

Parent / Carer Frequently Asked Questions

Who is eligible?

The extended free entitlement will be available to parents/carers of 3 and 4 year-olds in York where:

- The child and parent/carer **must** be resident (living) in the York Local Authority (LA) area, i.e. **pay council tax to City of York Council**

And

- Both parents/carers are working (or sole parent in a lone parent family) & each parent/carer earns on average:
 - a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage (NMW) for under 25 yr olds or national living wage (NLW) if over 25 yrs old, and
 - less than £100,000 per year

Or

- Both parents/carers are employed but one or both parents/carers is temporarily away from the workplace on parental, maternity, paternity or adoption leave or statutory sick pay, or
- One parent/carer is employed & the other parent/carer has substantial caring responsibilities based on specific benefits received for caring, or
- One parent/carer is employed & one parent/carer is disabled or incapacitated based on receipt of specific benefits.

When does the funding start for my child? When can I apply?

Children are eligible for the entitlement from the start of the term following their third birthday therefore you can apply for the extended entitlement up to half a term before your child's 3rd birthday.

Will all early years' providers (nurseries, playgroups, childminders, school nurseries) be offering this?

In York, the roll out of the extended entitlement began on the 1st September 2016, one year ahead of national roll out and providers across York will be able to start to offer the additional 15 hours for eligible parents/carers where they have the space to do so. However, please be aware that if you are eligible for the additional 15 hours you may not be able to access the full range of flexible provision at your current provider/ the provider of your choice from 1st September. The Local Authority (LA) will work very closely with our early years providers and school nurseries in York to try and meet the needs of all families.

How do I apply for the extended entitlement?

City of Yorks online checker for the extended entitlement can be found at <http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/families/Childcare/30-hours-parental-declaration.htm>

Parents/carers wishing to access the extended entitlement (additional 15 hours) will be required to go onto the yor-ok web link (above) and return a self declaration, confirming that you meet the local and national eligibility criteria. You will then receive a letter from the LA which will either

- a) confirm that you are eligible for the extended entitlement or

- b) request that you submit relevant evidence in order for the LA to check your eligibility.

All eligible families will receive a voucher code which you **must** show to your early year's provider, as evidence that you are eligible for the extended entitlement. If your child is attending more than one provider then you must show your voucher to each provider. You must also complete a Parental Declaration Form at each provider where your child attends.

What evidence will be required to prove my eligibility?

If you receive a letter from the LA asking for proof of eligibility, you will be required to provide the following information:

- A) Residential status - A copy of your City of York Council Tax bill.
- B) Employments status - One of the following documents as proof of employment (for two parent families, provide appropriate evidence for each parent/carer):
- The last three months pay slips; or
 - An offer letter from an employer if about to start work including evidence offering signed up to an agency offering zero-hours contracts; or
 - An SA250 form or other HM Revenues and Customs document showing a Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR) from within the last year for those who are self-employed.

If you are eligible for the extended entitlement because one parent/carer is in employment and a partner is in receipt of:

- Incapacity benefit
- Severe disablement allowance
- Long term incapacity benefit
- Carers' allowance
- Employment and support allowance
- National insurance credits on the grounds of incapacity for work or limited capability for work

You will need to provide a copy of official documentation demonstrating eligibility for the relevant benefit.

What if my circumstances change? Can a family fall in and out of eligibility?

Parents/carers are required to notify the LA of any changes to their circumstances that may result in them no longer being eligible for the extended entitlement. If the change in circumstances does result in a family no longer being eligible, they will receive a letter from the LA to let them know that their child will only be able to continue to access the extended entitlement until the end of the current term. If this results in a notice period of less than half a term i.e. the family circumstances change during the second half of a term then they will be notified that their child will only be able to access the extended entitlement until the following half term. The provider will also be notified by the LA by email, if a family accessing the extended entitlement at their provision is no longer eligible for the extended entitlement.

Which area is being covered by the Early Implementer Trail?

All families who pay their council tax to City of York Council and are using a provider within the City of York Council area will be able to take in the trial if they meet the eligibility criteria.

I live in York and currently use a childcare provider outside of York. Can I use the additional entitlement at a York setting?

Yes, as long as you meet the eligibility criteria for the extended entitlement you can take the universal 15 hours at a provider in another Local Authority and use the additional 15 hours at a provider in York.

Is the upper earnings limit of £100k per individual or household?

The £100k limit is per individual therefore in a household where both parents/carers are working, each parent/carer can earn up to the £100k earnings limit.

I am a single parent/carer who is working and would qualify but I am living with a new partner. Do they need to meet the eligibility criteria too?

Yes, eligibility is based on household income therefore both adults in the household would need to meet the eligibility requirements in order to receive the extended entitlement.

Are adopted children automatically entitled to the extended entitlement as is the case for the free early education places for two year olds?

No there is no automatic entitlement for adopted children unless they are eligible under the following criteria:

“Both parents/carers are employed but one or both parents/carers is temporarily away from the workplace on adoption leave”.

We are an army family and so our council tax is paid by the army. Do we still qualify?

As long as you can verify that you live at an address within the City of York Local Authority and meet the other eligibility criteria, you will be eligible for the extended entitlement.

My child starts reception class in September and will only attend half-days for the first month. Can I claim funding for the half day childcare I will need?

Children in reception class are not eligible for the universal entitlement / extended entitlement as they are on the school register and therefore funded through school funding channels.

Can I use the funded hours to pay for a nanny?

No, both the universal and the extended entitlement have to be taken at a childcare provider who is registered to deliver the early education entitlement and nannies are not registered to do so.

Are the 30 hours totally free?

Some providers may charge for meals, snacks or optional extras as these may not always be included within the universal / extended entitlement. If you take more than your total entitlement (190 hours per term for families only eligible for the universal 15 hours or 380 hours per term for families who are eligible for the extended entitlement), there is likely to be a charge from your provider for these additional hours. Please check with your provider for full details of any additional charges.

Is it possible to use the universal 15 hours term time only and to access the additional hours across the whole year?

From September 2016 it will be possible to split the entitlement, using some hours term time only and other hours across the whole year regardless of whether you are accessing the extended 30 hours entitlement or just the universal 15 hours. However, please be aware that if you are eligible for the extended entitlement you can take this up across a maximum of 3 providers whereas if you are only eligible for the universal 15 hours, this cannot be taken across more than 2 providers.

What will the flexible offer look like for a child eligible for the extended entitlement? What different models are available?

The Extended entitlement equals 380 hours per term (1140 hrs per year). This can be taken term time only or flexibly across the year:

- Up to 30 hrs per week for 38 weeks of the year
- Up to 23.75 hours per week across 48 weeks of the year
- Up to 22.25 hours per week across 51 weeks of the year

Standard / Flexible model (38 week / Term time)

Up to 30 hours per week over 38 wks of the year (12.67 weeks per term)

This model is used for children who are attending a term time only provider or for those attending settings open longer than 38 weeks where the parent/carer pays for additional hours not covered by the free entitlement (i.e. the child attends for more than their 30 hours free entitlement).

For families who pay for additional hours, most providers pro rata the entitlement across the year so that the parent/carer pays an equal amount each month. This model allows parents to claim the full 190/380 hours entitlement per term (570 / 1140 hours per year) at all types of providers.

Stretched Offer Model

The stretched offer model is for families who **ONLY** want to take up their free entitlement and not pay for additional hours at providers who are open for more than 38 wks of the year.

- a) **51 week stretched offer** up to 22.25 hrs per week over 51 weeks of the year (17 wks / term)
- b) **48 week stretched offer** up to 23.75 hrs per week over 48 weeks of the year (16 wks / term)

Our role as an Early Implementer is to explore patterns of take up requested by families alongside the ability of providers to deliver these. The LA recommends that parents/carers discuss flexibility options with their provider as the range of models and their availability will vary across the city.

What if my provider is full and they cannot offer the extra hours that I need?

The majority of providers in York work in close partnerships with other providers in their local area to deliver early education and childcare provision therefore they may be able to signpost you to other local provision which can meet your needs. The Family Information Service will also be able to provide you with details of other childcare provision available within the area that you are seeking childcare. They can be contacted on 01904 554444 or at fis@york.gov.uk.

Where do I go for further information?

Further information on the universal 15 hours and 30 hours extended entitlement can be found at <http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/families/Childcare/childcare.htm>