**30 HOUR PROVIDER QUESTION AND ANSWERS**

**Question 1 Will Looked After Children [LAC] be entitled to 30 hours?**

**Answer**  No LAC is not a government eligibility criteria.

**Question 2 Are fostered children entitled to 30 hours?**

**Answer** No children who are fostered are not entitled; however foster carers’ own children are entitled.

**Question 3 If we cannot offer the full 30 hours can we offer less hours and claim funding?**

**Answer** Yes providers can offer any number of hours from 1-30 hours and will be paid for the number of hours they offer. Providers should ensure parents know that they can take their entitled hours with more than 1 provider.

**Question 4 Can providers offer funded hours over lunch?**

**Answer** Yes funded hours can be provided over lunch as long as EYFS requirements are maintained.

**Question 5 Can we check an eligibility code anytime?**

**Answer** Yes the Funded Hours Code Checker is available on Bradford Schools Online at all times. Sometimes you may receive an error message; this is because the national checker has a fault.

**Question 6 I think I have registered for Tax Free Childcare, how do I check?**

**Answer** The list of providers is on the Childcare Service website, you can search for providers - the link to the website page is below. If you are not on the list there is guidance on the website on how to register

[**https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/moreinfoccp/?returnURL=%2F**](https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/moreinfoccp/?returnURL=%2F)

**Question 7 Is there a standard invoice template that complies with the requirements of a charging model?**

**Answer** No there isn’t a standard template, as each provider’s fee structure and charging model will be different. The invoice should be clear on the hours that are free and the charged services.

**Question 8 If we have set hours for our sessions, and there is no minimum session length do we have to offer 1, 2, 3 hours if a parent requests it?**

**Answer** No providers are not required to offer every session length, the session lengths should be based on financial sustainability and demand from parents. It’s advisable that providers set out the available session lengths to parents so they are clear how they can access the funded hours.

**Question 9 Can parents access less than 30hrs and can providers claim for less?**

**Answer** Yes parents can choose the number of hours they access and providers can claim for anything from 1hr to 30 hrs per week.

**Question 10 Why is there a deadline for parents to get a 30 hour eligibility code?**

**Answer** The government will only fund hours of eligible children the term after their third birthday **and** they have a code with a start date on or before 31 August. This means if a parent doesn’t apply for a code before 1 September they cannot access the funded hours until January 2018. This will be the case for all terms. Providers should encourage parents to apply as soon as their child is 3. Parents can also register for updates on The Childcare Service Website.

**Question 11 If a child is claiming funded hours from another setting and I am picking up and dropping off, am I able to charge for the time they aren’t with me?**

**Answer** Providers are free to set their own chargeable services as long as they explain to the parents that they have chargeable childcare hours and why prior to a child registering. If a service is provided e.g. collecting the child if ill or “on-call” services (see page 27 and 34 of the operational guidance) and you are not filling the hours with another child then that is acceptable. Providers will need to consider if this is suitable for their customers.

**Question 12 What is the difference between Tax Free Childcare and Childcare Vouchers?**

**Answer** Parents can have either Childcare Vouchers or Tax Free Childcare

* Childcare Vouchers will remain open to new joiners until April 2018
* Tax Free Childcare - Parents of children who will be under 4 on 31 August, and parents of disabled children 0-17, can apply now

**Childcare Vouchers are for**

* working families, **in the UK**
* With **children under 16** (or **under 17 if disabled**)
* Up to £933 a year in tax and National Insurance savings

**Tax free childcare is for**

* + - For working families, including the self-employed, **in the UK**
    - With **children under 12** (or **under 17 if disabled**)
    - For every £8 you pay in, the government will add an extra £2, up to £2,000 **per child**- that's up to £500 every three months

**Question 13 Can a Childminder claim 30hrs funding for children who are relatives?**

**Answer** No, childminders are unable to provide any early years funded hours to relatives, this is a legal condition set out in The Childcare Act, a relative is a parent or step-parent of the child, a person with parental responsibility for the child, a grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother or sister, whether of the full blood or half blood or by marriage or civil partnership.

**Question 14 What are the hourly funding rates for the 30hrs?**

**Answer** The hourly rates for 30 hours are the same rates for 3 and 4 year old universal entitlement as set out in the technical statement each March. Providers can find their individual rate in their indicative budget available on Bradford Schools Online.

**Question 15 When are children eligible for 30 hrs Childcare?**

**Answer** Children are entitled the term after their 3rd birthday providing they have an eligibility code dated before the start of the term.

**Question 16 Can providers set different childcare rates for children accessing additional childcare over and above their funded hours than those just accessing paid for childcare?**

**Answer** Providers are free to set their own charging policy, however they are required to be completely transparent and publish their additional charges. However, providers cannot charge parents “top-up” fees (the difference between a provider’s usual fee and the funding they receive from the local authority to deliver free places).

**Question 17 If a child only accesses the funded hours can I charge a fee to keep the place available over the summer holidays?**

**Answer** No, however providers could choose tocharge parents a deposit to secure a funded place, but the deposit must be refunded in full to parents within a reasonable timescale following the child starting.

**Question 18 Can providers set different childcare rates for children accessing additional childcare over and above their funded hours than those just accessing paid for childcare?**

**Answer** Providers are free to set their own charging policy, however they are required to be completely transparent about their additional charges. However, providers cannot charge parents “top-up” fees (the difference between a provider’s usual fee and the funding they receive from the local authority to deliver free places).

**Question 19 If we only offer the 15hrs and a parent is eligible for 30hr do we require an eligibility code to receive funding?**

**Answer** HMRC advise parents to take their code to all providers they wish to take up the funded hours with. Parents have to complete a parent agreement with each provider indicating how many hours they wish to claim at each provider.The Parent agreement template is on Bradford Schools Online. [PARENT AGREEMENT FORM](https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/content/30-hours)

**Question 20 Can a provider charge for food?**

**Answer** Government funding is intended to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of free, high quality, flexible childcare. It is **not** intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional activities. More guidance is available in the [**DfE Early years entitlements: operational guidance for local authorities and providers July 2017**](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/629544/Early_years_entitlements-operational_guidance.pdf)

**Question 21 Are apprentices entitled to 30 hour childcare?**

**Answer** Yes apprentices could be entitled; their earning threshold will be lower than the average of £120 per week. They should make an application to HMRC who will make the decision on their eligibility.

**Question 22 Do parents have to have recourse to public funds to be eligible for 30 hours childcare?**

**Answer** If one or both parents is a non-EEA national, the parent applying must have recourse to public funds.

**Question 23 If we are open for 3 hours session but offer a lunch club can we offer 4 hours funded session and provide 20hrs per week?**

**Answer** Yes lunch can be part of funded hours as long as EYFS is being delivered

**Question 24 If we offer a paid for lunch session do we have to register for tax free childcare?**

**Answer** No, providers do not have to be a registered tax free childcare provider, but they should consider if the parents accessing additional lunch time childcare would like to pay for this through their tax free childcare account.

**Question 25 What happens if a parent does not reconfirm their eligibility code?**

**Answer** If a parent does not reconfirm their eligibility code they will enter the grace period. Parents will be sent reminders from HMRC to reconfirm.

**Question 26 How will we find out when a child loses their eligibility to 30 hours?**

**Answer** Bradford Council will check the validity of all eligibility codes on six fixed dates per year. These are set out inPage 11 of the Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities March 2017. If a parent enters a grace period Bradford Council will inform the provider when the funding will end.

**Question 27 How many years are the funding rates protected for?**

**Answer** The funding rates are set until March 2018. Refer to the Technical Statement on Bradford Schools Online and providers can find their unique rate in their indicative budget <https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/Secure/CMSPage.aspx?mid=3346>

**Question 28 When does a child’s eligibility stop?**

**Answer** 30 hour free childcare is an entitlement for children a term after their third birthday until they attend a reception class of a school in the September after a child’s fourth birthday or they reach **compulsory school age** which begins at the start of the term following a child's fifth birthday.

**Question 29 How long will the grace period be?**

**Answer** The grace periods are set by government, refer to Page 11 of the early education and childcare statutory guidance for local authorities March 2017

**Question 30 What happens if a parent gets a job after the start of the term and are eligible for 30 hours childcare?**

**Answer** The parent can access a funded place from the start of the next term. They could choose to apply for tax free childcare, vouchers or childcare tax credit to support the cost of their children before their funded hours begin.

**Question 31 Can a provider charge a registration fee?**

**Answer** Providers must not require parents to pay a registration fee as a condition of taking up a funded place. Registration fees for those accessing additional services are a decision for each provider.

Providers could choose tocharge parents a deposit to secure a funded place, but the deposit must be refunded in full to parents within a reasonable time scale.

**Question 32** **Do I have to stretch the entitlement over more than 38 weeks if I am open more than 38 weeks?**

**Answer** Providers can choose to provide the funded hours for 38 weeks or stretch them by offering less free hours over more weeks. If a provider is open 50 weeks a year they can offer the funded hours over any number of weeks from 38 as a minimum to 50. Providers should agree the number of weeks with the parent based on the models they can deliver; there is no requirement to offer it stretched over a number of weeks requested by the parent if this doesn’t fit the provider’s sustainable business model.

**Question 33 If Dad earns £150, 000 and mum earns £20,000 are they eligible for 30 hours childcare?**

**Answer** No if either parent has an income of more than £100,000 they are not eligible.

**Question 34 A parent has given me an eligibility code and has been told by HMRC her child is eligible from September, but the child isn’t age 3 until 1 October, can I claim the funding from September?**

**Answer** No, funding is only available for children a term **after** the child’s third birthday, HMRC will issue codes before the child is aged 3 but providers must check the child’s date of birth to determine when the child can start receiving funded hours.

**Question 34 A parent has applied but is still waiting for a code, can I offer a place and get the code later?**

**Answer** Providers should only offer a place when they have received **and** checked a code. Funding will only be paid when codes have been checked and verified through the Funded 30 hour checker. Providers should advise parents to contact the Childcare Service helpline 0300 123 4097.

**Question 35 If a parent can’t find their code in their online childcare account, who can help?**

**Answer** Please share the information [How parents who’ve applied for 30 hours already can access their account](https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/Schools/News_View.aspx?Id=14994) with any parents who are having difficulty finding their code.

**Question 35 Can I charge for a 1 hour lunch break between 2 funded sessions?**

**Answer** Evidence shows that continuous provision is in the best interest of the child. Where it is reasonably practicable local authorities should ensure that children are able to take up their free hours in continuous blocks and avoid artificial breaks being created throughout the day.

**1 August 2017**