

Market Study Notice

Early Years Education and Childcare in England

1. This market study notice is published by the Competition and Markets Authority (the CMA) in accordance with section 130A of the Enterprise Act 2002 (the Act).¹
2. The CMA is proposing to carry out its functions under section 5 of the Act in relation to early years education and childcare services in England, to consider the extent to which a matter in relation to the acquisition or supply of those services has or may have effects adverse to the interests of consumers, and to assess the extent to which steps can and should be taken to remedy, mitigate or prevent any such adverse effects.
3. In this notice, the term ‘early years education and childcare services’ encompasses education and childcare services for children from birth until they start school (aged four or five) provided by:
 - childminders with or without domestic premises and providers of childcare on domestic premises;^{2,3}
 - group-based providers (education and childcare providers operating on non-domestic premises, including private group-based providers, voluntary group-based providers and other group-based providers such as local authorities or private not-for-profit organisations); and
 - school-based education and childcare providers (both maintained nursery schools and other schools offering nursery classes).
4. Further details of this market study, including detailed issues on which the CMA would welcome responses, are provided in the Statement of Scope which is published on our [case page](#).

¹ A copy of this notice is placed on our [case page](#).

² Those registered with Ofsted and with a childminder agency are included within scope.

³ Domestic premises excludes domestic premises where one or more of the children being looked after live. Nannies (looking after children from up to two families in the home of one of the children), who are exempt from registration on Ofsted’s Early Years Register, and other informal childcare for which funded hours cannot be used are excluded from the scope of this market study.

5. The CMA now invites any persons wishing to make representations on the matter, including on whether the CMA should make a market investigation reference under section 131 of the Act, to do so in writing no later than **26 July 2026**. Representations should be emailed to childcare@cma.gov.uk.
6. If the CMA proposes to make a market investigation reference, or if representations (as provided for in section 131A of the Act) have been made to the CMA that such a reference should be made but the CMA proposes not to make such a reference, the CMA will publish a notice of that proposal and begin a process of consultation under section 131A(2)(b) of the Act.
7. The CMA will publish its market study report, setting out its findings in relation to the matter specified in this notice, and the action (if any) which the CMA proposes to take in relation to that matter, no later than 30 June 2027.

1 July 2026

Competition and Markets Authority