



## Extended Hours Funded Childcare

Here is a quick and easy guide to what we know so far about this offer (also known as '30 Hours').

### What are the Extended Hours?

All 3 and 4 year old children can currently receive 570 hours of funded childcare per year. Eligible children will be able to access an additional 570 hours. This could be through a nursery school or class, a childminder or a private, voluntary or independent childcare setting.

### When will it start from?

In Northamptonshire it will start from September 2017. Some areas of the country are starting earlier to test out systems and ways of delivering it.

### So who will be eligible?

This offer is about supporting working parents so it is likely to be a very different group to those who receive 2 year old funding or qualify for the Pupil Premium. Both parents (one in a lone parent family) will need to be working and earning the equivalent of 16 hours a week on National Minimum Wage including those receiving tax credits or Universal Credit. Eligibility will be retained if one parent is temporarily away from work for instance on maternity leave or off sick. Families should also be eligible if one parent is working and the other has substantial caring responsibilities or a disability.

### How can parents find out if they qualify?

Once the system is operational there will be a simple online checker. Parents will then have to reconfirm their eligibility on a three-monthly basis. If their circumstances alter and they are no longer eligible then there will be a short grace period before the child's funding ends in order to help the child and provider to manage the change. The length of this grace period has not yet been confirmed.

### Do providers have to offer the extended hours?

No. Some providers will not be able to deliver the offer, perhaps because of restrictions on their premises. Others may choose to remain as sessional care. Individual providers do not have to offer the full day and can select their opening hours to meet local need. They may wish to work in partnership with other providers to make a full day as children will be allowed to access their entitlement across a maximum of three different providers.

### What happens if childcare providers do not have the space to meet demand?

Childcare providers may need to think about whether they can develop new places in order to deliver the offer. There has already been one opportunity to bid for capital funding and we will continue to explore further opportunities.

### I work all year so need childcare in the school holidays as well as term time.

Some providers are already offering funded places all year round. More may be considering this option so parents can seek out a provider who meets their needs. The offer equates to an additional 15 hours per week if it is taken in term time only or 22.8 hours per week if it is spread across 50 weeks.

### **My working hours vary or are outside the traditional 9 to 5. Will I still be able to use the extended hours offer?**

The funded hours can be taken across an extended day (likely to be 6 am to 8 pm) with a maximum of ten hours in any one day. Childcare providers are being encouraged to explore ways in which they can offer more flexibility in their hours. This will be easier for some providers than others so parents may need to 'shop around' to find the best way to meet their family's needs.

### **What about lunch arrangements for children accessing longer hours?**

Providers will need to consider the best way for them to meet children's needs. As with the current offer, they will not be able to insist that parents pay for any additional services. Therefore if they choose to charge for the provision of a meal they should also offer the option of bringing a packed lunch.

### **I will need more childcare than the funded hours.**

Parents will still be able to make arrangements to pay for additional hours at a rate determined by the provider. From early 2017 the Tax-free Childcare Scheme will give the opportunity to pay for this via an online account which the Government will top up by 20%. Details about this for parents can be found [here](#) and for providers [here](#).

### **My child has special needs. Will a childcare provider be able to cope with them for the extra hours?**

All families should have access to high quality, flexible childcare. The Government have consulted on changes to the funding arrangements and we await the confirmation of new guidelines designed to ensure that providers have the resources they need to support the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities.

### **How will childcare providers get paid for delivering the offer?**

This will be through the same process as is used to pay for other funded childcare. However we know this needs to be improved to enable it to cope with the additional demands, to make it easier and to give clearer information. Providers who wish to be part of the designing and testing group for the new systems and processes should get in touch with the local authority.

### **As a provider, how can I tell what demand is likely to be?**

The local authority will shortly be publishing a new Sufficiency Assessment detailing current area data and information about the impact of projected housing developments. This can be combined with your local knowledge of the working patterns of your current and future customers to give you an idea of likely demand in your local area.

### **The extended offer will mean extra staffing costs for childcare providers. How will these be met?**

The Government have committed to making more money available and have consulted on the detail of how this will be distributed. We will need to make changes to the local Funding Formula in order to follow new national guidelines and we will be consulting on these in the winter before the exact rates for Northamptonshire are agreed.

### **What happens next?**

A group of provider representatives has already been established to look at how the 30 hours offer will work and consider the support that providers will need if they are to make changes to their current delivery. If you would like to get involved with this please contact [earlyyears@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:earlyyears@northamptonshire.gov.uk).

We will continue to share information with providers as it becomes available through the Early Years bulletin, and through the Network Events and Funding Workshops which are advertised in the Bulletin.