

## 30 hours funded places

Working parents could receive 30 hours a week of funded childcare for their 3 and 4 year old children (over 38 weeks a year). The 30 hours childcare doubles the existing 15 hours childcare funding currently available to all 3 and 4 year olds.

### **Criteria for the additional 15 hours (making 30 hours):**

Each parent (or lone parent) earns at least the minimum equivalent of 16 hours a week at the national minimum wage or national living wage, this equates to earning at least an average of:

- £131 per week (or £1707.68 over the next 3 months – National Living Wage) for each parent aged 25 years and older.
- £123.20 per week for each parent aged 21-24 years.

Parents **will not** be eligible if:

- Either parent earns more than £100,000 a year
- Either parent is a non-EEA national and subject to immigration control and has no recourse to public funds.

### **Extended criteria**

Some families of 3 and 4 year olds could be eligible for the extended hours if one of the following is met and normally parents meet earnings criteria:

- Where one or both parents are unable to work due to **paid** maternity leave, paternity leave, statutory sick. Families wishing to apply for extended hours for an age eligible adopted child, can do so from 31 days before returning back to work. Parents can still apply for a birth child at any point whilst on adoption leave for another child.
- Where one parent ( in a couple household) meets the earnings criteria but the other parent is in receipt of benefits due to having carer responsibilities preventing employment, or has incapacity or limited capacity to work.
- Where one parent is in the 'start up period' (newly self-employed) they do not need to demonstrate they meet the income criteria for 12 months.

### **Foster carers**

Since September 2018 foster carers have been able to apply for fostered children where the following criterion is met:

- accessing the extended hours is consistent with the child's care plan, placing the child at the centre of the process and decision making, and
- If in a two parent family, when both partners are foster carers, both must engage in any amount of paid work outside their role as a foster carer. If one partner is not a foster carer they must meet the main criteria for working the equivalent of 16 hours a week at the national minimum or living wage as outlined above.
- If in a single parent foster family, the foster parent must also engage in any amount of paid work outside their role as foster carer

### **How to apply**

Parents apply online to HMRC who check and confirm eligibility:  
[www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)

Parents who do not have internet access should contact the HMRC Customer Interaction Centre on 0300 123 4097.

**Foster carers** do not need to apply online and must contact the related social worker/ key worker who will make and support an application to the local authority for the extended 15 hours on foster carers behalf.

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## What next?

- If your application is successful, parents who applied via Childcare Choices, will be sent an 11 digit code by HMRC to their online Gateway Account and a start date for the extended hours. The extended 15 hours will start from the term period **after** the parent/ carer receives their code if the child is age eligible.

\***Foster carers** apply who successfully through their social worker (not Childcare Choices) will be sent an 11 digit code direct from Staffordshire County Council.

- Parents must give/ present the code letter or confirmation to the childcare provider who is to claim the extended hours. The provider needs to validate the code with their local authority and check the actual funding start date.
- Parents should discuss with their childcare provider how the funded hours can be taken.
- Any hours taken prior to the extended funding start date will be paid for by the parent.
- Parents who have difficulty with their account or retrieving their code should contact the Childcare Choices/ HMRC Customer Interaction Centre on 0300 123 4097.
- **Important:** parents must reconfirm they are still eligible every 3 months, HMRC should normally remind via text/ email to log into their Gateway Account and reconfirm details/ eligibility to continue receiving the extended hours.

\***Foster Carers** will be contacted every 3 months by the relevant local authority and not HMRC.

- The extended hours cannot be claimed if a child start a place when they have out of eligibility/ or is in the grace period for the extended hours (i.e. moving to a new provider). The extended hours can be claimed when eligibility is again confirmed/ successfully applied for. The start date again would be the term after the application is made.

## What if a family falls out of eligibility?

- If a family falls out of the eligibility criteria for the extended 15 hours, or they do not confirm their eligibility every 3 months, a grace period of funding will continue for a set date before the extended 15 hours stop.
- After the grace period is completed and parents are still not eligible, the child will then revert back being able to claim a maximum of 15 hours per week of funded childcare over 38 weeks (or 570 hours over more weeks of the year).

## Contact Information:

Family Information Service:

> Telephone: 0300 111 8007 then choose option1

> Email: [eeac@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:eeac@staffordshire.gov.uk)