

# GLoucestershire Early Years Provider Agreement 2025/26



[Early Years Service]  
GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

# EARLY YEARS FUNDED CHILDCARE ENTITLEMENTS

## INCLUDING UNIVERSAL AND EXPANDED ENTITLEMENTS

### Contents

<b>Legal framework and statutory guidance</b>	<b>page 2</b>
<b>1. Key local authority responsibilities</b>	<b>page 3</b>
<b>2. Key provider responsibilities</b>	<b>page 3</b>
<b>3. Safeguarding</b>	<b>page 4</b>
<b>4. Eligibility</b>	<b>page 4</b>
<b>5. The Grace Period</b>	<b>page 5</b>
<b>6. Flexibility</b>	<b>page 5</b>
<b>7. Partnership working</b>	<b>page 6</b>
<b>8. Special educational needs and disabilities</b>	<b>page 6</b>
<b>9. Supporting Disadvantaged Children</b>	<b>page 7</b>
<b>10. Quality</b>	<b>page 7</b>
<b>11. Charging</b>	<b>page 8</b>
<b>12. Funding</b>	<b>page 9</b>
<b>13. Compliance</b>	<b>page 12</b>
<b>14. Termination and withdrawal of funding</b>	<b>page 12</b>
<b>15. Appeals process</b>	<b>page 15</b>
<b>16. Complaints process</b>	<b>page 15</b>
<b>Declaration</b>	<b>page 17</b>

## **Legal framework and statutory guidance**

The following legislation underpins this agreement, and comprehensive details can be found following the necessary links:

- [Early Education and Childcare, Statutory Guidance & Framework for Local Authorities 2025](#)
- [Childcare Act 2006](#)
- [Childcare Act 2016](#)

You may also wish to refer to the following legislation and policies:

- [The Childcare \(Free of Charge for Working Parents\) \(England\) Regulations 2022](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [School Admissions Code 2021](#)
- [The Local Authority \(Duty to Secure Early Years Provision Free of Charge\)](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice 2015](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)

The Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR places obligations on data controllers and regulates the processing of information relating to individuals. Gloucestershire County Council must comply with the data protection regulations when processing personal information.

For more information about the obligations of Gloucestershire County Council and rights of the individuals, please visit [Introduction | Gloucestershire County Council](#) and [Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\)](#).

This agreement is specific to Gloucestershire Early Years providers only, delivering the funded entitlement. For the purpose of this agreement, provider means:

- an early years provider other than a childminder registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register
- a childminder registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register
- a childminder or childcare provider registered with a childminder agency which is itself registered with Ofsted
- schools taking children aged 2 years and over which are exempt from registration with Ofsted as an early years provider

## **1. Key local authority responsibilities**

- 1.1 Gloucestershire County Council must have due regard to the Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2025.
- 1.2 Gloucestershire County Council must secure a free place for every eligible child in its area.
- 1.3 Gloucestershire County Council should work in partnership with providers to agree how to deliver free entitlement places.
- 1.4 Gloucestershire County Council should be clear about its role and the support on offer locally to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) as well as its expectations of providers.
- 1.5 Gloucestershire County Council must contribute to the safeguarding and promote the welfare of children and young people in its area.

## **2. Key provider responsibilities**

- 2.1 The provider must comply with all relevant legislation and insurance requirements. This agreement, when signed, will remain in force until there is a change of management, either party withdraw from the scheme, or the agreement is amended.
- 2.2 The provider should deliver the free entitlements consistently to all parents, whether in receipt of 15 or 30 hours and regardless of whether they opt to pay for optional services or consumables. This means that the provider should be clear and communicate to parents' details about the days and times that they offer free places, along with their services and charges. Those children accessing only the free entitlements should receive the same quality and access to provision as paying children.
- 2.3 The provider must follow the EYFS and have clear safeguarding policies and procedures in place. These must link to Gloucestershire County Council's guidance for recognising, responding, reporting and recording suspected or actual abuse.
- 2.4 The provider must have arrangements in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These arrangements should include a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND. Providers should utilise the Disability Access Fund and seek support from the EY Service Inclusion Team to access SEN Inclusion Funding to deliver effective support, whilst making information available about their SEND offer to parents.

## **3. Safeguarding**

- 3.1 Gloucestershire County Council has the overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in its area. It has a number of statutory functions under the 1989 and 2004 Children Acts which make this clear, and the [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children) guidance sets these out in detail.
- 3.2 The provider must follow the EYFS and have clear safeguarding policies and procedures in place that are in line with local guidance and procedures for responding to and reporting suspected or actual abuse and neglect. The provider must designate a lead practitioner to take responsibility for safeguarding/child protection and all staff must have training to identify signs of abuse and neglect. The provider must have regard to the [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children) guidance.

3.3 Providers must complete and pro-actively use the 'GSCP Safeguarding Audit – Early Years Foundation Stage Assurances'. It is a legal requirement of the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Partnership under the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' guidance.

#### **4. Eligibility**

4.1 The provider should check original copies of documentation to confirm a child has reached the eligible age on initial registration for all free entitlements. The provider should retain paper or digital copies of documentation to enable Gloucestershire County Council to carry out audits and fraud investigations. Where the provider retains a copy of documentation, this must be stored securely and deleted when there is no longer a good reason to keep the data.

4.2 The provider should offer funded places to disadvantaged 2-year-olds on the understanding that the child remains eligible until they become eligible for the universal entitlement for three- and four-year-olds.

4.3 Gloucestershire County Council must ensure that a child can access a funded place no later than the beginning of the term following the child and the parent meeting the eligibility criteria for the free entitlements.

4.4 Alongside the eligibility code, which is the child's unique 11-digit number, and original copies of documentation (see 4.1), a provider must acquire written consent from, or on behalf of, the parent to be able to receive confirmation and future notifications from Gloucestershire County Council of the validity of the parent's eligibility code. Once a provider has received written consent from the parent, they must verify the eligibility code using the Nursery Funding Portal.

4.5 Gloucestershire County Council will confirm the validity of eligibility codes to allow providers to offer free places for eligible children aged 9 months and above. The Nursery Funding Portal will provide a validity checking service to providers to enable them to verify the eligibility code. This service has the facility to make instant checks for code validity and will notify a provider where a parent has fallen out of eligibility and inform them of the grace period end date.

4.6 Children become eligible for the funded entitlement from the term after they reach the relevant age and up until statutory school age, which is the term after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, if they remain at an Early Years provision and do not accept a place at a school, see 12.13.

The table below confirms when a child is eligible to receive funding. These dates are consistent with those used to determine the start of compulsory education (all dates are inclusive):

<b>When child turns the relevant age (9 months, 2, 3 or 4 years)</b>	<b>When they can get their hours from</b>
1 January to 31 March	Summer Term starting <b>on or after</b> 1 April
1 April to 31 August	Autumn Term starting <b>on or after</b> 1 September
1 September to 31 December	Spring Term starting <b>on or after</b> 1 January

4.7 A child will be entitled to the extended funded hours from the term after both of the following conditions are satisfied:

1 - the child has reached the relevant age and is eligible to receive funding (see table above)  
**AND**

2 - the parents have applied before the deadline date, have a valid eligibility code and the code has a start date on or before:

31st August	for the	Autumn term
31st December	for the	Spring term
31st March	for the	Summer term

## 5. The Grace Period

5.1 A child will enter the grace period when the child's parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria set out in the Childcare (Free of Charge for Working Parents) (England) Regulations 2022, as determined by HMRC (or where the child is in foster care, the responsible local authority) or a First Tier Tribunal in the case of an appeal.

5.2 Gloucestershire County Council and providers can access information about whether a child has ceased to meet the eligibility criteria and entered the grace period via the Expiration Dashboard in the Nursery Funding Portal. The grace period end date will automatically be applied to eligibility codes.

5.3 Gloucestershire County Council should continue to fund a place for a child who enters the grace period as set out in the Early Education and Childcare Statutory guidance for Local Authorities 2025.

5.4 Funding for the extended entitlement cannot be claimed for the first time when an eligibility code is in its Grace Period. This also applies if a child moves settings during the term and wants to claim the Extended Entitlement for the first time at that setting and the code is in its Grace Period.

5.5 Providers should remind parents to reconfirm their eligibility codes before the end of the validity period, not the Grace Period end date. The Expiration Dashboard in the Nursery Funding Portal can be used to identify those codes approaching their expiration date.

5.6 Consideration will be given to extending the "grace period" for a short period of time in "very exceptional circumstances", for example if the parent has been forced to leave their home and paid employment, or where the parent is a victim of domestic abuse or other serious crime.

## 6. Flexibility

6.1 Provision must be offered within the national parameters on flexibility as set out in Section A2 of Early Education and Childcare Statutory guidance for Local Authorities:

[Early education and childcare - GOV.UK](#)

6.2 The provider should work with Gloucestershire County Council and share information about the times and periods at which they are able to offer free entitlements to support the local authority to secure sufficient stretched and flexible places to meet parental demand in the area. If the setting's capacity is reduced at any point, the provider should report this via the Self Update Provider Portal.

The provider should also make information about their offer and admissions criteria available to parents at the point the child first accesses provision at their setting. It is recommended that this information is updated, using the Self Update Provider Portal (SUPP) account.

6.3 Funding can be apportioned over 2 settings per day, but it is the provider's responsibility to liaise with parents and other providers to ensure the correct hours are claimed. In the event of the submission of conflicting claims from different providers, the Early Years Funding Team reserves the right to allocate the funding as per the standard apportionment calculator.

## **7. Partnership working**

7.1 Partnerships should be supported by Gloucestershire County Council on four levels between:

- i. Local authorities and providers
- ii. Providers working with other providers, including childminders, schools and organisations
- iii. Providers and parents
- iv. Local authorities and parents

7.2 Gloucestershire County Council should promote partnership working between different types of providers, including childminders, across all sectors and encourage more providers to offer flexible provision, alongside other providers.

7.3 The provider should work in partnership with parents, carers and other providers to improve provision and outcomes for children in their setting. An interactive toolkit has been developed to help providers set up or join a partnership, maximise the benefits of working together and tackle the challenges joint working can bring. This can be found at [Toolkit](#)

7.4 Providers should discuss and work closely with parents to agree how a child's overall care will work in practice when their free entitlement is split across different providers, such as at a maintained setting and childminder, to ensure a smooth transition for the child.

## **8. Special educational needs and disabilities**

8.1 Gloucestershire County Council must strategically plan support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to meet the needs of all children in their local area as per the Special Educational Needs and Disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years.

8.2 The provider must ensure owners and all staff members are aware of their duties in relation to the SEND Code of Practice 2015 and the Equality Act 2010. Special educational needs should not be a barrier to accessing funded hours where places are available. Such actions may be considered discriminatory practice.

8.3 Gloucestershire County Council must be clear and transparent about the support available to families of children with SEND in its area, through their Local Offer, so that parents and providers can access that support if needed. Details can be found at [Local Offer](#).

8.4 The provider should be clear and transparent about the SEND support on offer at their setting and make this information available to help parents to choose the right setting for their child.

8.5 Providers should consider the needs of their cohort when carry out business planning to support children with SEND. Leadership, budgets, outcomes and quality should all be considered as part of this process.

8.6 Providers with children on the Graduated Pathway should consider contacting the Early Years Service Advice Line ([EYSadvice@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:EYSadvice@gloucestershire.gov.uk) 01452 425959) for generic advice and support if necessary. Providers must **not** reduce a child's hours whilst claiming the full entitlement unless (a) they have had a conversation with the parents regarding the rationale for this decision and parents are in agreement, (b) this is for a temporary period and the child's My Plan/+ clearly evidences how the hours will be increased as soon as reasonably possible, and (c) they have had a conversation with the Early Years Service and gained agreement for this arrangement. Please note that it is fraudulent for providers to claim the child's full entitlement but only allow them to access a reduced number of hours.

## **9. Supporting disadvantaged children**

9.1 There may be some circumstances where households meet the eligibility criteria for both the disadvantaged two-year-old entitlement and the working parent entitlement. In these situations, the childcare should be provided under the disadvantaged 2-year-old entitlement. The child will remain on the disadvantage entitlement until they become eligible for the universal entitlement for 3- and 4-year-olds or 30 hours free childcare for 3- and 4-year-olds if they meet the eligibility criteria. As is currently the case, the child remains eligible for the disadvantaged 2-year-old entitlement even if the family's circumstances change.

9.2 Gloucestershire County Council should promote equality and inclusion, particularly for disadvantaged families, looked after children and children in need by removing barriers to access funded places and working with parents to give each child support to fulfil their potential.

9.3 The provider should be aware of the disadvantaged children in their setting and will be notified of those eligible for EYPP via the termly funding payments. They should use EYPP and any locally available funding streams or support to improve outcomes for this group. The funding rate for 2025/26 is £1.00 per hour.

## **10. Quality**

10.1 The [EYFS](#) is mandatory for all schools that provide early years provision and early years providers registered with Ofsted or with an Ofsted-registered Childminder Agency in England. The EYFS sets the standards that early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.

10.2 Ofsted and inspectorates of independent schools have regard to the EYFS in carrying out inspections and report on the quality and standards of provision. Childminder agencies (CMAs) are organisations that can register and quality assure childminders as an alternative to registering with Ofsted. Ofsted inspection judgements (or the inspection judgement of an independent inspectorate approver by the Secretary of State for Education), and a CMA's reasonable opinion of quality at a childminder registered with it, are the sole benchmarks of quality that local authorities can consider when securing quality for the free entitlements

10.3 Gloucestershire County Council has a legal duty to provide information, advice and training on meeting the requirements of the EYFS, meeting the needs of children with SEND and on effective safeguarding and child protection for providers who are rated less than 'Good' by Ofsted or newly registered providers.

10.4 Provision must be offered in accordance with the national parameters on quality as set out in Section A3 of Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2023 and the EYFS statutory framework.

## 11. Charging

11.1 Provision must be offered within the national parameters on charging practices set out in section A1 of the Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2025.

11.2 Government funding is intended to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of free, high quality, flexible childcare. The 15 or 30 hours must be able to be accessed free of charge to parents. There must not be any mandatory charges for parents in relation to the free hours. Government funding is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional services.

11.3 Gloucestershire County Council should ensure that providers are aware that they can charge parents for the following extras in connection with the free hours, but these charges must be voluntary for the parent:

- Consumables, such as nappies or sun cream.
- Meals and snacks.
- Extra optional activities such as events, celebrations, specialist tuition (for example music classes or foreign languages) or other activities that are not directly related or necessary for the effective delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework.
- Additional, private paid hours according to their usual terms and conditions on the understanding that taking up private paid hours is not a condition of accessing a free place.

11.4 The costs of chargeable extras should be published on provider websites or, where they do not have any website, on [Glosfamilies Directory](#). These should be clear, up-to-date and easily accessible, to enable parents to make an informed choice of provider.

11.5 Invoices and receipts should include the provider's full details so that they can be identified as coming from a specific provider and the charges should be itemised separately into:

- the free entitlement hours
- additional private paid hours
- food charges
- non-food consumables charges
- activities charges.

11.6 Providers should be made aware that participation in any voluntary extra activity should be based on parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Gloucestershire County Council should ensure that children who do not participate in voluntary activities continue to receive provision that complies with the EYFS.

11.7 Providers should be mindful of the impact of charges on families, particularly the most disadvantaged. Providers who choose to offer the free entitlements are responsible for setting a policy on providing parents with options for alternatives to additional charges. This policy must offer reasonable alternatives that allow parents to access the entitlement for free, including allowing parents to supply their own, or waiving the cost of these items.

11.8 Gloucestershire County Council should intervene if a provider seeks to make additional hours, voluntary services or voluntary consumables a mandatory condition of taking up a free place.

11.9 Providers should deliver the free entitlements consistently, so that all children accessing any of the free entitlements receive the same quality and access to provision, regardless of

whether their parents choose to pay for voluntary hours, voluntary extra services, meals or consumables.

11.10 Gloucestershire County Council must take all steps available to ensure that the free entitlements are available free of charge and that providers do not charge parents for the following in connection with the entitlement hours:

- Top-up fees - any difference between a provider's normal charge and the funding received from Gloucestershire County Council to deliver free places.
- The supply of or use of any materials necessary for the effective delivery of the EYFS.
- Business running costs, including but not limited to, rent, staff wages, cleaning materials, insurance, or utility bills such as energy, gas or water.
- Registration fees as a condition of taking up a child's entitlement place.
- Non-refundable deposits as a condition of taking up a child's entitlement place.
- General charges, including but not limited to, non-itemised enrichment charges, sustainability charges, business continuity charges, additional charges, enhanced ratios, hourly rates, or any other supplementary charges on top of the free hours.

11.11 Gloucestershire County Council should ensure that children are able to take up their free hours in continuous blocks if they wish to, and there should be no artificial breaks in the funded hours. For example, a provider should not offer 10am to midday and 1pm to 3pm as funded hours and offer only private paid hours in between.

11.12 Providers must ensure they have their own debt policy in place to recover fees for non-eligible disadvantaged 2-year-olds and working parent eligibility codes that are not valid in the relevant term.

## 12. Funding

12.1 For the financial year 2025/2026, Gloucestershire County Council will fund providers as follows:

9 – 24-month-olds funding rate (up to 15 hours)	£10.18 per hour	Eligibility criteria applies
9 – 24-month-olds funding rate (up to 30 hours from September 2025)	£10.18 per hour	Eligibility criteria applies
Expanded Entitlement for work families of 2-year-olds, funding rate	£7.47 per hour	Eligibility criteria applies
Disadvantaged 2-year-olds funding rate	£7.47 per hour	Eligibility criteria applies
3- and 4-year-olds funding rate	£5.33 per hour	For both Universal hours and Extended hours, where applicable
Deprivation payments (if eligible)	£0.13p per hour	Automatically calculated based on hours claimed and children's postcodes linked to the deprivation index
Early Years Pupil Premium – EYPP (if eligible)	£1.00 per hour	Automatically calculated based on parent/carers details held by DWP
Disability Access Fund – DAF (if eligible)	£938 per year	Eligibility criteria applies

12.2 Gloucestershire County Council should pay all providers the full amount owed to them monthly unless they have good reason not to do so, for example, if, after consultation, most providers opt for an alternative method of payment. Local authorities should be mindful of the concerns of smaller providers, particularly childminders, about their cash flow when making decisions about payment methods and should strive to make monthly payments to these providers where possible. Gloucestershire County Council should regularly review how they pay providers to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of all providers in their area.

12.3 Gloucestershire County Council should clearly set out the documentation that they need to receive from providers to support payment and delivery of the free entitlements and the timetable which providers should follow when submitting their documentation, this includes setting out the importance of timely and accurate census returns. Timetables are published on our website [Nursery Education Funding \(NEF\) | Early Years Service](#)

12.4 The provider should ensure they submit timely and accurate information, including, but not limited to, headcount data, census data, parental declarations and invoices, as per the financial guidelines of Gloucestershire County Council. Failure to do so may result in inaccurate, delayed or suspended funding.

12.5 Gloucestershire County Council should not charge providers disproportionate penalties for providing late or incomplete information leading to additional administration in the processing of free entitlements. Any charges should be reasonable and proportionate to the inconvenience or costs incurred to the local authority as a result of the lateness and Gloucestershire County Council will ensure charges are clearly communicated to providers.

12.6 The provider should maintain accurate financial and non-financial records relating to free entitlement places and should give the local authority access on reasonable notice to all financial and non-financial records relating to free entitlement places funded under the provider agreement, subject to confidentiality restrictions.

12.7 All headcount and amendment claims are made online via the Nursery Funding Portal at [Provider Portal - Log In](#). When the tasks are open, providers will receive a notification e-mail informing them that the task is available. Before submitting a task, providers must ensure they have read and are compliant with the Submission Declaration on the Nursery Funding Portal. Failure to do so, may result in the reclaim of any funded hours claimed.

12.8 Funding will be paid in accordance with the timetable of dates directly into provider's bank accounts (via BACS), and these accounts must be in the name of a business, except for childminders. It is the provider's responsibility to notify Gloucestershire County Council of any changes to their bank account details.

12.9 Independent settings can claim any number of funded weeks between 33 – 38 weeks per academic year, but it is the provider's responsibility to notify Gloucestershire County Council of the breakdown of the number of weeks they wish to claim before the start of each academic year. If the breakdown is not received the default number of weeks for Independent settings is 11 weeks funding per term.

12.10 A Gloucestershire County Council Parent/Carer Declaration Form must be completed for each funding period in respect of every child who is claiming funding at the setting. Providers must ensure that parents are aware that:

- when a child attends more than one setting a separate Declaration Form must be completed with each provider. All Declaration Forms must show the providers names and the total number of hours being taken up at each provision and the hours to be claimed at each setting. The forms must correspond at all settings.
- the parent is signing up to a funding period for the funded entitlement and may be liable for any costs if there is a breach of that declaration.

12.11 Hours attended and claimed **must** match those shown in the register of attendance held by the provider. Registers will be inspected as part of the funding audit and Gloucestershire County Council may request them at any time.

12.12 Providers **must** ensure that they have evidence of a child's eligibility to the disadvantaged two-year-old funding scheme before offering them a funded place. Eligibility is confirmed by the Early Years Service to parents via email. Where eligibility has not been obtained and confirmed, Gloucestershire County Council will not have a duty to pay funding to a provider for hours attended by that child at their setting.

12.13 Early years funding cannot be claimed once a child is on a school's register of attendance and parents have accepted the school place. Funding for the child's education is then paid to the school. This is particularly important for a child who is being 'phased in' at the beginning of the reception year. Early Years funding cannot be claimed in this instance.

A child must start full-time education once they reach compulsory school age. This is on 31 December, 31 March or 31 August following their fifth birthday.

Independent schools can continue to claim early years funded hours for children at their setting until the child reaches compulsory school age.

12.14 Gloucestershire County Council will not claim back funding for any irregular attendance in a funded period but needs to be informed of any regular patterns of non-attendance so that the matter can be reviewed for the following funded period. This includes children that are absent due to sickness. Providers should be seen to be engaging all the relevant parties to support a child to regularly access their funded place. Children can be absent due to holidays for up to 2 weeks in a funding period before any funding will be recovered.

12.15 In exceptional circumstances Gloucestershire County Council will not claim back funding for a period of 2 weeks in cases where parents do not give their correct notice period when leaving the setting. However, funding cannot be claimed by the new setting for the same 2-week period, if it exceeds the parents' entitlement. Parents can be charged for any non-funded hours in this overlap period. It is the responsibility of the setting to ensure they have robust contracts with their parents that details all aspects of a funded placement including notice periods and their debt recovery policy for any outstanding fees. Parents should be made aware of the contract before accepting a funded placement.

12.16 Funding may be transferred between providers when a child changes provision. A 'Funding Amendment' form must be completed in this instance. The provider must enter the revised details online, onto the amendment task when it is open and retain the forms at the setting. The funding will then be adjusted accordingly in the amendment payment.

12.17 If a child is accessing less than their funded entitlement, a parent can agree with the provider to increase the number of hours attended up to their maximum entitlement at any point in the funding period. If a child is reducing their hours a parent can agree with the provider to decrease the number of hours at any point in the funding period. In both instances the

providers must complete a 'Funding Amendment' form and enter the revised details online, onto the Amendment task when it is open and retain the forms at the setting.

To assist providers with amendments, apportionments and stretched funding claims, funding calculators are available and should be used [Nursery Education Funding \(NEF\) | Early Years Service](#)

12.18 If the provider closes during a funded period and there are outstanding funding reclaims, the provider will be liable to pay this funding back to Gloucestershire County Council.

12.19 Further funding information regarding the Early Years Funded Entitlements can be found on our website and the "Early Years Funding FAQ's" document can support you further with your funding claims [Nursery Education Funding \(NEF\) | Early Years Service](#)

### **13. Compliance**

13.1 Gloucestershire County Council reserves the right to audit providers on a regular basis to ensure compliance with the requirements of delivering the free entitlements. Audit regimes should not be disproportionate or are unnecessarily burdensome to providers.

13.2 If a provider fails to adhere to any aspect of this Local Provider Agreement funding may be withdrawn.

13.3 Providers are required by legislation to complete the annual early years census and must submit their data to Gloucestershire County Council via the Self Update Provider Portal.

### **14. Termination and withdrawal of funding**

14.1 Suspension of registration by Ofsted or childminder agency, or a breach of statutory requirements or safeguarding issues may result in the termination of the arrangement and withdrawal of funding.

14.2 The following table details the inspection scenarios and the effects on the funding claims:

## 14.2 (continued)

Provider type and Incident	Age of children	Possible impact on funding	Timescale	Action required by provider
<b>PVI, childminders, childminder agency</b>  Ofsted judgement of Inadequate or childminder agency (CMA) outcome of not effective	Disadvantaged 2-year-olds	Not eligible to claim for new children	Next published inspection judgement shows Requires Improvement (RI) or higher or for CMA effective	Should take part in Gloucestershire Early Years Intervention programme
	2-year-old children at the setting who move onto disadvantaged 2-year-old funding	GCC will continue to fund these children		If providers choose not to take part in this programme in order to continue to receive funding providers must evidence alternative quality improvement sources to address concerns raised in the inspection
	Other funded children attending the setting	GCC will continue funding	GCC will review this funding when provider is re-inspected	CMA's must engage with the Gloucestershire Early Years Quality and Business Support teams otherwise funding will be withdrawn
<b>PVI, childminders, childminder agency</b>  Ofsted judgement of Inadequate or childminder agency (CMA) outcome of not effective and there is a parental request to remove a child	Any child	Funding for child will be withdrawn	Immediate effect	
<b>PVI, childminders, childminder agency</b>  Inspection highlights safeguarding issues and/or a parental request to remove a child	Disadvantaged 2-year-olds	Funding withdrawn	Immediate effect	
	Any child	Funding for child will be withdrawn	Immediate effect	

<b>PVI, childminders, childminder agency</b> Ofsted judgement of RI	All children	Funding may continue – see action column		
<b>Governor run settings</b>  Where a school has received an Ofsted judgment of significant improvement or special measures.	Disadvantaged 2-year-olds	Not eligible to claim for new children	Next published inspection judgement shows higher than significant improvement or special measures.	Will be offered the opportunity to take part in Gloucestershire Early Years Intervention programme
	2-year-old children at the setting who move onto disadvantaged 2-year-old funding	GCC will continue to fund these children		If schools EY settings choose not to take part in this programme in order to continue to receive funding providers must evidence alternative quality improvement sources to address concerns raised in the inspection
	Other funded children attending the setting	GCC will continue funding	GCC will review this funding when school is re-inspected	
<b>PVI, childminders, childminder agency</b> <b>Governor run settings</b>  Second inspection that is Inadequate, not effective, significant improvement or special measures	All children	GCC may withdraw funding	Managers in the Early Years Service will conduct a review conversation to consider whether to withdraw funding	If funding is continued –  Will be offered the opportunity to take part in Gloucestershire Early Years Intervention programme  If schools EY settings choose not to take part in this programme in order to continue to receive funding providers must evidence alternative quality improvement sources to address concerns raised in the inspection

## **15. Appeals process**

15.1 A provider may be denied approval to offer the free entitlements or have their funding withdrawn. Providers wishing to appeal Gloucestershire County Council's decision must notify [Efunding@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:Efunding@gloucestershire.gov.uk) within 14 days of Gloucestershire County Council's decision. Following receipt of the email of appeal, Gloucestershire County Council will notify the provider within 14 days a date for an appeal hearing and the procedure and format of the appeal process. At this time the provider will be asked to submit any written evidence to support their appeal. Evidence from the provider and from Gloucestershire County Council will be circulated to all parties, 14 days before the appeal date. The provider will be notified of the appeal panel's decision within 5 working days.

15.2 If a provider wishes to object to the appeal's decision, it will then be taken as a complaint towards Gloucestershire County Council and be treated as such by progressing it through the local authority's complaints policy. The appeal decision will stand and be implemented whilst the complaints procedure is underway.

## **16. Complaints process**

16.1 The provider should ensure they have a complaints procedure in place that is published and accessible for parents who are not satisfied their child has received their free entitlement in the correct way, as set out in this agreement and in Early Education and Childcare Statutory guidance for Local Authorities.

16.2 If a parent has a concern regarding the funded entitlement, they should in the first instance discuss this with the provider. The provider should investigate the concern in accordance with their own complaints policy. If the parent still feels that the matter relating to the funded entitlement is not resolved they should inform the Early Years Funding Team at Gloucestershire County Council of their concerns at [Efunding@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:Efunding@gloucestershire.gov.uk). The Local Authority cannot intervene in disputes relating to fees over and above the funded entitlement. These fees form part of the parent's contract and the provider's terms and conditions and, as such, are a private matter between the provider and the parent.

16.3 If Gloucestershire County Council is made aware by a parent that any of the non-compliant practices may have been carried out, the local authority will immediately investigate further and request detailed information on billing/invoice material. Providers are required to make all information available to Gloucestershire County Council on request.

16.4 If a provider is dissatisfied with their treatment under this appeals procedure, they may make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman (see Complaints Procedure section for contact details) after the full appeals procedure with Gloucestershire County Council has been exhausted. Local Government Ombudsman Advice Team can be contacted via [Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman](#)

16.5 Advice on how to complain to Gloucestershire County Council is available on the Council's website, via:

[Complaints about children and young people's services | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

**THIS AGREEMENT** is made from 1st April 2025

**Between:** Gloucestershire County Council of Shire Hall, Westgate Street,  
Gloucester GL1 2TG ("the Local Authority")

**And** \_\_\_\_\_ ("The Provider")  
*(insert your registered provider name)*

**Type of Provision (delete as appropriate):**

Playgroup / Day Nursery / Childminder / Independent School / School Managed /  
Childminding Agency

**VAT Number (if applicable)** \_\_\_\_\_ **Charity Number (if applicable)** \_\_\_\_\_

It is the Provider's intention to offer the following funded entitlement schemes:

**(please select the funding schemes that you WILL be offering)**

- 9 – 24 months old funded entitlement for working parents
- 2-year-olds funded entitlement for working parents
- Disadvantaged 2-year-olds funded entitlement
- 3- & 4-year-olds universal funded entitlement (first 15 hours)
- 3- & 4-year-olds extended entitlement for working parents (up to 30 hours)

#### **DECLARATION**

The Provider has read this agreement and confirms that this provision will meet the conditions of funding as set out in the DfE Early Education and Childcare: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2025 and the Gloucestershire County Council Early Years Funded Entitlement for under 5s, as set out in this Local Provider Agreement.

The Provider agrees to repay Gloucestershire County Council all funding received in respect of the period for which the conditions of this agreement are not met.

**Print name of authorised signatory:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sign:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(wet signatures only)

**Position (delete as appropriate):** Registered Person / Owner / Head Teacher /  
Chair of Committee / Chair of Governors

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

Gloucestershire County Council agrees to fund the provider in accordance with the terms of this Local Provider Agreement. This agreement will be kept under review and updated as necessary.

**Name of authorised signatory:** SARAH HYLTON, HEAD OF EARLY YEARS

**Sign:** 

**Date effective from:** 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025

**Please complete and return this page only to [Efunding@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:Efunding@gloucestershire.gov.uk)**