

Funding and Portal Guidance – Spring 2025

Wednesday 27 November 2024

The Early Years Finance Team can be contacted by professionals via

✉ earlyyearsfinance@norfolk.gov.uk

☎ 01603 222300 - Option 2

or for more funding information visit our webpages at

🌐 www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/earlyeducation

IMPORTANT: Families should call 0344 800 8020 or email fis@norfolk.gov.uk

Portal and Webpage Shortcuts

 Sign in to the Provider Portal	 SEN Inclusion Funding	 Early Education Hourly Rates
 Early Education Documentation and Guidance	 Funding Agreement	 Early Years Payment Dates
 Early Years Grants	 Deadlines	 Subscribe to Early Years Communications

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1. Key points

AUTUMN 2024

DEADLINE – ACTUALS: 13 December 2024 is the last day to submit/amend your child records.

SPRING 2025

DEADLINE - ESTIMATES: 13 December 2024 is the INITIAL deadline to submit your claim. (The portal will remain open until 17 January 2025 for adjustments).

DEADLINE – ACTUALS: 17 January 2025 is the INITIAL deadline to submit your child records.

PARENT / CARER CLAIM FORM: These forms are mandatory. [Guidance is available.](#)

WORKING PARENT HMRC CODES: Must be valid as of 31 December 2024. The start date must be on or before this date and the re-confirmation (end) date is on or after 1 January 2025.

PAYMENTS: The January payment will be based on estimates. From February, payments will be based on your actuals which have been downloaded by the team. Payment dates are subject to change, but we aim to ensure that these are received on or by 7th of each month.

WEEKS AVAILABLE: The maximum number of weeks applied in the portal will be based on your funding agreement submission. Please email the team if an additional day(s) is/are required for those children attending a flexible pattern of attendance.

FUNDING NOTES: It is no longer necessary to add the 2-year-old eligibility code to the notes, but please include anything that helps determine the hours which have been claimed or advise that a document has been uploaded.

Also, please remember to avoid adding the HMRC code to the notes. If there is an issue inserting working parent funding details, please call the Finance team so that we can determine if the code is valid.

FUNDING START AND END DATES: These dates must relate to the number of weeks attended on the child record, and therefore must be amended to reflect the child's actual attendance.

NOTICE PERIODS: The Finance team **must** be contacted when a family has not adhered to your policy concerning a notice period, so that an end date for funding can be determined.

SHORT TERM ABSENCE: Children can be absent for up to 2 weeks (consecutive days) before it is necessary to seek approval from the local authority to claim funding for an extended period of absence.

SEND FUNDING: Application forms are available to download. The deadline to submit a SENIF or exception application will be 17 January 2024.

NORFOLK EDUCATION ONLINE (NEO): At present the provider portal will be available throughout the Spring claim period.

PORTAL TRAINING: The Spring programme for [funding / portal training](#) will commence in January 2025. Please book your place or call back via the portal.

FOOD VOUCHERS: We will issue the next batch of e-Codes to providers once funding claims have been received and the child data is processed. The value of the voucher is £45.00 for Jan to Mar 2025.

2. Updates for Claim Period

- **Terminology**

Please refer to the [Entitlement Toolkit](#) for more information.

- **Working Parent Entitlement**

Once consent is sought, and in line with the statutory guidance, all HMRC codes must be validated as soon as possible using the Eligibility Checker in the portal.

Families will require a valid HMRC code by the deadline and their child must be within the age range of the claim period.

- **Spring 2025 Age Range:** 01/01/20 to 31/03/24

The funding types are:

- Under 2-year-olds (up to 15 hours)
- 2-year-olds (up to 15 hours)
- 3- and 4-year-olds (up to 30 hours)

HMRC codes will **remain the same** for each funding type (entitlement) **unless** a temporary code is issued.

IMPORTANT: Reconfirmation is generally every 90 days, however, sometimes reconfirmation may match when details need to be updated due to tax-free childcare or a sibling(s) on the account. Please ensure families are checking the end date of their HMRC code for the deadline to reconfirm, and their junk email messages too.

- **Parent / Carer Claim Form**

The claim form is split into 3 parts. All sections of Part 2 and 3 should be completed.

- **Part 1:** This must be issued to all families new to claiming early education. We recommend that the weblink or QR code is shared, which means families will have access to the following information –
 - ✓ Information to complete Part 2 and 3 of the claim form
 - ✓ Parent / carer booklet
 - ✓ Tax-free childcare QR code
 - ✓ Universal credit for childcare QR code
- **Part 2:** This must be issued to families claiming an entitlement for the first time. It is only necessary for this part to be completed again if the family's information changes (e.g. address).
- **Part 3:** This part must be completed **every claim period** to ensure consent has been sought to claim the funding for the specific claim period.

[Provider guidance](#) is available and we will continue to complete spot checks.

- **Portal Submission – Estimates**

Your estimate total should include the combined total of the following -

- **Under 2-year-old funding type**
 - ✓ Working parent entitlement for under 2-year-olds
- **2-year-old funding type**
 - ✓ 2-year-old funding
 - ✓ Working parent entitlement for 2-year-olds
- **3 and 4-year-old funding type**
 - ✓ 3 and 4-year-old universal funding
 - ✓ Working parent entitlement for 3 and 4-year-olds

- **Portal Submissions – Actuals** will open w/c 16 December 2024.

Parent / Carer details

Please only supply the details of one parent / carer. Where a NEO or HMRC code has been obtained, the person named on the account should be provided.

Families have the option to provide an email address, so that the Local Authority can communicate with them directly. If families do not wish to receive these messages, please insert your provider email address instead. (The email address field has been set to mandatory).

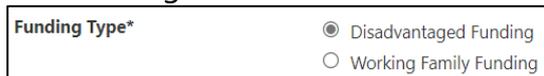
2-year-old funding type

When adding child records, please select –

- Enter EY Voucher to submit 2-year-old claims
- Add child to submit working parent claims



The Funding Details tab will denote the funding type –



When the Working Family Option is selected the opportunity to add the hours and HMRC code will be presented on the screen.



3 and 4-year-old funding type

Inputting child records remains the same.

- **Disability Access Fund (DAF)**

DAF has been extended to all children in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) that are in receipt of early education. The application form will no longer be required, please submit a copy of Part 2 and 3 of the claim form instead, together with a full copy of the DLA award letter.

- **SEN Inclusion Fund (SENIF)**

SENIF has been extended to all children in receipt of early education. Please submit a termly application by the deadline.

3. Frequently Asked Questions

Back dating funding claims

To maintain transparency and fairness to all providers, requests to back date early years funding to a previous claim period will be declined.

Eligibility Codes

Provided the child’s date of birth falls within the date range for the claim period, funding can be claimed when a signed parent/carer claim has been returned to you **AND** –

- **for 2-year-old funding entitlement**

a NEO code has been obtained via [Norfolk Education Online](#)

- **for working parent entitlement**

a HMRC code has been obtained via [the GOV.UK website](#) which is valid (The start date must be on or before 31 December 2024 and the re-confirmation (end) date is on or after 1 January 2025)

If families already have a HMRC account, they can sign in using this [weblink](#).

Cycle of Eligibility

The cycle of eligibility (1st, 2nd or 3rd claim) is determined by a child’s date of birth **NOT** the number of claims submitted.

Spring 2025	Born: Sept to Dec	Born: Apr to Aug	Born: Jan to Mar
	1 st Claim	2 nd Claim	3 rd Claim

Funding Claims

Early education funding –

- **will not be paid** where a parent/carer claim form has been completed but actual attendance did not commence in the claim period
- **will not be paid** for any days from 1 January and up to the child’s actual start date because the provider is implementing a staggered intake at the beginning of the claim period. This means families can seek alternative arrangements during this short period of non-attendance
- **will not be paid** where current government guidance is not followed. This includes any periods that a family has been asked by the setting for their child(ren) not to attend, because the decision to limit or temporarily cease the child attendance means that the entitlement will not be provided.
- **will be paid** for any short-term absences for children who do not attend (Children can be absent for up to 2 weeks (consecutive days) before it is necessary to seek approval from the local authority to claim funding for an extended period of absence)
- **will be paid** where a provider is required to close completely or partially short term or advised to close or left with no option but to close, due to public health or health and safety reasons

Please ensure -

- This type of closure has been communicated as per current guidelines
 - Families are informed that the entitlement will be claimed, and therefore these hours will not be available later
- **will be paid** within the national criteria for actual attendance (claims should be adjusted as families decide to cease or commence the entitlement so it "follows the child")

Please check with the team if you are not sure.

Charging families

The DfE guidance is that *"the general principle is that providers cannot charge parents for services that cannot be provided"*. This will include fees for additional services including meals and consumables.

Further consumer law advice is available on the [Competition and Markets Authority website](#) for the early years sector.

4. Submitting Your Spring Funding Claim

The [Provider Portal](#) is now open.

Deadline Dates –

Nov	January	February	March
Submit ESTIMATES	Submit ACTUALS	Adjust Actuals	Final Adjustment
By 13 Dec	By 17 January	18 January to 7 March	

- ! The estimate is the total number of funded hours that you expect to claim based on what families have agreed for each funding type
- The submitted estimate will be used to determine your initial January payment
- Monthly payments will be adjusted to actuals from February
- Submissions can be amended whilst the edit status is "Open"

Claim: 1 January 2025 to 31 March 2025

! The claim period end date is 31 March 2025

Eligibility:

2-year-old funding	To qualify for funding a child must meet the current National Criteria and have a NEO code AND be born on or between	1 Jan 22 to 31 Dec 22
3 and 4-year-old funding (universal)	To qualify for funding a child* must meet the current National Criteria AND be born on or between	1 Jan 20 to 31 Dec 21

Working Parent	To qualify for funding a child* must be born on or between AND the code is valid on or by 31 December 2024 because it was applied for on or by this date or re-confirmed by this date	Under 2-year-old 1 Jan 23 to 31 Mar 24
		2-year-old 1 Jan 22 to 31 Dec 22
		3- & 4-year-old 1 Jan 20 to 31 Dec 21

* must not be attending a state-funded reception class

Recommended Hours

The Local Authority will recommend a maximum number of hours that can be claimed for a child. This recommendation will depend on the child's date of birth (cycle of eligibility) and whether the entitlement is taken term time only or is stretched.

The actual number of hours to claim will be based on the child's pattern of attendance.

Where a family choose to take less hours or the pattern of attendance is less than the recommendation, it is possible within the same cycle of eligibility to claim the unused hours later provided –

- the national criteria is met
 - 2 YR OLD & 3&4 YR OLD UNIVERSAL ENTITLEMENT: Maximum Hours per Week – 15
 - 2 YR OLD & 3&4 YR OLD UNIVERSAL ENTITLEMENT: Maximum Hours per Year – 570
 - WORKING PARENT ENTITLEMENT (under 2-year-olds): Maximum Hours per Week – 15
 - WORKING PARENT ENTITLEMENT (under 2-year-olds): Maximum Hours per Year – 570
 - WORKING PARENT ENTITLEMENT (2-year-olds): Maximum Hours per Week – 15
 - WORKING PARENT ENTITLEMENT (2-year-olds): Maximum Hours per Year – 570
 - WORKING PARENT ENTITLEMENT (3- and 4-year-olds): Maximum Hours per Week – 30
 - WORKING PARENT ENTITLEMENT (3- and 4-year-olds): Maximum Hours per Year – 1140
 - Maximum Hours per Day – 10
 - No Minimum Hours per Day but subject to the requirements of registration on the Ofsted Early Years Register
 - A maximum of two sites in a single day
 - Not before 6.00am or after 8.00pm
- where applicable a HMRC code is valid
- it has not been necessary to pro rata the entitlement

Claims will be adjusted by the Local Authority where the national criteria are not followed. This includes where a claim exceeds the maximum weekly and/or annual hours.

Please remember that where families decide to access the entitlement with two or more providers, the national criteria must be met too.

The following table are the maximum hours recommended for a **Term Time** offer –

	Born: Sept to Dec		Born: Apr to Aug		Born: Jan to Mar	
15 hours (max 570)	Claim ①	165	Claim ①	216	Claim ①	192
	Claim ②	189	Claim ②	165	Claim ②	213
	Claim ③	216	Claim ③	189	Claim ③	165
30 hours (max 1140)	Claim ①	330	Claim ①	432	Claim ①	384
	Claim ②	378	Claim ②	330	Claim ②	426
	Claim ③	432	Claim ③	378	Claim ③	330

To calculate the maximum hours available for a **Stretched offer** –

1. Divide 1140 or 570 by the total number of weeks funding is offered in a year [A]
2. Multiply [A] with the number of weeks funding is offered this claim period

- ❗ The national criteria must be adhered to when offering additional or ad-hoc funded hours per week
- Claims will be adjusted by the Local Authority where the national criteria are not met
- There may be a shortfall in funded hours for term time only contracts
- **Please contact finance when a family has not adhered to your policy concerning a notice period, so that an end date for funding can be determined**

Pattern of Attendance

The maximum number of weekdays this claim period are as follows –

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Term Time Only (TT)	11	11	11	11	11
All Year Round (AYR)	13	12	13	13	13

The maximum number of weeks is –

Pattern of Attendance is 5 days	TT	11	AYR	12.8
Pattern of Attendance is less than 5 days it could increase to	TT	11	AYR	13

- ❗ Your funding offer to families and a child's pattern of attendance will determine how many hours can be claimed. Claiming 15 or 30 hours a week may not equal the recommendation.

To calculate the hours that can be claimed

For a **Term Time Offer**, it is necessary to count each day to determine the number of hours to claim.

Step ①: Count each day of attendance (A)

Step ②: Add daily funded hours for the week (C)

Step ③: Multiply A with C

Example	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	TOTAL
[A] Weekdays Attending	11	11	0	0	0	
[B] Daily Funded Hours	5	5	0	0	0	10
[AxB] TOTAL HOURS	55	55	0	0	0	110

Step ④: Add together to calculate Total Hours

For a **Stretched Offer**, it is necessary to calculate how many funded hours can be offered each week to a family when open and offering the funding over more than 38 weeks.

Step ①: Divide 1140 or 570 by the total number of weeks you offer funding during the year. This will equal the maximum number of funded hours that can be claimed each week [A].

Step ②: Multiply [A] with the number of weeks you will offer funding this claim period to the family. This is the total number of funded hours that can be claimed.

Example – 15 hours funding is available 45 weeks of the year

Step ①: 570 divided by 45 = 12.67 hours

Step ②:

Open	Autumn = 15 weeks	Spring = 12 weeks	Summer = 18 weeks
Hours	15wks x 12.67hrs = 190	12wks x 12.67hrs = 152	18wks x 12.67hrs = 228
	190 + 152 + 228 = 570 hours		

Payments

Unless agreed otherwise, funding payments are processed monthly and initially based on your estimate(s). The amount to be paid in January will be a % of the submitted estimate. **From February, payments will be based on your actuals that have been downloaded by the team.**

! The February payment will be adjusted if your estimates were overstated.

Month	January	February	March
Estimate	33.3%		
Actual Funded Hours		33.3%	Balance
Receipt of Payment (on or by)	7 th of each month		

Early Years Pupil Premium will be paid as soon as possible following the claim being processed and an eligibility check completed by the team.

****IMPORTANT****

Records that are awaiting download **will not** be included in any payments. Please call the team if your records have been awaiting download for **more than 5 working days**.



Awards for successful SENIF applications will be paid week commencing 10 February 2025.

Funding for EHCP applications will be paid on the next available pay date once the early education claim has been downloaded and processed by the team.

- [Payment dates](#) are subject to change
- Child records may be deleted if claims (actuals) are not received when required
- To manage your cashflow, it is possible to amend your estimates later in the claim period via the portal where they have been significantly under or overestimated
- Providers should receive a remittance* to advise when a payment will credit their bank account. Please message p2p@norfolk.gov.uk if you do not receive it

* Schools using Star Accounts will receive notification via the monthly download

5. Funding Documentation

All funding documentation is accessible on our [Early Years Funding document webpage](#). It is regularly updated, so please remember to download the latest version for the claim period.

Parent/Carer Claim Form and Booklet

These are mandatory documents. Please refer to the [provider guidance](#) for the hyperlinks and QR codes. There is also mail merge documentation to help you populate the claim forms to share with families.

- Spot checks take place to ensure the forms have been completed as expected
- An electronic signature is acceptable
- Forms must be securely stored for 6 years plus current

[Language Line](#) is available to support you and families to complete funding documentation. It is a telephone interpreting service that connects via telephone individuals who wish to speak to each other but do not share a common language. The telephone interpreter converts the spoken language from one language to another, enabling listeners and speakers to understand each other.

Pattern of Attendance Hourly Calculators

These are offered to help providers calculate the funding to be claimed based on the pattern of attendance and/or date of birth and provide detail for the portal submission.

Termly [claim form calculator](#)

Termly [change of hours](#)

Termly [Estimate & Actuals \(multiple children\)](#)

Annual (based on date of birth) – [Summer](#) / [Autumn](#) / [Spring](#)

Provider Payment Details

It is important that you inform us of any changes to your bank details. Please use the following form to inform us of any changes –

[Bank Details & Remittance Details](#)

Please allow at least 10 working days for the changes to take place.

6. 2-year-old funding

All families will need to check their eligibility by creating or signing in to a [Norfolk Education Online \(NEO\) account](#) (NEO). The account activity will display the outcome of the check, plus an email message will be sent to them to confirm the eligibility outcome.

Before a place can be offered, families must supply their child's **Norfolk unique 6-digit code** to you.

This code must be entered on the Provider Portal, use the Enter EY Voucher button.



Please only use the “add child” button for children that have a code issued by another local authority or meet the following criteria –

- are looked after by a local authority
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- get [Disability Living Allowance](#)
- have left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order or a child arrangements order

It is **no longer** necessary to add the code in to the Notes field

- ❗ It is not possible to complete an eligibility check before a child is 21 months
- Providers can continue to support families to complete an eligibility check by helping them to set up a NEO account using the family's email address
- Providers should not set up a NEO account to check a family's eligibility
- The Local Authority writes to all families that may be eligible when informed by the Department for Work and Pensions
- Families may be asked for additional evidence to verify their eligibility; this document must be uploaded in their NEO account so that a manual eligibility check can be completed by the Local Authority
- Families meeting the non-benefit criteria will be required to provide evidence of meeting the criteria, if it is not possible for the Local Authority to determine eligibility
- Please ask families to include their address when completing an eligibility check

7. Working Parent Entitlement

The GOV.UK webpage provides details of when families should apply for their code and a reminder to re-confirm. A valid code must be in place **before** the start of the claim period.

Eligibility Checks

Please verify eligibility codes as soon as possible using the portal eligibility checker.

This process should be undertaken once consent has been sought from parents that wish to access the entitlement at your setting.

Home	Forms	Courses	Funding	Sufficiency	Staff	Ofsted
Summary	Estimates	Actuals	Adjustments	Eligibility Checker	Registered	Interests

Dates (as displayed in the portal)

Validity Start Date	The date on which the parent has applied and been issued with a code
Validity End Date	The parent's 'deadline' for reconfirming their details with HMRC
Grace Period	The last date on which they should receive their Working Parent funded place (which is generated by the ECS)

Reconfirmation

Codes **must** be reconfirmed every 90 days or by the end date stated on the HMRC notification. Families will also need to reconfirm their code before the start of the claim period if they applied more than 3 months prior to keep the code valid and ability to claim the Working Parent entitlement.

The code must be valid as of **31 December 2024**. The start date must be on or before this date and the re-confirmation (end) date is on or after **1 January 2025**.

It is important to regularly remind families including those on your waiting list to renew their codes before the deadline, so that they do not miss the ability to claim funded hours.

Grace Periods



Please remember to check the portal for children that are in their Grace Period.

These families **will need to reconfirm their details** with HMRC to extend their entitlement **if** they remain eligible.

Children should not start a new Working Parent entitlement place at a provider during the grace period. Please refer to [A1.25] of the [statutory guidance](#)

You will need to discuss childcare arrangements with families where their eligibility has ceased for the working entitlement.

PLEASE call the Finance Team if you are experiencing an issue with a code. Please do not record the problem in the notes, as the opportunity to resolve the issue may pass before the notes are read.

-  The Local Authority **does not** have discretion to offer funding to a family because the opportunity to obtain a code or renew their details with HMRC has been missed. Those experiencing technical difficulties or need help should contact the Childcare Service Helpline on 0300 123 4097.

Please continue to use and signpost families to the Childcare Choices website –



FOR PROVIDERS <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/providers/>

FOR PARENTS <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

8. Special Educational Need (SEN) Funding

The application form templates for the Spring claim period are available via the [SEN Inclusion webpage](#). Applications received on an older version or are incomplete will be declined. The deadline to submit a SENIF or exception application is **NOON 17 January 2025**.

9. Timely and Accurate Information

As part of the funding agreement, providers are required to submit timely and accurate information. This includes (but not limited to) funding and census data, claim forms and agreement documentation. Please also ensure the following is checked for accuracy and updated/submitted where amendments are required no later than **31 January 2025**.

- Staff Records (via the Portal)
- Sufficiency Records (via the Portal)
- Census Data (via the Portal - more information to follow)

-  Remember to complete a form named PORTAL - Userid – REMOVE ACCESS (delete id) which is in the Forms Module for any staff member that has left who had access to your portal account.

10. Help with Childcare Costs

Tax-free Childcare

This scheme enables working families who meet certain criteria to benefit from the government adding an extra £2 (up to £2,000 per child per year) for every £8 paid into their online account. This money is available to spend on regulated childcare.

To enable families to use the scheme as a payment method for childcare, including that provided by before and after school clubs and holiday clubs, providers must be [signed up](#).

For more information, families can be signposted to the [Childcare Choices](#) website which includes detail on [how to use it](#). For providers, there is a [dedicated page](#) on the same website for guidance, including a [communications toolkit](#).

Universal Credit for Childcare

This scheme enables working families claiming Universal Credit who meet certain criteria to receive financial help with their childcare costs. Families can be signposted to the [GOV.UK website](#) for more information.

11. Keeping in touch and up to date

Newsletters / Weekly Round Up

Remember to [subscribe](#) to receive the regular updates which let you know about developments in early years and childcare both in Norfolk and nationally, to share good practice and highlight new publications.

Norfolk Education Online (NEO)

Within the unrestricted areas of NEO, there is a wealth of resources including deadline date reminders. It is available online and open to both [providers](#) and [families](#).

Other ways of keeping in touch and finding out current news

Join the Norfolk Early Years Staffroom, a private Facebook group for early years and childcare practitioners in Norfolk.