

Cheshire West & Chester Council

30 hours extended childcare offer

All three and four year olds are entitled to 15 hours of funded childcare through the universal entitlement. From September 2017, working parents of three and four year olds could be entitled to an additional **15 hours of funded childcare**.

Eligibility:

- Foster carers need to apply through their child's social worker for the 30 hour code not on child care choices. The local authority will issue a code and reconfirm their codes upon receipt of an application from the child's social worker confirming it is in line with their care plan.
- both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family)
- Either or both parents' income does not exceed 100K
- Each parent earns, or expects to earn the equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum or National Living Wage over the next 3 months. This equates to £115.20 a week, approximately £6000 a year for each parent over 25 years old; or £111.20 a week, approximately £5,700 per year for each parent between 21 and 24 years old.
- This applies whether the parent is in paid employment, self-employed or on a zero hours contract.
- Where a parent is in a 'start-up period' (i.e. they are newly self-employed) they do not need to demonstrate that they meet the income criteria for 12 months.
- One or both parents is either on maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave or if they are on statutory sick leave.
- Where one parent meets the income criteria and the other is unable to work because they are disabled, have caring responsibilities or have been assessed as having limited capability to work.



Who will not qualify?

- Families that live in Wales.
- In a two parent family where one parent has a disability and the other parent is a carer
- In a single parent family where the sole parent has a disability or is a carer
- Your child is 4 before the end of August and they are due to take up a Reception place in September.
- Either parent is a non-EEA national and subject to immigration control (and has no recourse to public funds).

How to check if you are eligible for up to 30 hours funded childcare:

- Go to www.childcarechoices.gov.uk
- Click onto the 'Apply now' section for 30 hours free childcare.
- When you get to the page where it asks 'Were you invited to use this service?' click on 'No'
- If you do not already have a government gateway account you will need to follow the link via the checking service and set up an account in order to complete your 30 hour eligibility check. Please note that if you do have to open a government gateway account it will increase the stated time to complete your check.

- It may be useful to know that to open your government gateway account you will need one of the following:
 - A valid passport
 - A recent P60
 - A tax credits letter that has your reference number on it
- When completing your check you will need to know the following:
 - Your National Insurance number and the date you started your current employment
 - In a two parent household: your partners National Insurance number and the date that they started their current employment.
- Feedback from HMRC Customer Interaction Centre suggests that where possible you should try to complete your check during off peak times.
- In many cases parents receive an instant eligibility code, however some families are finding that it can take up to 2 weeks to receive a reply, particularly if you are self-employed or on a zero hour contract/varying weekly income
- If you need any help or advice when choosing your childcare provider, please contact the Information, Advice and Support Service on: **0300 123 7001**.



At the end of the application process, you will have a childcare service account. If you are eligible for 30 hours, you will be given an 11 digit 'eligibility code' for your child. You will be asked to take this code, along with your National Insurance number and child's date of birth, to your chosen childcare provider to claim your 30 hours place. These details are used by the provider for verification purposes only and your personal and financial information cannot be accessed. If you have any problems making your application you can contact the childcare service Customer Interaction Centre at HMRC on **0300 123 4097** for support.

When you can start your 30 hour place

Child born between	Can receive the free hours from
1 April 2014 to 31 August	September (Autumn term)
1 September 2014 to 31 December	January (Spring term)
1 January 2015 to 31 March	April (Summer term)
1 April 2015 to 31 August	September (Autumn term)

When to check your eligibility:

To start accessing a place for the start of September your child must be 3 years old on or before the **31st August** and parents must have confirmed their eligibility by **31st August**. Where a successful eligibility check has been completed after this date you will be unable to access the additional hours until **January**.

Please note that your child must be at least **two years and 39 weeks old** before you can complete your 30 hour eligibility check, if your child is younger than this you will only be given the option of opening a 20% tax-free savings account and this may have an impact on any tax-credits that you receive.

Provided they continue to meet the eligibility criteria children can receive the additional hours until they either start in a reception class at a local authority maintained school or reach compulsory school age (which is the school term after their fifth birthday).

It is proposed that the free hours will be delivered as flexibly as possible and there is no requirement for them to be taken on a particular day of the week. However, it will be up to your childcare provider to decide how they will offer the funded places. When you meet with your chosen childcare provider to confirm your 30 hour place you will be asked to sign a parent contract.



At this point if you chose to split your funded hours between more than one provider we will ask you to nominate who your universal entitlement will go to in the event that you fall out of eligibility for the extended funded hours.

Rechecking your code:

Once you have received your code you must recheck your eligibility every 3 months via HMRC. You will receive reminders to recheck and reconfirm that the details you entered onto your application are still correct and that there has been no change to your circumstances. You will receive a text message and/or email four weeks before your reconfirmation deadline and again two weeks before the deadline if they still haven't reconfirmed. We would always advise that you recheck your code as soon as you receive your reminder in case there are any issues with the online checking system.

What will happen if you fall out of eligibility?

If your circumstances change during the year and you no longer meet the eligibility criteria you will still be able to keep your 30 hour funded place for a period of time, (see the table below detailing the grace period). If you reach the end of your grace period and you still do not meet the criteria you will be able to revert back to your universal 15 hours funded entitlement.

To clarify:

Parent becomes ineligible between	Grace period end date
1 January and 10 February	31 March
11 February and 31 March	31 August
1 April and 26 May	31 August
27 May and 31 August	31 December
1 September and 21 October	31 December
22 October and 31 December	31 March

Using your extended entitlement:

You do not have to use all of the extended funded hours if you do not require them, many parents have said that they would only need an additional 5 to 10 hours. Make sure that you speak to your chosen childcare provider so that they know how many additional hours you will need and then they can claim for those as necessary through the local authority.

Accessing Cheshire West and Chester Council information and services

Council information is also available in Audio, Braille, Large Print or other formats. If you would like a copy in a different format, in another language or require a BSL interpreter, please email us at: equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 123 8 123

Textphone: 18001 01606 275757

Email: equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Web: www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk