

Free Early Education entitlement funding - Extended 30 hours Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) - May i2017

Parent and carers FAQ's

Q. When will the 30 hours be available?

The 30 hours extended free entitlement is available for eligible families from September 2017

Q. Who will be eligible for the 30 hours?

Both parents are working or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family, and each parent earns, on average the equivalent weekly minimum of 16 hours at national minimum wage or national living wage; and earn less than £100,000 per year

Q. What is 30 hours?

The 30 hours extended free entitlement funding, is an additional 15 hours to the universal 15 hours free entitlement that all 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to. The 30 hours is a term time only (38 weeks) equivalent, If you choose to access your entitlement over the whole year you will receive less hours per week e.g 23 hours over 48 weeks

Q. Where can I receive my 30 hours free childcare?

You can receive your free entitlement funding at one of the approved providers on the directory of Early Years Providers, which can be found on the FIS website www.sutton.gov.uk/familyinfo

Q. Can I get more than 30 hours?

Parent and carers can purchase additional hours above the 30 hours per week, however the maximum of 30 hours per week can be claimed as free entitlement.

Q. Do I have to use all the 30 hours?

No, you can choose how many hours you wish to access, you can also stretch your hours over the entire year.

Q. If I do not work how many hours is my child eligible for free of charge?

The universal free entitlement (15 hours) is for all 3 & 4 year olds.

The extended free entitlement (30 hours) is for working parents who meet the following criteria

Families where both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family), and each parent earns, on average, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage or national living wage and less than £100,000 per year.

Q. Is it term time only?

The 30 hours represents a term time only model, however you are able to 'stretch' your hours over the entire year.

Q. What would happen if I wish to use my hours all year but the provider I wish to use the hours with will only allow me to use them term time only?

You are able to take up your entitlement at more than one provider, Sutton Family Information Service who will be able to support you in finding childcare that best suits your needs. Sutton Family Information Service can be contacted on 020 8700 6000

Q. The childcare provider I currently use limit the number of funded places available, what happens I do not get the place I want?

Childcare providers can choose how they offer the 30 hours as long as they meet the legal requirements, including limiting the number of places they offer. The provider should have a free entitlement policy that describes their offer and the criteria in which they allocate places. The provider will be able to discuss this further with you. Information of all childcare providers who offer free entitlement places is available from Sutton Family Information Service, Sutton Information Service also offer a brokerage service to support families to find available free entitlement places.

Q. What happens if I am no longer eligible?

There will be grace period, the time frame for this grace period is below

Date Parent receives ineligible decision on reconfirmation:	Grace Period End date:
1 Jan – 10 Feb	31 March
11 Feb – 31 March	31 August
1 April – 26 May	31 August
27 May – 31 August	31 December
1 September – 21 October	31 December
22 October – 31 December	31 March

Once you are no longer eligible you will be informed of the grace period, during the grace period you will be able to still receive the free entitlement, however, after the grace period you will be liable for any costs incurred for any additional hours over the universal 15 hours your child attends.

Q. Who checks and confirms if I am eligible to receive the 30 hours? How is this done? How regularly? How does the provider know I am eligible to receive the funding?

Parents and guardians will be able to check their eligibility online. If you are eligible you will receive an 11 digit code, you must present this code at a childcare provider that is offering the free entitlement to receive you place. The provider will be able to confirm your eligibility

and if available offer a place. In addition you will be required to check your eligibility every three months - (HMRC will send reminders)

Q. What happens if my current childcare provider does not offer 30 hours?

Not all providers will be able to offer the full 30 hours, however you are able to receive your funding in a maximum of three providers and only two providers in any one day. Sutton family Information service are able to support parents in choosing childcare.

Q. Can I use more than one childcare provider?

Yes, you can use a maximum of three providers, however you can only use two provider in any one day.

Q. Do I have to use a childcare provider near where I live?

No, the entitlement is national entitlement, therefore if you are eligible you can take up a place in any of the approved childcare providers. If you require support with choosing a childcare provider that is not in Sutton, you will need to contact the local family information service in the borough you are looking for childcare.

Q. Is it really free?

Yes, if you are eligible, you are entitled to 30 hours of childcare where the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is delivered. Providers are not allowed to make any conditions on you accessing your entitlement, however some providers may have additional charges for meals or additional activities such as sports, music or languages, but you will have the choice as to whether or not you pay for these, for example you can take a packed lunch or your child does not participate in extra paid for activities.

Q. Can the provider I choose insist I pay for extra hours or services in order to access my 30 hours free of charge?

No, providers are not allowed to insist you buy additional services or hours to access your entitlement. The free entitlement hours are free at the point of access.

Q. Can I use childcare vouchers/tax free childcare scheme to pay for extra hours?

Yes, please see information on Sutton website for all your childcare options www.sutton.gov.uk/familyinfo Parents can only use one of the schemes not both.

Q. What happens if I wish to use all my 30 hours but cannot find providers to offer me all my entitlement? Where do I get help?

Sutton Family Information Service will be able to support you find childcare. You can contact them on 020 8770 6000

Q. Can I claim my funded hours if my child is cared for by a relative? If the relative is already registered with Ofsted as a childminder can I claim the funded hours with them?

Childminders cannot claim funding for a child who they are related to. 'Early years provision is defined in Section 20 in the 2006 Act as the provision of childcare. Childcare as defined in

section 18 of the 2006 act, specifically excluded care provided for a child by a parent, step-parent, foster parent (or other relative)... for a related child does not count as childcare in legal terms. Government funding cannot be claimed by, or spent on, childminders providing childcare for their own child or a related child.' (p40 Statutory Guidance 2017)

Q. How much notice do I need to give?

You will need to confirm with your chosen childcare provider, each provider will have its own notice period. However, a grace period for eligibility for the 30 hours entitlement can be found above. If you choose to change child care provider during a term you will not be able to claim free entitlement funding for the remainder of the term at the new setting, only those settings identified on the parent declaration form when funding commences will be paid. Children can start at any point in the term if they have not claimed their free entitlement place funding elsewhere.

Q. Are school nurseries still only going to offer 15 hours per week?

It will be up to each individual school to decide whether or not to offer 30 hours. Some school nurseries will be able to offer the full 30 hours and some will not. Schools that can not offer the 30 hours will work with local providers to help parent access any additional hours they require.

Q. Where do I go for further information?

Further information can be found at www.sutton.gov.uk/freechildcare

Q. I am foster carer are my children eligible for 30 hours?

If you meet the financial criteria you will be able to claim for you own children but not the children you care for.

Childcare provider Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How much funding will I receive?

The base hourly rate paid by the local authority for families taking up their free entitlement will be £4.75. This hourly rate will apply to both the universal and extended free entitlement. More details can be found in the provider agreement to register onto the directory of providers.

Q. Do I have to offer the 30 hours and what will happen if I don't?

No, you do not have to offer the 30 hours, however we do expect that there will be high demand for places and expect childcare providers to work in partnership to deliver the 30 hours.

Q. How many children do we expect to be eligible?

The local authority is currently finalising its Childcare Sufficiency Assessment that will help estimate eligible numbers and the demand and supply of childcare available in Sutton

Q. How do we know who is eligible and who is not?

Parents will apply and check their eligibility online with the HMRC. If they are eligible they will receive a 11 digit eligibility code. Providers will need to validate this code with the local authority. It is expected an online system will be available in September the providers will be able to receive instant answer, more details and training will be provided soon.

Q. Is the funding the same as the first 15 hours?

Yes, the hourly rate for three and four year old funding will be the same for the universal free entitlement and the extended 30 hours entitlement.

Q. What can I charge outside of the funding e.g. lunch club or wrap around care

Providers are able to charge for any additional activities outside of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) as long as it is not a condition to access the free entitlement. Please refer to the provider agreement or operational [guidance](#) for more information.

Q. Can I make extra charges or request that a parent supplies nappies, wipes, milk etc?

Yes, as long as it is not a condition of accessing a free entitlement place all additional charges must be voluntary, further information can be found in the operational guidance.

Q. What if, I cannot do the 30 hours because I don't have use of the premises?

The local authority understands that not all providers will be able to offer the full 30 hours, the local authority would expect childcare providers to work in partnership with others to support families to take up their entitlement.

Q. How many settings can a child attend?

Children can attend maximum of three settings, however they can not attend more that two settings in any one day.

Q. How often do I get paid for the funded hours?

PVI providers will continue to receive funding in the same they do now, two allocation per term. Details on how and when to claim funding will be provided in the funding handbook.

Q. What will the flexible offer look like for a child eligible for the extended entitlement? What different models are available?

The Extended entitlement equals 380 hours per term (1140 hrs per year). This can be taken term time only or flexibly across the year:

- Up to 30 hrs per week for 38 weeks of the year
- Up to 23.75 hours per week across 48 weeks of the year
- Up to 22.25 hours per week across 51 weeks of the year

Q. How will I know what other settings a child attends?

If a child attends more than one setting the parent should declare this to all the providers on the parent declaration form. The parent can decide which provider they want to receive the universal (15) hours and the provider that will receive the extended entitlement.

Q. How do I offer it to parents - first come first served?

How you offer places to parents is your choice. The local authority will only get involved if you are not meeting the terms and conditions for funding.

Q. How do I cap places?

This would depend on your business plan and what is financially viable to your setting.

Q. What happens if parents aren't happy about not having the full 30 hours with me?

Parents are able to use more than one provider to access their entitlement, Sutton Family Information Service will be able to support parents in choosing childcare.

Q. What happens about payments if a parent who is using their entitlement with me decides to leave mid term?

Funding will be administered in the same way it does for the universal 15 hours of free childcare, the free entitlement funding handbook will provide further details. If you do not have a copy of the handbook please contact your Early Years Advisor or Childminder Development Officer.

Q. What happens after the grace period, will I be paid for hours that I have provided during this time? And will parents be able to re check their eligibility in during the grace period?

Providers will be funded for the duration the grace period. Parents will be able to check eligibility during the grace period, if they fall back into eligibility they will be able to continue to receive funding after the grace period with no break in funding.

Q. If I do not wish to offer the funding and a parent whose child I currently care for wishes to use the funding with me, can I be forced to offer it?

No, all childcare providers have a choice as to whether or not they offer free entitlement places, however each provider need to make it clear what their offer is to families.

Q. Do I need to keep a space in case someone already with me becomes eligible?

No, you do not have to keep spaces available but you will need to have a good understanding of the demand for places for new and existing children.

Q. What happens if a family goes on an extended holiday and wants me to keep their child's place open for them? Can I still claim the hours to hold the place?

This is decision for each provider to make, the local authority will not pay for places that are not filled for an extended period of time.

Q. What if a child is long term sick?

This would need to be in line with your existing policies and procedures for your setting if you hold that place open, however as mentioned above the local authority will not pay for places where children are not attending. In exceptional circumstances it will be considered by the local authority on a case by case basis. Funding is allocated for 'normal' sick absence.

Q. Will there need to be a formal agreement between providers when the hours are being shared and if so who is responsible for producing this?

There will be formal agreements between parents and providers, where the parent wants to take up their universal entitlement and their extended entitlement. The local authority continues to work with providers to discuss what partnership working between providers could look like. If you have any question please contact your Early Years Advisor or Childminder Development Officer in the first instance. The family and childcare trust have developed a [toolkit](#) to support provider partnerships that you may find useful..

Q. Is there any extra work or record keeping involved over and above what is currently necessary for offering FEF?

No, there will be no additional record keeping. It is our intention to upgrade some of the modules on the provider portal so that record keeping and administration is more efficient.

Q. Will the current process that is used for claiming funding for FEF still be the same when the 30 hours is available?

Yes, we intend to upgrade and purchase additional modules on the current system, so that it is more efficient for providers. Providers will be able to validate eligibility for the extended entitlement, two year old funding and EYPP.

Q. Who will be administering the system for 30 hours claims and payments? Who will be available to give help and advice with any issues?

The funding handbook is published to providers on a termly basis and includes contact details for staff who can provide assistance.

Q. Can registered childminders collect a child from one setting to drop them to another and be paid through the funded hours?

Parents can only take up funding over a maximum of three provider and only two sites in any one day, so this would depend on specific circumstances.

Q. As a childminder if I drop a child to preschool or nursery and then collect them, I charge the parent a retainer fee whilst their child is there. Am I still able to do this if I agree to offer 30 hours FEF?

Providers can charge for additional service, but can not make a condition on access to a free entitlement place.

Q. Will providers have information on local providers?

All providers at the start of the year will receive a copy of the directory of providers that can be shared with parents. The directory is regularly updated as new providers sign up to offer the free entitlement throughout the year. Providers can request a copy of the directory from Sutton Information Service at any point.

Q. Where do I go for further information?

Further information can be found at www.sutton.gov.uk/freechildcare or by contacting your Early Years Advisor.