



Early Years Education (EYE) “Stretched Offer”

Provider information

Background

In *Next Steps for Early Learning and Childcare*, published in January 2009, the Government set out plans to increase flexibility through making it possible for parents to ‘stretch’ their free early years education provision for eligible 3 and 4 year olds by accessing fewer hours across more weeks of the year. The current Government has upheld this commitment.

The 38 week (term time only, 15 hours per week) free early years education delivery will remain as the Standard Offer.

Parents who wish to “stretch” their free entitlement over a longer period than the standard term are able to do so by “stretching” their entitlement over a maximum of 52 weeks per annum at participating providers.

This will enable those parents whose children attend for childcare and early years education to do so across a full year. There will be the opportunity to access the free entitlement in this “stretched” way to assist them to budget and balance work or other commitments consistently across a full calendar year.

The “stretched offer” availability in Hampshire

We want to ensure that the “stretched offer” is equitable, transparent and easy to understand for parents and early years education providers. We want to improve the fit between parental demand and the flexibility of part- time funded early years education hours. We also want to support the sufficiency of early years education provision in Hampshire. .

Since September 2012, all Hampshire early years education providers have been able to offer a “stretched” provision if they wished to do so.

Hampshire County Council does not expect that all providers will adapt to provide a “stretched” offer but we will seek to ensure that there is a mix of different types of provision that will meet the differing needs of the community.

The stretched offer has become a key part of a provider’s market offer and as such providers will continue to develop good partnership arrangements with the parents of children who attend and regularly consult with them, and those on waiting lists, to ensure that their early years education offer continues to meet the needs of the community they serve. As such there may be a variety of “stretched offers” available to parents within a community, although each provider will only offer one “stretched offer” together with the “standard offer”.

Implementing the “stretched offer”

Each child’s maximum free entitlement offer in both the “standard” and the “stretched” offer will be the same, **570 hours per year**. The year is defined as the child’s birthday year and begins the funding period after the child’s 3rd birthday and 4th birthday, or for eligible 2 year old children the funding period after their 2nd birthday

Features of the “standard” and “stretched offer” delivery

Standard Offer - Features Maximum number of hours per child 570 hours	Stretched Offer - Features Maximum number of hours per child 570 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum 15 hours per week over 38 weeks (Academic Year) • Only accessed in school terms • Funding cannot exceed 570 hours per child’s birthday year. If the academic year pattern is longer than 38 weeks or includes part weeks which takes the academic year beyond 38 weeks, providers must agree with parents which weeks or part weeks their child will either not attend or be paid for by them. • Parents can choose to use a maximum of two approved early years education providers • Parents must confirm the hours required with the early years education provider through a parent declaration for each funding period (school term). i.e. 3 times a year. • Parents must pay for any additional hours or services over and above the free 15 hours per week and 570 hours in their child’s birthday year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers may offer the 570 hours per child’s birthday year over a maximum of 52 weeks (or less) • Providers cannot offer the “stretched offer” alone and must still provide the “standard offer” of 15 hours per week over 38 weeks (Academic Year) • Funding cannot exceed 570 hours per child’s birthday year. • Parents can choose to use a maximum of two approved early years education providers • Providers will choose one from a number of options provided by Hampshire County Council for ‘stretching’ the offer • Providers will determine the “stretched offer” available based on consultation with parents and their operational requirements • Parents must confirm the hours required with the early years education provider through a parent declaration – at the start of their child accessing early years education and then for each funding period. • The provider confirms to parents the number of hours that are part of the “stretched offer” and produces clear invoices indicating the free early years education hours. • Parents must pay for any additional hours or services over and above the free early years education hours.

Considerations for delivering a “stretched offer”

For parents who currently take up and pay for additional hours at the provision that their child attends over a full year, the stretched offer will provide no change to this. However, the greatest benefit is the ability for the early years education provider to raise consistent invoices across the year instead of a high bill over the holiday periods, especially for those attending during Summer holidays.

For parents who only take up the free entitlement, the “stretched” offer could provide parents with the option to spread their child’s free hours into holiday periods. This would provide children with consistent early years education across the year. This could also be a benefit to early years education providers where occupancy falls during holiday periods.

Providers of early years education who wish to consider offering a “stretched” delivery will need to carefully consider the maximum numbers of weeks that the setting is open – taking into account setting closure/holiday dates and other bank holidays. They will need to consider if all the weeks are available for “stretching” the free entitlement.

Table 4 below, offers an example of how the 570 hours per child could be provided. It should be noted that the 570 hours is not easily divisible by all the numbers of weeks options available. All calculations are based on hours round down to the nearest 30 minutes to comply with DfE rules.

By spreading the total 570 hours across the number of weeks a setting is open (or the weeks the setting provides EYE) does in some cases provide a balance of hours which HCC refer to as “spare hours”. Hampshire considers it is important that parents are able to take up the full entitlement for their child and therefore we are proposing that the “spare hours” are offered during the summer funding period, or at other holiday periods (if these are available) if parents prefer.

Please note “spare hours” are not to be confused with “unused hours” which are those which a parent chooses not to take up during a funding period. For example a parent who’s child starts their eligible birthday year at say 5 hours per week in their first funding period, cannot carry forward the unused hours to subsequent funding periods.

Providers need to consult with their existing and potential customer base to ensure that participation in the scheme meets the needs their needs. Some examples of how the stretched offer could look are detailed in the table below. All possible permutations are detailed fully in the stretch offer “ready reckoner” which can be found at the link:

Stretch Offer ready reckoner <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/childcare/providers/eye-eyff/stretchedoffer.htm>

Stretched Offer examples

Hours per five day week adjusted based on $\frac{1}{2}$ hour rule	Number of weeks EYE is provided at the setting	Annual Entitlement spread across the number of weeks	Variation (Balance of hours)	Examples of offer
15	38	570	0	Standard offer. Setting is not open during school holidays periods (not stretched)
14.5	39	565.5	4.5	Setting operating 39 weeks per year and/or EYE is available 39 weeks at the setting.
14	40	560	10	Setting operating 40 weeks per year and/or EYE is available 40 weeks at the setting.
13.5	42	567	3	Setting operating 42 weeks per year and/or EYE is available 42 weeks at the setting.
13	43	559	11	Setting operating 43 weeks per year and/or EYE is available 43 weeks at the setting.
12.5	45	562.5	7.5	Setting is closed during Summer holiday but is open and offering EYE at half terms and Easter. Setting operating 45 weeks per year and/or EYE is available 45 weeks at the setting.
12	47	564	6	Setting is open during Summer and Easter holiday periods but is closed half terms or Christmas. Setting operating 47 weeks per year and or/EYE is available 47 weeks at the setting.
11.5	49	563.5	6.5	Setting operating 49 weeks per year and/or EYE is available 49 weeks at the setting.
11	51	561	9	Setting operating 51 weeks per year and/or EYE is available 51 weeks at the setting.

Providing “standard” and “stretched” early years education offers between two providers

The early years education “standard” offer enables parents to split their child’s attendance between two providers. The providers must be Hampshire approved early years education providers. This option will continue to be available to parents who wish to stretch their offer and/or have the standard offer.

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.

This table demonstrates how parents can split their child’s attendance between two Hampshire approved early education providers

When split may be considered	Example of how provided	Who does what
Where a provider offering the “Standard” delivery in the funding period is not able to provide the full entitlement of hours for that period.	2 PVI (public, voluntary or independent) settings 1 x setting and 1 x childminder 1 x maintained nursery and 1x PVI (public, voluntary or independent) setting 1x maintained nursery and 1x childminder	Parent completes parental declarations at each provider confirming the number of hours their child will attend at each and alerting the early years education providers that the child is attending two settings. Each provider claims for the child hours on the appropriate headcount.
Where a provider is offering a “Standard” delivery of 38 weeks and parent would like to stretch into a closed period.	1 x PVI (public, voluntary or independent) approved EYE setting that is open for the additional weeks required. 1 x approved EYE Childminder that is open for the additional weeks required 1 x maintained provision that is open for the additional weeks required.	Provider seeks a confirmed partner organisation as part of their declared EYE offer to parents. Children able to attend appropriate hours at their provision and enables balancing hours and weeks to be provided at the other confirmed partner setting. Both providers enter an agreement regarding the EYE offer. Parent completes parental declarations for both EYE provider confirming the number of hours their child will attend at each and alerting the providers that the child is attending two settings. Each provider claims for the child hours on the appropriate headcount.

The table below shows the three funding periods and demonstrates the maximum number of weeks and hours for the “standard” offer and for the “stretched” offer. The “stretched” offer indicates the maximum number of weeks and hours that would be available taking account of standard Bank Holiday closures. Both offers show the distribution of the 570 hours per child across the **three funding periods**. The “stretched offer” suggests that there could be the balance of 9 hours provided in the “1st April to 31 August” funding period.

The County Council has previously used school terms to define its free entitlement periods. These have been closely aligned to the Hampshire schools’ academic year. For the purposes of the early years education they will now be referred to as “funding periods.” These periods are already familiar to both providers and parents as they follow the periods that the current early years funding may be claimed and paid. The “standard” and “stretched” offer will continue to be paid in the three funding periods as shown in the table below.

Example of how the 570 hours per child can be provided across the three funding period

FUNDING PERIOD			STANDARD OFFER		STRETCHED OFFER	
Period name	Period Start	Period End	Max weeks	Max hours	Max weeks	Max hours
Autumn	1 September	31 December	Usually 14	195	16	176
Spring	1 January	31 March	Usually 11	180	13	143
Summer	1 April	31 August	Usually 13	195	22	242 + 9 additional hours
TOTALS			38	570	51	570

Becoming a “stretched offer” provider

To become a “stretched offer” provider, simply contact your local Childcare Development Co-Ordinator who will be happy to discuss the straightforward registration process with you.

Headcount process for the “stretched offer”

The process for completing the headcount form is very similar for both the standard and stretched offer. In both cases an EYE parent form is required which sets out the attendance pattern of the child. Detailed guidance on completion of the stretched offer EYE parent form can be found at: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/childcare/providers/eye-eyff/eye-scheme.htm>

On the headcount form itself it is important that you annotate the form with an “S” next to a child’s name who is taking up the stretch offer. The days and hours attending columns will be completed by you from the information on the EYE parent form.

In time claims for both the standard and stretched offer will be made on-line. Further information on the timescale and roll out of this process will follow in due course.

Getting Help

Following your initial discussion with your Childcare Development Co-ordinator, and completion of the registration forms, providers are able to book a business surgery slot with the Business Support Officer for your area.

There is a range of online tools available to help you understand the funding periods and the allocation of hours to them.

These can be found at:

Stretch Offer ready reckoner <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/childcare/providers/eye-eydff/stretchedoffer.htm>

EYE eligibility for stretch and standard offer <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/childcare/providers/eye-eydff/stretchedoffer.htm>

EYE parent form guidance for stretch and standard offer
<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/childcare/providers/eye-eydff/eye-scheme.htm>

Information for parents and carers <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/childcare/parents/cis/eye.htm>