



## Summary of the Offer

30 hours a week of free early education and childcare for eligible working parents of 3 and 4 year olds, for up to 48 weeks of the year. The 30 hours will consist of a combination of the existing Foundation Phase Nursery (FPN) provision open to all 3 and 4 year olds and the additional funded childcare for eligible families.

### **How many hours of childcare?**

The offer is a maximum of 30 hours of combined education and childcare. The number of hours of childcare funded is calculated by using the current FPN provision within your local authority as a basis, so that no combined total exceeds 30 hours.

Parents are not required to access their early education entitlement as a prerequisite to them accessing the childcare element of the offer, however, their entitlement will include these hours whether they access them or not.

### **Who will deliver the Offer?**

All registered childcare settings are able to deliver the offer. The offer cannot be taken in any setting or with any person that is not registered with CSSIW (or Ofsted in England). Eligible parents will be allowed to take up their childcare in any registered childcare setting that suits their personal and family circumstance, whether inside or outside of county (including England), so long as the setting is a registered provider and has agreed to take part in the offer.

### **When can families access the Offer?**

The offer will begin from the term after a child's third birthday until the September following their fourth birthday when they are offered a full time education place – aligning with the FPN provision.

Parents can take up the childcare offer at any point during this time period, so long as they are eligible to do so. Parents should be able to access the offer from whichever point they wish during that term, providing their child was eligible from the beginning of that term, or earlier. This includes parents who move into a pilot area or gain employment.

Children will no longer be eligible to take-up the childcare offer from the point at which they are offered a full time education place by their local authority.

## Who can access the offer?

To access the childcare element of the offer parents and guardians must:

- Live in a designated pilot area
- Be employed or self-employed and permanently reside in Wales. **Both parents must be** working in a two parent family, or the sole parent in a lone parent family;
- Earn a weekly minimum equivalent of 16 hours at the national minimum wage (NMW) or national living wage (NLW) (around £111 and £115 a week at the current 21-24 NMW and NLW rate respectively).

For the purpose of the pilots, parents will need to prove they are working a minimum of 16 hours a week, through their earnings. There will be no maximum earnings threshold for the pilots.

Where parents have separated but do not share equal custody of the child, the parent with primary custody will be eligible to take up the offer (if they meet the eligibility criteria). Where parents share equal custody **one** parent will need to be nominated as the lead parent for the offer.

Parents, guardians, step-parents and live-in partners will all need to meet the eligibility criteria in order for a child living within that household to be able to take up the Offer.

## Temporary Exemption Period

Should a parent fall out of eligibility, a temporary exemption period of 8 weeks will be granted during which they will be able to continue to access the offer.

## Exceptions to Eligibility

There are some circumstances in which parents will be able to access the offer when they don't meet the eligibility criteria, these are:

- where one or both parents are temporarily away from the workplace on statutory sick pay or are in receipt of statutory maternity/paternity pay;
- where one parent is employed and one parent is disabled or incapacitated based on receipt of specific benefits or has substantial caring responsibilities based on specific benefits received for caring;
- Kinship carers, family and friend's carers who have taken responsibility for a child or step child who is not their own because:
  - the child has no parents or has parents who are unable to care for the child;
  - it is likely that the child would otherwise be looked after by a local authority because of concerns in relation to the child's welfare.

**Is there a limit to the number of settings the offer can be accessed in, in any given day?**

The offer will allow children to access a maximum of two registered childcare setting in addition to their FPN setting in any given day.

During the holiday period a child may therefore access a maximum of two registered settings under the offer.

**Are there limits to the days, the times of day and the amount of hours the offer can be accessed?**

For this year of the pilots, parent can access the childcare element of the offer on at any point they wish, however, it is the responsibility of the parent to find childcare providers who can accommodate their requirements.

**Can parents accrue their hours?**

No, an accruals/banking system will not be put in place from September 2017. Parents will be provided with a total of 30 hours a week of combined FPN provision and childcare with parents choosing how much of the 30 hours to take up. Any hours not used in a week will be lost.

**What is the rate of pay for providers under the offer?**

All providers will receive a rate of £4.50 per hour for children receiving the offer. This rate excludes food. Provider can therefore charge additional fees to parents for food. However, this cannot exceed more than £7.50 per day.

The Welsh Government guidelines in respect of setting additional fees under the offer for a full day care session (approximately 10 hours) are that parents should not be charged more than £7.50 per day (this would include three meals at £2 per meal and 2 snacks at a charge of 75p per snack). For a half day session (approximately 5.5 hours) parents should not be charged more than £4.75 (two meals at £2 per meal plus a snack at a charge of 75p per snack). For sessional care where a meal is not provided but children receive a snack, guidelines are that parents should not be charged more than 75p per day for snack provision.

Providers can also charge for activities and transport such as trips off site that incur an additional cost or pick up's/drop offs.

Providers cannot charge hourly top-up rates if they would normally charge more than £4.50 per hour.

**How will the offer work outside of term time?**

The childcare offer will cover up to 48 weeks per year. Foundation Phase Nursery Provision is available for 39 weeks per year, therefore eligible parents will be able to access 30 hours of childcare for the remaining 9 weeks of the year.

Eligible parents can access their 9 weeks of holiday provision whenever they choose, however, it is the parent's responsibility to find a provider that offers the provision that best suits their needs. For the purpose of the pilot scheme parents will need to access their provision in week long blocks. Hours of childcare cannot be accrued across weeks.