

Funding and Portal Guidance – Spring 2024

Thursday 23 November 2023

The Early Years Finance Team can be contacted by professionals via

✉ earlyyearsfinance@norfolk.gov.uk










☎ EY Advice Line: 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 our Early Years Newsletters

Content

1. Key points
2. Frequently Asked Questions
3. Submitting your Spring Claim
4. Funding Documentation
5. 2-year-old funding
6. 3- and 4-year-old funding – 30 hours
7. SEN Funding
8. Staff Module
9. Childcare Sufficiency Module (Places Numbers & Vacancies)
10. Tax Free Childcare
11. Keeping in touch and up to date

1. Key points

AUTUMN 2023

DEADLINE: 8 December 2023 is the FINAL deadline to amend / submit ACTUALS.

Please remember to check the portal BEFORE this date to check the hours that have been funded by the Local Authority are as expected. After this date, it will not be possible to amend any funding details for the claim period.

SPRING 2024

DEADLINE - ESTIMATES: 8 December 2023 is the INITIAL deadline to submit your claim.

DEADLINE – ACTUALS: 19 January 2024 is the INITIAL deadline to submit your child records.

30 HOUR CODE: Must be valid as of 31 December 2023. The start date must be on or before this date and the re-confirmation (end) date is on or after 1 January 2024.

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 is 11 for term time and 12.6 for all year round (stretched). Please call 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 30-hour code to the notes. If there is an issue inserting 30-hour 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 19 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 on 15 January 2024. 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 2024.

2. 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**
a NCC code has been obtained via [Norfolk Education Online](#)
- **for 3- and 4-year funding (30 hours)**
a HMRC code has been obtained via [Childcare Choices](#) which is valid (The start date must be on or before 31 December 2023 and the re-confirmation (end) date is on or after 1 January 2024)

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 2024	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.

3. Submitting Your Spring Claim

The [Provider Portal](#) will be open for you to submit your –

- ESTIMATES from 23 November 2023.
- ACTUALS from 1 January 2024.

Deadline Dates –

Nov	January	February	March
Submit ESTIMATES	Submit ACTUALS	Adjust Actuals	Final Adjustment
By 8 Dec	By 19 January	20 January to 8 March	



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

Claim: 1 January 2024 to 31 March 2024

Eligibility:

2-year-old Early Education	15 hours	To qualify for funding a child must meet the current National Criteria AND be born on or between	1 Jan 21 to 31 Dec 21
3 and 4-year-old Early Education	15 hours (UNIVERSAL)	To qualify for funding a child* must be born on or between	1 Jan 19 to 31 Dec 20
	30 hours (EXTENDED)	AND the code is valid on or by 31 December 2023 because it was applied for on or by this date or re-confirmed by this date	

* 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
 - EXTENDED ENTITLEMENT: Maximum Hours per Week – 30
 - EXTENDED ENTITLEMENT: Maximum Hours per Year* – 1140 (subject to eligibility)
 - 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 30-hour eligibility 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 is 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	213	Claim ①	189
	Claim ②	192	Claim ②	165	Claim ②	213
	Claim ③	213	Claim ③	192	Claim ③	168
30 hours (max 1140)	Claim ①	330	Claim ①	426	Claim ①	378
	Claim ②	384	Claim ②	330	Claim ②	426
	Claim ③	426	Claim ③	384	Claim ③	336

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 is 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)	12	13	13	13	12

The maximum number of weeks is –

Pattern of Attendance is 5 days	TT	11	AYR	12.6
Pattern of Attendance is less than 5 days it could increase to	TT	11	AYR	13



The 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	
[C] Daily Funded Hours	5	5	0	0	0	10
[AxC] 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 plus an advance for early years pupil premium. **From February, payments will be based on your actuals that have been downloaded by the team.**

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

****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 and exception applications will be paid week commencing 12 February 2024.



- [Payment dates](#) are subject to change
- Subscribe to the EY Online Calendar for important dates and immediate notification of changes
- 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

4. 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



The completion of the claim form is mandatory each claim period. Parents and carers must acknowledge the declaration by ticking every statement and signing the document to claim 2-year-old or 3 and 4-year-old funding. Please ensure the correct sections are completed for each claim.

Where necessary, it is acceptable to support parent/carers to fill out the form to claim the funding. However, it is not acceptable to complete the form on their behalf and expect them to simply sign the form. All parents/carers must have a clear understanding of what they have signed and what will be claimed on their behalf.

Early Education funding **cannot be claimed without a signed form in place as consent MUST be obtained** to share information with the Local Authority and actual attendance has occurred. Failure to meet these requirements will mean that funding will be recovered if we become aware of non-compliance. Termly spot checks will take place to ensure claim forms have been completed as expected.

Claim forms must be securely stored for a period of 6 years plus current.

The parent/carers booklet must be shared with all new families prior to them making their first funding claim. The aim of the booklet is to communicate how funding is offered in Norfolk, how/when it can/must be claimed and what they should expect.

Parent / Carer Claim Form  [pdf](#)  [word](#)
Parent / Carer [Booklet](#) 

[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 Funding Update Form

It is important that you inform us of any changes to your bank details, contact information and when the criteria for the supplements are no longer met. Please use the following forms to inform us of any changes –

3 and 4-year-old funding [Provider Supplements](#)

[Bank Details & Provider Supplements](#)

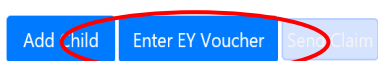
Termly audits will take place to ensure supplements are paid in accordance with the criteria. Funding paid in error due to a supplement change will be recovered.

5. 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 their NEO account
- 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

6. 3- and 4-year-old funding – 30 hours

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.

Reconfirmation

Codes **must** be reconfirmed every 90 days. 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 30 hours.

Eligibility Checks

Please verify eligibility codes as soon as possible. This process should be undertaken once consent has been sought from parents that wish to access the extended entitlement at your setting.

****IMPORTANT****

When completing a check, please remember to confirm that consent has been sought and **insert the mandatory fields ONLY** –


- Eligibility Code
- Child Date of Birth
- Parent/Carer NI Number

30 Hour Childcare

Please enter a valid Eligibility Code and Child Date of Birth, together with Parent/Carer Details. Partner Details are optional but if entered then all fields, except Forename, must be filled in.

Eligibility Code*	<input type="text"/>	←
Child Date of Birth*	<input type="text"/>	←
Parent/Carer Forename	<input type="text"/>	
Parent/Carer Surname	<input type="text"/>	
Parent/Carer NI Number*	<input type="text"/>	←
Consent must be given for this	<input type="checkbox"/> Eligibility Check	←
Partner Forename	<input type="text"/>	
Partner Surname	<input type="text"/>	
Partner NI Number	<input type="text"/>	

*denotes mandatory fields

If additional fields have detail added, the check will FAIL  Submission Failed

Eligibility Checker 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 30 hours place (which is generated by the ECS)

The code must be valid as of **31 December 2023**. The start date must be on or before this date and the re-confirmation (end) date is on or after **1 January 2024**.

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 the additional 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 30 hours place at a provider during the grace period. Please refer to [A1.23] of the [statutory guidance](#)

You will need to discuss childcare arrangements with families where their eligibility has ceased for 30 hours, as their funded early education will reduce to the universal offer.

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/>

7. 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 19 January 2024**.

8. Staff Module

Please could you check your staff records held on the portal and submit any changes to ensure the list is accurate.

There are courses available each term to help you undertake this task.

It is also necessary 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.

9. Childcare Sufficiency Module

Please review and submit amendments via the portal for Spring 2024 by **19 January 2024**.

Training is available to support you with this task, please book a place via the portal.

10. Tax-free Childcare

Norfolk was selected to take part in a project to promote tax free childcare to families with children aged 0-11 or up to 16 if disabled. 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.

Many did [sign up](#) when the scheme was initially introduced, but statistics shared as part of the project suggest we have a number that are yet to join or do not have any families using it.

Whilst families will need to meet a criteria to open an account, those that are eligible will benefit by the government adding an extra £2 (up to £2,000 per child per year) for every £8 paid into the online account. We are sure that you will agree this is an opportunity that families should not miss out on when looking for affordable childcare and out of school provision.

The success of the project in Norfolk depends on all providers offering the approved types of regulated childcare being signed up to enable families to use the scheme and actively promoting this as a method of payment regularly.

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](#).

11. Keeping in touch and up to date

Newsletters

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.

Early Years Calendar

Our Early Years calendar provides quick access to deadline dates and events. It can be viewed [online](#), or it is possible to subscribe so that the calendar is accessible on a mobile device or laptop.



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](#). It is also possible to view the [Family Information Service newsletter](#) here too.

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
- Visit the Norfolk County Council Family Information Facebook page, [@NorfolkFIS](#).