

## **Government Childcare Expansion - Phase 1 April 2024**

Please find below reminders about the Government's expansion of early years education and childcare to working parents of children who have turned **two years old before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**.

If providers are not currently set up to offer government funded places and anticipate having eligible families, please contact the Early Years Funding Team as soon as possible on [eyft@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:eyft@northyorks.gov.uk)

### **Department for Education (DfE) Naming Conventions**

The DfE has re-confirmed the following naming conventions for the different funding entitlements:-

- '**Funded hours**' for the 15-hour entitlement for **disadvantaged** two-year-old children and the **universal** 15-hour entitlement for three- and four-year-old children.
- '**Eligible Working Family Entitlement**' for all qualifying working families of children aged nine months upwards to five years or until they cease to be a qualifying family.

### **Current and Ongoing Two-year-old Disadvantaged entitlement**

There are no changes to the current eligibility criteria nor the application process for applying for the disadvantage entitlement for two-year-old children.

Information about eligibility and the **North Yorkshire Council** online application form can be found at [Early years funding for 2 year olds | North Yorkshire Council](#)

There may be some circumstances where families may be eligible for both the Disadvantage funded hours and the Working Family entitlement hours. Families are only eligible to claim one entitlement. **Families should be directed to claim government funding under the Disadvantage offer.**

If families meet the eligibility criteria for two-year-old Disadvantaged entitlement they will not be required to re-confirm their eligibility.

If further information or support is required about the Disadvantage entitlement, please contact the Families Information Service on [fis.information@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:fis.information@northyorks.gov.uk)

### **Eligible Working Family Entitlement for two-year-old children**

For take up of government funded provision commencing on or after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, potentially eligible families of two-year-old children can apply from January 2024. This is for up to 15 hours of Eligible Working Family Entitlement. **Parents must apply through Childcare Choices** [Childcare Choices | 30 Hours Free Childcare, Tax-Free Childcare and More | Help with Costs | GOV.UK](#)

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- If families claim the Eligible Working Family Entitlement, they will need to re-confirm their eligibility every three months.
  - If families claim the Eligible Working Family Entitlement, they may fall out of eligibility and into a grace period.

As with current policy, parents are only legally entitled to start claiming the 15 hours working family entitlement for their child in the term following the date they receive a decision from HMRC.

### **Application Process**

Parents must have set up an online Government Childcare Account before they can apply for an eligibility code. Parents do this via Childcare Choices [Childcare Choices | 30 Hours Free Childcare, Tax-Free Childcare and More | Help with Costs | GOV.UK](#)

- The Working Family Entitlement eligibility codes will be issued to eligible parents making applications from 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024.
- If parents apply from 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024, it may be that their eligibility code will need to be re-confirmed before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.
- Parents must ensure that they check their online Childcare Account.
- The policy of eligibility codes will remain unchanged. Parents must have a valid eligibility code in place to enable their child to access funded hours.
- Parents can apply up to 31 days before taking up employment or returning to work.
- The earliest an eligible parent can receive an eligibility code for their child is 16 weeks before the child reaches the age of eligibility.
- The code will be named Eligibility Code. Codes for the Working Family Entitlement hours will be issued in the same format (11 digits starting '50...').

### **Foster Parents Working Family Entitlement**

Foster parents must be in paid employment **in addition** to their fostering care responsibilities to be able to claim the working family entitlement. Foster parents must apply through their responsible local authority and will receive codes beginning '400'. Foster parents must re-confirm with the local authority.

### **Tax Free Childcare**

Providers must ensure they are set up to offer parents Tax Free Childcare for parents to be able to claim Tax Free Childcare on chargeable childcare costs. This is set up through <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/providers> Working families claim Tax Free Childcare through their online Childcare Account.

### **Headcount Process**

Providers will still be required to submit a termly Headcount for all eligible children taking government funded childcare provision.

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## **Reminder about Key Dates**

- From April 2024, eligible working families of two-year-old children may be able to access up to 15 hours of funded childcare per week (up to 570 hours per year) from the term after their child's second birthday.
- From September 2024, eligible working families of children who have turned nine months old before 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024 will be eligible for up to 15 hours government funding.
- From September 2025, eligible working families of children aged from nine months old up to school age will be eligible for up to 30 hours government funding. Early years funding ceases when a child is admitted into school through the Schools Admissions process.

## **Reminder about existing and ongoing funding entitlements**

- There is no change to universal government funding. All children are eligible for up to 15 hours the term after they have turned three years old.
- There is no change to the eligibility criteria or application process for families of disadvantaged two-year-old children [Early years funding for 2 year olds | North Yorkshire Council](#).

Reviewed 15/12/2023