



September 2026 Addendum

Addendum to Stockport Provider Agreement for the funding of Early Education and Childcare 2025 (Provider Agreement)

The existing Provider Agreement April 2025 and the clarification letter dated 7.7.25 continue to be valid for the purpose of receiving early education entitlements funding.

This addendum to the agreement is to incorporate the changes to Inspection judgements and specified grades that are the new quality standards required for early years providers to receive entitlement funding. Statutory guidance – Early Education and Childcare updated April 2026 [Early education and childcare - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/115444/early-education-and-childcare-2025.pdf)

The changed approach to inspection and new way of reporting means that Stockport Council is issuing this addendum about the new quality standards to sit alongside its existing Stockport Provider agreement for funding April 2025 and clarification letter July 2025.

Quality standards

The DfE states that local authorities are not required to fund early years entitlement places at early years providers who do not meet the quality standards.

The new Ofsted inspection and grading system introduced 10th November 2025, and the Independent Schools Inspectorate introduced 5th January 2026 no longer give one overall judgement grade good, outstanding, requires improvement or inadequate as previously.

They now grade specific areas as below.

- exceptional
- strong standard
- expected standard
- needs attention
- urgent improvement
- Safeguarding is now graded 'met' or 'not met'.

All providers who are inspected on the new Ofsted grading system or the Independent Schools Inspectorate. The changes below will apply

The grades of **needs attention** or **urgent improvement** in leadership and governance or **not met** in safeguarding will not meet the quality standards for funding.

The new grade of needs attention will replace the wording of requires improvement

The new grade of urgent improvement will replace the wording of inadequate.

Both changes apply in the Quality section of the provider agreement (pages 11 & 12 point 2.49-2.57) and Termination and Withdrawal of funding section in the provider agreement (page 18 point 2.98.4) in the Stockport provider agreement for funding 2025.

For childminders registered with a childminding Agency (CMA) there is no change "Stockport Council will not agree to make arrangements for funding with childminders where the childminder agency notifies them that in the agency's opinion, the childminder has ceased to provide childcare of satisfactory quality." see point 2.55 Agreement