

Projections and Forecasts

Projection methodology for existing and new schools

Cardiff employs a robust projection methodology for planning school places which takes account of NHS GP registration data and school census data (PLASC) submitted by and verified by all Cardiff schools. As projections can only take account of historic and current information the Council also identifies trends within projections, and analyses school preference data and other contextual information to produce forecasts on a city wide basis and in each locality.

Data analysis allows projections to be prepared based on localised patterns at primary school catchment area level, by secondary school catchment area and on a city-wide basis. Each of these provide differing contextual information to inform the forecasting on the number of places that may be needed to meet the requirements of each area and of Cardiff as a whole. Specialist provision is considered on a city-wide basis.

Forecast methodology for specialist provision

The determination of future ALN provision requirements based on historical trends adds additional complexity to population projections. Data analysis must additionally take into account:

- Cohort size: ALN numbers being a small fraction of the total population are therefore prone to significantly greater percentage fluctuation
- Need identification: The identification and categorisation of primary need has been a developing process such that it is challenging to establish a pattern of requirement against a common frame of reference for each need type.
- ALN placement: Pupils with significant additional learning needs can be placed in a wide variety of settings both in and out of county, and in both LA and independent facilities. The Pupil Level Annual School Census which forms the basis of pupil population projections in Cardiff therefore does not clearly capture the full range of ALN needs.
- Effects of covid-19: Historical patterns do not capture the increase in needs that is likely to have been caused by measures to mitigate the effects of the covid-19 pandemic.
- LDP: The population data capture in 2019 (PLASC) would not be able to capture future build rates of housing building on the strategic sites and hence patterns of occupancy
- Children and young people may not need specialist provision throughout their school career- some pupils succeed in mainstream for several years before they need to transfer to a specialist setting; others may make sufficient progress in a specialist setting to be able to return to a local mainstream school. The age at which pupils may need to access specialist provision therefore varies and cannot be precisely predicted.
- As a capital city, hosting the Children's Hospital for Wales and a range of special schools, Cardiff experiences a high number of new arrivals each year who require to go directly into a special school. In 2019-20 the number of new arrivals with this level of need was 18: in special school terms, this was the equivalent of 2-3 new classes that needed to be provided.

As limited historical data is available, ALN projections have therefore been predicated on an extensive data capture exercise undertaken in 2019 to identify the need type and number of Cardiff resident pupils, and evaluated as a percentage of the verified PLASC 2019 dataset. Demand has then been projected based on an estimated annual growth of ALN pupils of 0.05% of the whole pupil population, from the baseline established in 2019.

Emotional Health & Wellbeing

It has been estimated that EHW pupils make up around 40% of pupils with complex ALN in Cardiff which corresponds to a projected growth of 0.02% per annum. In order to mitigate the risk of under provision and to allow for flexibility in the system, a further 10% uplift has been applied.

Table 1 sets out EHW Primary provision currently available in Cardiff and projected future demand.

Primary places	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
The Court	42	42	42	42	42	42
Fitzalan WBC	8	8	8	8	8	8
Fairwater WBC	8	8	8	8	8	8
Springwood WBC	8	8	8	8	8	8
Lakeside WBC	8	16	16	16	16	16
Pen y Groes WBC	8	8	8	8	8	8
Total capacity	82	90	90	90	90	90
Projected demand	103	107	110	112	116	119
Projected demand (+10%)	113	118	121	123	128	131
Surplus / deficit	-31	-28	-31	-33	-38	-41

The ALN Provision Gap in Primary- Emotional Health and Wellbeing Needs

In 2020/21 Cardiff maintains 82 primary special school and Wellbeing Class places for children with SEMH needs. This will increase to 90 in 21/22, as the Wellbeing Class at Lakeside is due to open 8 further places.

Taking account of children out of county, and in mainstream awaiting specialist placement, the demand for places is estimated to be circa 103 in 20/21, rising to 119 by 25/26. With a 10% tolerance to allow flexibility, the ideal position would be 113 places in 20/21, and 131 places by 25/26.

In summary, there is an estimated **provision gap of 31 places in 20/21**, rising to **41 places** in 25/26.

This projection does not take account of a possible further increase in needs as an outcome of 'lockdown' measures during the COVID 19 pandemic. It is likely that further additional provision, focussed on early intervention in Wellbeing Classes, will be needed over the next few years to address this issue.

Complex Learning Needs

Future demand projections were based on the 2019 ALN data captured and normalised against the verified PLASC 2019 survey.

Table 5 sets out Primary CLN provision currently available in Cardiff and projected future demand.

Primary places	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Ty Gwyn*	75	90	90	90	90	90
Riverbank	70	70	70	70	70	112
Meadowbank	41	50	50	50	50	50
Hollies	112	112	112	112	112	112
Bryn Hafod	20	20	20	20	20	20
Llanedern	20	20	20	20	20	20
Llan Fach	20	20	20	20	20	20
Marlborough	20	20	20	20	20	20
Springwood	28	28	28	28	28	28
Pwll Coch	7	10	15	20	20	20
Pentrebane	24	24	24	24	24	24
Allensbank SLCN	8	8	8	8	8	8
Total places	445	472	477	482	482	524
Projected demand	500	510	515	522	536	547
Projected Demand (+10%)	550	561	567	574	590	602
Surplus / deficit	-105	-89	-90	-92	-108	-78

The ALN Provision Gap in Primary- Complex learning/ autism

In 2020/21 Cardiff maintains 445 primary special school and SRB places for children with complex learning/ autism. Projects previously agreed by Cabinet, to extend and rebuild Riverbank Special School and to establish an SRB at Ysgol Pwll Coch, will increase the total to 524 places by 2025.

Taking account of children out of county, and in mainstream awaiting specialist placement, the true demand for places is estimated to be circa 500 in 20/21, rising to 547 by 25/26. With a 10% tolerance to allow flexibility, the ideal position would be 550 places in 20/21, and 602 places by 25/26.

In summary, there is an estimated provision gap of 89 in 21/22, rising to 108 by 2024/25. If there were no further growth beyond current plans in relation to Riverbank and Pwll Coch, a provision gap of circa 78 places will remain in 25/26.

NB The projections have been calculated to take account of a falling birth rate in Cardiff over the last 3 years. However, to date, the Inclusion Service has not seen a fall in the incidence of complex needs in the 0-3 age group, referred to Education by Health. 35 extra primary places p.a. were needed in 2020 and 2021. If growth continues at this rate, 140 extra places will be needed over next 4 years.