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| **Frequently Asked Questions – for Private, Voluntary, and independent settings (PVI’s) and Child Minders (CM’s) Entitlements** |

**Before offering the entitlements:**

It is important that you read the [Early education and childcare statutory guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-education-and-childcare--2/early-education-and-childcare-applies-from-1-april-2024) and the [Early Years entitlements operational guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-funding-2024-to-2025/early-years-entitlements-local-authority-funding-operational-guide-2024-to-2025). These documents, produced by the Department for education (DfE), seek to assist Local Authorities on their statutory duties and provide guidance to childcare providers on offering the free entitlements.

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| **What are Early Years Entitlements** |

1. **15 Hours for 2-Year-Olds (Families Receiving Additional Government Support)**, visit [Parent Portal: Home (servelec-synergy.com)](https://tri-borough.cloud.servelec-synergy.com/LBHF/FIS/Synergy/Parents/default.aspx)
2. **15 Hours for Children Aged 9 Months to 2 Year Olds (Eligible Working Families)**. For eligibility criteria and more details, visit the [Apply for free childcare if you're working - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-childcare-if-youre-working)
3. **15 Hours for All 3 to 4-Year-Olds**. For more details, visit [3 and 4 year old childcare funding | London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham (lbhf.gov.uk)](https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/family-hub/early-years-and-childcare/help-childcare-costs/3-and-4-year-old-childcare-funding)
4. **30 Hours for Children Aged 3 to 4 Years (Eligible Working Families)**. For eligibility criteria and more details, visit [Apply for free childcare if you're working - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-childcare-if-youre-working)

**Eligibility and Registration:**

To offer the 9 months to 3- & 4-year-old entitlements, you must be registered with Ofsted as an Early Years provider and have signed the Hammersmith and Fulham Provider Agreement. The Provider Agreement builds on the guidance provided by the DfE. It is intended to enable providers and the Local Authority to understand their respective roles and to ensure that the early years entitlements are delivered with the best outcomes for children and their families.

Independent Schools not registered with Ofsted must be registered with an Independent Schools Inspectorate.

You can offer the 3- & 4-year-old entitlement if you have a satisfactory/required to improve, good, or outstanding Ofsted grade.

You can offer the 9 months and 2-year-old entitlement if you have a good or outstanding Ofsted grade. Providers who hold a satisfactory/requires improvement grade are not able to offer the 9 months and 2-year-old entitlement unless there is a lack of childcare in the area, and it has been agreed by the Early Years and Childcare Service.

All newly registered childcare providers with an Ofsted grade can offer the 9 months, 2, 3 & 4-year-old entitlement. Childminders and childcare providers: register with Ofsted - Registration requirements - Guidance - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

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| **Which families are eligible for which Entitlements?** |

* **15 Hours for 2-Year-Olds (Families Receiving Additional Government Support)**, visit [Parent Portal: Home (servelec-synergy.com)](https://tri-borough.cloud.servelec-synergy.com/LBHF/FIS/Synergy/Parents/default.aspx)
* **15 Hours for Children Aged 9 Months to 2 Year Olds (Eligible Working Families)**. For eligibility criteria and more details, visit the [Apply for free childcare if you're working - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-childcare-if-youre-working)
* **15 Hours for All 3 to 4-Year-Olds**. For more details, visit [3 and 4 year old childcare funding | London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham (lbhf.gov.uk)](https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/family-hub/early-years-and-childcare/help-childcare-costs/3-and-4-year-old-childcare-funding)
* **30 Hours for Children Aged 3 to 4 Years (Eligible Working Families)**. For eligibility criteria and more details, visit [Apply for free childcare if you're working - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-childcare-if-youre-working)

Children living outside of the Borough can take up a place with a H&F childcare provider. These children will still be funded by H&F. Contact a member of the Early Years Entitlement Funding Team to discuss what evidence is required.

A parent of an eligible 2-year-old will not need to keep showing proof of confirmation each term. Once a child takes up a place, they can keep their entitlement even if the family's circumstances change.

NB: Not all parents of 9 months to 2-year-olds who approach your setting are looking for a funded entitlement place. Any looking to pay for a place do not need to be referred to check for eligibility. Please check with the family if they wish to take up a funded or paying place.

**3 & 4-Year-Old 15 hours Entitlement (Universal Hours)**

All 3 & 4-year-olds are entitled to the universal hours and do not need a code or confirmation letter. Any child can take up their universal hours regardless of their status. Information for parents can be found on [3 and 4 year old childcare funding | London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham (lbhf.gov.uk)](https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/family-hub/early-years-and-childcare/help-childcare-costs/3-and-4-year-old-childcare-funding)

**3 & 4-Year-Old Entitlement (30 Hours Extended Hours**)

Information for parents can be found on the [H&F page](https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/family-hub/early-years-and-childcare/help-childcare-costs/3-and-4-year-old-childcare-funding). Eligible families will need to apply through the HMRC website here [Get free childcare if you're working: step by step](https://www.gov.uk/get-free-childcare-if-youre-working). If successful they will receive a 30-hour code. Useful information can be found on the [Childcare Choices](https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/how-apply-help-childcare-working-parents) website.

All 3 and 4-year-olds can take up the existing 15 hours a week of free early education and childcare and this is referred to as the **universal hours** offer. The additional 15 hours of free childcare a week is only for some working parents of 3 and 4-year-olds and is referred to as the **extended hours** offer. The full 30 hours is a combination of the universal and extended hours. The 30 hours can be offered as a full offer or can be shared with another provider. If a child is already attending a maintained school nursery class or another provider, they will already be accessing their universal hours and in some cases may be accessing the full 30 hours (universal and extended).

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| When is a child eligible for entitlements? |

A child is eligible for the entitlement the term after their 9-month, 2nd or 3rd birthday from the dates set out below.

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| **A child born in the period:**  | **Will become eligible for a free place:**  |
| 1st April to 31st August  | 1st September following child’s 1st, 2nd or 3rd birthday or the start of Autumn school term  |
| 1st September to 31st December  | 1st January following child’s 1st, 2nd or 3rd birthday or the start of Spring school term  |
| 1st January to 31st March  | 1st April following child’s 1st, 2nd or 3rd birthday or the start of summer school term  |

**Important**: you can only offer the 30 extended hours the term after a parent has applied for a code.

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| How can Entitlements be offered? |

The entitlement offer should be:

* between 6am and 8pm
* no session longer than 10 hours a day
* a maximum of two sites in a single day

The entitlements can be offered as a term time offer, for example, 15 or 30 (if eligible) hours per week for 38 weeks of the year. This is like when schools are open.

Please note that the funding from the DfE to Local Authorities is only for 38 weeks, which is one week less than a maintained school is open (due to school inset days). The term time offer is therefore split into 3 terms to match as closely as possible to the school term.

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| **Term**  | **Months**  | **Number of funded weeks**  |
| Autumn  | September to December | 12.6666 |
| Spring  | January to March |  12.6666 |
| Summer  | April to August |  12.6666 |
| Total  | **38**  |

The number of weeks excludes half-term weeks.

The maximum total funded hours within an academic year a child can receive is 570 hours (15 hours x 38 weeks) or 1140 hours if 30 hours (15 + 15 x 38 weeks).

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| **Funding Rates and Termly Amounts** |

You can also offer the entitlements all year round but for fewer hours per week. This is called a ‘Stretched’ offer. The stretched hours to be offered each week are calculated by dividing the full entitlement of 570 universal hours (15 hours x 38 weeks = 570 hours) or the 1140 extended hours (30 hours x 38 weeks = 1140 hours) by the number of weeks your setting is open each year, e.g. if your setting is open for 51 weeks a year you divide 570 hours by 51 weeks which gives 11.18 hours each week. You will find further information and more examples in the document [Guidance on Stretching the Entitlement](https://lbhounslow.sharepoint.com/sites/InternetLinks/fsd/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FInternetLinks%2Ffsd%2FShared%20Documents%2FEarly%20Years%2FFunded%20entitlements%20for%202%2C%203%20and%204%20year%20olds%2Fguidance%2FGuidance%20on%20stretching%20the%20entitlements%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FInternetLinks%2Ffsd%2FShared%20Documents%2FEarly%20Years%2FFunded%20entitlements%20for%202%2C%203%20and%204%20year%20olds%2Fguidance&p=true&ga=1).

**The Hourly Funding Rates for 2024/25 are:**

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| **H&F** Funded Childcare Offer | **H&F** HourlyFunding Rates | **H&F Average Deprivation Supplement** | **SEN Inclusion Fund****(SENIF)** | **Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)** | **Disability Access Fund (DAF)** |
| **9 to 23 Months-Olds** | £13.45 per hour | £0.77 per hour | Up to £2000 | £0.68 per hour  | £910 per child, per year |
| **2-year-olds** | £9.36 per hour | £0.89 per hour | Up to £2000 | £0.68 per hour | £910 per child, per year |
| **3-and 4-year-olds****(15 hrs universal and 15 hrs extended)** | £6.68 per hour | £0.72 per hour | Up to £2000 | £0.68 per hour**NB:** Up to £129 per term | £910 per child, per year |

**For providers open 38 weeks/ year (term time only)**

**The calculation and maximum entitlement for this is:**

**Entitlement**

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| 15 hours/week 38 weeks/ year ÷ 3 terms = 12.6666 weeks/ term  |
| 15 hours/week 38 weeks/ year ÷ 3 terms = 12.6666 weeks/ term  |
| 30 hours/week 38 weeks/ year ÷ 3 terms = 12.6666 weeks/ term  |

**Full term attendance payment**

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| £13.45 x 190 hours  | = £2556 per term |
| £9.36 x 190 hours  | = £1778 per term  |
| £6.68 x 190 hours  | = £1269 per term  |
| £6.68 x 380 hours  | = £2538 per term  |

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| **Entitlements calculations** |

For providers open less than 38 weeks per year

An example of the calculation would be…

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| * 15 hours/week Number weeks open/ year ÷ 3 terms Number of hours/term = 15hrs x number weeks/term
 |
| * Provider open 33 weeks/ year = 11 weeks in the term = 165 hours/ term (15 hrs x 11 weeks) = £13.45 x 165 hours = £2,219 per term
 |
| * Provider open 33 weeks/ year = 11 weeks in the term = 165 hours/ term (15 hrs x 11 weeks) = £9.36 x 165 hours = £1,544 per term
 |
| * 15 hours/week Number weeks open/ year ÷ 3 terms Number of hours/term = 15hrs x number weeks/term
 |
| * Provider open 33 weeks/ year = 11 weeks in the term = 165 hours/ term (15 hrs x 11 weeks) = £6.68 x 165 hours = £1,102 per term
 |
| * 30 hours/week Number weeks open/ year ÷ 3 terms Number of hours/term = 30 hrs x number weeks/term
 |
| * Provider open 33 weeks/ year = 11 weeks in the term = 330 hours/ term (30 hrs x 11 weeks) = £6.68 x 330 hours = £2,204 per term
 |

**Headcounts dates –**

**Autumn** **–** 3rd October 2024

**Spring** **–** 16th January 2025

**Summer** **–** 15th May 2025

**How many hours of funding can be claimed for under the Early Years 9moths to 2-year-old and 3 & 4-year-old funding?**

The maximum amount of funding that can be claimed is 190 hours per term. This is delivered as 15 hours a week, term time only, distributed over 12.6666 weeks.

30 hours is for eligible 3 & 4-year-olds only. If they are eligible, the maximum amount of funding that can be claimed is 380 hours per term. This is delivered as 30 hours a week, term time only, distributed over 12.6666.

30-hour funding can be split between 2 providers; where one provider claims the universal 15 hours, and the other provider uses the 30-hour code and claims the extended hours.

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| **Term Dates** |

The number of weeks excludes half-term weeks.

The maximum total funded hours within an academic year a child can receive is 570 hours (15 hours x 38 weeks) or 1140 hours if the 30 hours (15 + 15 x 38 weeks).

You can also offer the entitlements all year round but for fewer hours per week. This is called a ‘Stretched’ offer. The stretched hours to be offered each week are calculated by dividing the full entitlement of 570 universal hours (15 hours x 38 weeks = 570 hours) or the 1140 extended hours (30 hours x 38 weeks = 1140 hours) by the number of weeks your setting is open each year, e.g. if your setting is open for 51 weeks a year you divide 570 hours by 51 weeks which gives 11.18 hours each week. You will find further information and more examples in the document ‘Guidance on Stretching the Entitlement.’

# **Provider Portal opening and closing dates for Academic Year 2024-25**

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|  | **Advanced Estimates** | **Main Claim** |
| **Autumn 2024** | Open | Closes | Open | Closes |
|
|  | 22nd July 2024 | 2nd August 2024 | 30th September 2024 | 11th October 2024 |
| **Spring 2025** | Open | Closes | Open | Closes |
|
|  | 11th November 2024 | 29th November 2024 | 13th January 2025 | 24th January 2025 |
| **Summer 2025** | Open | Closes | Open | Closes |
|
|  | 24th February 2025 | 7th March 2025 | 12th May 2025 | 23rd May 2025 |

**Headcount dates:**

**Thursday 3rd October 2024**

**Thursday 16th January 2025**

**Thursday 15th May 2025**

**IMPORTANT** – **The above dates may vary; however, providers will always be informed of the dates ahead of time. If providers need to make an adjustment outside of these dates, please contact a member of the Early Years Team via email at**

**Renee.Daley@lbhf.gov.uk**

**Danila.Pykhanov@lbhf.gov.uk**

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| **What is an Adjustment?** |

The adjustment is any changes to your original claim that you made at the beginning of the term. For example, a child who left – before completing the number of weeks included in their funding claim, new starters, a change in hours, etc.

If we must take funding back from you (known as claw back) because children have left, the amount will be taken off your next term’s remaining balance.

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| **Can I charge extra?** |

The funding for the universal and the extended hours is to deliver high-quality provision. This funding is not intended to cover the cost of additional hours, consumables, meals, snacks, drinks, or nappies.

Providers can charge for meals, snacks, and other consumables if these charges are voluntary. You may charge for hours above the free hours if a parent wishes to purchase additional hours. Providers should be mindful of the impact of additional charges on the most disadvantaged parents. Furthermore, if a parent chooses to purchase additional hours or services this should not affect the parent’s ability to take up the free hours. If you provide invoices or receipts, they should be clear, transparent, and itemised, allowing parents to see that they have received their child’s entitlement completely free of charge and understand fees relating to additional hours or services. Invoices and receipts should include the setting’s full details so that they can be identified as coming from you.

You can claim the entitlements using an online system called the Synergy Provider Portal under the section called **Funding**. At the beginning of each term, you will be sent step-by-step guidance on how to make your claim.

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| **What must I do before I offer a place and a claim?** |

A Parent Declaration Form ***MUST*** be completed by the parent and provider for all children to receive their entitlement. A document is important because parents/carers:

* are confirming that they are claiming their maximum entitlement with one provider, or the entitlement is being shared between two providers.
* are giving their consent to check eligibility for additional funding.

There is a section for parents/carers to complete, and then providers must complete and sign their section of the form (on the bottom of the last page), verifying they have seen proof of the child’s date of birth.

A PDF template will be sent to you when you receive your instructions on making your claim. You must **NOT** post back PDFs to the local authority. These are to be kept securely at your setting for audit purposes. Only one PDF needs to be completed for the whole duration the child attends your setting.

* For 15 hours for children aged 9 months to 2 years old (eligible working families), you must see the working families code which you will need to validate online.
* For a 2-year-old eligible child, you must see a Reference Number; this can either be in a parent’s confirmation letter or email.
* For a 30-hour extended eligible child, you must see a 30-hour code which you will need to validate online.

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| **How do I receive my payments?** |

You will receive an advance payment at the beginning of the term and the remaining balance towards the end of the term.

Your advance payment is 100% of the same term in the previous year. Once you have submitted your main claim during the term, we will calculate the remaining balance by subtracting your advance payment from the total claim amount.

Any adjustment amount whether a claw back or additional amount will roll into the next balancing payment.

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| **How do I get paid?** |

You will be paid straight into your bank account. If you have not been paid by London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham before, we will need to set you up on our payments system. We will ask for a copy of your Ofsted registration certificate and your bank details.

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| **What must I consider when handling personal information**  |

You must never email children’s personal details to the Local Authority. You must keep the information you have on children and the claims secure and safe.

For more information and advice on your data protection responsibilities and obligations please refer to the Information Commissioners Office at [Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)](https://ico.org.uk/)

You will find our privacy notice via the main H&F Council web page [The Family Hub | London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham (lbhf.gov.uk)](https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/family-hub) Scroll down to the bottom of the webpage and click on Privacy Notice. Then go to bullet point 4 ‘Children’s Social Care Education Early Intervention’ Privacy Notice’.

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| **What do I do if a child’s attendance is becoming a concern, or the family want to go on holiday during their funding period?** |

If the child’s attendance is becoming a concern, you should refer to your safeguarding policy or H&F document. If the family wants to take a holiday and is receiving the Funding entitlement term time (non-stretched offer) it is not acceptable for a child to take a holiday during term time, just as it is in schools. For children receiving the entitlement all year round (stretched offer) it is acceptable for a child to take up to 6 weeks (about 1 and a half months) holiday over a twelve-month period.

**FYI:** **School admissions: School starting age - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)**

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| **Will the Local Authority audit my claim?** |

Yes, each childcare provider will be audited on their administration of the free entitlement for 9 months to 3- & 4-year-olds. This is to ensure funding is being claimed in accordance with the Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for local authorities and the Provider Agreement. Childcare providers will be contacted by email to arrange a convenient time for their audit to take place.

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| **Can I receive any other funding?** |

**SEN Inclusion Funding (SENIF)**

**What is SEN inclusion funding?**

SENIF is funding for providers, to support the individual needs of children with moderate to severe level SEN (Special Educational Needs) or a disability, where they have not yet had a statement of SEN or an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan) plan. This funding is available for children aged 9 months - 4 years old.

**What is the rate?**

The rate is up to £2000 per term depending on level of need.

**How can the provider claim Inclusion Funding?**

The provider will need to contact the Early Years Advisors to make an application for this funding through the SENIF email.

You may be able to claim the **Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP**) for some children aged 9 months – 4 years old children as there is an eligibility criteria attached to this funding.

[Get extra funding for your early years provider - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/get-extra-early-years-funding)

The **EYPP** will give your setting extra funding to support disadvantaged children. The extra funding is per child per hour for each term. You can apply for this funding by providing the parent’s name, National Insurance Number, and parent’s date of birth. This information can be collected via the PDF and can be included as part of your online claim. After we check your claim for EYPP you will receive a lump sum payment for each eligible child each term.

You may also receive **Deprivation funding** to support your setting. This payment is extra funding based on the most deprived children using the IDACI (Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index) postcode measure. Postcodes of children from your Early Years Census data are collated and matched against IDACI data. If there is a match, a payment is raised per child aged between 9 months – 4 years old claiming the free entitlements.

The deprivation supplement is funding to assist with additional costs to your provision in meeting the additional needs of children from a socially deprived background.

The **Disability Access Fund (DAF)** is financial support for early years settings that have children aged 9 months 4 years old with special educational needs or disabilities. The DAF can be used to meet the extra needs of the child. To be eligible for the funding, chhild would need to be in receipt of:

* child disability living allowance (DLA)
* [free early education entitlement](https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-and-education-for-2-to-4-year-olds)

Each child does not have to use the full 570 hours of their annual entitlement to receive the full amount of DAF, which is paid once, annually, for each eligible child.