

# '30 Hours' Childcare

The extended entitlement to free early years education/ childcare  
Stakeholders briefing sheet no. 2 (December 2017)

## Introduction

In Hampshire, over 6,000 families have applied for the Government's extended free childcare entitlement, '30 Hours' Childcare since it started on 1 September 2017.

Part of the successful take up has been down to the promotion and awareness raising carried out by childcare providers and partner stakeholders.

Working parents have been able to access for their three or four year old child this entitlement of up to 1,140 hours, either in term time (30 hours, over 38 weeks) or 'stretched' (up to 22 hours, over 51 weeks).

*(Further examples of what this is are in Stakeholders briefing sheet no 1 – July 2017).*

The scheme is open to one or two parent families who are working and earning on average, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum/living wage though less than £100,000 per year.

Parents who are on zero hours contracts or are self

employed or are on apprenticeships may also be eligible for the extended entitlement.

Parents who have caring responsibilities may also be eligible for the entitlement. For further details regarding the eligibility for the extended offer see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/30-hours-free-childcare-eligibility>

A child is eligible to have the 30 free hours from the beginning of the term **after** their 3rd birthday. Terms starts on 1 January, 1 April or 1 September.



## How to Apply

New parents wanting to apply for 30 Hours childcare from **1 January 2018** must do so **now** using the Government's online childcare service:

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

Parents firstly need to set up a Government Gateway account through the Childcare Choices online portal.

This will enable them to open a 30 Hours account in order to apply for the free childcare entitlement and receive communications from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) who are responsible for administrating the childcare accounts.

Once a parent has completed their online application they will be sent confirmation if they are eligible for 30 hours free childcare. There may be a delay in confirmation if further information is required by HMRC.

Parents do need to supply any additional information required by HMRC as quickly as they can in order for their application to be processed for an eligibility code to be given.

If the parent **does not** hold an eligibility code before their child is due to start their extended hours, the parent **will not** be able to receive the extended entitlement and will be asked to pay for these hours until the following term.

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The eligibility code is an 11 digit Eligibility Reference Number starting with a '5' which they need to present to their childcare provider in order to be validated. Once the number has been validated by the provider then arrangements can be made for the child's placement.

Some parents may have received a temporary eligibility code when they first applied - an 11 digit Eligibility Reference Number starting with a '1'. HMRC are writing to those families now to ask them to re-apply in order to receive a permanent code which they can then present to their childcare provider.

If the parent uses more than one childcare provider in order to access the extended entitlement then they will need to present their code to both childcare providers for validation.

## Re-confirmation

Parents who have received their extended entitlement in this period **must** ensure that they reconfirm their eligibility to HMRC **now**. Re-confirmation is required every 3 months (12 weeks) to ensure that the family is still eligible for the extended entitlement.

Parents will receive a reminder 4 weeks before the validity end date is due. This will either be an email or SMS text message, and a message will also appear in the parent's online childcare account.

If parents are unsure as to how to access their account, details of how to do this are available from the Services for Young Children website:  
<https://www.hants.gov.uk/childcare/payingforchildcare/frechildcare/3and4yearoldoffer-step5>.

For January 2018, parents need to reconfirm **before 31 December 2017**, or they will not be able to take up the extended 15 hours until 1 April 2018.



## Tax-Free Childcare

The extended entitlement is being introduced alongside a new scheme to help working families with the cost of childcare called [Tax-Free Childcare](#)

Tax-Free Childcare is available to self-employed parents, and all qualifying working parents regardless

of their employer. Parents can apply for both 30 hours free childcare and Tax-Free Childcare.

The service is now open to parents whose youngest child is under 6 or who has their 6th birthday on that day. Parents can apply online through the childcare service which can be accessed via the [Childcare Choices](#) website.

## Other help with childcare costs

Details of other schemes to help with childcare costs can be found on the Childcare Choices website. To help decide what scheme is best for their circumstances, parents can use the [Childcare Calculator](#).

Other information on help with childcare and family costs is available from the Services for Young Children website:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/childcare/payingforchildcare>

## Contact info

30 Hours Childcare/ Tax-Free Childcare helpline:  
Childcare Service Helpline  
**0300 123 4097**

[tax-free.childcare@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:tax-free.childcare@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk)