

Free Early Education & Childcare 30 Hours Hub Events Questions & Answers

Questions were raised at the various Hub events held in Kirklees throughout April and May. Below are answers to these questions. Answers are current as at the date of publication, however, may be subject to change when revised guidance is published by the Department for Education.

30 Hour Criteria

1. Do 4 year olds qualify for 30 hours funding if they are in a Reception Class?

No. The Operational Guidance¹ issued by the Department for Education in April 2017 states on page 10 *“Parents cannot claim their 30 hours in addition to a full time reception place in a maintained school or academy. Therefore, parents cannot use their eligibility code to claim their 30 hours if their child is in a full-time reception place.”*

2. Criteria: Is it £100,000 combined or £100,000 per parent?

In a two parent family, both parents need to be earning less than £100,000 each.

Eligibility Codes

3. When should parents be encouraged to apply?

The term in which their child has their 3rd birthday to ensure they can access a place at the start of the following term. If the parent does not apply before the start of term they will not be able to access their 30 hours place until the following term. For example, if their child’s birthday is between 1 September and 31 December they should apply during this period, ideally around the middle of the period so that the voucher end date falls after the start of the following term (refer to question 8 below for more details).

4. Will the same eligibility code be issued/used when a parent confirms their eligibility every 3 months?

Yes unless a temporary code has been issued, HMRC may release a small number of ‘Temporary Eligibility Codes’ beginning with the number ‘11’, as opposed to the usual ‘5000’ prefix. This is due to some applications for 30 Hours needing manual intervention.

5. When will parents receive live eligibility codes?

Parents have been able to apply from Friday 21 April 2017. To apply:

- Log onto <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>
- Click on ‘apply now’

6. Can providers assume that if they meet the criteria they will definitely be eligible and we can therefore allocate places to them on this basis?

No. Providers should not allocate a place for a child without a valid code. Providers will be able to check the validity of the code via the [Provider Portal](#)

Parents may receive eligibility codes before their child is three but they can only start claiming their 30 hours place the term following the child’s third birthday or the term following the date the eligibility code was issued (whichever is the later).

¹ [Operational Guidance](#)

7. Is the code for the additional 15 hours only?

Yes. No code is needed for the universal entitlement.

If a child is taking up their universal 15 hours entitlement and a parent becomes eligible for 30 hours part-way through the term, the parent can start claiming their additional hours the term following the date on which they received their code.

8. What happens when the parent loses eligibility?

A grace period is applied which enables parents to retain their childcare place for a short period if they become ineligible for 30 hours. Parents must reconfirm their eligibility every 3 months.

The 'validity/voucher start date' is the date when HMRC confirm eligibility and issue a code. The 'validity/voucher end date' is the parent's 'deadline' for reconfirming. The 'grace period end date' is the last date on which they can receive their 30 hours place. Parents will be reminded by HMRC to re-confirm their eligibility 28 days before the validity end date.

A grace period will not continue beyond the age that a child has achieved compulsory school age (the term following their fifth birthday).

Important note: The grace period does not apply if children have not started accessing their place. For example, a parent applies in May and the code expires in August, and has a grace period end date of 31 December. On reconfirmation if the parent is no longer eligible the code will not be extended and the grace period does not apply.

Date parent receives ineligible decision on reconfirmation:	Grace period end date: <i>Note for children stretching the grace period end date will include the holiday periods, for term time only children the end date will be the end of term.</i>
Spring term - first half (e.g. 1 Jan – 10 Feb)	End of Spring term (e.g. 31 March)
Spring term - second half (e.g. 11 Feb – 31 March)	End of Summer term (e.g. 31 August)
Summer term - first half (e.g. 1 April – 26 May)	End of Summer term (e.g. 31 August)
Summer term - second half (e.g. 27 May – 31 August)	End of Autumn term (e.g. 31 December)
Autumn term - first half (e.g. 1 September – 21 October)	End of Autumn term (e.g. 31 December)
Autumn term - second half (e.g. 22 October – 31 December)	End of Spring term (e.g. 31 March)

Charging

9. Can providers charge for ½ hour lunch break? (i.e. child attends school nursery 9-12 and pre-school 12:30-15:30)

The Operational Guidance states on page 31 "Children should be able to take up their free hours as part of continuous provision and providers should avoid artificial breaks in the day wherever possible. For example, the lunch time hour/session should form part of the free provision where the child is attending a morning and afternoon session. Providers may wish to offer additional hours around the free provision hours".

Note: to provide the free entitlement over the lunch period providers must be delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and therefore the child:staff ratios and qualification requirements relevant to the type of provision will apply.

In this example if the child is attending five days they will access 30 hours hence if the parents require childcare over the lunchtime a charge can be made.

10. Can settings ask for a deposit?

The Operational Guidance states on page 32 *“Providers can charge a refundable deposit to parents accessing the free entitlements for two-, three- and four-year olds, for both the universal entitlement and the extended entitlement. The purpose of the deposit is to give providers certainty that a parent will take up the place. Local authorities should work with providers to determine a reasonable timescale for refunding deposits to parents. Local authorities and providers should make clear to parents that if a parent fails to take up their place, the provider is not obliged to refund the deposit. Local authorities can use their discretion to determine if charging a deposit will prevent take-up, for example, for the two-year-old entitlement for disadvantaged families.”*

Payments

11. When will payments for the additional 30 hours be paid?

All claims including children who are eligible to the extended entitlement will be processed and paid as per the current [FEFC Funding Calendar 2017/18 - Claim deadlines and payments](#)

12. Estimates: must providers check eligibility codes before including children potentially eligible for 30 hours in an Estimate claim?

Yes. Providers must check eligibility codes using the Provider Portal. The voucher end date (also known as the validity end date) must be on or after the start of the eligible term e.g. 4th September 2017 for the Autumn term.

If the voucher end date is prior to 4th September providers **can still offer the place** for September on the understanding that both parties know that funding is not guaranteed until the parent has reconfirmed their eligibility with HMRC.

Parents can reconfirm their eligibility with HMRC from 28 days before the voucher end date, so in most cases where the parent has an end date prior to 4th September parents should be able to reconfirm before the estimate deadline or before the start of autumn term. Parents will receive a reminder from HMRC.

13. Monthly payments - Are monthly payments for childminders only or all providers?

Next year Kirklees Council will consult with providers as to whether they would like to consider being in receipt of monthly payments or whether they would prefer to continue with the current FEFC payment schedule.

14. Does the 30 hour funding end termly?

The FEFC team will fund in line with term dates.

Example: Spring Term 2017 (3 Jan 2017 - 7 April 2017) - Grace period would have ended 31 March but children would have been funded up to the end of term i.e. 7 April. Children stretching their entitlement would have been funded until 23 April.

Provider Claims

15. Do we need both parents NI numbers?

No, you need the NI number from the parent who applied and received the code. All the details required are included on the [30 Hour Eligibility Check Consent form](#)

Schools

16. Can a school refuse a nursery placement if the parent chooses an alternative setting to provide the universal entitlement?

We would recommend that schools try to meet the needs of working parents. Parents do have the choice to consider the offers made by other childcare providers and it may be that in time market forces persuade some schools to reconsider and look at a more flexible approach.

17. If a school does not offer 30 hours, do they automatically become a 15 hour (universal) provider only?

Yes unless they are working in partnership with another provider to offer 30 hours and have completed the online form to be included in the 30 Hour Directory (see question 30).

If a parent splits their 30 hour entitlement between more than one provider, the parent can choose where to access their universal and extended free entitlements. For example they may choose to access their universal hours at a school and their extended hours at a pre-school, or vice versa. However the extended entitlement hours can only be accessed at a provider or school which is listed on the 30 Hour Directory.

Parent Agreements

18. Will providers still need to complete a Parent Agreement for the additional 15 hours and will it show the second provider?

Yes. The revised [Parent Agreement template](#) requests any additional providers to be listed.

Stretching

The purpose of stretching the entitlement is to enable a child to attend regularly throughout the year.
Example: 22hrs/51wks

19. Can stretch just be offered to children eligible for 30 hours?

Yes. Stretch can be offered to children eligible for 30 hours if it fits a providers business model.

20. If a provider opened term time only, could they offer stretch?

No. There would be no benefit to child/parent if the 30 hours wasn't stretched during some of the school holidays.

21. If a child is eligible for 30 hours but the parent only wants the child to attend 15 hours over 52 weeks. Can this be done? If so, how?

Yes if the provider offers stretch. The parent wishing to access 15hrs/52weeks would access a total of 780 hours. In this example the parent is accessing only part of their maximum entitlement e.g. 1140.

22. If the parent chooses to 'stretch' their entitlement, how does the provider get paid?

All claims including children who are stretching their entitlement are processed and paid as per the current FEEC payment schedule. See question 11.

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) / Disability Access Fund (DAF)

23. Do providers need documented evidence of a child's eligibility?

Yes. Parents must provide childcare providers with a copy of the child's most recent Disability Living Allowance confirmation letter.

24. How do providers claim for an eligible child from the Disability Access Fund (DAF)?

Early years providers are responsible for identifying eligible children - you should speak to parents in order to find out if their child is eligible for Disability Access Funding (DAF). Parents must complete and sign the DAF application form and return to the childcare provider with proof of eligibility. The childcare provider will then send the form and proof of eligibility to Kirklees Council. Link to [Parent Information and Application Form](#)

DAF is payable in a lump sum once a year per eligible child. If an eligible child attends more than one provider, the parent will nominate which provider receives the payment.

If a child receiving DAF moves from one provider to another within a financial year (April to March), the new provider is not eligible to receive the DAF for the child within the same financial year, the funding will remain with the original provider.

25. Can Disability Access Fund (DAF) be paid to 3 and 4 year olds in maintained nursery schools?

Yes, however, four year olds in reception classes are not eligible for DAF.

Access Fund

26. What is the Access Fund?

The [Access Fund](#) supports the inclusion of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) attending PVI settings including childminders, but excludes maintained nursery classes/schools. The Access Fund is currently under review as part of the Strategic Review of High Needs Funding.

Hubs

27. Hub contacts – how will childcare providers be included in local work for families?

Hubs are in various stages of development. Further information will be shared when available.

Miscellaneous

28. We are a holiday provision. We do not deliver Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Do we have to register for full day care?

Yes. In order to provide 15 or 30 hour early education and childcare you need to be registered on the Early Years Register and be delivering the EYFS.

29. If the provider, as part of their service, collects an eligible child from school, can the provider claim from the time they pick up?

Yes. The provider must ensure they are delivering the EYFS and providing a quality experience for the whole duration the child is in their care.

30. How do parents know whether a provider intends to offer 30 hours?

This information will be displayed on the Kirklees childcare search. To enable parents to make informed choices about their childcare options, please let the local authority know as soon as possible whether you intend to offer 30 hours free early education and childcare places from September 2017.

Note: providers do not solely need to offer the full 30 hours - you could offer 30 hours in partnership with another provider. Log in to the [Provider Portal](#) and submit your intentions on the online form:

[Click here to check whether you are currently included in the 30 hour directory](#)

Even if you do not intend to offer 30 hours please submit your form indicating you cannot offer 30 hours at this stage.

If you have forgotten your password for the provider portal please email feecteam@kirklees.gov.uk

If you are not currently on the Register to provide free early education and care for 3 and 4 year olds, but would like to be, please email feecteam@kirklees.gov.uk who will process your registration and then issue you with a user name and password to access the Provider Portal.