

**30 hours  
of Free Childcare  
for eligible families  
of 3 and 4 year olds**

**Frequently  
asked questions by  
early years  
providers –  
March 2017**



## Aims

- Eligible families are able to access free entitlement to enable them to work;
- Early years providers are able to develop sustainable provision;
- High quality provision which supports children’s learning and development.

All providers are part of the solution for families.

### Is it childcare or early education?

All funded provision must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. There is no difference in the education and care standards which must be met for both the universal 15 hour and extended 30 hour entitlements.

### Do providers have to offer 30 hours?

It is up to individual providers to look at the hours they can offer. All 3 and 4 year olds are eligible for 15 hours of nursery provision and some of your families may be eligible for 30 hours.

It is recommended that if you are not able to offer 30 hours to eligible families that you have options available for families to enable them to access 30 hours, which may mean you work in partnership with other providers in your area.

If you know what other providers in your area are offering, you can then work in partnership with them to offer a package of childcare that best meets the needs of families to access their full entitlement.

### Do parents have to take up the full 30 hours?

No, eligible parents can take any amount of childcare up to the maximum of 30 hours.

### How can I find out what the demand for 30 hours is?

There is limited information at a local level on how many children will be eligible from September 2017. We would strongly recommend that you speak to your existing families and new applicants to find out who might be eligible by sharing the proposed eligibility criteria with them.

Suggested questions for parental questionnaire:

Would you be eligible for the 30 hours?	Yes / No
If Yes, how many hours would you use?	.....hours
Would you use more than one provider?	Yes / No
Would you still use informal (unpaid/family carers) childcare?	Yes / No
Do you want childcare near home or work?	Home / Work
What kind of childcare would you prefer?	Childminder/PVI/School
What time would you like to access your childcare?	Starting at:                      Finishing at:
Term time only or all year round?	Term time / All year

## How will providers know if a child is eligible?

Parents will apply online and will be given an eligibility code; they must give this code to their provider, along with their national insurance number and child's date of birth. This will enable the provider to confirm with their local authority or a provider portal that it is a valid code.

Cumbria will be establishing an electronic system for providers to check eligibility; we will be in contact with you as soon as it is installed.

## What can I do if it is not financially viable to offer extended hours?

All early years providers have to ensure that the services they offer are financially viable in the long term. By identifying the childcare provision in your area, working with other providers may be the solution for families, whereby you can offer 15 hours per week and another provider can offer the remaining hours, which could support both business models to be sustainable and ensure choice and flexibility for families.

For more information, please see the Cumbria County Council briefing issued on 27 January 2017, or contact your early years team (details below) or access the department for education web site: [http:// bit.ly/2gDT49v](http://bit.ly/2gDT49v)

## I am not sure what the funding rate is going to be.

### Funding formula

It is proposed that from the 1st April 2017, all providers will receive an hourly base rate of £4.00 per hour. In addition there will be 20p per hour for children identified as living in an area of deprivation and an SEN inclusion fund for identified children. (Please note this is subject to Cumbria County Council cabinet approval in March 2017).

### Disability access fund (DAF)

When children are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA), providers will be able to apply for an annual payment of £615. This payment is paid once per year, it cannot be split between providers or transferred if a child moves providers.

### Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

Childcare providers can apply for EYPP if the family/child meets the criteria below, the provider will then receive 53p per hour that the child attends the provision.

The family gets one of the following:

- Income-based Jobseeker Allowance
- Income-related Income support
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- \*Working Tax Credit run-on, which is paid for 4 weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit

\*If the family is in receipt of Working Tax Credit for more than the 4 weeks 'run-on', then the family do not meet the qualifying criteria

Your child has been looked after by a local authority for one day or more

Your child has been adopted from care

## How can the additional hours be staffed in maintained schools?

If a school already offers wraparound care outside the present free entitlement hours led by a suitably qualified level 3 member of staff, then they will be able to offer the additional free entitlement hours using this arrangement within the school day.

However, any new extension of hours will require the provision to be led by a teacher.

Breakfast and afterschool school clubs are exempt from having to have a teacher in ratios.

For more information please see the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, section 3.37

## Can providers charge for meals?

Providers are able to charge parents for meals, nappies and discretionary items such as trips and additional teaching such as learning a musical instrument. However, these charges are voluntary and at the discretion of the parent and therefore cannot be a condition of accessing any free entitlement place i.e. a child may bring a packed lunch rather than parents paying for a meal.

Providers should deliver the free entitlements consistently to all children accessing any of the hours regardless of whether they opt to pay for optional hours, services, meals or consumables.

## How can I manage lunch times?

### Offering free entitlement over lunch time

Free entitlement can be offered over lunch time; however you cannot insist families buy a lunch from you. You can charge for a lunch, but if families prefer to provide a packed lunch this must be allowed – free entitlement is free at point of delivery, without any additional conditions. If you insist that a family purchase lunch from you, you would not be complying with statutory guidance. Please note EYFS staffing requirements must apply during this time.

### Not offering free entitlement over lunch times

If you prefer to set sessions when you will offer free entitlement you cannot insist that parents purchase the childcare/lunch between the sessions as this would be seen as applying conditions to families accessing their free entitlement.

However, if families choose to purchase the childcare/lunch between the free entitlement sessions that is then their choice, i.e. childcare provider offers: 3 hour free entitlement morning session, 1 hour lunch session and then 3 hour free entitlement afternoon session.



## What can I do to manage the impact on children?

Consider your transition arrangements and how you share information about children to ensure they have a positive experience in early years and make good progress. If children are moving providers, consider working in partnership to manage the transitions, i.e. can staff from both providers support the transition from one provider to another, rather than it just being one of the providers, plan in time for staff to pass on information, etc.

## What do I need to consider when managing occupancy?

Consider the demand for before and after school provision, and 'stretching' the entitlement over more weeks, which may then mean you can accommodate more children.

Look at your current patterns of occupancy and consider how many 30 hour places you could offer, try not to be too rigid in setting your limit, as occupancy and the number of eligible families can change.

If you are a sessional provider, offering provision that enables families to choose 5 hours will allow you to accommodate more children. The examples below show the possible impact on changing what you can offer – the models are based on minimum number of children to keep the explanation as simple as possible.

### Example one:

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Total
Morning	3 hours	15 hours				
Afternoon	3 hours	15 hours				

In this model you could accommodate 2 children accessing 15 hours or 1 child accessing 30 hours.

### Example two:

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Total
Morning	5 hours	25 hours				
Afternoon	5 hours	25 hours				

In this model you could have 3 children accessing 15 hours and still have a 5 hour session to accommodate families who may want to purchase extra hours or 2 children accessing 25 hours so they can stretch their entitlement into the school holidays or 1 child able to access 30 hours, with 20 hours spare.

If you have breakfast, lunch and after school clubs offering free entitlement they could add up to offer a 5 hour session, this would then enable you to continue to be able to offer 3 hour sessions for children not eligible for 30 hours.

Occupancy changes throughout the year, therefore if you are intending to change your admission policy to accommodate the 30 hours, try to ensure that you have considered all of the options and that you do not turn away children who you may be able to accommodate at a later date. Consider using waiting lists with parents, particularly if they are already at your provision.

## Who will be responsible for submitting assessment data for children?

All providers will be assessing children, where children are attending more than one provision. It will be important that appropriate information is shared, so please ensure parents are made aware that this will be taking place. Local partnership working will be key. Normally the provider who has the child the most would submit the data, however if it is a 50/50 split we would expect both providers to submit the data.



## Who can I contact to discuss my individual circumstances?

Cumbria County Council contacts:

Early Years and Childcare Project Officer: [joan.bradley@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:joan.bradley@cumbria.gov.uk)

Early Years Team Managers:

Allerdale and Copeland: [karen.rutter@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:karen.rutter@cumbria.gov.uk)

Barrow and South Lakeland: [ann.breeze@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:ann.breeze@cumbria.gov.uk)

Carlisle and Eden: [lynsey.armstrong@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:lynsey.armstrong@cumbria.gov.uk)

## Where can I find other sources of information?

The Family and Childcare Trust, in conjunction with the Department for Education, have designed a free toolkit to support mixed model partnership approaches to delivering the extended free entitlement for three and four year olds. The interactive toolkit will help providers:

- Think about how to get started
- Assess the likely supply of and demand for the extended free entitlement
- Explore benefits and challenges of adopting a partnership approach
- Explore how relationships with parents (mothers, fathers and other carers) might change
- Learn from a number of case studies

You can access the toolkit here: <http://bit.ly/2gDT49v>

You can also use: Twitter, Facebook/LinkedIn, Instagram by following the link above.

**6 March 2017**