

## **WORKING FAMILY ENTITLEMENT FUNDING GUIDANCE**

### **FOR NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL FOSTER PARENTS, SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKERS (SSW) AND/OR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORKERS(CSW)**

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

Working Family Entitlement Funding is available to eligible foster parents of 2 year old or 3&4 year old children. To be eligible the child must meet the date of birth criteria and:

- Accessing Working Family Entitlement funding is consistent with the child's care plan, placing the child at the centre of the process and decision making
- In single parent foster families, the foster parent engages in paid work outside their role as a foster parent.
- In two parent foster families, both partners engage in paid work outside their role as a foster parent. If one partner is not a foster parent, then they must be in qualifying paid work and earn a minimum of the equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum/national living wage.
- Accessing Working Family Entitlement funded hours will not be appropriate for every child in foster care. This additional childcare funding is however intended to enable those foster parents who are working outside of fostering, to access this support where it is right for the child.
- There is no expectation or requirement for foster parents to work outside fostering unless they choose to do so.
- There is no requirement on the type of work or number of hours that a foster parent must work to access Working Family Entitlement funded hours, as long as they meet the income criteria (see above).
- There is no minimum earnings limit (although they must be engaging in paid work), as long as they meet the income criteria (see above).
- The child in foster care does not have to take up their full Working Family Entitlement of either 15 or 30 hours per week, depending upon if they are a funded 2 or 3 and 4 year old.
- A funding claim can be made for Working Family Entitlement funding from a childcare provider, from the term after a foster child turns two or three, and the date the foster parent/s have received their eligibility code, whichever is later.
- Foster parent/s can apply via their SSW for their eligibility code up to 16 weeks before their foster child turns two or three, as applicable.
- Children in foster care aged 3 and over will continue to qualify for their universal 15 hours funding regardless of the working status of their foster parents.
- If circumstances change and a child in foster care ceases to be eligible for Working Family Entitlement funding, the responsible local authority should assess the child's needs for early years provision as part of the care plan.

#### **Initial Process**

1. Eligible foster parent/s should be given an application form by their Supervising Social Worker (SSW). If a form is required, please contact the Funding Team at [eyft@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:eyft@northyorks.gov.uk). If you

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- are a foster parent requiring a form, please contact your SSW to ask they contact the Funding Team for this to be sent on your behalf.
2. The eligible Foster Parent/s will then complete the application form in discussion with their SSW. The SSW will then countersign the form.
  3. The SSW will ask the Child's Social Worker (CSW) to also sign the application form to confirm that this amount of childcare is part of the child's Care Plan and receiving their Working Family Entitlement funded hours will be in the best interests of the child (electronic signatures are appropriate be used).
  4. The SSW will then email the form to the EY Funding Team once all signatures have been completed. ([eyft@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:eyft@northyorks.gov.uk))
  5. The EY Funding Team will process the completed application form, through the Electronic Checking Service to generate an 11-digit eligibility code for the child.
  6. This code will then be sent by email from the Funding Team to the SSW and or CSW to pass onto the foster parent/s.
  7. The Foster Parent will then take the code to their chosen Childcare Provider who will validate this and use this code to claim Working Family Entitlement funding on their behalf.

### **Reconfirmation of Eligibility**

Foster Parent will need to re-confirm that they still meet the eligibility requirements for Working Family Entitlement funding, every 3 months.

1. The EY Funding Team will receive a prompt from ECS to say that the Foster Parent needs to reconfirm eligibility.
2. The EY Funding Team will contact the SSW for confirmation of continuing employment and eligibility and request the completion of a declaration form.
3. The SSW will complete this declaration form – confirming that the placement is still consistent with the child's care plan, and the Foster Parent is still engaging in paid work outside their role as Foster Parent. This form is then returned to the Funding Team to process.
4. The EY Funding Team will then reconfirm eligibility and send confirmation of this to the SSW and/or CSW.

### **Timescales**

1. There is an expectation that the form will be counter-signed within 4 weeks of the application being completed.
2. Application forms need to be with the Early Years Funding Team by last day of each term preceding the term the child will be taking their Working Family Entitlement funded hours:
  - **31<sup>st</sup> August** to access their extended hours from 1<sup>st</sup> September
  - **31<sup>st</sup> December** to access their extended hours from 1<sup>st</sup> January
  - **31<sup>st</sup> March** to access their extended hours from 1<sup>st</sup> April

### **Appeals**

If the Foster Parent is unhappy with the outcome of the process, then they need to contact their SSW who will then follow due process for complaints.

Further information on all types of childcare funding and support available to help with childcare costs can also be found here: [Childcare Choices | 30 Hours Childcare, Tax-Free Childcare and More | Help with Costs | GOV.UK](#)