



# THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

## **Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Free Entitlement to Nursery Education for 3 & 4 year old children – 30 hours free childcare for working parents IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**

All three and four year olds living in England are entitled to 570 hours of free early education and childcare a year. This is usually offered as 15 hours a week for up to 38 weeks a year and is a universal entitlement. It can be claimed through an Ofsted registered childcare provider the term after your child's third birthday.

From September 2017 the government are proposing to increase the hours from 15 to 30 a week for children of working families who meet their eligibility criteria. This means that eligible children will be able to receive up to 1140 hours of free childcare a year.

Below is a list of our most frequently asked questions about the extended entitlement. You can find additional information about the government's proposal to extend the free hours in their [Childcare Bill: policy statement](#).

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### **Who will be eligible to receive the extended entitlement?**

The extra free hours will be made available to families where:

- both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family)
- each parent earns on average a weekly minimum amount equivalent to working 16 hours at [National Minimum Wage \(NMW\)](#) or [National Living Wage \(NLW\)](#)
- neither parent has an income of more than £100,000 per year

It is also proposed that the additional hours should be made available to families in the following circumstances:

- both parents are employed but one or both parents is temporarily away from the workplace on parental, maternity or paternity leave
- both parents are employed but one or both parents is temporarily away from the workplace on adoption leave
- both parents are employed but one or both parents is temporarily away from the workplace on statutory sick pay
- one parent is employed and one parent has substantial caring responsibilities based on specific benefits received for caring, or
- one parent is employed and one parent is disabled or incapacitated based on receipt of specific benefits

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## Do I need to be working 16 hours a week to qualify?

The eligibility checker has been designed to accommodate parents with fluctuating incomes, such as seasonal workers, those on zero hours and the self-employed. So you do not need to actually be working 16 hours every week but your earnings over the next 3 months must be equivalent to the amount you would earn if you worked 16 hours a week at either the [National Minimum Wage \(NMW\)](#) or [National Living Wage \(NLW\)](#).

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## How can I confirm my eligibility?

The government will be introducing an online eligibility checker for parents. However, registration for the scheme is currently only open to invited participants. If you register your email address with [gov.uk](#) they will email you when it becomes available for your family.

If the checker shows you are eligible you will be given an eligibility code to take to your childcare provider. You will need to reconfirm your eligibility every three months to continue claiming the extra hours. You can find details of how you will be able to apply at [gov.uk](#).

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## What happens if I no longer meet the eligibility criteria?

If your family no longer meets the criteria you will stop being eligible to claim the extra hours. However, there will be a grace period until the start of the next funded period to give you the opportunity to regain employment. If your circumstances change during the grace period you can reapply again and continue to receive the extra hours

You will still be able to receive the universal 15 hours of free childcare for all 3 and 4 year olds even if you are no longer eligible for the extended entitlement.

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## If I am eligible when can my child start to receive the extended entitlement?

Eligible children can receive the extra free hours from the start of the term following their third birthday:

Child born between	Can receive the free hours from
1 April 2014 to 31 August 2014	September 2017 (Autumn)

<b>Child born between</b>	<b>Can receive the free hours from</b>
1 September 2014 to 31 December 2014	January 2018 (Spring)
1 January 2015 to 31 March 2015	April 2018 (Summer)
1 April 2015 to 31 August 2015	September 2018 (Autumn)

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).

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### **When can my child use the extended entitlement hours?**

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, you won't be able to:

- have any time before 6am or after 8pm
- claim more than 10 hours a day
- claim more than 30 hours a week
- claim more than 1140 hours per year
- use the funding at more than two childcare providers in one day

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### **Can I use the extended entitlement with more than one childcare provider?**

Yes, you can choose to take the free hours with up to three childcare providers. However, you must not exceed 30 free hours a week or use it at more than two childcare providers a day.

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### **How can I find a childcare provider offering the extended entitlement?**

We do not currently have details of the childcare providers in the Royal Borough who will be offering the extra hours. However, once we have this information we will make it available. In the meantime you could speak to your childcare provider to see if they are planning to offer the extra free hours from September 2017.