

Early Years Autumn 2017 Update

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The existing entitlements

Take up of the existing free entitlements remains higher than ever and we are keen to continue this.

In January 2017:

- 93% of the three year olds, 96% of four year olds are taking up the universal 15 hours entitlement
- 71% of the most disadvantaged two year olds were benefiting from a free early education place.

The evaluation of early implementation of the 30 hours concluded that there was no indication of adverse effects on other free entitlement provision from implementation of the 30 hours in participating areas.

Delivery of the existing entitlements remains an important priority.

- The gap between disadvantaged children and others achieving a good level of development has narrowed from 19.0 percentage points in 2013 to 17.3 percentage points in 2015/16.
- The Department will continue to monitor uptake of the two year old offer and intervene as necessary in local authorities where take up is low.

The importance of childcare brokerage

- A good quality early education or childcare place can make all the difference to a vulnerable child.
- Vulnerable families may need additional help to access a childcare or early education place.
- As well as a childcare brokerage service, Central Bedfordshire Council Family Information Service (FIS) also provides a specialised service for children, and their parents or carers that need extra support.
- Referrals are made through either Early Help professionals or social workers and can range from, children who require respite care, or when a family needs short term emergency care and do not have any other help available.
- This has been most beneficial for families and professionals as they have the confidence in knowing that suitable and appropriate childcare has been put in place.

Special education needs and disabilities

- Innovative approaches to provide flexible high quality childcare to meet the needs of working parents of children with SEND.
- The new Disability Access Fund, worth £12.5m (£615 per eligible child), and the requirement that LAs establish SEN Inclusion Funds will help to ensure children with SEND can access and get the best from the 30 hours.
- The 30 hours SEND advisory board brings together a range of stakeholders and VCS grants to discuss the impact of 30 hours on SEND provision
- It is important to include simple and clear messages for parents with children with SEND seeking childcare.

How FIS are helping us to deliver

A single point of information

Sandwell Family Information Service

- Developed close partnerships with Jobcentre Plus offices
- FIS staff attended Lone Parent and Income Support sessions
- Jobcentre Plus advisors now refer parents to the FIS to discuss childcare needs
- Parents receive clear consistent messaging about childcare entitlements
- FIS promote childminding and working in childcare as a career option in Jobcentre Plus
- FIS engages with vulnerable families
- During 2016, Sandwell FIS supported 350 parents.

Improving take up of the 2 year old entitlement

Suffolk Family Information Service

- Took the lead in promoting childcare entitlements
- Suffolk FIS posts Golden Tickets to parents eligible for the two year old entitlement
- The golden ticket can be redeemed to receive free childcare at registered providers rated good or outstanding by Ofsted
- The Golden Ticket campaign is advertised via social media
- Bespoke flyers provided free of charge to providers to help them promote two year old places

There are many more examples of these types of case studies – Thank you

30 hours free childcare – the story so far

- Over 216,000 children have successfully be given codes for 30 hours free childcare in Autumn and over 263,000 in total
- We have no reports of eligible parents being unable to access a 30 hours place
- LAs are continuing to prepare for the spring and summer term when demand is expected to grow
- We are working very hard to ensure the customer journey is as smooth as possible
- Parents wanting to claim a 30 hours place from January should apply in good time to secure a place

Findings from the early implementer and early rollout evaluations are very positive

Parents

(Early Implementer evaluation)

- In the Early Implementer areas, almost a quarter (**23%**) of mothers and almost one in ten (**9%**) fathers increased their work hours as a result of the extended hours. This effect was notably stronger for families with relatively lower incomes.
- Over three-quarters (**78%**) of parents reported that the extended hours had given them greater flexibility in their work choices.
- There were positive impacts on family finances:
 - **58%** of parents reported that they had slightly more money to spend, while
 - **26%** reported that they had much more money to spend.

Providers

(Early Rollout evaluation)

- Over **80%** of providers in the Early Rollout areas were willing and able to deliver the 30 hours.
- Only **12%** of all registered providers reported that they did not plan to offer the extended hours. Of these, half reported that one reason was that the funding level was too low, while others reported reasons related to other issues with the policy; resource constraints (such as a shortage of staff or venue space); or lack of demand.
- Around **a third** of providers:
 - had increased occupancy due to the delivery of extended hours.
 - had increased staff hours or the number of staff in order to deliver the extended hours.
 - could definitely offer more free entitlement places;
 - and could possibly (but not definitely) offer more places.

There were no indications during early rollout of any substantial adverse effects on other free entitlement and paid provision.

Our priority in the short term is to improve the experience of existing users. We will:

- use communications to support a smooth customer journey
- share case studies showing how the offer have worked for parents.
- we are keen to hear where 30 hours is going well and having positive benefits for parents / providers.

Key messages over Autumn will set out:

30 hours

- Deadlines for 30 hours applications for January term
- Parents will need to reconfirm their 30 hours eligibility every 3 months
- Enhancing parent understanding around policy e.g. grace period, flexibility across providers

TFC

- Throughout the rest of 2017, parents of older children will gradually be introduced to Tax-Free Childcare.

Any Questions?



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