

# 30 HOURS OF FREE CHILDCARE



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## MONTHLY UPDATE

### What is 30 Hours of Free Childcare?

The Childcare Act 2016 is delivering the Government's election manifesto commitment to giving families (where parents are working and eligible) an entitlement to 30 Hours of Free Childcare for their three and four year olds.

The national rollout of 30 Hours of Free Childcare commenced on the 1 September 2017.

### Message from the DfE – New Ministerial Appointment:

Damian Hinds MP was appointed the secretary of State for Education on 8 January 2018. Mr Hinds replaces Justine Greening MP.

The new Children and Families Minister is yet to be announced.

### Evaluation of the first year of the national rollout of 30 Hours of Free Childcare:

Kent County Council has been invited to take part in the evaluation of the first year of the national rollout of 30 Hours of Free Childcare.

The aim of the study is to generate evidence to help refine the policy as it enters its second year and to provide insights on the effects on both parents and childcare providers.

The evaluation will be undertaken on behalf of the DfE by a joint team of researchers from Frontier Economics, the University of East London and Natcen Social Research.

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The evaluation will involve three elements:

- A survey of providers in each local authority between February and March 2018
- Case studies between February and April 2018
- Initial findings early July 2018.

We would encourage as many providers (if contacted) to take part so you can express your views. You will not be obligated to take part if you are invited to do so and your participation will remain anonymous.

The findings will be published in August 2018.

Continued.....

## Message from the DfE Continued...

### The Treasury Committee new inquiry into childcare policy:

The Committee will examine the role high quality, accessible, flexible and affordable childcare can play in supporting labour productivity.

#### **Scope of the inquiry:**

The Treasury Committee has launched a new inquiry into childcare policy and its influence on the economy.

It will scrutinise the processes around how childcare schemes are delivered and the quality of childcare interfaces—such as the Childcare Service website and their previous failures.

It will also consider the overall package of Government initiatives that aim to make childcare affordable, how the individual initiatives interact with each other and their effectiveness, and whether they have delivered an adequate provision of affordable childcare that facilitates parental employment.

If you wish to submit evidence to this inquiry, the deadline to do so is Friday 9 February 2018.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/treasury-committee/news-parliament-2017/childcare-launch-17-19/>

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## Changes with the Childcare Voucher scheme in 2018 Reminder:

The new Tax-Free Childcare scheme started to be rolled out to eligible families during 2017.

The Childcare Voucher scheme is expected to close to new entrants in **April 2018** meaning that only parents/carers who are part of the scheme at that time will be able to continue using Childcare Vouchers. If parents/carers are not currently claiming help with childcare costs they have until April 2018 to decide which scheme is best for them.

### **Childcare providers:**

To sign up and receive payments from Tax-Free Childcare if you're an approved or registered childcare provider you can sign up to receive payments from parents who use the Tax-Free Childcare scheme. <https://www.gov.uk/childcare-provider-tax-free-scheme>

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## 30 Hours Marketing and Use of Language:

As Kent County Council is taking part in the 30 Hour evaluation of the first year of the national rollout of 30 Hours of Free Childcare we will consider the wording used to describe the 30 Hours offer within our information and marketing once this evaluation is completed.

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## Free Early Year s Entitlement base rate:

The funding rate from April 2018 is being reviewed and we are confident that we will be able share some good news in the coming weeks.

## Updates from Management Information:

All 30 Hour codes must be validated through the KELSI checker. Failure to do this will result in payment not being processed, even if Synergy allowed the claim through.

If you had any over allocation or adjustment claim in the autumn term, please make sure you have completed the KELSI check for these children. MI has identified many children where the universal and extended entitlement claims changed due to the over allocation of funding.

MI allowed these payments through on the basis that the other provider had completed the check. However, this cannot be applied in the spring term.

A child who has accessed the extended entitlement in the autumn term **can** continue to receive the 30 Hours of Free Childcare until the end of their grace period.

A child who has not claimed the 30 Hours of Free Childcare in the autumn terms, **cannot** access an extended entitlement place in the spring terms if they are in their grace period.

Any 30 Hour code with a start date from 12 January 2018, will receive a 'not eligible' email from the KELSI check and Synergy will not accept it. This is because the parent/carer applied too late in the spring term 2018. They will be eligible from the summer terms 2018.

The Synergy update on Tuesday 16 January was successful and will now allow children in their grace period who claimed last term to be added to your headcount. These children will have the yellow grace period exclamation mark. This is for your information only and will not affect your headcount claim.

The universal hours for 3&4 year old children should have carried over into your spring term actual headcount. **The extended entitlement hours** have not been carried forward as Synergy must complete another 30 Hour check before you submit the child on your headcount. (This is not validating the 30 Hour code).

You must go into each child's record and check the number of universal hours and extended hours match with your signed parental declaration for the spring term. Once you have checked the hours and added the extended entitlement hours and the code, please press the blue '30 Hour Free Childcare' box again to complete the check. Once the green tick appears, you can save the record. It will then take you back to your list of children ready to submit the claim using the 'Send Claim' button.

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## Briefing and Networking Sessions in February 2018:

There will be a short information slot at each Briefing and Networking Session in February to provide support with 30 Hours processes.

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## Parent/Carer Agreements:

Just to remind you that you must have a signed Parental Agreement in place before you make a claim for the Free Early Education (FEE). Please speak to your CSO if you have any questions.

**KELSI Website**

The 30 Hours of Free Childcare page on KELSI is designed to provide you with the information you need with ease. Each heading will take you to your desired page.

**30 Hours of Free Childcare:**

- Eligibility Criteria
- Childcare Choices
- Statutory Guidance
- Operational Guidance

**Eligibility Checker:**

Free Early Education

**Guidance Documents:**

- Open Objects Register
- Parent Declaration Form
- Disability Access Fund
- Transition and 30 Hours
- Further Information

**Monthly Updates:**

- 30 Hours of Free Childcare News

**District Information:**

- June Seminar Slides
- Countywide and District Presentations

**Q and A:**

- Provider Q and As

**Promotional Materials:**

- Parent Leaflet
  - Poster
  - Postcard
  - Images
- Digital Badges
- Eligibility Code Poster

**30 Hour audit of codes – February 2018:**

The Statutory Guidance specifies that local authorities should complete an audit check on eligibility codes at six fixed points in the year as set out in the table of LA audit dates:

<del>23 October 2017</del>	<del>27 October 2017</del>	<b>(Completed)</b>
<del>24 December 2017</del>	<del>6 January 2018</del>	<b>(Completed)</b>
11 February 2018	18 February 2018	<b>(Due)</b>
24 March 2018	1 March 2018	
27 May 2018	2 June 2018	
24 August 2018	1 September 2018	

This was completed on the 3 January 2018 and information was sent to providers. The next audit is due to be completed in February 2018 and the results will be sent out to you by Management Information.

**30 Hours Providers Working in Partnership:**

In November 2017 we sent an email request to find out about partnership working arrangements between providers delivering 30 Hours of Free Childcare to parents/carers. Thank you very much to those of you who responded of whom there were 368 as follows:

1. 118 (72 childminders and 46 group settings) had formal partnerships in place.
2. 103 (44 childminders and 59 group settings) do not have any partnership arrangements.
3. 147 (66 childminders and 81 settings) either share care but informally or have formal arrangements in place but not currently sharing children or signpost to specific providers to enable parents to access 30 Hours. There is further drilling down of this information if required.

We will be contacting some of you by telephone over the coming weeks to explore your responses further.

**Monthly Payments - Consultation on the Kent Early Years Payment Process:**

Kent County Council will be consulting with providers on the current payment process in order to find out what system works best.

This will be taking place in March 2018.

The 30 Hours of Free Childcare updates will continue to be uploaded onto KELSI the last Friday of each month.

<http://www.kelsi.org.uk/30-hours-free-childcare>



The new Threads of Success Recruitment Hub went live in November 2017 with dedicated pages for employers and employees.

Employers will be able to upload job vacancies and receive information and support about advertising, interviewing, staff retention, apprenticeships, governance around recruitment processes and safer recruitment. With employees being able to look for a new role or a career change/career progression through the recruitment opportunities section, they will also be able to receive advice and support about their recruitment journey.

Please visit the Recruitment Hub to familiarise yourself with it and share the news with the sector <https://www.threadsofsuccessrecruitment.com/home>

## THE EDUCATION PEOPLE

In spring 2018 Kent County Council will be launching a new company - The Education People.

The Education People will deliver a wider range of professional services to help schools and early years settings improve learning, wellbeing and children's development in Kent and beyond.

Please contact them if you have any questions or if you have any ideas for services they could help you with.

Contact: 0345 604 1699

Email: [hello@theeducationpeople.org](mailto:hello@theeducationpeople.org)

### 30 Hours Email Address

We have an email address for any queries you may have but please speak to your Childcare Sufficiency Officer in the first instance.

[30HoursFreeChildcare@Kent.gov.uk](mailto:30HoursFreeChildcare@Kent.gov.uk)

### Childcare Choices

If parents encounter any problems with the application process or accessing the childcare account, they should direct their queries to the HMRC Childcare Service Customer Interaction Centre on 0300 123 4097.

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>