

New children's daycare nursery – Murray Road, Northwood HA6 2EY

Assessment of demand – January 2024

Generally childcare provision needs to be very local, usually within walking distance of families' homes and is ideally en route to other facilities, whether shops or transport for travelling to work etc. The following analysis therefore addresses the HA6 postcode area, which the proposed site of the former Northwood Police Station, at 2 Murray Road, HA6 2YN sits at the centre of.



Map of the HA6 postcode area with 2 Murray Road at the centre

Existing provision

HA6 has a population in the region of 25,000 (24,959 – 2021 Census – StreetCheck). 1,313 (or 5.3%) of this population were in the 0-4 age band. This is close to the England-wide rate of 5.6%.

HA6 currently has 10 nurseries, including one exclusively serving the Northwood RAF Headquarters, as follows:

Chickywicks Day Nursery	HA6 1DN	31 Places
Happy Tree	HA6 1HR	42 Places
Ministeps Nursery	HA6 1NL	58 Places
Twinkle stars	HA6 1QS	60 Places
Woodlodge Montessori	HA6 1SL	60 Places
Little Crickets Nursery	HA6 2NP	61 Places
Bright Horizons Mount Vernon	HA6 2RN	124 Places
Wetherby House Montessori	HA6 2UT	70 Places
Little Learners Montessori	HA6 3AA	41 Places
Northwood Day Nursery (RAF Base)	HA6 3HP	45 Places
	TOTAL	592 places

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The total of 592 places is down from 709, following the closure of Tinies Nursery (100 places) in 2020 and The Hall School Baby Unit (17 places) in 2022, both of which had full rolls. This has resulted in the previous capacity of 54% dropping to 45.1%.

New demand

Starting from April 2024, Government childcare support will be expanded in phases. By September 2025, most working families with children under the age of 5 will be entitled to 30 hours of childcare support, this is a significant step towards supporting working parents and early childhood development. However, recent research conducted by the Early Years Alliance raises crucial concerns regarding the capacity of existing childcare settings to meet this increased demand effectively.

The findings from the Alliance's research, conducted between 10 and 21 July 2023, reveal a disconcerting disparity between the expected demand for expanded childcare support and the actual capacity of existing nurseries to accommodate this demand:

- 42% of all surveyed early years providers already have a full waiting list for places.
- Despite the anticipated rise in demand, 60% of providers planning to offer funded places for two-year-olds and 72% for the extended one-year-old offer do not intend to increase the number of places offered.
- A staggering 59% of providers feel that the sector has not had sufficient time to adequately prepare for the surge in demand resulting from the early entitlement expansion.

The pressure on places is most visible at the two primary nurseries in the area, which serve as key resources for childcare provision. Both maintain waiting lists and offer minimal flexibility in terms of session requirements, creating a challenging situation for working parents seeking suitable childcare options.

One nursery mandates a substantial minimum session requirement of 5 full days and 4 full days, while the other offers 5, 4, and 3 full days, as well as 5 mornings, thereby constraining parental choices and potentially leaving many families without accessible childcare solutions that align with their needs.

In addition, the closure of Tinies Nursery and The Hall (both of which were at full capacity) suggests there is now a lack of supply and a significant gap in available childcare options in HA6.

The culmination of these factors underscores the urgent need for additional nursery provision in HA6 to bridge the widening gap between the rising demand for childcare and the limited capacity of existing facilities to meet this demand effectively.

Hillingdon has previously recognised the nature of the demand and the need to increase the supply of nursery places. Clause 7.11 of its adopted Local Plan (January 2020) states:

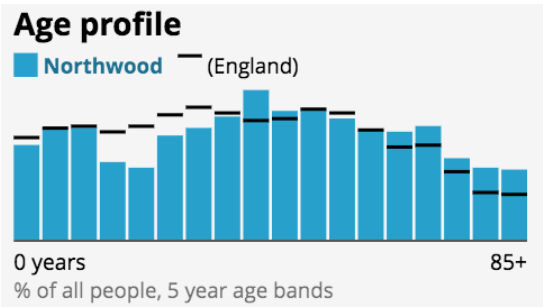
“birth rate increases are the major driver of demand, other changes (e.g. migration into the Borough) increase demand for places across all year groups (including nursery). In addition, local authorities now have a duty to secure early years provision for the least advantaged two year olds.”

In light of these compelling circumstances, facilitating the establishment of a new nursery in HA6 would not only support working families but also contribute significantly to the well-being and development of its youngest community members.

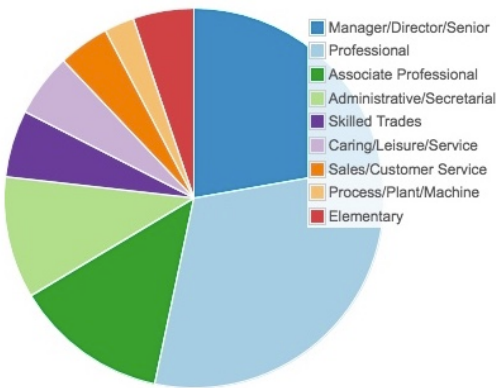
Local demographics

Census statistics for HA6 shows that the proportion of children in the area is close to the national average only dropping significantly below the mean from age 15 to 35. This indicates that the demand is there for nursery spaces.

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The employment statistics add to this, showing that 53.3% of employees in the area are in socio-economic groups 1 & 2 compared to the national average of 33.1% with unemployment at 2.6% compared to 8.4% (2021 census data). There is also a high proportion of dual working parents - all pointing to a substantially higher than average requirement for nursery places in the locality.



Employment classification in HA6
Source 2021 census & streetcheck.co.uk

Proposed location

The provision of a new nursery at the junction of Murray and Maxwell Roads in Northwood will provide an additional 117 full time equivalent places situated at an ideal location in the borough. It is within 2 Km (25-30 minutes walk) of almost all the housing in the HA6 area and very close to both shops and the Northwood Underground Station.

There is no doubt that there is demand for early years childcare provision in HA6 that will rapidly fill these places.