

GUIDANCE FOR EARLY YEARS ENTITLEMENTS FUNDING 2025



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Introduction

Welcome to the Guidance for Early Years Entitlements Funding.

This document is aimed at highlighting the funding processes involved in making claims for the Early Years Funding Entitlements and should be read in conjunction with the Warwickshire County Council Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding 2025.

Access to Information

All of the up-to-date information required to claim the Early Years Entitlements Funding for providers can be found on our website: [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Early-Education-Funding-Entitlements-Education-and-Early-Years-providers) All termly information letters, Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Forms, guidance documents and leaflets, including translated versions for parents/carers can be found on page 2.

Information about the Early Years Entitlements Funding for parents and carers can be found on the Warwickshire website: [Help with childcare costs – Warwickshire County Council](https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Help-with-childcare-costs) with links to useful services.

Information about all government help with childcare costs can be found on the website: [Childcare Choices | 30 Hours Childcare, Tax-Free Childcare and More | Help with Costs | GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/childcare-choices)

The Early Years Entitlements

Reference Section 3.1. - Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding and A2.1 – A2.17 of the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

The entitlements are:

- 2Help entitlement for 2-year-olds: 570 hours per year
- Universal entitlement for 3- & 4-year-olds: 570 hours per year
- Extended working parent entitlement for 3- & 4-year-olds: 570 hours per year
- Expanded working parent entitlement for children aged 9 months – 3 years: 1140 hours per year

The entitlements equate to 15 or 30 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year. Children may stretch their entitlement over more than 38 weeks (and up to 52 weeks). This means taking fewer hours per week, subject to a maximum of 570 or 1140 hours a year. The Early Years entitlements are from the term following a child is 9 months old until the child reaches compulsory school age (the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday). The framework for delivering the entitlements set by the DfE are:

- No session longer than 10 hours
- No minimum session length (subject to the requirements of registration on the Ofsted Early Years Register)
- Not before 6.00am or after 8.00pm
- A maximum of 2 sites in a single day (separate provision on a school site is counted as one site)

Local authorities should ensure that children are able to take up their free hours in continuous blocks if they wish to, and avoid artificial breaks being created throughout the day, for example, over the lunch period.

Determining Eligibility for the Entitlements

2Help (Disadvantaged 2-year-olds Entitlement)

Reference: Section 2.1.1. – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

2Help is the name for the entitlement for eligible families receiving some additional forms of government support, such as certain benefits or credits, or those meeting other criteria as detailed below.

- A 2-year-old child will be entitled to the 2Help funding entitlement when **both** of the following criteria are met: (1) from the term after the child has attained the age of two and (2) the child or parent meets the eligibility criteria (either through a successful application or via an ECS check on the Provider Portal).
- They continue to receive a place until they become eligible for the universal entitlement (from the term following their third birthday). The child remains eligible even where the child or parent ceases to meet these criteria at a later date - once a child has been given a funded place, they will keep it.

The following table shows when a child is eligible to receive the 2-year-old 2Help funding entitlement, (all dates are inclusive):

| Eligibility start dates for children aged 2 years old | |
|---|---|
| A child born between: | Will be eligible for a funded place from: |
| <i>1st January and 31st March</i> | <i>The start of the Summer Term (on or after 1st April) following their 2nd birthday</i> |
| <i>1st April and 31st August</i> | <i>The start of the Autumn Term (on or after 1st September) following their 2nd birthday</i> |
| <i>1st September and 31st December</i> | <i>The start of the Spring Term (on or after 1st January) following their 2nd birthday</i> |

Eligibility Criteria:

2-year-olds are eligible for the 2Help entitlement of 15 hours of early years provision, from the term after the child's second birthday, if the parent(s) claim one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of the State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit, with an annual household income of less than £16,190 before tax
- Working Tax Credit, 4 week run on
- Universal Credit, with an annual net earned income equivalent to and not exceeding £15,400 assessed on up to three of the parent's most recent Universal Credit assessment periods

OR

- The child is looked after by the local authority
- The child has left care through adoption, special guardianship or a child arrangement order
- The child has a current statement of Special Educational Need, or an Education and Health Care Plan
- The child is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance

OR

If a parent's immigration status says they have 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF), they may be able to access a funded childcare place for their 2-year-old if they:

- live in England and their annual household income is no more than:
 - £26,500 for families outside of London with one child
 - £30,600 for families outside of London with two or more children
- have no more than £16,000 in savings or investments

Additional Information:

- Each child's place is approved on an individual application basis or via an ECS check on the Provider Portal. Families must meet the specific criteria as above and set out in the ['Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for local authorities'](#)
- Families can apply for the 2Help funding online at [Help with childcare costs – Warwickshire County Council](#) or a paper application is available if the parent does not have access to the internet, and can be requested from 2help@warwickshire.gov.uk

- If a parent does not have access to the internet, they can contact their local Children and Family Centre for help. For more details visit: [Children and family centres – Warwickshire County Council](#)
- The earliest that a parent's eligibility can be checked is the term that the child turns 2, for their place to start from the term after their second birthday. If an application is received before this time, it will be held, and their eligibility checked at the start of the term that the child turns 2
- If a family is eligible, they will be sent a Funding Confirmation letter via email or post by the Early Years Entitlements Team. This letter includes the EY Voucher Code that the provider will need to enter on to the Access Synergy Provider Portal to match with the records of eligibility
- The provider **MUST** see a copy of the Funding Confirmation letter before offering a (2Help) 2-year-old funded place
- The EY Voucher Code on the letter will need to be entered on to the EY Voucher box on the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF) and in the Access Synergy Provider Portal
- Following an upgrade to the Provider Portal, from September 2025, eligibility can be checked in the child funding tab in the Provider Portal, using the parent/carers details entered onto the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF)
- All parents accessing a 2Help funded place must complete the current Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF)
- Once a child's eligibility is confirmed via the application process, they will be entitled to keep their funded hours until they become eligible for 3- and 4-year-old Universal Entitlement funding, and parents **do not** need to reconfirm their code on a termly basis
- Where the family circumstances improve or change, the place will not be removed
- If an eligible child starts after the Headcount date the funding entitlement can be claimed using the Online Adjustment process
- Where a setting offers 2Help funding, the setting's details are added to a list of 2-year-old funded Providers. This list is sent to parents with their funding confirmation letter
- Where eligibility has been confirmed by a Local Authority outside of Warwickshire, a copy of the confirmation letter will need to be attached to the funding application using the Document Upload facility in the Access Synergy Provider Portal
- There may be some circumstances where households meet the eligibility criteria for both the 2Help entitlement and the 2-year-old working parent entitlement. In

these circumstances, from September 2025, the first 15 hours childcare should be provided under the 2Help entitlement, before the working parent hours are funded. Children eligible for both entitlements will be able to access 15 hours under the 2Help entitlement plus 15 hours under the working parent entitlement, until they become eligible for the 15 hours universal entitlement for 3- and 4-year-olds and 15 hours working parent entitlement for 3- and 4-year-olds, if they meet the eligibility criteria. Therefore, households will not lose eligibility for their 15 hours funded early education, as is currently the case for the 2Help entitlement

3- & 4-year-old Universal Entitlement:

Reference: Section 2.1.2. – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

ALL 3- & 4-year-olds are entitled to the 15 hours Universal Entitlement from the start of the term following their third birthday until the child reaches compulsory school age, the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday, or where the child is taking up a full time school place in reception, whichever is the earlier.

There is NO application process or eligibility code required for the Universal Entitlement. The funding is claimed by their chosen early years provider once the parent completes a Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF).

The following table shows when a child is eligible to receive the 3- and 4-year-old Universal entitlements (all dates are inclusive):

| Eligibility start dates for children aged 3 & 4 years old | |
|---|--|
| A child born between: | Will be eligible for a funded place from: |
| <i>1st January and 31st March</i> | <i>The start of the Summer Term (on or after 1st April) following their 3rd birthday until statutory school age</i> |
| <i>1st April and 31st August</i> | <i>The start of the Autumn Term (on or after 1st September) following their 3rd birthday until statutory school age</i> |
| <i>1st September and 31st December</i> | <i>The start of the Spring Term (on or after 1st January) following their 3rd birthday until statutory school age</i> |

Local authorities should:

- Secure a pro-rated number of free hours for children who first take up their place part-way through the year. The total number of hours should be adjusted to reflect the portion of the year remaining from the relevant date after the child is first eligible (i.e. from 1 April, 1 September or 1 January)
- Ensure that all 3- and 4-year-old children moving to England from another country can access their free place on the same basis as any other 3- and 4-year-old child in the local authority area, irrespective of their family circumstances

Working Parent Entitlements:

Reference: Section 2.1.3 – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

A child is eligible for the entitlement for eligible working parents provided the eligibility criteria are met. The child will need to attain the relevant age and have a positive determination of eligibility from HMRC. (For foster children, eligibility is determined by the LA instead of HMRC). From the Effective Date, a child will be entitled to the specified free hours set out in the table below, the term after both of the following conditions are satisfied: (1) the child has attained the relevant age; and (2) the child's parent has a current positive determination of eligibility from HMRC, i.e., a valid eligibility code

The following table shows when a child is eligible to receive the working parent entitlement (all dates are inclusive):

| Eligibility start dates for children from 9 months old and above | |
|--|--|
| A child turning 9 months between: | Will be eligible for a funded place from: |
| 1st January and 31st March | <i>The start of the Summer Term (on or after 1st April) following the date of turning 9 months old</i> |
| 1st April and 31st August | <i>The start of the Autumn Term (on or after 1st September) following the date of turning 9 months old</i> |
| 1st September and 31st December | <i>The start of the Spring Term (on or after 1st January) following the date of turning 9 months old</i> |

3- & 4-year-olds

- A 3- or 4-year-old child of working parents will be entitled to the 15 hours (570 hours) extended entitlement (30 hours in total) from the term after **both** of the following

conditions are satisfied: (1) the child has attained the age of three: (2) the child's parent has a current positive determination of eligibility from HMRC i.e. a valid eligibility code, until the child reaches compulsory school age, the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday or where the child is taking up a full time school place in reception, whichever is the earlier.

2-year-olds

- A 2-year-old child of working parents is entitled to the expanded 30 hours (1140 hours) entitlement for working parents from the term after **both** of the following criteria are met: (1) the child has attained the age of two and (2) the child's parent has a current positive determination of eligibility from HMRC i.e. a valid eligibility code.

9 months old and above

- A child is entitled to the expanded 30 hours (1140 hours) entitlement for working parents of children 9 months old and above from the term after **both** of the following criteria are met: (1) the child has turned 9 months old and (2) the child's parent has a current positive determination of eligibility from HMRC i.e. a valid eligibility code.

Children in foster care

Children in foster care who have attained the Relevant Age are also eligible for the working parent entitlements, provided the foster parent is in paid work outside their fostering role, does not expect their adjusted net income to exceed £100,000, and the responsible local authority confirms it is satisfied that the foster parent engaging in paid work other than as a foster parent is consistent with the child's care plan. The foster parent does not have to meet the minimum income requirement.

Eligibility:

To be eligible for the Working Parent (Extended and Expanded) Entitlements above, parents must meet one of the following criteria:

- the parent (and partner where applicable) should be in qualifying paid work. Each parent (or the single parent in a lone parent household) will need to expect to earn the equivalent of 16 hours per week at the national living wage over the forthcoming quarter
- where one or both parents are in receipt of benefits in connection with sickness or parenting, they are treated as though they are in paid work
- where one parent in a two-parent household is in receipt of specific benefits relating to caring, incapacity for work or limited capability for work, they are treated as though they are in paid work

If either or both parents' income exceeds £100,000, they will not be eligible for the extended and expanded entitlements.

Immigration status:

In addition, the parent (and partner where applicable) must have a National Insurance Number and at least one of the following:

- British or Irish citizenship
- Settled or pre-settled status, or have applied and waiting for a decision
- Permission to access public funds, as shown on your UK Residence Card

Additional Information:

- To check for eligibility and to make an application, parents should visit the HMRC website: <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>
- It is the responsibility of the setting to check the details of each child, including date of birth. To ensure eligibility, this must include sight of an original birth certificate or other identifying documents e.g., passport, medical certificate, or Health records (copies do not need to be retained) and be recorded on the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF)
- Children must remain in the setting until the 'Headcount Day' in order to be eligible for the funding. Should parents choose to remove their child before this qualifying period, it is the provider's responsibility to make the parent aware that they may be liable for any costs in line with the provider's contractual arrangements
- If a child starts after the Headcount date who does not meet the specified criteria stated in Section 2.3.11 of the Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding, they will not normally be entitled to funding until the start of the following term. The provider **MUST** contact the Early Years Entitlements Team to review if funding can be claimed due to exceptional circumstances prior to making a claim using the Online Adjustment process
- Providers should have a written agreement between themselves and their parents/carers/guardians, setting out agreed hours of attendance and the funded hours to be claimed
- All parents accessing Funded Entitlement places must complete the current Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF)

Working Parent Entitlement Eligibility Code journey for Parents

Reference: Section 2.1.3.4 – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

In order to receive the eligibility code for the Working Parent Expanded and Extended Entitlements funding, the parent **MUST**:

- have applied through the HMRC's website: www.childcarechoices.gov.uk the term before they want the Working Parent Entitlements funding to start
- have a current confirmation of eligibility from HMRC via their Gateway account
- be issued with an 11-digit code starting with 50, to give to their childcare provider to verify eligibility. If a permanent code cannot be issued, parents must have a temporary code beginning with 11
- have a valid eligibility code for the term in which they want to start the Working Parent Entitlements funding
- ensure the code is renewed, as required by HMRC, usually every 3 months

Where a parent requires further guidance, they should contact the Customer Interaction Centre at HMRC on 0300 123 4097.

Where the parent does not agree with the eligibility outcome, there is an appeal process available. The review and appeals process is managed by HMRC. Their complaints form is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complain-to-hm-revenue-and-customs>

Local Authorities do not have any involvement in the application process for the Working Parent Entitlements eligibility code.

Working Parent Entitlement Eligibility Code Journey for Providers

Reference: Section 2.1.3.4 – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

Warwickshire County Council must comply with the DfE's guidance for the working parent entitlements funding:

Parents are only legally entitled to start claiming a working parent entitlement place for their child the term after they have received a decision (eligibility code confirmation) from HMRC and the term after they reach the age of 9 months or older, whichever is the later.

| DfE term start dates | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Autumn Term | 1 st September |
| Spring Term | 1 st January |
| Summer Term | 1 st April |

Common Eligibility Code Issues:

- During the Headcount period, there are a higher than expected number of queries regarding eligibility codes that cannot be accepted for funding, because the validity dates of the eligibility code are outside the accepted dates for funding for the term
- Parents have not re-confirmed their eligibility code at the validity end date or by the end of the grace period, and they have not acted on the prompt by HMRC
- Providers are not aware of the end dates of the eligibility codes for their funded children and have reminded the parent too late to re-confirm their code, usually after the term has started
- Providers are not aware of the accepted eligibility code dates for the term
- This causes problems for providers as they will not receive the funding they are expecting and for parents, as they will have to pay for childcare that they thought they would be funded for

To avoid these problems providers should:

- On receipt of the Termly Information Letter, emailed 3 weeks before the end of term, note the funding eligible dates for eligibility for funding for the coming term
- Check the Access Synergy Provider Portal for codes in their Grace Period

- Check new eligibility codes for funding in the following term, to make sure that the end date is after the start of term

Eligibility Code Process

See also: Working Parent Entitlement Eligibility Code Process for Parents and Providers leaflet – page 18

The following process will support providers to meet the requirements for accepting eligibility codes:

1. The parent applies for an eligibility code via the government website www.childcarechoices.gov.uk. If they are successful, they will be issued with an eligibility code starting with 50 or 11 if a temporary code, to their Gateway account

Foster carers applying for an eligibility code for a child in their care, apply through the responsible LA and are issued with an eligibility code starting with 40
2. The parent must give the details of the eligibility code to the provider for validating, together with their NI number and child's date of birth
3. You **MUST** obtain written consent from the parent(s) whose details are being checked, Part 2 of the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF) must be completed
4. Validate the code using the Eligibility Checker on the Access Synergy Provider Portal (available all year round) as soon as possible after receiving it, to confirm the validity dates of the code. This should be completed **before** a start date for the extended or expanded entitlement funding is agreed with the parent, preferably the term before funding will start
5. You must make a note of the validity start date, end date, and Grace Period end date to be aware of the expiry dates, and enable you to prompt parents to reconfirm in good time
6. **DO NOT** accept the **Found** result as proof of eligibility for funding for the term. This confirms a match of the details, not eligibility for the specific term
7. **ALWAYS** check the **Code start date** and **Code end date** to make sure that they match the **eligible dates** for funding for the term as stated in the Termly Information Letter, and on the landing page of the provider portal

Home Forms Funding

Summary Estimates Actuals Adjustments Eligibility Checker

The details provided have been found:

Eligibility Code: [redacted]

Code Start Date: 21-Jun-2024

Code End Date: 22-Jul-2025

Grace Period End Date: 31-Dec-2025

Eligibility Checker

Use this area to check if a child is eligible for extended hours. Please click the button below and provide the details as required.

Data Protection Notice - a record of the check is maintained for monitoring purposes. The information supplied is NOT stored by the system.

Eligibility Check

For children with an eligibility code who are new to funding or new to your setting, you must make sure that the eligibility code start date is valid for the term in which the parent wants to start the Working Parent Entitlements funding. The code must have a validity start date on or before the last day of the previous term as shown below, unless the Early Years Entitlements Team advise otherwise:

| Required dates for valid eligibility code | | |
|---|---|--|
| Term | Required <u>start</u> date | Required <u>end</u> date |
| Autumn | Start date on or before 31 st August | End date on or after the term start date following 1 st September |
| Spring | Start date on or before 31 st December | End date on or after the term start date following 1 st January |
| Summer | Start date on or before 31 st March | End date on or after the term start date following 1 st April |

Note: Where an eligibility code's end date has passed, the Grace Period **CANNOT** be used for children who are new to your setting. See also: The Grace Period – page 20

Eligibility codes that can be accepted if the code was previously funded for any age range in the previous term at your setting:

- The eligibility code must have a Code **start** date as above **and** a Grace period on or after:

| Grace period end date | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Autumn Term | 31 st December |
| Spring Term | 31 st March |
| Summer Term | 31 st August |

- Only AFTER checking that the code matches the eligibility dates for the term, should you offer the 15 hours Working Parent Extended Entitlement (30 hours in total) for 3- & 4-Year Olds, or the 30 hours Working Parent Expanded Entitlement place for children aged 9 months to 3 Years Old**
- If the code **does not** match the eligible dates for the term as stated in the Termly Information Letter or above, the Access Synergy Provider Portal will not accept the code, and the place will **not** be funded for the Working Parent Entitlement hours. **A 3- & 4-Year-Old child will still be entitled to 15 Universal hours**
- If a child is moving from one funding age range to another, e.g. from 2-year-old funding to 3- & 4-year-old funding, the code can continue to be funded if it is in a grace period, if the code was funded at your setting in the previous term

Eligibility codes that cannot be accepted:


- Codes with a start date on or after 1st of the month following the cut off date **will not** be accepted. They are eligible for funding from the following term. See table 'DfE's term start dates' - page 12
- The **ONLY** exception to the code start dates stated above would be if the parent applied **before** the deadline and the code was issued by:

| Accepted delayed eligibility code start dates | |
|---|----------------------------|
| Autumn Term | 14 th September |
| Spring Term | 14 th January |
| Summer Term | 14 th April |

AND where evidence can be shown such as copy of correspondence with HMRC or phone records showing a call made to HMRC dated before the deadline. This evidence will need to be emailed to the Early Years Entitlements Team at: eyfunding@warwickshire.gov.uk or childminderfunding@warwickshire.gov.uk

- A child **cannot** start a new funded place (either if they are new to funding, or new to your setting) if the end date of the code has passed and the code is in the Grace Period. See also: The Grace Period – page 20

Eligibility Code Re-Confirmation Process:

- Parents will need to re-confirm their code, **usually every 3 months**, and are reminded by HMRC usually around 1 month before reconfirmation is due, then again as the deadline for reconfirmation is approaching, via their Gateway account or via their nominated email/text alert. It is the parent's responsibility to maintain their eligibility for the working parent entitlement. Parents can also find the date reconfirmation is due in the most recent letter confirming their eligibility in their secure messages in their Government Gateway account
- Each term, the LA audit eligibility codes that are in their database on or around 1st September, January and April and around each half term. The code details (end date and Grace Period) are then updated in the Access Synergy Provider Portal
- The LA will remind providers, using emails and the Newsletter, to check their Access Synergy Provider Portal for eligibility codes showing in their Grace Period
- It is requested that providers also check their Access Synergy Provider Portal during the second half of each term for eligibility codes that are showing as being in their Grace period and contact their parents to prompt them to re-confirm their code. A yellow warning triangle will be shown next to the child's name 
- The provider should notify the parent that their working parent entitlement funding will cease at the end of the Grace Period, unless they are able to re-confirm their code **before** the 'cut off' date at the end of each term
- The LA will notify providers at the start of each term of children whose codes have not been reconfirmed, and where their grace period expired at the end of the previous term. **A 3- & 4-Year-Old child will then only be eligible for 15 universal hours funding in that term.** See also: The Grace Period – page 20

Eligibility code frequently asked questions:

- **Does Warwickshire County Council have any discretionary funding?**
Warwickshire County Council **does not** have any discretionary funding. We are unable to fund codes that fall outside of the eligible funding dates for the term, as advised by the DfE. HMRC's Customer Care Line will refer parents to their LA suggesting they have discretion to fund a code outside of the eligible dates, **we don't**. This can give parents false expectations
- **Can Warwickshire County Council make an exception if an eligibility code's dates are not valid for the term?**
Providers should make parents aware that the LA will **not** be able to override the DfE's criteria for eligibility dates, unless the parent can prove that they had applied before the 'cut off' date
- **HMRC informed the parent the code is valid, why can't they use it?**
When parents contact HMRC to query the eligibility of their eligibility code, HMRC may advise them that they have a valid code. However, they are advising them that their code is valid in their system, they are not advising them that the code is valid for funding for the current term
- **How can parents contact HMRC?**
If parents wish to make a complaint about HMRC's process or for delays in issuing their eligibility code, they should contact them at: [Complain about HMRC - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-hmrc) or call the childcare service helpline on 0300 123 4097
- **Why is the code not showing as 'found' on the Eligibility Checker?**
This usually means that the details entered do not match the with the details held by HMRC, which were used to issue the code. The following details must be checked with the parent, preferably requesting documentary evidence:
 - The eligibility code number
 - The child's date of birth
 - The parent's National Insurance number

If the above details are correct and a 'Not Found' result still shows, contact the Early Years Entitlements Team at: eyfunding@warwickshire.gov.uk or childminderfunding@warwickshire.gov.uk

Working Parent Entitlement Eligibility Code Process For Parents And Providers



1) PARENTS APPLY FOR AN ELIGIBILITY CODE THE TERM BEFORE THEY WANT A FUNDED PLACE

- Go to www.childcarechoices.gov.uk
- If eligible they will receive a code starting with 50



2) PARENT GIVES THE ELIGIBILITY CODE TO THEIR CHILDCARE PROVIDER(S)

- The code must be passed to the provider as soon as possible after it is issued.

3) PROVIDER TO COLLECT THE CODE DETAILS THE TERM BEFORE THEY OFFER A FUNDED PLACE

- Consent and code details to be completed on the Parental Declaration Form

4) PROVIDER TO VALIDATE CODE VIA THE PROVIDER PORTAL

- Check the code start and end date match the eligible dates for the term to be funded

5) PROVIDER TO OFFER A FUNDED PLACE TO THE CHILD

- Only when they know the Eligibility code is eligible for the term to be funded

6) PARENTS TO RECONFIRM THEIR CODE AT THE VALIDITY END DATE, USUALLY EVERY 3 MONTHS

- Via their childcare account at: www.childcarechoices.gov.uk



Scan below for more information and to apply:



Working Parent Entitlements for Children in Foster Care

Reference: Section 2.1.4 – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

A Child in foster care is entitled to free early years provision under the Working Parent Entitlement if the child has attained the relevant age, is under compulsory school age and the following criteria are met:

- that the local authority is satisfied that the foster parent engaging in paid work other than as a foster parent is consistent with the child's care plan, placing the child at the centre of the process and decision making
- that, in single foster parent families, the foster parent holds additional paid employment outside of their role as a foster carer
- and in 2-foster-parent families, both partners hold additional paid employment outside of their role as a foster carer or one partner is working outside their role as a foster carer and the other is on certain forms of family leave from work (including maternity, paternity and shared parental leave) or in receipt of certain forms of statutory pay in connection with sickness or parenting. If one partner is not a foster parent, then they must be in qualifying paid work and earn a minimum of the equivalent to 16 hours per week at national minimum/living wage

There is no requirement on the type of work or number of hours that foster parents must work to access the funded hours and there is no minimum earnings limit (although they must be engaging in paid work). The maximum income threshold is £100,000.

To make an application, foster carers should apply directly to the responsible Local Authority, who will allocate an eligibility code to the foster carer, as the Government Childcare Service will not be able to make the relevant checks. The 'responsible local authority' for these purposes is the English local authority who is looking after the child and is therefore the child's corporate parent. Where the local authority looking after the child is in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland the "responsible local authority" is the English local authority in whose area the child is currently living. The "funding local authority" is the local authority in which the child is taking their place and who is paying the provider. They may not be the same local authority.

Where foster carers are unhappy about the decision made by the local authority with regard to eligibility, they should seek resolution through their social worker, or through the local authority complaints process. Warwickshire County Council complaints procedure can be found here: [Customer feedback and complaints - Warwickshire County Council](#)

Other than the application, reconfirmation process and the minimum income requirement, all other eligibility criteria and provision set out above apply to children in foster care taking up the working parent entitlements in the same way as they do to all other children.

Application Process:

Foster carers caring for child where Warwickshire is the responsible local authority –

The carers must contact the Early Years Entitlements Team for an application form, email eyfunding@warwickshire.gov.uk. When completed, it is to be signed by the child's Social Worker and sent with evidence of their paid income e.g. current payslip or evidence of income if self-employed e.g. tax return and returned to the Early Years Entitlements Team to arrange for it to be authorised and countersigned by the Designated Officer from the Fostering Team.

Once the signed application form and evidence of paid income has been received by the Early Years Entitlements Team, a code will be generated by the DfE and the details will be sent to the foster carer by secure email. The email will show details of the code validity start date, validity end date and re-confirmation date.

Foster carers caring for a child where the responsible local authority is outside of Warwickshire –

the carers must contact the child's Social Worker for an application form. This form must then be completed with the child's Local Authority, who are responsible for issuing an eligibility code where the carers are eligible.

The code, starting with 40, is to be treated in the same way as a standard eligibility code and will need to be re-confirmed every 3 months with the issuing Local Authority. The foster carer will need to contact either their own or the child's social worker to request re-confirmation every 3 months on or around the re-confirmation date specified.

Details of working parent entitlements for children in foster care can be found on the Warwickshire website: [Help with childcare costs – Warwickshire County Council](#)

The Grace Period

Reference: Section 2.1.5 – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

The Local Authority will continue to fund a place for an existing funded child whose parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria or do not re-confirm their code at the validity end date, until the end of a **Grace Period**. The end date of the grace period is shown on the Eligibility Checker.

During the grace period they should continue to receive the 30 hours a week expanded working parent entitlement for children aged 9 months – 3 years old, or the extended working parent entitlement for 3- & 4-year-olds (30 hours in total), or fewer if the entitlement is being stretched, over the equivalent of 38 weeks of the year.


If the parent has not been able to re-confirm their code before the end of the grace period, the funding will cease for the Working Parent Entitlement hours at the Grace Period end date, and they will not be funded for them in the following term.

If an eligibility code is not or cannot be re-confirmed by the validity end date, the code will fall into a Grace Period, the grace period is the date when funding will end if the code is not re-confirmed. If the code is not reconfirmed before the Grace period end date, the code will not be eligible for funding in the following term. The Grace period should **NOT** be used as the deadline date to re-confirm the code.

If a parent who is applying for the first time, applies for their code early (more than 3 months before their child can take up a funded place), it is likely that they will have to re-confirm their code before taking up a place.

Reconfirmation is usually due every 3 months; however, this is not always the case. The code must be within a valid date at the start of the term in which funding is to be first claimed. A child cannot start a new funded place if the code is in the **Grace Period**. See table 'Required dates for valid eligibility code' - page 14.

Parents are advised of the first date reconfirmation is due, in the confirmation of eligibility message received into their Government Gateway account 'Secure messages'. Following reconfirmation, they are then advised of the next date reconfirmation is due, each time their details are reconfirmed.

When a code falls into the grace period, a yellow triangle with an exclamation mark () will be displayed next to the child's name on the Access Synergy Provider Portal. This is to prompt providers to contact the parent to re-confirm their code.

Please note: It is possible that the Access Synergy Provider Portal may indicate that a code is in its grace period, despite parents advising that they have reconfirmed. This is because the provider portal and HMRC systems are not linked. If the Actual tab or Adjustment tab are open for submissions, the child's record can be updated by performing an eligibility check on the code and resubmitting your claim. Alternatively, the most up to date dates of the code can be checked using the eligibility checker at any point during the year. This will **not** update the child's funding record.

The end date and grace period dates of a child's code will only be updated where an eligibility check is performed by the provider during the Actual Headcount or Adjustment periods, following an audit of eligibility codes, or where a manual ECS check is performed by the funding office.

The table below shows the grace period dates where a child is no longer eligible. The Local Authority will send reminders to the provider when a code falls into the grace period asking them to remind parents to re-confirm their code before the end of the current term. This is to avoid parents and providers from losing their Working Parent Entitlement funding in the following term.

| Date Parent receives ineligible decision on reconfirmation: | LA audit date: | Grace Period End date: |
|---|----------------|------------------------|
| 1 January – 10 February | 11 February | 31 March |
| 11 February – 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 |

Where a 2-year-old ceases to be eligible for the working parent entitlement, providers should encourage parents to check their eligibility for the 2Help entitlement. Falling out of eligibility for the working parent entitlement will not necessarily make a 2-year-old child eligible for the 2Help entitlement. Any child who has not previously been recorded as using the 15-hour disadvantaged 2-year-old entitlement, must have their eligibility checked before they can receive funding for a 2Help place.

Children claiming the Early Years Entitlements between more than one setting

- The parent must complete the termly table (part 3A) on the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF) with the details of all of the settings claiming funding for the child, and nominate how the funding will be allocated between settings
- Where applicable, the parent must decide which setting will be claiming the 15 Universal hours and which setting will be claiming the Extended hours, or which setting will claim the Expanded entitlement for 2-year-olds and which setting will claim the 2Help entitlement, and detail how these hours are going to be split on the termly table (part 3A) of the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF). See also: Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) - page 24
- The hours should be entered on to the Synergy Provider Portal by the settings as they are shown on the PDF
- For 3- & 4-year-olds, if the family do not have a valid eligibility code for the term or the Grace Period has ended, the child will only be entitled to claim the 15 Universal hours at the setting where they have nominated to receive the Universal hours

Please note: the 15 Universal hours should be fully used first before a parent claims the Extended Entitlement hours.

Additional Premiums

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

Reference: Section 2.2.1 – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

The purpose of EYPP is to improve the educational outcomes of socio-economically disadvantaged children who are eligible for free early years entitlements in an early years setting.

The Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) is additional funding of £1.00 per hour from April 2025, paid termly based on the funded hours claimed, to providers who have children who are accessing the entitlements and meeting the eligibility criteria up to a maximum of 570 hours. EYPP will be paid on the first 15 hours, up to a total of 570 hours in a year, where a child is accessing any of the working parent entitlements.

Where a 2-year-old is eligible for 15 hours 2Help entitlement, and the working parent entitlement, EYPP will only be paid on the 15 hours 2Help. Where a 3- & 4-year-old is eligible for 15 hours universal entitlement and 15 hours working parent extended entitlement, EYPP will only be paid on the universal entitlement.

For children who are eligible for EYPP by virtue of being looked after by a local authority, the local authority must fund the early years provider for 570 hours per year.

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) provides additional funding to providers to support the quality of early education for eligible children taking up the funded entitlements.

Early years settings should ensure EYPP funding is used to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged children by spending on activities, staff training and resources that specifically impact educational outcomes for disadvantaged children. They should plan EYPP spending based on consideration of well-evidenced approaches such as professional development for staff, which may benefit all children while providing the greatest benefit to disadvantaged children.

Recommended spending approaches are set out in the [Education Endowment Foundation \(EEF\) Guide to the Early Years Pupil Premium](#). This offers practical, evidence-informed advice for setting leaders on maximising the use of EYPP in their context.

Early years settings should spend EYPP funding in full within the academic year for which it has been allocated.

During an inspection, Ofsted will evaluate the quality of provision and consider:

- how effective the setting is at identifying children eligible for funding for disadvantage
- the decisions that leaders take about supporting those children's needs
- how well children are supported

- the impact on disadvantaged children

Local authorities are required to ensure early years settings use looked-after children EYPP in line with the directions of the local authority's virtual schools head and the child's personal education plan.

A child will be eligible for the Early Years Pupil Premium if:

- Their parents are in receipt of one or more of the following benefits or credits
 - Income Support
 - Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
 - Income-related 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, but not Working Tax Credit, with an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
 - Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
 - Universal Credit – (household income must be less than £7,400 a year after tax, not including any benefits - this is assessed on up to 3 of the parent's most recent universal credit assessment periods)
- OR
 - they are currently being looked after by a local authority in England or Wales
 - they have left care in England or Wales through:
 - an adoption order
 - a special guardianship order
 - a child arrangements order

If a child qualifies for EYPP under more than one set of criteria, they will only attract the funding once.

EYPP is only payable for the first 15 hours used by children taking up the eligible working parents entitlements for 3 and 4-year-olds and 2-year-olds and under. The EYPP is not payable on the additional 15 hours for these entitlements.

Additional Note: Warwickshire Children Looked After (CLA) will automatically have the EYPP weighting added. To add EYPP for a CLA from another LA, providers will need to send supporting information either: Adoption Birth certificate, Special Guardianship and Child Arrangement Orders to the Early Years Funding Team via the Document Upload facility in the Synergy Provider Portal.

How to claim:

To claim for the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP), providers should advise parents that they must fully complete the EYPP application in section 2 on the PDF (Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form) and sign the Declaration.

The parent **MUST** sign the Declaration before EYPP can be claimed as this is the parent/carer's agreement to use their personal details to check for eligibility using the Government's Eligibility Checking Service (ECS).

Their details should then be entered on to the Parent/Carer tab on the Access Synergy Provider Portal with the termly Headcount claim and the consent to check for EYPP box must be ticked.

EYPP payment will be made with the Actual payment for the term. Providers **must** check the Access Synergy Provider Portal after the Headcount week to make sure that all children are present on their claim and to check that those children that applied, have been allocated the EYPP funding. This will be shown in the **Weightings** column.

Following the processing of the funding claims, where a child **has not** had EYPP added as expected, it will mean that eligibility could not be confirmed using the ECS or the required supporting information was not added to the Access Synergy Provider Portal.

Where this is the case providers must:

- Check the information added to the Access Synergy Provider Portal for accuracy e.g. errors in the National Insurance number or date of birth etc. and advise the Early Years Entitlements Team of any changes that need to be made
- Contact the parent, where the details are confirmed as correct to request additional supporting information, including a Job Centre letter confirming income-based benefits or credits or Universal Credit full service statement
- Copies of the additional supporting information must be sent to the Early Years Funding Team, via the secure Document Upload service on the Access Synergy Provider Portal
- Information / changes must be received by the Early Years Entitlements Team by the submission end date for the current funding term via the Headcount or Online Adjustment process

- Information will be reviewed by the Early Years Entitlements Team and eligibility determined
- Providers must recheck their Access Synergy Provider Portal where any additional allocations will have been added to the Weightings column

There may be circumstances where a child is taking up the working parent entitlement, is eligible for EYPP and is splitting their provision across two or more settings. For these children, providers should use the EYPP section (part 2) of the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF) to enable parents to indicate at which provider they are taking their EYPP entitlement.

Important Note:

It is recommended that all children that may qualify, complete the EYPP application. Where eligibility is confirmed, this may provide additional support for a child when making their application for a primary school place. The Warwickshire County Council Admission Arrangements 2025/26 (Primary Schools admissions policy) states:

When a Warwickshire Community or Voluntary Controlled School is over-subscribed, after the admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care plan naming the school, priority for admission will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below:

- *Children who receive the Early Years Pupil Premium for their early years provider at the time of the making of the application, with no more than 14% of the places available to be allocated under this category.*

Deprivation Factor (DF)

Reference: Section 2.2.2 – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

The Deprivation Factor (DF) is an additional premium of 68p per hour from April 2025, paid to the provider based on children living in a postcode that falls within the most deprived 30% of postcodes as determined by IDACI (Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index). **The DF is paid automatically to the provider.**

If this has been added to the child's funding base rate for all funded hours claimed, 'DF' will show in the **Weightings** column next to the child's name on the Synergy Provider Portal.

Disability Access Fund (DAF)

Reference: Section 2.2.3 – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

The Equality Act 2010 requires local authorities to make adjustments for disabled children where it is reasonable to do so. Local authorities must comply with the provisions of the Act in finding suitable provision for eligible disabled children.

The DAF was introduced to support disabled children's access to the entitlements for 3 and 4-year-olds. From 2024 to 2025, DAF eligibility was extended to eligible 2-year-olds and children 9 months old to 2 years, accessing the entitlements. Providers receive £938.00 per eligible child per calendar year.

DAF funds can be used, for example, to support providers in making reasonable adjustments to their settings and/or helping with building capacity, either for the child in question or for the benefit of all children attending the setting. Settings may want to use DAF funding to pay for staff training to help meet children's specific needs, resources and adjustments to support the individual child's needs.

Children will be eligible for DAF if they meet the following criteria:

- the child is in receipt of [Disability Living Allowance \(DLA\)](#)
- **and** the child receives one of the following:
 - the universal 15 hours entitlement for 3 and 4-year-olds, or
 - the 15 hours entitlement for families of 2-year-olds receiving additional support, or
 - the 30 hours entitlement for children aged 2 years of eligible working parents, or
 - the 30 hours entitlement for children aged 9 months to 2 years of eligible working parents

Please note that children do not have to take up the full 570 or 1140 hours of early education funding that they are entitled to in order to receive DAF. Children will be eligible where they take up any period of funded entitlement and receive DLA.

Four-year-olds in primary school reception classes are not eligible for DAF funding.

All early years providers who are eligible to receive funding for the early years entitlements, qualify to receive DAF payments if they have eligible children.

Local authorities must fund all settings providing a place for DAF eligible children at a fixed annual rate of £938.00 per eligible child. The DAF is payable annually as a lump sum and will not be reduced if a child does not take up their full 15 or 30 hours entitlement.

Local authorities should distribute DAF funding in its entirety to providers, and DAF funding should not be offset against any other funding which the local authority may ordinarily be providing for children eligible for the DAF.

If a child is in receipt of the 2Help Funded Entitlement due to being in receipt of DLA, DAF will be paid automatically to the provider the child attends.

If a child eligible for the DAF is splitting their funded entitlement across two or more providers, the local authority will ask parents to nominate the main setting. This setting will receive the full DAF payment for the child.


If a child receiving DAF moves from one setting to another, the new setting is not eligible to receive DAF funding for this child until the anniversary of the first payment has passed. DAF funding received by the original setting will not be reclaimed. However, in this situation, and where local agreement can be reached, we encourage providers to transfer relevant resources or unspent funding to ensure continued support of the eligible child in their new setting.

When the child takes up the relevant entitlement for children aged 9 months up to 4 years, local authorities should issue DAF payments to providers as soon as possible. Where children are still eligible for the DAF, providers should receive successive payments annually until the child starts school. The successive payments will be made in the next payment run after the 12 month payment anniversary.

In cases where a child who lives in one local authority attends a setting in another local authority area, the local authority where the setting is based is responsible for funding the DAF for the child and eligibility checking.

How to claim:

- Early years providers are responsible for identifying eligible children and should prompt parents to sign the Declaration on the Disability Access Fund (DAF) in part 2 of the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF)
- Providers will need to check eligibility by seeing evidence of the child's Disability Living Allowance (DLA) award letter
- DAF is claimed for via the Synergy Provider Portal
- A copy of the DLA award letter must be sent to the Local Authority using the secure **Document upload tab** on the Synergy Provider Portal during the Actual Headcount or Adjustment period

- The following symbol will show next to the child's funding details if a document was attached 
- Where a copy of the DLA award letter is not attached to the Document upload tab, the claim for DAF cannot be approved
- If a child is in receipt of the 2Help Funded Entitlement due to being in receipt of DLA, DAF will be paid automatically to the provider and a copy of the DLA award letter is not required
- Payment is made as an adjustment with the termly final (actual) payment and can be seen in the Adjustment Payments in the child's and provider's Summary tab in the Synergy Provider Portal

Timing of payments

The DAF is intended to aid access to the government-funded entitlements for children with disabilities. Therefore, when the child takes up the relevant entitlement for children aged 9 months up to 4 years, local authorities should issue DAF payments to providers as soon as possible. Local authorities should make the first DAF payment as quickly as possible in the term it is claimed.

DAF is paid in the Actual payment after the termly Headcount. Where children are still eligible for the DAF, providers should receive successive payments annually until the child starts school. Subsequent payments are made in the next payment run after the 12-month anniversary of the first payment, for example if the first payment was made in the Autumn term Actual payment, the second payment will be made in the Autumn term Adjustment payment of the following year, DAF paid in the Autumn term Adjustment payment will be made in the Spring term interim payment of the following year.

Entering Funding Claims

Reference: Section 2.3 – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

Patterns of Payments, Headcount Dates and Payment Dates

In Warwickshire, the 38 weeks of Early Years Entitlements are paid termly as a set number of weeks. They are the same every year. Please be aware they do not always fit with the school term dates.

| Funded weeks per term | |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Autumn Term | 14 weeks |
| Spring Term | 11 weeks |
| Summer Term | 13 weeks |

Early Years Providers (excluding Childminders)

Reference: Section 2.3.2.1 – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

PVI Providers, Academies and Maintained Nursery Schools and Classes are paid twice termly as follows:

- An **Interim** payment is made at the start of term, following submission of **WEEKLY** hours entered onto the **Estimates** tab on the Access Synergy Provider Portal and sent before the submission deadline date, as notified in the Termly Information Letter. The interim amount is 70% of the estimated payment amount for the term and is not based on individual children. Please refer to Section 3.2 of the Access Synergy FIS Provider Portal Online Funding Guidance for guidance on how to calculate and input this onto the provider portal
- The Access Synergy Provider Portal will usually open 2 weeks before the start of term for the setting to enter the Estimate hours. (This is subject to change. Where this is not the case, providers will be notified in advance)
- **Where the submission deadline is missed by the provider, the interim payment will not be made, the provider will receive the full term's funding in the Actual payment**
- An **Actual or Final** payment is made after the Headcount figures have been calculated following submission of **HEADCOUNT** hours entered onto the **Actuals** tab on the Access Synergy Provider Portal and sent before the submission deadline date, as notified in the Termly Information Letter. This is the remaining 30%, or balance of funding minus the interim payment already paid. Please refer to Section 3.3 onwards of the Access Synergy FIS Provider Portal Online Funding Guidance for guidance

- An **Adjustment** payment is made at the end of the term if an adjustment is added via the **Adjustment** tab, by the submission deadline date as notified in the Termly Information Letter, after the Actual Headcount has closed. Please refer to Section 6 of the Access Synergy FIS Provider Portal Online Funding Guidance for guidance
- Any funding overpayment balance at the end of the term will be carried forward and taken from the interim payment, if there is one, or the final payment of the following term
- Where the deficit balance is greater than the expected interim payment, an invoice will be raised for this amount.

Actual payment dates, and Headcount dates set by the Department for Education for the Academic Year – 2025/2026:

| Term | Headcount Date | Deadline date for Headcount submissions | Interim Payment Date | | | Actual Payment Date | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| | | | 9Months – 2 year olds | 2 Year olds | 3 & 4 Year olds | 9Months – 2 year olds | 2 Year olds | 3 & 4 Year olds |
| Autumn Term 2025/2026 | 2 nd October 2025 | 10 th October 2025 | 19 th Sept 2025 | 18 th Sept 2025 | 17 th Sept 2025 | 21 st Nov 2025 | 20 th Nov 2025 | 19 th Nov 2025 |
| Spring Term 2025/2026 | 15 th January 2026 | 23 rd January 2026 | 23/01/2026 | 22/01/2026 | 21/01/2026 | 13/03/2026 | 12/03/2026 | 11/03/2026 |
| Summer Term 2025/2026 | 14 th May 2026 | 22 nd May 2026 | 01/05/2026 | 30/04/2026 | 29/04/2026 | 19/06/2026 | 18/06/2026 | 17/06/2026 |

Childminders

Reference: Section 2.3.2.2– Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

All childminders are paid monthly as follows:

- The **Interim** payment is calculated following submission of **WEEKLY** hours entered onto the **Estimates** tab on the Access Synergy Provider Portal and sent before the submission deadline date, as notified in the Termly Information Letter. The interim amount is 70% of the estimated payment amount for the term and is not based on individual children. Please refer to Section 3.2 of the Access Synergy FIS Provider Portal Online Funding Guidance for guidance on how to calculate and input this onto the provider portal
- The **interim** payment will usually be split into:
 - 3** monthly payments for the Autumn Term (September, October and November)
 - 2* monthly payments in the Spring Term (January and February)
 - 3** monthly payments for the Summer Term (April, May and June)

The total interim amount is 70% of the estimated payment amount for the term

- The first 2* or 3** monthly payments will be calculated by dividing your total interim payment due by 2* or 3** equal amounts
- The Access Synergy Provider Portal will usually open 2 weeks before the start of term for the setting to enter the Estimate hours (This is subject to change. Where this is not the case, providers will be notified in advance)
- If the submission deadline is missed, the interim payments will not be made, the Childminder will receive the full term's funding in the Actual payment
- An **Actual or Final** payment is made after the Headcount figures have been calculated following submission of **HEADCOUNT** hours entered onto the **Actuals** tab on the Synergy Provider Portal and sent before the submission deadline date, as notified in the Termly Information Letter. This is the remaining 30%, or balance of funding minus the interim payments already paid. Please refer to Section 3.3 onwards of the Access Synergy FIS Provider Portal Online Funding Guidance for guidance
- If the numbers increase at the Actual Headcount, the additional funding will be paid in the Actual or Final payment. Adding additional children to the Actual Headcount does not automatically update the Estimate hours, nor the monthly interim payments
- An **Adjustment** payment is made at the end of the term if an adjustment is added via the **Adjustment** tab, by the submission deadline date as notified in the Termly Information Letter, after the Actual Headcount has closed. Please refer to Section 6 of the Access Synergy FIS Provider Portal Online Funding Guidance for guidance
- If there has been an overpayment of the interim funding, the Actual or Final balance will

be a minus amount and an invoice will be sent to the setting for repayment or will be carried forward and taken from the interim payment of the following term, if one is due

The regular monthly payment dates for 2025/2026 will be as follows:

| Term | Headcount Date | Deadline date for Headcount submissions | Interim Payment Dates | | | Actual Payment Date |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| | | | 1 st Payment | 2 nd Payment | 3 rd Payment (if applicable) | 4 th Payment |
| Autumn Term 2025/2026 | 2 nd October 2025 | 10 th October 2025 | 15 th September 2025 | 15 th October 2025 | 14 th November 2025 | 15 th December 2025 |
| Spring Term 2025/2026 | 15 th January 2026 | 23 rd January 2026 | 15 th January 2026 | 13 th February 2026 | - | 13 th March 2026 |
| Summer Term 2025/2026 | 14 th May 2026 | 22 nd May 2026 | 15 th April 2026 | 15 th May 2026 | 15 th June 2026 | 15 th July 2026 |

Funding Rates

The 2025/2026 Early Education Funding rates are as follows:

PVI settings and school run provision including maintained schools with nursery classes:

| Early Education Funding Rates | 2025 – 2026 £ - per hour |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Funding Rate for 9 months – 2 years old – Working Parent Entitlement hours | 10.42 |
| Funding Rate for 2 Year Olds – 2Help and Working Parent Entitlement hours | 7.66 |
| Funding rate for 3- & 4-year-olds -Universal and Working Parent (Extended) Entitlement hours | 5.50 |
| Early Years Pupil Premium- allocated to Universal Hours for 3- & 4-year-olds, under 2's and 2-year-olds, up to a maximum of 15 hours per week | 1.00 |
| Deprivation Factor – allocated to all hours | 0.68 |
| Disability Access Fund – annual payment for eligible children in receipt of Disability Living Allowance | 938.00 |

Maintained Nursery Schools only:

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Early Education Funding Rates | 2025 – 2026 £ - per hour |
| Funding Rate for 9 months – 2 years old – Working Parent Entitlement hours | 10.42 |
| Funding Rate for 2-Year-Olds – 2Help and Working Parent Entitlement hours | 7.66 |
| Funding rate for 3-&4-Year-Olds - Universal and Working Parent (Extended) Entitlement hours | 5.50 |
| Maintained Nursery School Supplementary Funding paid for 3-&4-Year-Old <u>Universal Entitlement Hours Only</u> | 5.27 |
| Early Years Pupil Premium- allocated to Universal Hours for 3-&4-Year-Olds, under 2's and 2-Year-Olds, up to a maximum of 15 hours per week | 1.00 |
| Deprivation Factor – allocated to all hours | 0.68 |
| Disability Access Fund – annual payment for eligible children in receipt of Disability Living Allowance | 938.00 |

Entering the Funding Claims

Reference: Section 2.3.4 – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

A **Funding Termly Information Letter** is sent at the end of each term which includes all the important dates and deadlines needed to enter termly funding claims for the following term. The letter **must** be read fully and carefully as it contains all of the important information and dates for that term:

- Term dates
- Estimate hours deadline date
- Interim Payment date
- Headcount Day
- Headcount submission deadline date
- Adjustment tab Provider Portal opening and submission deadlines dates
- Sufficiency information submission deadline date (Summer term)
- Early Years Census Form submission deadline date (Spring term)

- Actual or Final payment date
- Childminders monthly payment dates
- Adjustment payment date

Providers are responsible for inputting their funding claim returns within the deadlines given by the Early Years Entitlements Team and to check the accuracy on completion at the end of each term.

A copy of the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF) will be sent each term with the Termly Information Letter each term for completion by providers and parents of new children as directed.

A funding claim for a child can only be made where an up to date signed Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF) is received for the term.

Funding Claims Process

Access Synergy Provider Portal:

- The web address for the Access Synergy provider Portal, which is used to enter funding claims is: <https://admissions.warwickshire.gov.uk/synergy/providers>
- Sign in using the unique username and password issued by the Early Years Entitlements Team: please note, this is **not** your email address
- Where a provider has not used the system before, please contact the Early Years Entitlements Team for sign in details, username and password
- A copy of the **FIS Access Synergy Provider Portal Online Funding Guidance** is sent to all new providers and at the start of the Autumn term, it can also be found at: [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Early-Education-Funding-Entitlements-Education-and-Early-Years-providers)
- The **FIS Access Synergy Provider Portal Online Funding Guidance** should be referred to when entering funding claims as there may be changes to the system following an upgrade
- The Access Synergy Provider Portal opens 2 weeks before the first day of each term and closes one week after Headcount Day as detailed in the Termly Information Letter (This is subject to change. Where this is not the case, providers will be notified in advance)

Carry forward procedure:

- Child details for children below school age are usually carried forward from the previous term's Headcount by the LA and can be viewed in the current term's list of Actual children on the Synergy Provider Portal. Please check your Actuals list to ensure the children have been carried forward as expected, and delete any children no longer attending
- Child details will be carried forward from the previous age range to the next age range where applicable e.g. from 9 months – 2 years to 2-year-olds, and 2-year-olds to 3- & 4-year-olds funding age ranges, to allow the eligibility code details to continue. However, these children's details and hours **MUST** be checked on the new age range Actuals list as if they are a new child.
- Children's working parent Expanded hours carried forward from 2-year funding to 3- & 4-year-old funding will be transferred to **Universal** hours funding. Extended hours funding will need to be added if the eligibility code is still valid.
- Child details are **not** carried forward from Summer term to Autumn term for children who will be of **school age** or **for Childminders**.
- Childminders will need to notify the funding office of children continuing funding using the eligibility code who are moving from one headcount age range (in the Summer term) to another (in the Autumn term) where their eligibility code is in a grace period at the start of the Autumn term.
- Working Parent Entitlement hours claimed using an eligibility code are not always carried forward from term to term. This is because, at the point when the records are transferred, the code may be in a grace period that expires before the start of the following term

Note: Children receiving 15 Expanded hours between the ages of 9 months – 3 years old will be eligible for 30 hours funding from September 2025, **the Actuals list must be updated with the correct hours in the Autumn term 2025.**

Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form:

- The provider must enter all the children they are claiming funding for that term and the number of funded hours from the details on the signed Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF)
- The provider must check that they enter the child's details on the Access Synergy Provider Portal accurately and in accordance with the legal name, date of birth and address, ethnicity and SEN type as shown on the PDF, and update details as necessary

- Only children with a completed Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF) and who are booked for a regular pattern of attendance during the week of the specified Headcount date, can be entered on to the Headcount claim (this also includes children who are absent due to sickness or on holiday)
- Where a child is attending a setting at headcount, a claim should be made for the whole of the term. If a child moves setting after the Headcount, an adjustment can be added via the Adjustments tab on the Provider Portal, this is not obligatory. Refer to Section 3 of the Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

Ensuring the accuracy of your claim:

- The Access Synergy Provider Portal closes for inputting of the Actual Headcount submission at the deadline date, as notified in the Termly Information Letter. The Access Synergy Provider Portal will not allow any changes to be made to Actual Headcounts after this date
- The provider **must** check the Access Synergy Provider Portal when the Adjustment tab opens, to check that their Actual Headcount claim is correct, this includes the child's personal information, claimed hours, for adjustments for DAF and weightings for EYPP and DF
- Any changes after the Actual Headcount submission date should be made using the Online Adjustment process via the provider portal. Refer to Section 2.3.8 of the Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding. See also: Adjustment to Payments – page 40
- After the Actual Headcount information is submitted, a detailed breakdown of funding allocated to each child will be shown on the Actuals, child summary tab on the Access Synergy Provider Portal. The Universal and the Extended 30 hours for 3- & 4-year funding are shown separately. The 2Help and Working Parent Entitlements for 2-year-old funding are also shown separately

Please note that:

- The Early Years Entitlements Team are not able to make any changes to funding after the term has ended. Adjustments, where agreed, can only be made for the current term
- The Local Authority may reclaim funding that has been overclaimed relating to any terms if identified at audit
- Information from your Actual Headcount may be shared to ensure effective safeguarding and promote the welfare and protection of children
- Payments may be delayed where returns remain outstanding

Payment Summary

Reference: Section 2.3.5 – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

Selecting the Summary page on the Funding tab for the term will show the details for the Estimate, Actual, Adjustments and Weighting payments for the selected term. Summary information for all terms from the start of the setting's records in the system can be checked. See Section 4 of the Access Synergy FIS Provider Portal Guidance, which can be accessed at the website: [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](https://admissions.warwickshire.gov.uk/synergy/providers)

Summer Term Sufficiency Return

Reference: Section 2.3.7 – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

The Local Authority collects funded entitlements place and vacancy information from funded Early Years providers in the Summer Term during the Headcount period. The submission deadline date will be notified in the Termly Information Letter.

The return is completed by selecting the **Sufficiency Tab** on the Access Synergy Provider Portal: <https://admissions.warwickshire.gov.uk/synergy/providers>

For details on how to complete the Sufficiency return please refer to the **How to Guide: Sufficiency Synergy Provider Portal**, which can be accessed at the website: [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](https://admissions.warwickshire.gov.uk/synergy/providers)

Adjustment to Payments

Reference: Section 2.3.8 - 2.3.11 – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

The Early Years Entitlements funding will normally be paid for the whole term to the provider the child attends on Headcount Day.

For children attending a setting on Headcount Day (or within the week of the specified Headcount date), a claim should be made for the whole of the term. This will enable the local authority to fund another Warwickshire setting if the child has already taken sessions with them, where both settings agree. This must then be completed by entering an adjustment claim via the Adjustments tab on the Provider Portal.

Where a child leaves a setting after Headcount, providers should make private arrangements between themselves to add adjustments to the Adjustment tab on the Provider Portal for a proportion of the funding to be transferred for the remainder of the term. There is no obligation to transfer funds, however where this is agreed between providers the process **must** be

undertaken via the Synergy system Adjustments tab. Refer to Sections 2.3.9 and 2.3.10 of the Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding.

Adjustment claims should only be entered via the Adjustment tab for a child where a claim has already been made at Actual Headcount, when both settings have agreed to make corresponding online adjustments.

Where a parent's contract is terminated by the provider, the provider is not entitled to retain the early years entitlements funding claimed from that date to the end of the term. An adjustment must be added for that proportion of the funding via the Adjustments tab on the Provider Portal.

Note: It is Warwickshire's policy that funding claimed at Headcount must not be transferred to another setting outside of Warwickshire.

Where an arrangement is made by a setting from another local authority to transfer funding to a Warwickshire setting, the setting will be paid at the funding rate of the other local authority. This may be higher or lower than the funding rate paid by Warwickshire and no additional funds can be paid by Warwickshire e.g., to adjust a lower hourly rate.

To make any changes after the Headcount period has ended, the Adjustment process must be followed:

- Adjustments to the Actual Headcount claim must be made using the Online Adjustment process via the Access Synergy Provider Portal:
<https://admissions.warwickshire.gov.uk/synergy/providers>
- Guidance on how to enter Online Adjustments can be found in the **FIS Access Synergy Provider Portal Online Funding Guidance**. It can also be found at: [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](#)
- Online Adjustments must be entered during the specific dates notified in the Termly Information Letter
- Adjustments can only be accepted if they meet the criteria detailed in Section 2.3.11 of the Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding
- Adjustment payments will only be made for the number of weeks remaining in the term from the date of the change or the child's start date
- Payments for any adjustments are made to providers in the last week of the funding term if they have not been added to the Actual payment

Please ensure that all parents/carers/guardians sign their PDF each term, which sets out the hours and patterns of attendance for the funded entitlement that the parent and provider have

agreed. The current PDF can be found on the website at: [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Early-Education-Funding-Entitlements)

Please contact the Early Years Entitlements Team to discuss individual situations or for further advice.

Early Years Census

Reference: Section 2.3.15 – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

- The Early Years Census information is collected using the Synergy Provider Portal, currently in the Spring Term
- The Census form will be found under the 'Forms' tab at the start
- For guidance on completing the Census Form, refer to the **Access Synergy FIS Provider Portal Online Funding Guidance** found on the website: [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Early-Education-Funding-Entitlements)
The online Census Form **MUST** be completed by the submission deadline date as detailed in the Termly Funding Information Letter for the Spring Term and in line with the requirements in the Provider Agreement
- There may be a delay to final payments where a return is not completed
- **From the Summer Term 2026**, the Early Years Census must be completed on a termly basis, in line with DfE deadlines and requirements. Further details will be confirmed in due course

Process for Private, voluntary, independent providers, schools running governor run provision and childminders:

Census Provider Details

- Information will be sent to each provider at the end of the Autumn Term giving the details of the Census Collection date (normally Headcount Day, the third Thursday in January, or a date advised by the Early Years Entitlements Team)
- The Early Years Census Form will be made available under the 'Forms' tab in the Access Synergy Provider Portal at the start of the Spring Term to complete the provider's Census details
- The online form **must** be completed and submitted by the due date, in accordance with the instructions

Individual Child Details

- The requirement to collect individual child details will be fulfilled using the Spring Term Headcount or a collection date advised to providers by the Early Years Entitlements Team

- The child details are taken from the Spring term Headcount claim, taking the information providers have inputted on to the Access Synergy Provider Portal. This information must be taken from the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Forms (PDFs)
- The ‘**Present during Census**’ box **MUST** be ticked for all children that are on register and being funded during Census week
- The child’s ethnicity section **MUST** be completed in line with the information provided by the parent on the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form
- The child’s Special Education Need **MUST** be completed in line with the Code of Practice Stage
- You **must enter 38 weeks only**, into the ‘Census information’, ‘Entitlement weeks’ box, according to the entitlement being claimed. This will be either:
 - Funded (Universal and 2Help entitlements)
 - Expanded (working parent entitlement for children aged 9months – 2 years, and 2-year-olds)
 - or Extended (working parent entitlement for 3- & 4-year-olds.
 If claiming both Universal (funded) and Extended hours, or 2Help (funded) and the working parent entitlement for 2-year-olds (Expanded), 38 must be entered for both entitlements. Your funded hours must be entered based on the equivalent of **38 weeks** funding
- The Early Years Census information is used to determine the funding allocated to Warwickshire County Council by the Department for Education. Any delays or errors in the data returns will affect the funding allocation for Warwickshire and may affect funding for individual providers too

Process for Maintained Nursery Classes, Academies and Nursery Schools:

It is vitally important that schools keep their SIMS system up to date, as this will be used to create the statutory school census returns in October, January, and May. Registered pupils of the school (2, 3 and 4-year-olds depending on the statutory age range of the school) **must** continue to be included in these returns.

Please refer to the DfE Census Guide for Schools with Early Years provision for full details of how to complete the Early Years Census: [Early years census - Which children to include - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-census-which-children-to-include)

A summary is detailed below:

- Schools **must** be aware of their statutory age range to be able to decide which census their children should be added to
- Where the school has 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds as registered pupils (included in the school's age range) they will need to be included on the Schools Census via SIMS
- Children attending the school who are not within the statutory age range (not included in the school's age range as pupils) of the school need to be counted as attending a s27 state funded governor run provision and included in the Early Years Census, do not include them in the school census – an Early Years Census form must be completed via the Synergy Provider Portal in the Spring Term
- For schools who only have a maintained nursery class, (without a s27 state funded governor run provision), the children must be included in the School's Census via SIMS
- For schools who have a maintained nursery class and a s27 state funded governor run provision, the children who are pupils of the school (within the Published Admission Number (PAN)) must be added to the School Census (SIMS). Any children above the PAN will need to be counted as attending the s27 state funded governor run provision and included in the Early Years CENSUS (Synergy Provider Portal)
- Children may appear on the 2 different censuses where their funding entitlement hours are split between 2 different settings or legal entity, s27. In which case, the number of free entitlement hours for each child across all provision is limited to 15 hours or where eligible, 30 hours

Changes to Provider Details

Reference: Section 2.3.17 – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

Changes to your bank details:

If there is a change to your bank details, you will need to contact the Warwickshire County Council Exchequer Services Department,
email: suppliermaintenance@warwickshire.gov.uk

Changes to your contact details:

If you make a change to your contact details, **especially your email address** or telephone number, please advise the following as soon as possible as most correspondence and information is sent to you electronically:

Early Years Funding at: eyfunding@warwickshire.gov.uk and earlyyearsadmin@warwickshire.gov.uk

Childminder Funding at: childminderfunding@warwickshire.gov.uk

Early Years Advisory Team at: earlyyearsadvisors@warwickshire.gov.uk

Exchequer Services at: suppliermaintenance@warwickshire.gov.uk

You must also contact Ofsted at: 0300 123 1231

Children of School Age

Reference: Section 2.4 – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding Entitlements

Children who have been admitted to primary school and are attending a state-funded or independent school reception class are not entitled to any additional free hours outside of their school reception class place. This includes the settling in period, prior to a child starting school in September.

Children who are delaying or deferring entry into reception class, as agreed by the Schools Admissions Team, who are not on the school roll, are entitled to Early Years Entitlements funding until they reach statutory school age, the term following their 5th birthday.

The setting the child of school age attends will have to undertake statutory monitoring. Before you offer a funded place, you are advised to contact the School Improvement Team for details of the requirements of this monitoring:

Telephone Elaine Smith on 01926 742089 or email:

edassessmentteam@warwickshire.gov.uk

If providers are aware of potential deferred or delayed entry children, please refer to the [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK](#) for childminders or settings, as the EYFS Profile must be completed for a child who has not started school by the final term of the year in which the child reaches age 5. If you require more information about returning early years profile data, the Statutory Assessment Team can be contacted at the email address above.

Free school meals

For information about Free School Meals for Early Years children go to:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/education-learning/apply-free-school-meals>.

For queries telephone: 01926 359189 or email freemeals@warwickshire.gov.uk

VAT for Independent Schools

Private schools are required to account for VAT on fees or other consideration received for supplies of education, boarding or vocational training. Per pupil funding counts as school fees for the purposes of the legislation, including local authority funding for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and the early years funding entitlement (where the class of those receiving the early years funding entitlement is in scope of policy).

For VAT purposes, a private school is any school or institution that provides full time education for a fee to either pupils of compulsory school age or 16- to 19-year-olds, where that institution is wholly or mainly concerned with providing education suitable to that age range. Any provider which does not meet the definition of a private school – such as a school that only provides nursery education - will not need to account for VAT on the early years funding entitlement.

Local authorities can reclaim VAT incurred using the existing 'section 33' processes. To do so local authorities will need a VAT invoice from schools and can contact schools to request this if these have not been provided.

Further details:

- If a school does meet the definition of a private school, then whether it will need to account for VAT on early years funding entitlement will depend on which type of class children in receipt of the entitlement are in and if this is in scope of VAT
- Nursery classes attached to private schools continue to be exempt from VAT if they are wholly (or almost wholly) composed of children under compulsory school age who would not be expected to turn compulsory school age that academic year
- Reception classes within private schools are usually subject to VAT, given children within them turn compulsory school age during the academic year they are in that class. Given most children start in reception in the September after their 4th birthday and are eligible for the early years funding entitlement until a date following their 5th birthday, children in these classes may both have fees subject to VAT and be eligible for early years funding
- Mixed aged classes which do not meet the above definition of a nursery class are subject to VAT

From the Summer Term 2025 onwards, to assist both the school and the Early Years funding team, Warwickshire County Council set up two separate settings for Independent schools, one for nursery aged children and one for the reception aged children. This enables funding claims from an Independent school to be entered separately for Reception children and Nursery children into the Synergy Provider Portal. Payments relating to each age cohort are then separately itemised on your remittance to help identify the amount that the school needs to reclaim the VAT in relation to Reception aged children.

At the end of each term, schools will be responsible for issuing an invoice as follows:

- Issue a VAT-only invoice to Warwickshire County Council retrospectively at the end of each school term
- The reference number of the related remittance advice issued with the Reception Class children's funding payment must be included and the school's VAT number on this invoice
- Invoices must be emailed to eyfunding@warwickshire.gov.uk
- Invoice totals will be verified against the funding claims made by the school for the reception age cohort via the Synergy system
- Once confirmed, they will be forwarded to WCC Finance colleagues for payment
- Schools are fully responsible for ensuring that children are included in the correct Reception class setting which relate to VAT charges as retrospective corrections cannot be made

The Stretch Offer

Reference: Section 3.1 – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

Stretch and Averaging of Funding

Be aware of the difference between the stretch option and averaging of funding.

Stretch option:

The stretch offer is designed to enable children who attend less hours per week than their maximum entitlement hours, to access their full entitlement over more weeks of the year. Providers can stretch the maximum entitlement hours over the number of weeks the setting is open for. For example, just under 12 hours a week for 48 weeks of the year where the child is entitled to a total of 570 hours per year or around 23 hours a week for 48 weeks of the year where the child is entitled to a total of 1140 hours per year. Stretch can be calculated annually or termly, please see below for more information.

Stretch patterns must be reflected within the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF), contracts and attended as specified. Completion, in full, of columns A, B & C on the PDF will support providers in entering an accurate claim to reflect their stretch.

Please note: the setting must be open for the number of weeks the funded hours are stretched over and the child's attendance must fit this pattern. If the child leaves before the end of the year, the number of funded hours taken will need to be calculated in relation to the

38 weeks entitlement. This is to ensure the child has received the correct number of funded hours and any outstanding charges due to the setting or the parent are identified.

Averaging:

Averaging enables parents to have a regular amount invoiced to them each month for any additional paid for sessions. Funded hours are offered term time only, usually 38 weeks. Any additional hours taken are charged at the provider's published fee rate. Averaged invoices are calculated by adding together the total number of funded hours and total number of paid for sessions over a 12 month period (or less) and divided by 12 months (or less) as per contract arrangements, to provide parents with a standard invoice amount each payment period. **Parents can spread the cost of childcare equally by paying the same amount each week, month, or term throughout the year.**

Please note: Providers must ensure that the model of funded hours offered (and how this relates to invoicing and payment requirements) is clearly shown in writing to parents at the outset, and links to the invoices issued. If the child leaves before the end of the year, the number of funded hours taken will need to be calculated in relation to the 38 weeks entitlement. This is to ensure the child has received the correct number of funded hours and any outstanding charges due to the setting or the parent are identified.

Stretched Offer Guidance

Stretching funded hours

- The LA has a statutory duty to 'enable parents to take up their child's free place in patterns of hours that 'stretch' their child's entitlement by taking fewer hours a week over more weeks of the year, where there is provider capacity and parental demand'
- There is no requirement on any individual provider to deliver a stretched offer and parents do not have the right to demand one
- There are advantages and disadvantages of stretching – providers may prefer to offer a full 12 month stretch from the start of an academic year in September, to avoid under or overclaiming.
- The maximum funded hours available are **570 for 15 hours funding** or **1140 for 30 hours expanded or extended funding**. The child cannot compress their funding and receive more than their maximum weekly funded hours 15 or 30 hours over the equivalent of 38 weeks

- Providers can decide which period they are stretching funding over and for how many weeks:
 - 12 months/3 terms (up to max of 52 weeks)
 - 2 terms (35 weeks maximum for Spring and Summer)
 - 1 term (22 weeks maximum for Summer)
- Providers can only stretch funded hours over their published opening hours and weeks
- The number of funded hours available each term for children eligible for 570 funded hours are as follows:

| Autumn term | Spring term | Summer term |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 210 funded hours | 165 funded hours | 195 funded hours |

- The number of funded hours available each term for children eligible for 1140 funded hours are as follows:

| Autumn term | Spring term | Summer term |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 420 funded hours | 330 funded hours | 390 funded hours |

Calculation:

Number of funded hours available to be claimed in the stretch period / number of weeks to be stretched over.

Stretching process and examples:

1. Example: Stretching over 51 weeks (Autumn, Spring & Summer terms - equivalent to 38 weeks funding)

| A | B | C | D |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|---|---|
| Maximum funded hours available | Weeks attending | Funded Hours per week <i>Col A / Col B</i> | Funded Hours to be entered onto the portal <i>Col B x Col C / 38</i> |
| 570 | 51 | 11.17 | 15 |
| 1140 | 51 | 22.35 | 30 |

Child Attending 10 Hours per week

| A | B | C | D |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---|---|
| Weekly Hours attended | Weeks attending | Hours attended per year <i>Col A x Col B</i> | Funded Hours to be entered onto the portal <i>Col C / 38</i> |
| 10 | 51 | 510 | 13.42 |
| 20 | 51 | 1020 | 26.84 |

2. Example: Stretching over 35 weeks (Spring & Summer terms – equivalent to 24 weeks funding)

| A | B | C | D |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|---|---|
| Maximum funded hours available | Weeks attending | Funded Hours per week <i>Col A / Col B</i> | Funded Hours to be entered onto the portal <i>Col B x Col C / 24</i> |
| 360 | 35 | 10.28 | 15 |
| 720 | 35 | 20.57 | 30 |

Child Attending 10 Hours per week

| A | B | C | D |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---|---|
| Weekly Hours attended | Weeks attending | Hours attended per year <i>Col A x Col B</i> | Funded Hours to be entered onto the portal <i>Col C / 24</i> |
| 10 | 35 | 350 | 14.58 |
| 20 | 35 | 700 | 29.16 |

3. Example: Stretching over 22 weeks (Summer term – equivalent to 13 weeks funding)

| A | B | C | D |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|---|---|
| Maximum funded hours available | Weeks attending | Funded Hours per week <i>Col A / Col B</i> | Funded Hours to be entered onto the portal <i>Col B x Col C / 13</i> |
| 195 | 22 | 8.86 | 15 |
| 390 | 22 | 17.72 | 30 |

Child Attending 10 hours per week - WARNING: *There are a maximum of 195/390 funded hours for the Summer Term. Settings will have to charge for the additional hours attended at their standard fees.*

| A | B | C | D | E |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---|---|---|
| Weekly Hours attended | Weeks attending | Hours attended per year <i>Col A x Col B</i> | Funded Hours to be entered onto the portal <i>Col C / 13</i> | Number of hours to be charged to the parent |
| 10 | 22 | 220 | 15 | 220 hours attended – 195 hours funded = 25 hours to be charged / 22 weeks = 1.14 hours per week |
| 20 | 22 | 440 | 30 | 440 hours attended – 390 hours funded = 50 hours to be charged / 22 weeks = 2.27 hours per week |

Other considerations:

- Providers should be aware that stretching entitlements can result in decimals of hours, these decimals **do not** relate directly to minutes. To convert decimal hours into minutes, providers should **multiply the number of decimal hours by 60**. For example, for a stretch of 21.92 hours, the 0.92 hours must be converted into minutes using this equation $0.92 \times 60 = 55.2$). Therefore 21.92 hours is equal to 21 hours 55.2 minutes. For a stretched offer of 10.96 hours, the 0.96 hours must be converted into minutes ($0.96 \times 60 = 57.6$). Therefore 10.96 hours is equal to 10 hours 57.6 minutes

- School starters - Depending on when a child starts in an academic year, not all children will attend for a full 52 weeks in the year before starting school. When stretching over less than a 52 week period, you will need adjust your funding claim in the last term and potentially reduce the number of funded hours offered and shown on invoices
- Managing stretched funding for children who leave early can be particularly challenging, as the number of funded hours used will depend on where the child is in their stretched entitlement cycle at the time of leaving. If a child leaves before the end of the funding period, the early education funding claimed should accurately reflect the funded hours allocated on their invoices. To ensure this, providers must calculate and adjust the funding to match the actual hours used, up to the child's leaving date. This may require reconciling the total funding claimed with the hours invoiced, ensuring that all funding is correctly allocated up to the end of the funding period (typically the last day of term). Adjustments may be necessary to avoid over- or under-claiming. For example, if a child leaves before Headcount in the 3rd term of an expected 3 terms stretch, you may have been paid more funding than would have been due for the whole of the year because of accumulated funding from previous terms. You will need to contact the Early Years Entitlements Team to arrange for funding to be re-paid
- In the event that the funded hours are less than the hours allocated on your invoices for stretch i.e., a child starts in the Summer term and leaves at the end of the term, please be aware that you will need to charge the parents for the difference see example 3. (Maximum funding is dictated by the funding caps in place – Autumn 210/420, Spring 165/330 and Summer 195/390 hours). Funding would have been accumulated in subsequent terms had the child stayed for 3 terms
- Please be aware that there may be different funding implications for each term. It is the responsibility of the setting to notify parents of any charges that may apply
- The same Headcount rules will apply to children on a stretch offer as the term-time offer. A child must be on role for the hours that you are claiming for the whole of the term at the Headcount date, as advised by the LA. We may not be able to increase funded hours after the Headcount date
- If a child has moved settings and stretched their funding at their previous setting, please contact the Early Years Entitlements Team for confirmation of individual amounts available for funding as stretched periods may differ across the settings
- Stretch models must be clearly written into Fee information for parents with the specific models available stating number of weeks available, funded hours offered and cost for any additional services

- Parents may choose to vary their child's funded hours each term throughout the year. It is necessary to have robust systems in place to manage the calculations that will need to be made to ensure that claimed hours are correct and parents receive the correct number of funded hours for their child. Children must have accumulated sufficient funded hours
- Funding can be shared between a maximum of two sites in a single day. Communications may be required with the other providers to ensure that where stretch funding is involved, that all providers are clear on how many hours each provider can claim as the equivalent of 38 weeks
- Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Forms (PDF's) must show the correct number of stretched hours and include all providers and models on the form
- Averaging for invoicing purposes e.g., spreading annual funded hours and charges over equal monthly amounts is NOT the same as stretch
- Be transparent and consistent to ensure parents / carers are clear on how they are being charged and funded hours given. Fee information must be reflected on invoices
- Extended periods of absence may affect a child's funding and the stretch may need to be re-calculated
- Please ensure that as a setting the team dealing with funding, charging and invoicing fully understand the models that the service offers

Disclaimer: This guidance is provided to support settings to develop a stretched offer. Settings can choose whether to use this guidance or develop their own offer and are responsible for ensuring their offer meets the statutory guidance.

| WEEKS PER YEAR | HOURS PER WEEK | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | 38 | 76 | 114 | 152 | 190 | 228 | 266 | 304 | 342 | 380 | 418 | 456 | 494 | 532 | 570 |
| | 39 | 78 | 117 | 156 | 195 | 234 | 273 | 312 | 351 | 390 | 429 | 468 | 507 | 546 | 585 |
| | 40 | 80 | 120 | 160 | 200 | 240 | 280 | 320 | 360 | 400 | 440 | 480 | 520 | 560 | 600 |
| | 41 | 82 | 123 | 164 | 205 | 246 | 287 | 328 | 369 | 410 | 451 | 492 | 533 | 574 | 615 |
| | 42 | 84 | 126 | 168 | 210 | 252 | 294 | 336 | 378 | 420 | 462 | 504 | 546 | 588 | 630 |
| | 43 | 86 | 129 | 172 | 215 | 258 | 301 | 344 | 387 | 430 | 473 | 516 | 559 | 602 | 645 |
| | 44 | 88 | 132 | 176 | 220 | 264 | 308 | 352 | 396 | 440 | 484 | 528 | 572 | 616 | 660 |
| | 45 | 90 | 135 | 180 | 225 | 270 | 315 | 360 | 405 | 450 | 495 | 540 | 585 | 630 | 675 |
| | 46 | 92 | 138 | 184 | 230 | 276 | 322 | 368 | 414 | 460 | 506 | 552 | 598 | 644 | 690 |
| | 47 | 94 | 141 | 188 | 235 | 282 | 329 | 376 | 423 | 470 | 517 | 564 | 611 | 658 | 705 |
| | 48 | 96 | 144 | 192 | 240 | 288 | 336 | 384 | 432 | 480 | 528 | 576 | 624 | 672 | 720 |
| | 49 | 98 | 147 | 196 | 245 | 294 | 343 | 392 | 441 | 490 | 539 | 588 | 637 | 686 | 735 |
| | 50 | 100 | 150 | 200 | 250 | 300 | 350 | 400 | 450 | 500 | 550 | 600 | 650 | 700 | 750 |
| | 51 | 102 | 153 | 204 | 255 | 306 | 357 | 408 | 459 | 510 | 561 | 612 | 663 | 714 | 765 |
| | 52 | 104 | 156 | 208 | 260 | 312 | 364 | 416 | 468 | 520 | 572 | 624 | 676 | 728 | 780 |

| WEEKS PER YEAR | HOURS PER WEEK | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 38 | 608 | 646 | 684 | 722 | 760 | 798 | 836 | 874 | 912 | 950 | 988 | 1026 | 1064 | 1102 | 1140 |
| | 39 | 624 | 663 | 702 | 741 | 780 | 819 | 858 | 897 | 936 | 975 | 1014 | 1053 | 1092 | 1131 | |
| | 40 | 640 | 680 | 720 | 760 | 800 | 840 | 880 | 920 | 960 | 1000 | 1040 | 1080 | 1120 | | |
| | 41 | 656 | 697 | 738 | 779 | 820 | 861 | 902 | 943 | 984 | 1025 | 1066 | 1107 | | | |
| | 42 | 672 | 714 | 756 | 798 | 840 | 882 | 924 | 966 | 1008 | 1050 | 1092 | 1134 | | | |
| | 43 | 688 | 731 | 774 | 817 | 860 | 903 | 946 | 989 | 1032 | 1075 | 1118 | | | | |
| | 44 | 704 | 748 | 792 | 836 | 880 | 924 | 968 | 1012 | 1056 | 1100 | | | | | |
| | 45 | 720 | 765 | 810 | 855 | 900 | 945 | 990 | 1035 | 1080 | 1125 | | | | | |
| | 46 | 736 | 782 | 828 | 874 | 920 | 966 | 1012 | 1058 | 1104 | | | | | | |
| | 47 | 752 | 799 | 846 | 893 | 940 | 987 | 1034 | 1081 | 1128 | | | | | | |
| | 48 | 768 | 816 | 864 | 912 | 960 | 1008 | 1056 | 1104 | | | | | | | |
| | 49 | 784 | 833 | 882 | 931 | 980 | 1029 | 1078 | 1127 | | | | | | | |
| | 50 | 800 | 850 | 900 | 950 | 1000 | 1050 | 1100 | | | | | | | | |
| | 51 | 816 | 867 | 918 | 969 | 1020 | 1071 | 1122 | | | | | | | | |
| | 52 | 832 | 884 | 936 | 988 | 1040 | 1092 | | | | | | | | | |

Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF)

Reference: Section 3.1.1 – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

Providers must adhere to the following when completing the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Forms:

- A Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF) must be fully completed, signed and retained for each child by the provider
- A copy of the current PDF can be found on the Early Years website: [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/EarlyEducationFundingEntitlements)
- The Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form is formatted to enable electronic completion. This allows the provider to email the form to parents/carers/guardians to complete and return electronically, without the need to print
- Only one PDF per child should be completed each academic year; and it must be updated and signed each term by the parents and the provider to confirm agreed attendance patterns
- PDFs must be retained by the setting for 6 years plus the current year (7 years) and should be available in the event of any queries and for audit purposes
- PDFs can be stored electronically in a secure file
- Do not send copies of Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Forms (PDF) to the Early Years Entitlements Team unless they have been requested
- **There is no requirement to upload the PDF to the child's funding record on the Synergy Provider Portal**
- Providers should establish an additional written agreement between parents and themselves to outline agreed hours of attendance and funded entitlement claimed. However, the standard PDFs must still always be completed

Please ensure that all parents/guardians are aware that:

- A child can only be funded if they meet the eligibility criteria for the funding type
- All hours attended by their child at all settings must be declared on the form, not just the funded hours
- If funding is being split between more than one provider, the parent must specify how the funding is to be split between all providers and does not exceed the maximum

entitlements. If funding is being stretched over more than 38 weeks, the entitlements must be converted to the equivalent of 38 weeks

- If the child is entitled to the 3 & 4 year old or 2 year old funding and the extended or expanded entitlements totalling 30 hours funding and funding is being split over more than one setting, it must be clearly stated on the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form which setting is to claim the Universal or 2Help 15 hours (or proportion of) and which setting is to claim the extended or expanded entitlement of 15 hours (or proportion of), and that the overall claim does not exceed the maximum entitlements. If funding is being stretched over more than 38 weeks, the entitlements must be converted to the equivalent of 38 weeks
- For the Working Parent Entitlements funding, the parent must have a valid eligibility code for the term to claim the Expanded or Extended funding. The eligibility code must be entered on the PDF
- The eligibility code must be re-confirmed by the parent every 3 months or as directed by HMRC
- If a parent is claiming the Expanded or Extended hours using an eligibility code, the details must be fully completed on the PDF to give consent to check eligibility using the ECS checking system
- Where a parent has applied for and has had funding confirmed for 2Help funding, the parent must have a funding confirmation letter or email with an EY Voucher Code. The code must be entered on the PDF. Alternatively, if 2Help funding has been confirmed via an ECS check on the Provider Portal, this must be noted in Part 2 of the PDF and the relevant parent details completed
- The Local Authority will only pay for a maximum of 15 hours per week over 38 weeks per year for the universal, 2Help and extended entitlements and up to a maximum of 30 hours per week for the expanded entitlements
- The maximum number of hours payable per day is 10
- The 570 or 1140 hours annual entitlement must be taken over no fewer than 38 weeks per year
- The entitlements can be stretched by offering fewer hours per week over more weeks of the year up to the maximum entitlements
- Funding will only be paid for a child starting after Headcount Day that meet the specified categories. See Section 2.3.11 of the Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding
- The parent must make sure that their child regularly attends the funded hours they are claiming for including the full session e.g., 8am start and 6pm finish

- If a parent wants to claim for EYPP the correct section of the PDF must be completed to give consent to check eligibility using the ECS checking system
- If a parent wishes to claim Disability Access Fund (DAF), the correct section of the PDF must be completed, and a copy of the Disability Living Allowance award letter provided to the setting
- Parents will be liable for the cost of any hours not covered by the funded entitlement, for example if a child leaves before the Headcount date, or uses additional services

Local Directory of Providers

Reference: Section 5 – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

Provider Agreement

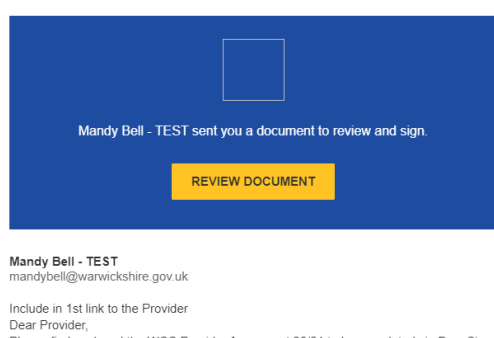
Reference: Section 5.2.1 – Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

All providers registered to claim early years entitlements funding must sign to agree to the annual Provider Agreement. This agreement is reviewed and reissued annually, each academic year. All providers must have regard to the current 'Early Education and Childcare Statutory guidance for Local Authorities' and follow all Department for Education requirements.

A copy of the Provider Agreement can be found on the website: [WCC Provider Agreement 25-26 Final \(PDF, 324 KB\)](#)

For existing settings on the Directory of Providers:

The annual Provider Agreement will be sent electronically from DocuSign EU usually at the end of the Summer Term. Providers will receive the following message via email:



- Click review document – then follow the on screen instructions to complete the form and sign electronically. Once submitted the completed Provider Agreement will be sent back to Warwickshire County Council
- On completion, recipients will get another email from DocuSign EU with a link to the completed document, this can be downloaded / printed for the providers own records

Full Guidance on how to complete and return the Provider Agreement will be issued to Providers with the DocuSign request and can be found on the website: [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers](#)

For new settings being added to the Directory of Providers:

To join the Directory of Providers a Provider Agreement must be requested and completed prior to offering places to parents.

You **MUST** have adequate equipment to access the internet as all funding claims and communications are made via the internet and email.

- The provider will need to complete and return the Provider Agreement via DocuSign (see instructions above)
- Full Guidance on how to complete and return the Provider Agreement will be issued to Providers with the DocuSign request and can be found on the website: [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](http://warwickshire.gov.uk/EarlyEducationFundingEntitlements-EducationandEarlyYearsproviders)
- The Early Years Entitlements Team will add your details to the list of funded providers on the Access Synergy FIS System
- Providers will be given a Unique Reference Number (URN) for the Local Authority, which is used for Census purposes (please note that this is a **different** number to the provider's Ofsted Registration Number)
- The Early Years Entitlements Team will set up the new provider with access to the Access Synergy Provider Portal:
 - A username, password and default security answers will be emailed to you
 - You will be requested to change the temporary password and security responses on first log in. You will need to do this within 3 days before the temporary password expires
 - You must keep a note of your username, password and security answers as these will be needed every time you log into the Access Synergy Provider Portal
- You will be sent Guidance on how to use the Access Synergy Provider Portal by email, this is also available on the website: [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](http://warwickshire.gov.uk/EarlyEducationFundingEntitlements-EducationandEarlyYearsproviders) This guidance will give you step by step instructions on how to use the portal, make your funding claim and review your funding in the term summary
- A copy of the Termly Information Letter for the current or new funding term will be emailed to you. It is important that you read this information carefully as it details all of the funding important dates and deadlines for the term

- The email will also confirm the action you need to take to proceed with making a claim for funding, if it is part way through the current term's process
- New Provider's details are added to the Agresso Finance System by the Early Years Entitlements Team
- Warwickshire County Council's Exchequer Services Department will send an email with a data capture form attached. This is to collect bank details to add the provider to the Local Authority's Finance system for the funding payments to be made. It will appear as suppliermaintenance@warwickshire.gov.uk **Funding cannot be paid until this form is returned and processed.**