

30 HOURS OF FREE CHILDCARE



March 2018 • Issue 17

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 Department of Education:

Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for all local authorities

The Statutory Guidance has been updated (March 2018) – to include information for parents/carers of two year olds who are in receipt of Universal Credit and subject to the new income threshold. To view please click [here](#).

Please see the section on the new Universal Credit thresholds for Free for Two funding.

We are expecting further updates to the guidance by July 2018.

Outcome of public consultations on Free School Meals (FSM) and the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) and the free early education entitlement for two year olds under Universal Credit.

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On 7 February 2018, the Government responded to two public consultations on introducing an earnings threshold for families on Universal Credit for Free School Meals (FSM), the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP), and the free early education entitlement for two year olds.

For FSM and the EYPP, the DfE is amending existing regulations to implement a net earnings threshold of £7,400 to come into force from 1 April 2018.

For the two year old entitlement, existing regulations are being amended to implement a net earnings threshold of £15,400 to come into force from 1 April 2018.

Further guidance on Free School Meals will be issued by the DfE in due course.

The Kent Provider Agreement – IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

As a result of the revision to the Statutory Guidance, the current Kent Provider Agreement will remain in place until 30 September 2018. However, we have added an introductory paragraph and re-dated the existing agreement..

In order for providers to continue receiving Free Early Education funding, you are requested to sign and return the new Provider Declaration form, and return it to Management Information by 30 April 2018. The re-dated Kent Provider Agreement and new Provider Declaration can be found on KELSI. To view please click [here](#).

Applying/Re-confirmation of 30 Hours of Free Childcare codes for the summer term 2018:

The deadline to apply for and/or renew the 30 Hour code is the **31st March 2018**.

Summer Flexibility:

As the Easter holidays fall in the first two weeks of April and a number of providers will not be open, the DfE has requested local authorities to fund a parent/carer where they have applied by 31 March but have a 30 Hours code dated between 1 and 23 April 2018.

The DfE envisages there will be a small number of parents who applied before 31 March 2018 that may receive their 30 Hours code in April owing to technical problems or HMRC requiring additional information.

Temporary Codes:

As an additional measure to ensure that parents receive their codes in advance of the 31 March deadline, the childcare service will begin to offer temporary codes to parents who experience technical problems from **Thursday 1 March**. These codes need to be validated via the Eligibility Checking System (ECS) in the same way as standard codes. The temporary codes begin with '11' as opposed to '500'.

For digital codes (beginning '500'), providers **will need to ask parents to acquire evidence of when they applied**. HMRC should issue a standard email or letter with the 'application date' to parents who contact the helpline requesting evidence. However, we would suggest encouraging parents to take a screen shot to provide evidence.

Temporary codes (beginning '11') will only be issued to parents who applied/attempted to apply by 31 March 2018 and so should be accepted as evidence that the parent applied by the deadline and remains eligible for a summer place.

Please encourage parents who are having difficulties completing their application or reconfirmation online, to contact the helpline on 0300 123 4097, who will check eligibility and provide them with a temporary code if they qualify for 30 Hours.

30 Hour validation process:

For new 30 Hour children – use the 30 Hour checker on the 3&4 year old KELSI page

- If you have a child who has not accessed the 30 Hours previously and the parent has given you an 11 digit 30 Hour code, you need to validate the code through the KELSI 30 Hour checker, to view please click [here](#).
- If a parent receives a new 30 Hour code due to technical problems in their childcare choices account, you will need to validate the new code through the 30 Hour checker on KELSI.
- All the codes validated through KELSI will appear on your audit and are checked against claims on Synergy. If you have not completed a 30 Hour validation check on a code through KELSI, then you will not receive payment for the term until this has been completed.

Existing 30 Hour children – use the Synergy onscreen 30 Hour checker

- If you have an existing 30 Hour child and you wish to check to see if they are eligible for the upcoming term, you can check the details on the Synergy eligibility checker. This is an onscreen check and is not stored in the child's record and does not feed through to MI. It is for your reference only.
- The 30 Hour Audit completed before the start of term will highlight to you all the children still eligible to receive the extended entitlement in the upcoming term and those who have fallen into the grace period or fallen out of eligibility and no longer entitled to the extended entitlement in the upcoming term.
- The Audit part the way through the term is based on your headcount and highlights the codes that need reconfirming with HMRC ready for the upcoming term.

New Universal Credit Threshold and Free for Two Funding:

The Government has recently introduced a new threshold for families who are receiving Universal Credit and have a child in the new date of birth range 01/01/16 – 31/03/16.

To be eligible for the FF2 funding, these families must have an annual net earned income for the household equivalent to and not exceeding £15,400. As this is a net threshold, this is based on the family's take-home pay after tax and NI deductions.

IMPORTANT: If a child is not in the new date of birth range i.e. their date of birth is between 01/04/15 – 31/12/15, the new threshold does not apply. Therefore, as long as the family is in receipt of universal credit they would be eligible for the FF2 funding.

Due to the introduction of this threshold, you may receive some new responses when checking eligibility for a family online.

These are explained on the page 4:

New Universal Credit Threshold and Free for Two Funding continued:

- **Eligible:** This response hasn't changed and means a family is entitled to the FF2 funding.
- **Not Found – No Trace:** This indicates that you have entered some of the claimant's personal details incorrectly. Please check with the claimant their surname, date of birth and national insurance number/national asylum support service number and reply to the email with the correct information so that we can recheck the application for eligibility.
- **Not Found – Pending:** This means the information needed to check the claimant's eligibility is not yet available. We will continue to check the application for up to 6 weeks and will email you as soon as we have a result. Please do not resubmit the original application or complete a new one as this causes unnecessary delays to the system.
- **Not Found – Manual Process:** This means we are unable to check the claimant's eligibility online and will need to request evidence of their earnings. Please ask the claimant for either a copy of their Universal Credit online statement or their entitlement letter. This can be sent via email to eyfreefor2@kent.gov.uk or via post to:

Free For 2 Team,
Management Information,
Second Floor Invicta House,
Maidstone,
Kent, ME14 1XX

- Once we have received the necessary evidence we will inform you of the result via email.
 - The final response you may receive will just inform you that we have received the application and will carry out an eligibility check. We will email you shortly with the result.
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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 on the **5 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 **5 April 2018** to decide which scheme is best for them.

Childcare providers:

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.

To view please click [here](#).

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

Provider Payment Consultation:

The Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for local authorities September 2017 from the Department for Education (DfE) recommends all authorities should consider paying providers monthly from 1 September 2018.

Consultation on the Kent County Council Early Years Payment Process:

On the 26 March 2018 the Local Authority will launch a short consultation on possible changes to the method and frequency we pay providers from 1 September 2018. This is an important issue where we seek the views of providers. You can access the consultation via the following link [here](#).

The consultation closes on 27 April. Please email eyfinance@kent.gov.uk if you have any questions.

Childminding News:

Childminders Survey - claiming free entitlement funding for related children

The Pre-School Learning Alliance is currently in discussions with the Department for Education around securing a change to current funding rules. Under the current rules, childminders are not able to claim free entitlement funding for children they are related to even though this restriction does not apply to group early years settings. To view please click [here](#).

If you have any questions, please contact

feedback@pre-school.org.uk

Childminder start-up grants:

Newly registered childminders and childminder agencies can apply for grants of up to £1,000, if they are planning to offer the Government's funded 30 Hour childcare places.

Childminding news cont.....

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>

Childminding News Continued....

To be eligible, new providers must be planning to offer the 30 Hours for three and four year olds, or be in partnership with a childcare provider that does.

The scheme is only open to newly registered businesses. From 1 May 2017 a newly registered business is one that has been registered with Ofsted or a CMA within the last 3 months.

Further information about the scheme can be viewed [here](#).

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

Following the survey of providers for the national evaluation of 30 Hours free childcare being carried out on behalf of the DfE by Frontier Economics, we wanted to let you know that the survey of parents has been and will remain open until Friday 20 April 2018.

Parents have been selected to take part in this survey from a list of those registered for 30 Hours of Free childcare provided to the evaluators by HMRC. Parents will initially be contacted by post and email with a request and web link to complete the survey online, followed up with reminder emails and then a telephone call to complete the survey by telephone as needed.

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30 Hours of Free Childcare:

Providers question and answers:

We have updated the Q and A and uploaded this on to Kelsi, to view please click [here](#).

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The 30 Hours Update:

The 30 Hours Update has been uploaded on the last Friday of the month since October 2016.

From April 2018 the intention is for 30 Hours related news to be included in the Early Years and Childcare Bulletin.

However, we are aware that with the volume and changing communications relating to the 30 Hours initiative project we are planning to send out any additional 30 Hours news in terms 5 (May) and 6 (July) to make sure providers remain informed and up to date.



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. Please click [here](#) to view the website.

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

