

30 Hours Update

Please see below a message from the Department for Education -

The operational guidance to support the delivery of the 30 hours extended entitlement has now been published. The guidance can be found here -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/30-hours-free-childcare-1a-and-early-years-provider-guide>.

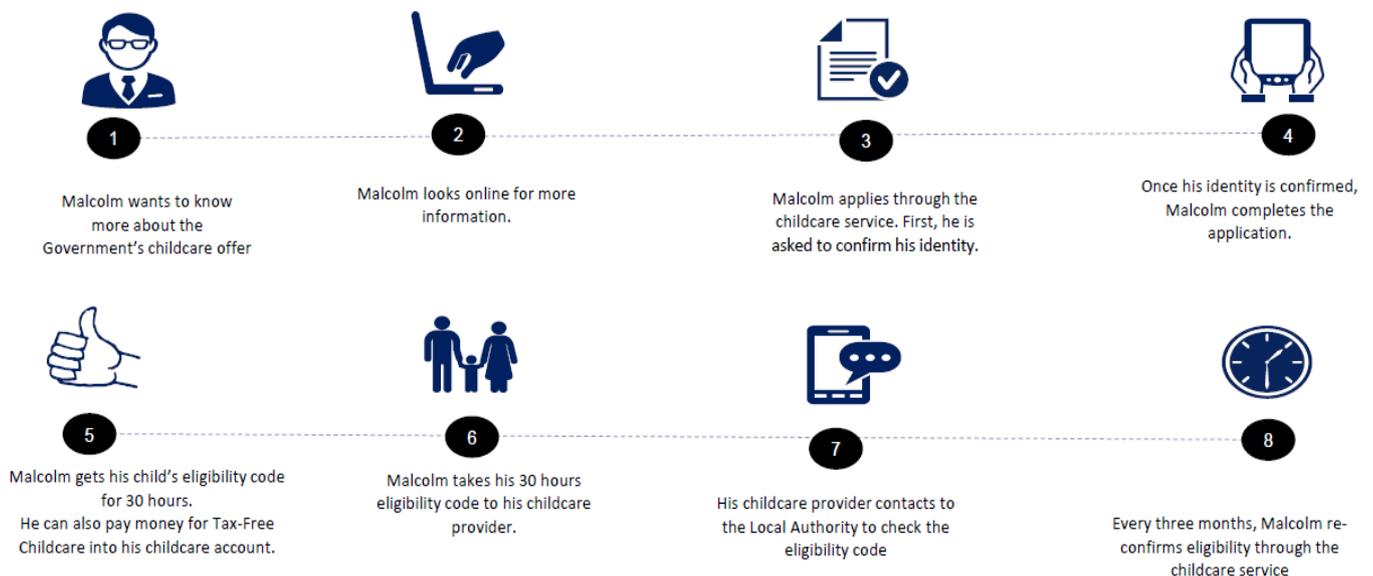
This builds on the statutory guidance and is intended to support local authorities and providers understand in more detail the Department for Education's expectations about how the free entitlements should be delivered.

The Childcare Service System has also now gone live for parents with children up to the age of 4. This means that parents wishing to access the 30 hours free childcare entitlement from September, will now be able to apply using the system. Here is a link to the online Childcare Service:

<https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/par/app/applynow> This link can be shared with parents to encourage them to begin to check their eligibility.

The info graphic below helps illustrate the process for parents.

Applying through the childcare service



Update from LB Lewisham

We have had reports of some parents experiencing difficulties using the childcare service system but have been assured that parents should persevere. If there are continuing difficulties parents should call the help line (*Customer Interaction Centre*) on 0300 123 4097

Parents will need to re-validate their code every 3 months, although the code itself won't change. Children in receipt of the extended entitlement will continue to be eligible for 15 hours even if parents fall out of eligibility. As an LA we will also be running checks and will advise schools if a parent falls out of eligibility. The infographic below illustrates the process for providers to submit eligibility codes



The systems that providers will use (*including nurseries and nursery classes*) to validate codes that parents provide them with is in the process of being established. Lewisham will use a web services system that will allow providers to initially check eligibility themselves, via an online portal. We are currently waiting for a date from Servelec (*our system provider*) for the software to be upgraded as are many other LAs across the UK and for the licence that will allow Lewisham to access the Eligibility Checking System (ECS) to be agreed. As soon as these actions are completed we will notify all

providers who are likely to claim for 30 hrs funding. We envisage this happening within the next month.

In the interim schools have had the opportunity to become familiar with the online provider portal that will eventually be used for submitting eligibility codes by using it to claim for Spring term EYPP.

In the short-term, providers are asked to collect eligibility codes from parents which are likely to be presented in the form shown below. This will indicate that parents have met the eligibility criteria and been issued with a code. This means that at this point in time you can offer a place in principal. As it currently stands parents who apply for a code now will need to re-check their eligibility before the start of the new term. *ie: parents who check in May will be reminded to re-check in August, parents who check in June will be reminded to re-check in September etc, etc.* The code itself won't change and will be further supported by the grace period that will be activated once a child has started a 30 hr place. The grace period will allow parents time to either find work or for you as a nursery to offer a place to another family. Children whose parents fall out of eligibility will continue to be entitled to universal 15 hours, so at worst, you may have to occasionally fill a part time place. As an LA we will also be running checks at the times specified by the DfE and will advise providers if a parent falls out of eligibility and when the end of the grace period will be. The pilots of 30 hrs have shown that the level of parents falling in and out of eligibility is similar to the normal churn that would be experienced with parents starting and leaving the school.

Dear <Parent Forename >

30 hours free childcare application for <Forename and Surname of child>

This letter confirms that you meet the income criteria for 30 hours per week of free childcare over 38 weeks of the year. Your child will also need to meet the age as set out below.

It's possible to stretch your entitlement, by taking fewer hours over more weeks of the year (such as 24 hours a week over 48 weeks of the year).

The eligibility code for <Forename and Surname of child> is <child's eligibility code>.

This code is important as you'll need it to get your 30 hours free childcare. You can find the code in your childcare service account if you need it at a later date. You should contact your childcare provider now to reserve your place. If your provider is not offering 30 hours, you can contact your local council to find out which providers are offering 30 hours in your area.

You can't use this code to claim 30 hours free childcare if your child is in full-time reception. If your child has reached compulsory school age, they won't be eligible for free childcare.

As you are making your arrangements for the Autumn Term please also ensure that you consider the requirements of the EYFS Statutory Guidance at all times particularly with regard to ratios and required qualifications.

FAQs

Questions asked about implementation of 30 hours by schools

- 1. If we want to provide an additional lunchtime hour (outside of the 6-hour provision), can this be supervised by Meals Supervisors on a 1:8 ratio.**

Please see EYFS Statutory requirements below:

3.37. For children aged three and over in maintained nursery schools and nursery classes in maintained schools

- there must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children
- at least one member of staff must be a school teacher as defined by section 122 of the Education Act 2002 ⁴¹
- at least one other member of staff must hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification ⁴²

⁴¹ See also the Education (School Teachers' Prescribed Qualifications, etc) Order 2003 and the Education (School Teachers' Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003.

⁴² Provided that the person meets all relevant staff qualification requirement as required by The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009.

Schools who wish to drop to a 1:8 ratio over the lunch period using supervision with appropriate qualifications, (i.e.: 1 member of staff with a Level 3 and 50% of other staff holding a level 2 or above) will need to ensure that quality and safety is maintained as Footnote **36** of the guidance clarifies:

³⁶ We expect the teacher (or equivalent) to be working with children for the vast majority of the time. Where they need to be absent for short periods of time, the provider will need to ensure that quality and safety is maintained.

- 2. We know we can't make the charge for lunch a condition, but can we charge for the supervision and make this charge a condition of the offer?**

You cannot make the offer of a 30 hrs place 'conditional' on paying any additional charges

- 3. If we provided a model, where the lunch-hour is included in the 6-hour provision (eg: 9.00am – 3.00pm), would this hour have to be covered by qualified nursery staff, i.e. teachers / NVQ3 Nursery Nurses? Can we use Meal Supervisors?**

As per the answer to question 1 in order to meet the statutory requirements of the EYFS you will need to ensure that suitably qualified staff are present with the children.

30 Hours Free Childcare for Working Parents of 3 and 4 year-olds

Frequently Asked Questions -

From 1 September 2017, the Government will be extending the free childcare entitlement for working parents of 3 and 4 year-olds, to 30 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year. This is being introduced alongside a new scheme to help working families with the cost of childcare called **Tax-Free Childcare**.

1. How many hours are free?

The current **universal entitlement** for **all** 3 and 4 year-olds will continue. Every 3 and 4 year-old will still be entitled to 15 hours free childcare per week for 38 weeks of the year – a total of 570 hours per year.

However, the Government is going to increase this entitlement for eligible working parents of 3 and 4 year-olds from 1 September 2017. Working parents will be entitled to an additional 15 hours of free childcare a week to make a total of 30 hours. This will be offered for 38 weeks of the year – a total of 1,140 hours per year.

2. Will my child qualify?

In order to qualify, both parents must be working or the sole parent must be working in a lone parent family. There are some exceptions though. See '**Are there any exceptions to the eligibility criteria**' below.

3. Can I claim the 30 free hours for my foster child?

No. Foster carers cannot claim the 30 free hours for children they foster.

4. Can I claim the 30 free hours for my adopted child?

Yes, as long as you and your partner meet the eligibility criteria.

5. Are there any exceptions to the eligibility criteria?

Yes, there are some exceptions to the criteria that both parents must be working, or the sole parent must be working in a lone parent family.

You could still qualify for the 30 hours free childcare if:

- one or both parents are temporarily away from work because of maternity, paternity, parental or adoption leave
- one or both parents are in receipt of statutory sick pay
- one or both parents are on specific carers' benefits
- one or both parents are on specific disability benefits.

6. Will my child qualify if I am living with a new partner or have remarried?

If you have remarried or are living with a new partner, you and your new partner **must both be working** in order for your child to be eligible.

7. Is there a minimum or a maximum amount that each parent must earn?

Eligibility is based on income earned, not hours worked.

- Each parent over the age of 25 must earn **at least** £115.20 a week at current rates (as of November 2016). This is the equivalent of 16 hours at the National Living Wage
- If you are age 16 - 24 you must earn **at least** £64.00 - £111.20 at current rates (as of November 2016) - depending on your age. This is the equivalent of 16 hours at the National Minimum Wage for your age.
- If you are on an apprenticeship you must earn **at least** £54.40 a week at current rates (as of November 2016). This applies for apprentice parents under the age of 19, or older apprentice parents *in the first year of an apprenticeship*. This is the equivalent of 16 hours at the national Apprentice Rate.

The **upper limit** that **each parent** can earn is £100,000.

8. Will my child qualify if my partner or I are on a zero hours' contract?

Providing you work on average two weeks out of every three and when you are working you earn the equivalent of **at least** 25 hours at the National Living Wage or National Minimum Wage (*depending on your age*), your child will be eligible for the 30 hours free childcare.

9. Will my child qualify if my partner or I are self-employed?

As long as you earn **at least** the minimum amount (see '**Is there a minimum or a maximum amount that each parent must earn?**' above) but less than the upper threshold of £100,000 each, your child will be eligible for the 30 hours free childcare.

10. Will my child qualify if I've just started a new job?

If you expect to earn **at least** the minimum amount (see '**Is there a minimum or a maximum amount that each parent must earn?**' above) on average, over the next three months, your child will be eligible for the 30 hours free childcare.

11. What happens if my income drops below the minimum amount? Or I lose my job?

If either parent starts earning less than the minimum income threshold or stops working altogether, you will be given a short 'grace period' (*set by the Government*) to give you time to find a new job and start earning at least the minimum amount again. The grace period is shown below, along with the LA audit dates that all LA's will be required to carry out on the dates specified.

Validity end date:	LA audit date:	Grace Period End date:
1 Jan – 10 February	11 February	31 March
11 Feb – 31 March	1 April	31 August
1 April – 26 May	27 May	31 August
27 May – 31 August	1 September	31 December
1 September – 21 October	22 October	31 December
22 October – 31 December	1 January	31 March

If you do not find a new job within the grace period, your child will stop being eligible to receive the 30 hours free childcare.

12. If my partner and I become eligible part way through a term, can we get the 30 free hours straight-away?

The Government has said that local authorities should allow you to start claiming your 30 free hours “as soon as is reasonably practicable” during that term, and no later than the start of the next term.

13. Will my child be eligible from their 3rd birthday?

Your child will be eligible to claim the 30 free hours from the beginning of the term **after** their 3rd birthday.

Term dates start on 1st January, 1st April 1st September.

For example, *if you child turns 3 on the 23rd June, they will be eligible from the 1st September.*

In order for your child to qualify for the 30 free hours from 1st September 2017, they must have been born after 1st September 2013. Please ensure you check your own eligibility for extended entitlement in the term that your child turns 3 so that they can take up their place in the following term.

14. How long can my child receive the 30 free hours for?

Your child can receive the 30 free hours until they reach statutory school age **or** attend school in Reception class (Year R).

15. How do I apply for the 30 free hours?

Parents must apply through an online eligibility checking system. <https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/par/app/applynow>

Parents who provide false information about their eligibility can be fined between £300 and £3000.

16. Who makes the decision whether my partner and I are eligible?

Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customers (HMRC). Once you have gone through the online eligibility checking system, HMRC will give you an 11 digit Eligibility code beginning with 5000xxxxxx. You will need to give this to your chosen childcare provider in order to claim the 30 free hours.

17. What types of childcare provider can offer the 30 free hours?

All Ofsted-registered approved childcare providers in Lewisham can offer the 30 hours free childcare unless they have a current judgement of ‘inadequate’. This includes childminders, nursery schools, day nurseries, nursery classes, independent schools and pre-schools.

18. Will all childcare providers in Lewisham offer the 30 free hours?

It will be **optional** for approved childcare providers in Lewisham to offer the 30 free hours. Lewisham EYQST (*Early Years Quality and Sufficiency Team*) is currently speaking to all childcare providers to see if they are **likely** to be offering the 30 free hours. Please note that childcare providers who opt **not** to provide the 30 free hours might still offer the universal 15 free hours for 3 & 4-year-olds.

19. My current childcare provider doesn't look like they will offer the 30 free hours. What can I do?

You have a couple of options.

You could move your child to another childcare provider who will offer the 30 free hours. Or you could stay with your existing provider if they will offer the universal 15 free hours but also use **another** childcare provider who **is** going to offer the 30 free hours, for the additional 15 hours per week.

20. Can I use more than one childcare provider to claim the 30 free hours?

Yes. You can use up to 3 childcare providers - **but you cannot claim more than 30 hours per week in total.**

Also, you cannot use more than 2 childcare providers on one day to claim the 30 free hours.

21. Do I have to use all 30 free hours each week?

No, you can use anything from 16-30 hours - it is up to you.

However, not all childcare providers may be able to offer the exact amount of free hours that you require. Providers can claim the 30 free hours' entitlement from their Local Authority using the following criteria (as of November 2016):

- 10 hours maximum per day
- No minimum amount of hours per day
- Hours between 6am – 8pm each day

If your childcare provider cannot offer the exact amount of free hours that you require, you could split your 30 free hours across more than one childcare provider.

22. Can I claim my free hours all year round?

The new 30 free hours' entitlement should be flexible. The phrase '30 free hours a week' is based on a childcare provider only being open for the 38 weeks during the year (term-time only). However childcare providers **will have the option** to offer the same total number of hours (1,140 per year) over more than 38 weeks.

For example, if a childcare provider is open 48 weeks of the year, then they could offer 23.75 funded hours per week all year round. Or if a provider is open 51 weeks of the year, then they could offer 22.25 funded hours per week all year round. This is known as a stretched offer.

However, not all childcare providers may be able to offer the stretched offer.

Providers can claim the 30 free hours' entitlement from their Local Authority using the following criteria (as of November 2016):

- 10 hours maximum per day
- No minimum amount of hours per day
- Hours between 6am – 8pm each day

NB:

- **No childcare provider can offer *more* than 30 free hours per week over *less* than 38 weeks.**
- If your child attends a childcare provider for more than the free hours available in a claim period, **you will be responsible for these fees and should ensure you understand how these will be calculated and what you will be charged.**
- You should also check whether there are any other additional charges such as for meals and snacks.