

4 February 2025



Early Years Funding Consultation



Business News Tuesday

EARLY YEARS PROVIDERS FUNDING RATE CONSULTATION 2025/26

The consultation for the funding rates for 2025/26 is now open and closes on 14 February. This consultation is your opportunity to tell us which of the proposed funding rate options is your preference. Once we have analysed all your responses after the closing date, we will adopt the option preferred by the majority of providers that responded to this consultation.

Please can we encourage as many of you as possible to complete this survey.

[Start Consultation](#)

Please note that the consultation will close on 14 February 2025:

10 : 13 : 23 : 50
days hours minutes seconds

If you have any questions, please contact [EY Business Support](#)

WORKING PARENT ENTITLEMENT CODES

During late December, DfE incorrectly turned off the auto-rollback facility for eligibility codes that were being reconfirmed. This resulted in over 5,000 codes in England appearing as not valid for the Spring term. This was corrected by DfE by 13 January. We are confident in Gloucestershire that we were able to correctly pay any extended hours to settings for families that may have been affected by this issue.

However, we do have a small number of codes where the start date has been changed to a date after 31 August, restricting the use of the Grace Period in the Spring term. This appears to be a separate issue and we have raised this with the DfE and are waiting to hear back from them.

Please can we take this opportunity to remind you that the Grace Period should only be used as a “buffer zone” for parents that fall out of eligibility. It should not be considered as an extension to the code’s validity period. Parent’s will receive 3 reminders from Childcare Choices to reconfirm their codes. The first reminder is sent approximately 4 weeks before the code expires. The second reminder is sent 2 weeks before and the final reminder is sent of the expiry date. Within the Portal, provider have the “Expiration Dashboard” tool that they can use as a

further reminder to parents to reconfirm their codes before they expire.

The dates to focus on are the “Eligible from” and “Eligible to” dates:

Age ↕	Child ↕	Earliest start date for Working parent entitlement place ↕	Eligibility code ↕	Check last run ↕	Eligible from ↕	Eligible to ↕	Grace period end ↕	Check status ↕
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If you see “Not known” in the “Earliest start date for Working parent entitlement place” field, the code is not valid in the current term and the parents have applied after the deadline date.

CAPPED FUNDING CLAIMS – SPRING TERM

As part of our checking processes for the Spring term funding payments, we became aware of an issue effecting claims for children with dates of birth between 1 January and 31 March. Due to the number of funded weeks in the *academic year* 2023/24 the system has capped some of the claims as these children appear to have accessed 40 weeks funding in the *financial year*. We were able to identify a lot of the claims effected and correct them before the payment was made. However, for those children that moved settings during the year, identifying them wasn’t so straight forward. Unfortunately, they may have been missed from the correction process and their Spring claims capped.

Please can we ask that you visit your funding breakdown statements in the Portal and review the hours paid for the children at your setting in this date of birth range. If you believe the hours have been capped, please email the details to free34formsubmission@eygloucestershire.co.uk We will manually adjust the children’s entitlement which will then allow you to enter the hours into the amendment task that opens on 24 February. If you have already spoken to us about this issue, you do not need to email your details to us as they will already be registered on our correction list.

CENTRAL DIGITAL PLATFORM

Following on from the recent communication regarding the request to register on the Central Digital Platform, we are now able to provide you with further information.

The central digital platform is an online resource which will make it easier for all suppliers of goods, works and services to find and bid for contract opportunities. It is the place where all the regulated public procurement notices will be published and is free to access.

Suppliers of goods and services are advised to take independent professional advice with respect to all matters concerning the Procurement Act 2023 (PA 23), as ultimately it is their responsibility. GCC can provide signposting but cannot be held accountable for suppliers taking all the necessary actions required to comply with provisions under PA 23.

Under the Procurement Act 2023, grant payments are generally not classified as goods and services. Grants are typically considered the transfer of funding of financial assistance provided by government entities to support specific projects activities, or purposes and are distinct from procurement contracts that involve the purchase of goods or services.

Therefore, Early Years providers that only claim grants from GCC and do not supply goods and services, do not need to register on the Central Digital Platform.

For further details please see central government's [CDP factsheet](#).

DfE Early Years Qualification Announcement

The Department for Education have announced a package of early years qualification initiatives that will both support entry and progression within the workforce and ensure that the staff working with young children have the right skills and knowledge to deliver high-quality provision.

To support early years settings to recruit and retain staff and meet this increased demand, from 3 March 2025 eligible educators will be able to access an [experience-based route](#) to working in the Staff:Child ratios at level 3. This new route recognises the significant contribution that skilled

and experienced staff can make to the education and care of young children . This is an opportunity for educators without currently approved qualifications, to develop their careers, and for providers to maximise the potential of their talented staff in a way that works best for the children in their care. The full consultation response can be found [here](#).

Alongside this DfE have announced the publication of the [Early Years Teacher Degree Apprenticeship standard](#). This new, graduate-level qualification will give everyone from school leavers and junior staff to senior leaders the opportunity to easily move into a specialist career in the early years sector.

DfE have also announced the Check an Early Years Qualification digital service which will be available later this Spring to early years managers. This service will guide managers through the process of checking the approval status of qualifications held by existing staff members and prospective employees, increasing their confidence that they have appropriately qualified staff ahead of the September expansion.

These initiatives will support SoS' vision for a childcare system that supports the sector, creates the best possible experience for parents and gives all children access to the opportunities they deserve.

Wraparound News

Don't forget to check out our web pages – new information is being added all the time so please take a look

[Wraparound care childcare | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

Some providers have been in touch saying they are struggling to recruit staff. We have added some links that may help with advertising for staff. They can be found on our webpages using the link below

[Information for professionals | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

Or by using the direct links here:

[Do something big.](#)

[Find a job](#)

In addition, useful tools for all aspect of wraparound provision can be found on the Childcareworks website where they have a 'Wraparound toolkit' -[Wraparound Childcare Toolkit | from Childcare Works.](#)

Breakfast Club Early Adopters

Early Adopter schools should now have been notified by DfE. We are happy to provide any help or support for schools undertaking this task.

Schools and providers can also find out more information using the following link

[Breakfast clubs early adopters scheme - GOV.UK.](#)

Please contact the team on

Wraparound2@gloucestershire.gov.uk

SEND training for wraparound providers

Please find below the booking links and dates for Spring 2025 courses.

February - Churchdown: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/inclusion-needs-you-13th-and-27th-february-2025-tickets-1090988288339>

March/April – Shurdington/Cheltenham:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/inclusion-needs-you-26th-march-and-9th-april-2025-tickets-1091000896049>

Please feel free to contact the wraparound team should you wish to discuss this further: wraparound2@gloucestershire.gov.uk.



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