

Questions and Answers for Stretched Offer

- Q. Will the headcount and payment dates be the same as for the standard offer?**
- A. *Yes, the funding periods and payment dates are identical*
- Q. How will this work with children who access more than one setting?**
- A. *Two providers can be used for 2, 3 & 4 year olds where both providers agree how the entitlement is being divided across two settings and fits within the parameters of flexibility. Parent declaration forms must clearly show how many hours of the offer are being accessed at each provider and total hours across both don't exceed 570 hours. Care should be taken to ensure that the statutory minimum claim of 2.5 hours is met when splitting the offer between two settings. For example: if both settings are offering 51 weeks stretched at 11 hours per week, the maximum that one setting can claim will be 8.5 hours in order for the second setting to be eligible to claim the minimum of 2.5 hours.*
- Q. Is there a minimum number of hours attendance or days that the offer can be taken over?**
- A. *The only difference is the hours per week that the offer can be provided over. Whilst this will affect the hours that a parent can claim in a week there are no changes to minimum hours /days this can be taken over. HCC will continue to use the definitions as set out in the Statutory Guidance 2012 revised 2013*
- Q. Do all families in the setting need to be part of the stretched offer?**
- A. *All families using the setting should be offered the stretched offer but they may choose not to take it up. The EYE standard offer of 15 hours over 38 weeks must also be available to families for children eligible for the EYE funding. Providers should make clear in relevant documentation to parents taking up the stretched offer the number of hours and weeks available and be clear about any additional childcare charges*
- Q. Will families be able to use Childcare vouchers for top-up in the same way as with EYE?**
- A. *Yes. Families will need to ensure they update the relevant agencies following changes to the amount of care they access.*

- Q. How will the calculations be made if a child moves setting during the year?**
- A. If a child moves provider, the new provider must manage the outstanding entitlement and be clear with parents about how this will be made available. The new provider will need to take into account how many weeks and hours have already been accessed. This will involve contacting the previous provider to determine the amount of total hours claimed in each of the funding periods.*
- Q. Can a family decide to move from the stretched offer to the standard EYE – 15 hours/38 weeks?**
- A. If a child ceases to take part in the stretched offer, at the start of the next funding period the child would be entitled to up to 15 hours per week of funding for the relevant number of term weeks. Any ‘balance of hours’ due that exceed the 15 hour entitlement will be forfeited. If there is insufficient entitlement remaining to cover the normal funding period at the end of a child’s birthday year, the payment will be capped at 570 hours. HCC will continue to operate in 3 funding periods with a maximum number of hours being able to be claimed in each period.*
- Q. Can a child or children access differing numbers of hours during the term time and the holiday periods?**
- A. No. The hours are fixed for the funding period as stated in the EYE parent declaration.*
- Q. What happens to any unused hours a child may have at the end of the academic year?**
- A. Please see the provider guidance for the difference between “unused hours” and “spare hours”. Unused hours in a funding period cannot be carried forward.*
- Q. Does this offer need to be offered to all parents i.e. those children who are old enough to be accessing the EYE but will do in one or two terms?**
- A. If a setting is offering stretched provision then this would need to be consistent for all parents. This can only be offered to children eligible to claim the free entitlement.*
- Q. How will this entitlement work for families who are claiming Universal Credit/Working Tax Credit?**
- A. In the same way that it does currently. All families potentially facing changes to the amount of childcare they pay for should contact Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC).*

Q. What happens if the setting is full?

A. *Providers should review the potential impact of the stretched offer in light of their current pattern of delivery and consult with parents. At the moment it is not mandatory to provide a stretched offer.*

Q. Could the free entitlement be provided at weekends or evenings to accommodate variance?

A. *Not currently. Hampshire County Council is bound by statutory code of practice.*

Q. How do we tell parents?

A. *Hampshire County Council's Childcare and Family Information Team (CFIT) will be promoting the stretched offer to parents and information is on the Services for Young Children website <http://www.hants.gov.uk/cis/eye.htm>*

And individual settings can share the information with families they support.

Q. Whose responsibility will it be to sort balances of funding owed when children receiving stretched provision move settings?

A. *This does not change. The settings involved in the transfer continue to be responsible for this.*

Q. Will there still be three points of entry in a year

A. *Yes. There are three funding periods. Eligible children will join the funding period following their third birthday. The funding periods are from:*

- *1 January – 31 March*
- *1 April – 31 August*
- *1 September – 31 December*

Q. There are settings on County borders - what happens here?

A. *Information is shared*

Q. We are a 38 week setting who want to include a 2 week holiday scheme. Does it have to run concurrently with the 38 weeks or can we nominate 2 weeks in August for instance?

A. *If this is delivered in the same location (under the same EY registration). The setting must deliver the EYFS in the additional weeks it would be open in order to claim. (parents are effectively offered a 40 week stretched provision.)*

- Q. If you offer a shortfall on the full 570 hours (over the year) but the parent cannot take up your offer, is that OK?**
- A. Providers and parents should agree when the shortfall is able to be offered. The intention is that all children are able to receive their full offer but there will be some cases where this does not happen. Unused hours can not be carried forward from one funding period to the next, but the take up can be split between settings to ensure the entitlement is maximised, subject to the minimum take up of 2.5 hours per session.*
- Q. What if you can't offer extra hours to make up the full offer because you are full?**
- A. It is the providers responsibility for planning how the stretched offer can be delivered in their setting. Ultimately children should be able to receive all their eligible hours - the take up can be split between settings to ensure the entitlement is maximised, subject to the minimum take up of 2.5 hours per session*
- Q. Does a child have to attend a 'minimum of 2 days' to take up the offer under 'eligibility and framework' as this suggests?**
- A. As a child on the stretched offer, for example, a maximum 10 hours could be taken on one day per week*
- Q. If a child is going to 2 settings does each setting have to be offering the same number of stretched weeks?**
- A. Where children share provision across providers there has to be agreement with the parents and the provider on how the child's entitlement is split between them. Providers do not have to offer the same number of stretched weeks. It is the hours of the child that needs to be appropriately split across the two provisions and agreed and that the child does not exceed the maximum number of hours they are eligible for.*
- Q. If we do not register now, can we start offering the stretched offer in January or after Easter? Is it a rolling programme like the 2YO offer?**
- A. It is a rolling programme. It is up to the provider when they can start to offer the stretched offer. However, it may be better for parents to know this at the start of an academic year. This will aid planning of places and invoicing.*
- Q. Can you stop being an approved provider if it doesn't work for the setting?**

A. *The stretched offer is to meet parental needs and to offer more simple invoicing. Both of which we would anticipate will show benefits to the provider in planning and receiving payment. Therefore we would expect that providers would continue to offer this delivery. Providers once approved for stretched offer must discuss any change in delivery with the Childcare Development Coordinator before any change is made.*

Q. What help can we provide to parents to help them understand the stretched offer?

A. *A leaflet for parents is also available on this website. It is for the provider to develop the model of stretched that fits their business model and the requirements of the early years education scheme and to publicise and inform parents. If settings require more information regarding the stretched offer they should contact the childcare development coordinator to attend a business surgery.*