure conversations: [Timewise-A-Guide-for-Nursery-Managers.pdf](#)

Action 5: Test and measure new working patterns

- Do not be afraid to trial new working patterns, new ways of rostering or new recruitment campaigns.
- Be transparent with parents and staff about what's being tested and why.
- *In practice*: Consider what you want to get out of the trial: for example, if you want to recruit more qualified staff by offering a 10am-2pm shift pattern, measure how many applications you received previously for the same role at the same level.

- For tips on how to navigate flexible working and the benefits it brings, Childcare Works spoke to nursery owner, Lucy Lewin and Steve Brennan of Love Childcare recruitment, who share their experience here.

4 Practitioners' View

For tips on how to navigate flexible working and the benefits it brings, Childcare Works spoke to nursery owner, Lucy Lewin and Steve Brennan of Love Childcare recruitment, who share their experience here.

Recruitment in early education and childcare remains a significant challenge across the country. While the reasons are complex and multifaceted, what has become increasingly clear is that successful recruitment is no longer about simply posting a vacancy and hoping for the best. Providers and recruiters alike are having to think differently, act strategically, and connect more directly with the values and needs of today's workforce.

4.1 An early years and childcare setting's approach

At Little Angels, a small nursery in rural Uppingham, recruitment is treated as a core part of the business. The setting's owner, Lucy Lewin, made the decision several years ago to stop waiting for the right candidates to appear. Instead, she chose to build recruitment into the rhythm of the year. Twice annually, regardless of vacancies, Little Angels hosts open days for anyone interested in working in early years. Some are experienced practitioners, others are nannies or childminders looking for flexible opportunities, and occasionally they are people entirely new to the sector who are simply curious.

This approach has been fruitful in more ways than one. During one such open day, Lucy met Sam, a visitor with no formal experience yet a natural affinity for early years work and a clear values fit. Although the nursery was not actively hiring at the time, Lucy made a plan to offer Sam a role several months later. Sam eventually joined earlier than planned, bringing with her passion and new energy and several families too. The story illustrates how thinking long-term and remaining open to potential can change the future shape of a team.

4.2 A recruitment specialist experience

Lucy is not alone in this shift. Steve Brennan, Director of Love Childcare, works with providers across the UK to match candidates to roles in early years, wraparound care, and schools. Steve and his team supported candidates through over 17,000 job applications last year alone, resulting in more than 500 new starters. From his perspective, the landscape has changed dramatically. It is now very much a candidate's market. Applicants are scrolling through hundreds of vacancies and paying close attention to just two things: salary and location. To stand out, providers must lead with clarity, culture, and opportunity.

One of the most successful strategies Steve recommends is reframing how providers think about attraction. A job advert is no longer enough. What matters is how the setting is perceived in the wider marketplace. That includes social media presence, how engaged and welcoming the tone of voice is, and how confident and consistent the organisation is in telling its story. Candidates, especially younger ones, are

drawn to employers they recognise from social platforms. They want to feel they are part of something before they even apply.

Lucy has seen this first-hand. Little Angels shifted its social media approach away from solely marketing to parents. Instead, it began showcasing what it feels like to be part of the team. Posts now include staff-led content, celebrations, behind-the-scenes stories, and videos that bring to life the culture of the setting. These are authentic and staff-driven. In Lucy's words, social media is free, and early years practitioners love making the content themselves. Candidates have told her that these posts made them feel like they already belonged, even before stepping through the door.

4.3 Offer flexible working

Both Lucy and Steve highlight the importance of flexibility. Lucy has introduced a four-day working week for full-time staff, built internal float roles to cover rota gaps, and created part-time contracts specifically designed around the needs of parents returning to work, students, and experienced practitioners looking for more balance. At Love Childcare, Steve has seen growing interest in split-shift models, particularly among candidates who want to work early mornings and afternoons with a break in between. This mirrors the pattern of wraparound care and suits those who cannot commit to full nursery days but still want to stay in the workforce.

A particularly creative approach Lucy has developed involves partnerships with nannies and childminders. Many of these professionals find themselves with fewer hours once the children they care for start school. In response, Little Angels has offered flexible contracts that allow these practitioners to work in the setting a few days a week. Families benefit because they retain a trusted adult without the cost of a full-time arrangement, and in some cases, they are able to access funded hours by working through the nursery. One nanny continued her funded hours role within the nursery even after her original child had moved on to school. This model keeps experienced practitioners in the sector and offers continuity for children and families.

4.4 The need for proactivity in recruitment

Steve also emphasises the importance of proactivity. He encourages providers to reach out to candidates quickly, conduct short screening calls to understand what applicants are really looking for, and send personalised candidate packs before interviews. These packs can include a short welcome from the manager, team stories, and examples of career development within the setting. In his experience, this early engagement helps candidates feel a sense of connection and increases the likelihood of them accepting and staying with the offer. For settings where time is tight, Steve also recommends outsourcing parts of the process to recruitment partners who can manage the initial engagement on the setting's behalf.

Timing also matters. Many candidates are applying for several roles at once. When providers set rigid interview dates without flexibility, they may lose strong applicants who are simply unavailable at that time. Flexibility in interviews, trial shifts, and

onboarding schedules can make the difference between securing a great team member or missing out altogether. At Little Angels, each candidate who reaches the interview stage is invited to complete a Gallup Strengths profile. This helps the team understand both a person's experience and their natural talents. Lucy uses the results to guide the conversation, understand how candidates might contribute to the team, and ensure that values are aligned. Even when a candidate is not selected, they are offered a follow-up call with a short coaching conversation on how to use their strengths in future applications. This has built a reputation for fairness, care, and professionalism that candidates appreciate and remember.

4.5 Rethink recruitment strategies

What ties all of these approaches together is mindset. Providers who see recruitment as a passive, administrative function are struggling. Those who are engaging actively and creatively, who understand the power of their culture and their story, are seeing results. Whether through open days, personalised interview processes, or flexible roles built around real lives, the message is clear. Recruitment is not about filling vacancies. It is about building a team, one connection at a time.

5 Background

5.1 National picture

The government estimates that 35,000 new paid childcare staff are needed to meet demand for the rollout of the 30-hours funding for children 9-months and older. The latest data shows that, with the total number of paid childcare staff in England grew by 20,200 over the year, rising from 347,900 in 2023 to 368,100 in 2024 - a six percent increase. The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) say that if these trends continue then the sector is on-track to meet the level of workforce required [The Early Years Workforce in England 2025 - NFER](#). While staff numbers in both school and group-based provision saw growth, the national number of childminders has been in long-term decline, falling by seven percent in the same period.

Despite this uplift, the picture remains mixed on the ground, with staff shortages and places needed to meet capacity varying across the country. Some providers report that staff shortages have led them to take actions that may run the risk of reducing quality and capacity. These actions, highlighted in the DfE November 2024 [Pulse Survey](#) (specifically relating to early years providers), include asking managers to work on ratio more (63 per cent in July) and asking more staff to work overtime (52 per cent in July).

Not having sufficient staff to cover new places was cited by group-based providers as the most common challenge to delivering the 15 hours of funded childcare per week in the November Pulse Survey. Meanwhile, LAs reported that early years providers cap the number of places they offer (below the Ofsted registration capacity) as a result of staff shortages. [Research](#) on nursery closures commissioned by the Local Government Association (LGA) in 2023 found that lack of appropriate staff was leading ‘directly’ to temporary, partial and occasionally permanent closures. “Some have shut rooms or close temporarily for days or weeks and there are many reports of settings limiting places for children with more complex needs”, the report stated.

The rise in children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and the lack of timely support, coupled with staff shortages, places increased burdens on staff. This impacts staff wellbeing, leading to ‘increased absences, with senior managers often left “picking up the pieces” with parents and on behalf of stressed or absent staff, as highlighted in the Timewise report, [Building the Early Years and Childcare Workforce of the Future](#).

5.2 Staff turnover - early years

Recent data from the DfE’s annual early years [Providers’ survey](#) showed that more paid childcare staff joined the sector than left the sector last year. However, the picture varied across provider type. School-based providers, who made up 9,700 of the 54,700 early years providers in total, experienced a turnover of 4,300 staff leaving, but this was offset by the recruitment of around 8,700 new staff – roughly

double the number of staff who departed. By contrast, group-based providers who made up 21,200 of the total number of providers, faced a higher level of staff movement, with 40,200 leaving their roles. Yet, they recruited 58,900 staff over the same period, reflecting a net increase. Childminders, who made up the biggest share of provider numbers across all regions in 2024 - 23,800 childminders providing 143,200 registered places – continued to leave the profession, with [1,340 more childminders leaving](#) than joining in 2023-2024.

While these figures suggest some success in attracting new staff, they also highlight the sector's ongoing challenge of staff turnover and the pressure to maintain a stable workforce amid growing demand.