

Eligibility and hours

Information in response to questions such as:

How do we find out if a child can have 30 hours?
What will be the process to check eligibility?
Who is eligible?
How will we know if they are eligible?
What happens if a parent is no longer working?

Eligibility criteria:

Parents of three and four year olds will need to meet the following criteria in order to be eligible for 30 hours free childcare:

- ✓ They earn or expect to earn the equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum or Living Wage over the coming three months.
- ✓ This equates to £115 a week (or c.£6,000 a year) for each parent over 25 years old or £111.20 a week (or c.£5,700 a year) for each parent between 21 and 24 years old.
- ✓ This applies whether you are in paid employment, self-employed or on zero hours contract.
- ✓ The parent (and their partner where applicable) should be seeking the free childcare to enable them to work.
- ✓ Where one or both parents are on maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave, or if they are on statutory sick leave.
- ✓ Where one parent meets the income criteria and the other is unable to work because they are disabled, have caring responsibilities or have been assessed as having limited capability to work.
- ✓ Where a parent is in a 'start-up period' (i.e. they are newly self-employed) they do not need to demonstrate that they meet the income criteria for 12 months.
- ✓ If a non-EEA national, the parent must have recourse to public funds.

A parent will **not** receive a 'yes' decision where:

- Either or both parents have an income of more than £100,000
- The parent is a non-EEA national and subject to immigration control (and has no recourse to public funds)

There is a childcare calculator available on www.gov.uk website to support parents with their childcare payment arrangements. Parents will check eligibility on the HMRC website.

Grace period for 30hr entitlement:

As part of the implementation of the 30hr childcare entitlement the government are committed to introducing a grace period where a parent is found to be no longer eligible for the additional childcare during a term. Local authorities should continue to fund a place for a child whose parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria and ensure that providers are aware of this.

The government is committed to a grace period that strikes a balance between being deliverable, affordable for the taxpayer and not too burdensome to administer. The government intends to adapt the existing DfE Eligibility Checking Service (ECS) so that any national grace period will be automatically calculated for local authorities.

A child who becomes ineligible during the first half of a funding block (as defined in the table below) should be funded until the end of that funding block (31 March, 31 August, 31 December) or for as long as they remain under Compulsory School Age, whichever is the shorter.

A child who becomes ineligible in the latter half of the funding block (up to the last day of the funding block) should be funded until the end of the following funding block or for as long as they remain under Compulsory School Age, whichever is the shorter.

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Date Parent receives ineligible decision on reconfirmation:

Grace Period End date:

1 January – 10 February
11 February – 31 March
1 April – 26 May
27 May – 31 August
1 September – 21 October
22 October – 31 December

31 March
31 August
31 August
31 December
31 December
31 March

Funded hours:

The council will be adhering to the statutory guidance as laid out by the government.

The information currently provided by the government in relation to the hours the funding can be used between is as follows:

- The funded hours can be delivered between 6am and 8pm.
- There is no minimum session length, however sessions cannot be longer than 10hours.
- The hours can be taken at 2 sites each day.

It is possible that a number of parents will need access to childcare in the early morning or later into the evening to cover shift patterns and at weekends. Extending the hours over which funded provision can be taken will allow parents to drop off their children earlier in the day and collect them later in the evening.

Children may stretch their entitlement and take fewer hours per week over up to 52 weeks of the year subject to not exceeding the maximum number of hours each term.