Department for Education

Estimating pupil yield from housing development

August 2023

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Summary

This document provides non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education. The guidance has been produced to help local authorities develop and apply long-term evidence of pupil yield from housing developments, to inform local plans and planning decisions, and justify developer contributions towards education.

Expiry or review date

This guidance will be reviewed when necessary (for example, in response to changes in legislation or government policy).

Who is this publication for?

This guidance is for local authorities with a responsibility for providing sufficient school places under the Education Act 1996. It may also be a source of information for local planning authorities and other stakeholders involved in the delivery of educational facilities.

Main points

This guidance sets out the department's recommended approach to calculating pupil yield from housing development for the **purposes of securing developer contributions towards education.** The department has published data alongside this guidance to provide baseline pupil yield factors, which local authorities can choose to adopt, supplement and update over time, or produce alternative local pupil yield evidence.

Introduction

This guidance is supplementary to the Department for Education's guidance for local authorities on securing developer contributions for education,[1] providing further advice on how local authorities can best estimate the number of early years, school and post-16 places required because of housing development. Evidence-based pupil yield factors assist in determining appropriate developer contributions when the need for new school places is driven by housing growth, an essential part of the evidence base informing local plans and planning decisions.

There are multiple ways in which local authorities estimate pupil yield from housing, such as national census analysis, monitoring of housing completions against local pupil data, benchmarking against neighbouring authorities, and household surveys of completed developments. The quality of local pupil yield evidence varies, affecting how education needs are identified and addressed through the planning system.

To reduce inconsistencies and improve the baseline data available to local authorities, the department has worked in partnership with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to produce pupil yield data for all local authorities in England, linking data on housing developments to pupil data held in the National Pupil Database.[2] This document provides guidance for local authorities on how to estimate pupil yield from housing development, making use of the department's published data and/or equivalent pupil yield data produced locally. The guidance and data are intended to assist you in securing developer contributions towards education, by enhancing the evidence base to support effective policies in local plans and decision-making on individual planning applications.

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/delivering-schools-to-support-housing-growth

[2] https://find-npd-data.education.gov.uk/

Purpose

In conjunction with the accompanying pupil yield data, this guidance is intended to help local authorities develop long-term evidence of pupil yield from housing development and apply that evidence in a consistent way, to make the planning process simpler, faster, and more transparent. The guidance should help you engage constructively with local planning authorities and justify developer contributions towards education. The department's pupil yield data is not intended to replace pupil yield assumptions in local authority school capacity survey (SCAP) forecasting models, which already allow for housing growth and demographic change in many different ways. As explained in separate SCAP guidance[3], pupil yield from housing development should only be added to forecasts if not already accounted for elsewhere in the methodology. One example is where there is a demonstrable increase in the rate at which new housing is being or expected to be delivered. In this case, only the additional yield above that which is already included in the forecasting models should be applied. The department's pupil yield data and this guidance may assist with these calculations and will be used by the department to check your assumptions.

Local authorities may continue using alternative data and tools such as the Greater London Authority (GLA) population yield calculator to estimate pupil yield if they consider these to be more detailed or representative of their local circumstances.[4]

This guidance does not:

- Preclude or replace finer grained or additional analysis at the local level.
- Provide a method for forecasting numbers on roll (NOR) or school capacity for SCAP purposes.
- Replace or override any aspects of other DfE publications such as guidance on SCAP, the Admissions Code or setting up new schools, or policy/guidance produced by other government Departments.
- Make recommendations for individual schools or academy trusts on managing their capacity or published admission numbers.

[3] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-capacity-survey-guide-for-local-authorities

[4] https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/population-yield-calculator

DfE's pupil yield data

1. The department's developer contributions guidance recommends that local authorities apply pupil yield factors to new development proposals, based on up-to-date evidence from local housing developments.[5] To assist with this, we have published pupil yield data for all local authorities in England.

DfE's pupil yield methodology

2. In partnership with ONS we matched Ordnance Survey residential development data to pupil data held within the National Pupil Database and Individualised Learner Record. Pupils attending independent mainstream schools are not included in the data. Other contextual data and the detailed method are described in the technical summary for the Pupil Yield Dashboard.[6] The housing data comprise all developments in England that have 10 or more dwellings and were started and completed between 2008 and 2022.[7] This is a substantial sample of housing developments in each local authority area, allowing average pupil yield factors to be derived that can be applied to future development proposals to help estimate need for additional education infrastructure. Pupil addresses were matched to the dwellings from first occupation to the latest record. This provides longitudinal information on:

- The number of recorded pupils aged 2-19 in mainstream settings.
- The distribution of pupils by size of dwelling (bedroom numbers)[8] and tenure (market/affordable).
- The number of pupils attending specialist provision (special schools, pupil referral units and other alternative provision) and the proportion of pupils in mainstream or specialist settings with Education, Health and Care plans (EHC plans).

3. From these data, pupil yield factors are determined at local authority (county/unitary and district) level, by education phase (early years, primary, secondary and 16-19), need (specialist provision), and housing characteristics (bedroom numbers, houses/flats, and tenure type). In addition to average yields from housing developments over the whole data period since 2008, the data identify annual yields from developments

[5] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/delivering-schools-to-support-housing-growth

[6] https://department-for-education.shinyapps.io/pupil-yields-dashboard

[7] 2008 is the earliest year available for comprehensive Ordnance Survey data on housing developments.

[8] Bedroom numbers are derived from Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data supplied by the ONS, explained further in the technical summary for the Pupil Yield Dashboard.

completed up to a selected year and yields each year post completion, to show how pupil yields develop over time.

4. By counting resident pupils in properties built and occupied since 2008, we gain a long-term pupil yield profile, matching pupil addresses to these properties up to the latest education record. This includes not only children moving into developments when they are first occupied, but also children who are born there in subsequent years (once they are recorded in the relevant local census which populates the National Pupil Database).

5. The department's pupil yield data may be considered a starting point or baseline position, which local authorities can supplement or adjust according to local circumstances and evidence. However, the use of the DfE data is voluntary and you can continue to rely solely on local pupil yield evidence if this is considered appropriate, for instance due to the local authority holding more detailed and representative data over a longer period, or your own data showing significant recent deviation from historic trends. Local evidence may be particularly relevant to large developments that include a new school, as they can take longer to build out than the timeframe of the department's housing data for pupil yield analysis and may not be represented in the data.

6. We recognise some inherent issues with projecting future need based on past trends. There is insufficient time in the department's data (maximum 13 years of post-completion data) to fully capture peak secondary and post-16 yields, as children will be born during the analysis period or move into a new development at a very young age and will not have completed their education within the timeframe available. Also, the sample of housing developments in the data increases over time as developments are completed, so any pupil yield analysis that considers the longer periods post-completion of development is based on a decreasing sample of schemes that have been completed.

7. There are also changes in birth rates, inward migration, housebuilding rates and even transport infrastructure which might lead to different pupil yield profiles in developments built more recently, but it is too early to know how those developments would compare longer-term. This guidance and the technical summary for the Pupil Yield Dashboard may assist local authorities producing ongoing pupil yield data to gain a more comprehensive knowledge of pupil yield over many years, which should also begin to shed light on the effects of macro forces such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the UK's exit from the European Union.

8. DfE collects child-level early years data for children in receipt of government-funded childcare, of which 15 hours a week are available to eligible two-year olds and all three- and four-year-olds, and an additional 15 hours (up to 30 hours a week) for three- and four-year-olds with working parents (until they start school). Expanded early years entitlements for children aged nine months to three years old become available from 2024, which will lead to additional children being recorded in the early years and school census.

9. The department's pupil yield data do not account for local movement of families, where children are likely to remain in their current early years settings or schools and may not require new places. Whilst there may be no immediate impact on local education capacity as a result of local moves, housing development increases the population in a pupil place planning area[9] and creates permanent future demand for local school places, while older properties that are vacated by local families can be backfilled by new residents requiring school places. We have not sought to quantify the extent of backfilling or local movement, as this is highly variable, subject to rapid change such as incoming refugees, and affects local school place planning in different ways. Depending on the local authority's configuration of pupil planning areas and characteristics such as urban or rural designation, "local movement" could be defined as moves within the pupil planning area, school catchment area, or a reasonable walking distance of the development. Local authorities can adjust the department's pupil yield factors to account for local movement and backfilling if they have the evidence to demonstrate this and consider it to be appropriate.

Using DfE pupil yield data

10. The department's pupil yield data are intended to assist you in securing developer contributions towards new education provision, based entirely on pupil numbers from housing developments in your area. Use of the DfE pupil yield data is voluntary. We would not expect pupil yield factors from the DfE data to be applied to proposals that are already at an advanced stage in the planning process (nearing a decision, or partway through a planning appeal) within 12 months of the Pupil Yield Dashboard being published.

11. The department's published pupil yield factors should not necessarily replace forecasting assumptions that have been designed purely for SCAP purposes as part of wider demographic modelling. Every local authority's SCAP methodology is different. For instance, SCAP models may forecast pupil growth from housing development and cross-border migration separately, while our pupil yield data makes no distinction, so replacing existing housing yield assumptions in SCAP with our pupil yield factors could result in double-counting pupils. When reviewing your SCAP forecast model, the department's pupil yield data and any additional local evidence of pupil yield may form part of that review, and we recommend early engagement with your DfE Pupil Place Planning Adviser if you are considering changes to your SCAP methodology and would like to align pupil yield factors for developer contributions and SCAP purposes.

[9] Pupil planning areas are defined in guidance: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-capacity-survey-guide-for-local-authorities

12. The department's pupil yield data are capable of being broken down in different ways to help you understand the nuanced picture of pupil yield in your area. For instance, affordable housing tends to generate more pupils than market housing, while flats usually generate fewer pupils than houses of the same tenure type, and larger properties in general will contain more pupils on average. When assessing the pupil yield for a development proposal, you can apply the relevant pupil yield factors according to the expected housing mix.

13. While the data may inform local assessments of education needs from new developments, there will be cases where a bespoke and flexible approach is required. Where local authorities have robust local evidence of different pupil yields than those shown in DfE's data, these yields can be used instead of our pupil yield data. In principle, the department considers local evidence of different pupil yields to be robust if it is transparent, based on a representative sample of housing developments, clearly explained and well-reasoned. When pupil yield evidence has been tested and validated through a local plan or CIL Charging Schedule examination, planning appeal, or Judicial Review, it should be accepted without further challenge unless there has been a significant material change in circumstances since that time.

14. There may be a need for local flexibility and reassessment based on atypical development characteristics, such as a large greenfield site coming forward in an area that has predominantly seen smaller brownfield development in the past. For urban extensions and new communities that will include new schools, we recommend more detailed local analysis of pupil yield, including sensitivity testing of different build rates and delivery models. New communities can generate significantly higher pupil numbers than seen elsewhere and are not fully represented in the DfE pupil yield data due to the length of time it takes for all phases of the development to build out, so in these cases bespoke local evidence can be used in preference to or alongside the department's pupil yield data when securing land and funding for new schools.

15. When using the department's Pupil Yield Dashboard to assess a development's education requirements, the recommended starting point is the "headline" pupil yield factors for 2021/22, as these are based on the full sample of developments between 2008 and 2022. The pupil yield factors per dwelling can be applied to detailed development proposals according to the housing mix (market/affordable tenure, dwelling type and size) to result in a predicted number of places of different phases and types arising from the development based on previous trends.[10] Outline planning applications

[10] In areas with 3 tier school systems, we recommend using the primary pupil yields for middle-deemed primary schools and secondary yields for middle-deemed secondary schools. For new middle schools or whole school expansions for middle schools not 'deemed' primary or secondary, we recommend applying the relevant pupil yield factors proportionally, e.g., primary pupil yield factor for Years 5 and 6, and secondary pupil yield factor for Years 7 and 8.

may not specify the housing mix, but you can use the DfE data and other local evidence if appropriate, to provide an estimate of pupil yield with provision for this to be reviewed at a later date.

16. You may decide to use district-level pupil yield factors rather than county-wide factors in applicable areas; this is for local authorities with education responsibilities to decide based on local circumstances such as variable housing markets, urban/rural characteristics, or other differences. It is important to be transparent about the reasoning behind this, and we recommend you publish your analysis and the rationale for applying differentiated pupil yield factors across a local authority area, to pre-empt challenge and ensure pupil yield factors are applied consistently.

17. Nationally, the department's pupil yield data show that pupil yields tend to peak at around 2 years after a development's completion for early years and 6 years for primary, before stabilising to align broadly with the mature housing stock. For secondary and post-16 phases, pupil yields take longer to develop, and the department's data includes insufficient years to capture peak yields and stabilisation. To understand the long-term average pupil yields once developments reflect the rest of the mature housing stock, you can apply longer-term local data if available, or national census analysis.

18. Our guidance on securing developer contributions for education advises you to respond to forecast peaks in demand, such as planning for modular or temporary classrooms where appropriate, working with schools to consider admitting above the Published Admission Number (PAN) for a limited period, and securing a large enough site to meet the maximum need generated by the development.[11] Temporary classrooms may be appropriate in the case of short-term peaks that only briefly exceed the longer-term average pupil yield and usually provide for one 'bulge' year group to progress through the school. However, housing development will generate pupils across all age groups, and not necessarily in numbers matching standard class sizes, so the use of temporary classrooms to meet peak needs will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

19. Provision which is expected to be needed at a single school for a longer period, allowing new cohorts to be admitted year-on-year, is likely to trigger a 'prescribed alteration' or 'significant change' process, to permanently change the school's physical capacity.[12] Therefore, when considering data on the build-up of pupil yield from developments completed in any given year (using "post-completion" data in our Pupil Yield Dashboard or equivalent local data if available), you can account for higher pupil

[11] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/delivering-schools-to-support-housing-growth

[12] DfE has published guidance on changing the capacity of maintained schools (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools) and academies (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-significant-changes-to-an-existing-academy)

yield if trends show that yields following completion of development are above the post-completion average (not the overall average) for longer than one cohort's progression through school (seven years for primary phase and five years for secondary phase). Note, the DfE post-completion data does not account for developments that are still under construction and only partially occupied, when pupil yield is lower and still developing. This may result in higher pupil yield factors for some local authorities than those shown from the full sample in the "headlines" part of the Pupil Yield Dashboard, which are based on cumulative property completions and are not linked to the completion of individual development schemes.

20. Our guidance on securing developer contributions for education contains more detail on establishing costs of permanent and temporary school expansions, with reference to the local authority school places scorecard.[13]

Pupil yield from affordable housing

21. Pupil yield from affordable housing is higher on average than the yield from market housing.[14] Families occupying affordable housing may move house within the same area and will not necessarily require new school places. However, in areas where local authorities prioritise allocating homes to families on waiting lists, it is possible affordable housing is more likely to be backfilled by families in need. Both market and affordable housing development increase the population in a pupil planning area and create permanent demand for school places. If you have evidence that all (or almost all) moves of existing local families into new affordable housing result in vacated properties being backfilled by other families (such as those on the affordable housing waiting list), or you can demonstrate that there has been no reduction in the take-up of school places as a result of new affordable housing being occupied, then there should be no expectation of downward adjustments to pupil yield factors to account for local movement. Paragraph 9 outlines some of the challenges and variables affecting local movement analysis.

22. The department's pupil yield data cannot differentiate between types of affordable housing such as shared ownership and affordable rent, so if you have reason to believe there will be significant variations in pupil yield from different affordable housing types, this will require additional local analysis.

23. Our guidance on securing developer contributions for education provides further advice on how to account for higher pupil yield from affordable housing when contributing to local plan preparation and seeking developer contributions towards new provision.

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[13] https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/school-places-scorecards

[14] Affordable housing is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2

When the proportion of affordable housing to be delivered in development schemes is unknown, the combined average pupil yield factors can be used instead.

Updating the pupil yield data

24. The DfE Pupil Yield Dashboard has been produced to improve baseline evidence of pupil yield from housing development. Some local authorities will already have substantial pupil yield data of their own, which can be used alongside or in preference to the DfE data. We invite local authorities to continue building on the DfE analysis by creating your own pupil yield data from the Early Years Census, School Census, Alternative Provision Census, and Individualised Learner Record, either as a rolling programme of continual monitoring or at set intervals, at a scale and frequency to suit your own circumstances. Within five years of its publication, the DfE data should be considered up to date. After this time (or sooner if preferred), we encourage you to publish new equivalent pupil yield data at local authority level.

25. The technical summary for the Pupil Yield Dashboard should assist you in producing pupil yield data, and more detailed information on the methodology we used is available to local authorities on request. There is no need to follow the department's exact process in terms of address-matching codes and statistical software used, but we recommend that pupil yield evidence is primarily based on linked housing development and pupil address data to monitor actual pupil numbers occupying new housing across whole local authorities over successive years, to build a longitudinal and increasingly comprehensive database of pupil yield from housing development. Household surveys and national census analysis can also play a part in building a comprehensive evidence base, and a nuanced local understanding of pupil yield from housing development.

26. It is best practice to publish your pupil yield evidence, ideally in a similar format to the department's data dashboard for the pupil yield data,[15] so that all stakeholders can consider the education requirements expected from development in a simple and transparent way. Pupil yield data should only be published at local authority (upper tier or district level) and never at development scheme level, to ensure sensitive information is not disclosed from a small sample where individual children might be identified. Data protection and accessibility legislation apply.[16]

27. There is great value in working with local planning authorities/colleagues to agree monitoring criteria for housing developments, such as recording bedroom numbers and market/affordable tenure at the point a new home's address is registered and using

[15] https://department-for-education.shinyapps.io/pupil-yields-dashboard

[16] https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/ and https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps

Unique Property Reference Numbers (UPRNs) throughout all housing and pupil address records.[17] Agreeing these criteria and aligning data protocols will make it easier to produce local pupil yield data in future.

28. However, it is possible to produce pupil yield data without high quality housing completion data being provided by local planning authorities. The housing data used in the production of the DfE pupil yield data is freely available to public sector organisations under the Public Sector Geospatial Agreement (PSGA) with Ordnance Survey, including support to help you use the data for pupil yield analysis.[18] There are development scheme level data and individual property data, including property and scheme completion dates, house types, Land Registry sales data, and various geospatial identifiers. If you are not already a member of the PSGA, we advise you to speak to Ordnance Survey about the opportunities this presents, including pupil yield analysis using Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping. There are various options for matching pupils to housing developments, including use of UPRN, postcode, or grid references, if the method employed by DfE in the national pupil yield analysis is not easily applicable to locally produced data. As well as working with Ordnance Survey to develop expertise in address-based pupil yield analysis, we recommend that local authorities work together to share knowledge and lessons learned; we can facilitate these conversations where necessary.

29. Using more recent Ordnance Survey or local housing development data, you can produce pupil yield data from developments completed in the years following the publication of this guidance. Local knowledge and analysis should explain any notable differences in pupil yield between datasets, such as new transport infrastructure improving connectivity to an employment hub, faster build rates which accelerate and increase the peak in pupil yields, or pupil yields that capture the peak but not the longer-term trend. Building on the department's baseline data, local authorities will be able to develop long-term data to inform pupil place planning, local planning policies and decision-making, and make a strong case for developer contributions.

[17] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-standards-for-government/identifying-property-and-street-information

[18] https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/business-government/licensing-agreements/psga-registration

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