



## Business News Tuesday - 21 October 2025

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## Welcome

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Dear Provider,

The team have been busy visiting providers and talking to lots of you on the phone over the recent weeks. We know that there are lots of things going on this term not least the audits and charging compliance that we are working on with many of you. We have put some more guidance in this bulletin for you which we hope will be useful.

Following the recent cyber security attack on a nursery <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/news/nursery-data-incident>; we thought it might be useful to draw your attention to some useful guidance for early years

settings:

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-practitioners-using-cyber-security-to-protect-your-settings>

We hope this is helpful.

This month we are launching our **Let's Talk business: A space for your questions.**

We know that many of the questions we get asked are not just relevant to one provider. This section of our bulletin has been put in so that we can answer questions and share the responses with everyone to help you all with business queries.

We look forward to seeing and talking with more of you soon.

Keep up the good work.

Early Years and Childcare Business and Funding teams.

If you have any questions please email [EY Business Support](mailto:EY Business Support), [EYfunding@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:EYfunding@gloucestershire.gov.uk) or [Wraparound Team](mailto:Wraparound Team)

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### **Why Your Input Matters: Supporting Childcare Sufficiency Across the County**

As part of your **Local Provider Agreement**, we are asking Early Years providers to share data on current childcare vacancies and waiting lists across all age groups. This information is essential for helping us understand childcare sufficiency across the county.

Your input plays a key role in:

- **Supporting families** in finding suitable childcare more easily - especially in areas with high demand
- **Informing funding decisions**, such as capital expansion and school-based nursery grants, ensuring new provisions complement existing ones

- **Helping providers fill vacancies** by identifying unmet demand and connecting families with available places

By contributing to this survey, you're helping us build a clearer picture of local childcare needs. This enables us to:

- Plan more effectively
- Advocate for resources
- Ensure every child has access to high-quality early education and care
- Support the sustainability of your setting

If you're unable to complete the survey online, a member of our team will contact you by phone to gather the information directly. We're committed to making this process as easy and accessible as possible.

**Thank you for your continued partnership and for taking the time to complete this**

[Link to Survey](#)

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## Childcare Sufficiency Report

Welcome to the Childcare Sufficiency Report, designed to support childcare providers with insights into local supply and demand. This report outlines current trends in childcare provision, identifies areas of unmet need, and highlights opportunities for growth and collaboration. It draws on data from families, providers, and community partners to help you understand how your service fits within the wider landscape. Whether you're planning to expand, diversify, or simply stay informed, this report is a valuable resource to help you meet the needs of children and families in our area.

[Link to Gloucestershire Childcare Sufficiency Duty Report - June 2025](#)

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## Early Years Funded Entitlements update

To all our term time only providers in Gloucestershire, we hope you have

a good break over the half term period. Don't forget that the amendment task for the Autumn term opens on 3<sup>rd</sup> November and closes on 28<sup>th</sup> November. Payments will leave GCC on 12<sup>th</sup> December.

Planning ahead, the claim packs for the Spring term will be issued on 8<sup>th</sup> December and you will be able to find them in your Portal account by the end of that day.

### **Charging and Funding Audits**

Please note that we are currently carrying out two types of audits.

#### **1. Funding Audit:**

10% of early years providers claiming funding are contacted each term by the funding team to review submitted claims, signed Parent Declaration forms, parent's invoices, signed Local Provider Agreements and updated details in the Self Update Portal.

#### **2. Charging audit**

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

What needs to be done

- Costs must be clearly itemised on invoices and websites
- Providers must be upfront about any charges and ensure clarity for parents
- A lead-in time until January 2026 is allowed for providers to meet new transparency expectations (for any provider that has 10 or more children)

We may ask to see the following documents or policies:

- Fee policy
- Voluntary charges policy
- Packed lunch policy
- Itemised invoice templates

All providers will be contacted as part of this audit.

Dear Colleague,

We are pleased to invite you to an upcoming webinar designed for professionals who support children and families. This session will introduce the newly launched **Gloucestershire Family Hubs**, including the **Virtual Family Hub**, and provide an opportunity to learn more about how these services can support your work.

To book a place, click on the link below:

- 10 November at 14:00 – 16:00 - [Microsoft Virtual Events Powered by Teams](#)
- 11 November at 09:30 – 11:30 - [Microsoft Virtual Events Powered by Teams](#)
- 12 November at 09:30 – 11:30 - [Microsoft Virtual Events Powered by Teams](#)

### **What are Family Hubs?**

Family Hubs offer a place-based approach to coordinating the planning and delivery of universal early help, and targeted family support services. They aim to:

- Improve access to services
- Strengthen connections between families, professionals, and providers
- Place relationships at the heart of family support

### **Introducing the Virtual Family Hub**

To complement the physical hubs, we have launched the **Gloucestershire Virtual Family Hub** – a digital platform designed to make it easier for families to access information and resources online, whenever they need it. Over the summer, we've collaborated with families, voluntary and community sector partners, and system partners such as Health to shape this virtual offer.

We look forward to sharing this work with you and exploring how we can

make it easier for you to support families in your role.

## [Visit the Virtual Family Hub](#)

### **Best Start in Life**

The [Best Start in Life website](#) brings together trusted advice, guidance, and local support for families. From weaning tips and childcare options to activities that prepare children for school, the site offers a wide range of resources. Families can also find information on:

- Childcare funding and eligibility
- Free breakfast clubs
- Best Start Family Hubs
- Support from pregnancy through to starting school

### **How You Can Help**

We'd love your support in helping us reach families with these important messages. Here's how you can get involved:

#### **Use the Campaign Toolkit**

Access ready-made resources including social media posts, newsletter copy, and blog content:

[Best Start in Life | Toolkit and creative assets](#)

#### **Promote the Website**

Encourage families to visit Best Start in Life to explore trusted information and find local support.

#### **Share the Campaign Video**

['The Story of You'](#) celebrates early childhood and the role parents play. Created by children's author Camilla Reid and illustrator Rob Biddulph, and narrated by well-known parents including Oti Mabuse and Billie Shepherd, it's a powerful way to connect with families. Share it on your social channels!

#### **Encourage Newsletter Sign-Up**

Invite parents to subscribe to receive personalised weekly emails with tips, updates, and guidance tailored to their parenting journey.

Links [Newsletter](#) or [Personalised Weekly Emails](#)

Use the Best Start in Life Logos on email signatures, provider webpages or social media posts to publicise the campaign and share the information more widely.

### **Wraparound providers – MI data collection**

It's that time of the year when we will be asking all our funded wraparound providers to complete the MI data return.

Important dates for your diary:

- **Friday 17 October:** MI guidance & supporting documents sent to LAs
- **Monday 10 - Friday 14 November:** Provider reporting week
- **Monday 17 - Friday 21 November:** Provider reporting window
- **Friday 21 November:** Provider reporting deadline
- **Monday 21 November - Friday 5 December:** LA reporting window
- **Friday 5 December:** LA MI template deadline.

### **Expansion funding for wraparound**

A Grant Panel is planned for 18 December 2025.

If you are a current wraparound provider and need more funding, you can apply for further revenue funding.

We have plenty of funding for wraparound projects so please feel free to apply for the next round which is open now. See details below.

Please make sure that you do not miss your chance to apply for funding.

Information on how to apply and the link to the application forms can be found here:

[Application form | Gloucestershire County Council](#) - for wraparound project funding

If you are a current wraparound provider and need more funding, you can apply for further revenue funding.

### **Dates for training for wraparound providers**

Tuesday 18 November (online) 9.30am - 11am - The EYFS environment in the context of wraparound provision -

<https://www.pataglos.org.uk/event-6400018>

Tuesday 25 November (online) 9.30am - 11am - Safeguarding for wraparound provision in the context of EYFS -

<https://www.pataglos.org.uk/event-6400029>

**Please email the wraparound inbox to register your interest in attending these courses, or if you have problems accessing these links so we can send you the joining information.**

[Wraparound2@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:Wraparound2@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

### **School Based Nurseries**

School-Based Nursery Grants – Supporting Early Years Provision

We are pleased to share details of the School-Based Nursery (SBN) Capital Grant for 2025–2026, which offers up to £150,000 in capital funding to support the creation or expansion of nursery provision within schools. This grant is available to state-funded primary-phase schools in England that already offer early education (eg reception classes) and maintained nursery schools seeking to expand provision on their current premises. The funding aims to improve access to high-quality early years education, particularly for disadvantaged families.

To be eligible, applicants must:

- Not have received funding in Phase 1 of the SBN programme (2024–2025)
- Secure local authority support using the designated approval form
- Obtain landlord or freehold owner consent, where applicable
- Ensure the proposed nursery provision aligns with local sufficiency needs and does not negatively impact nearby providers

Applications must be submitted online by **5pm on 11 December 2025**,

and all supporting documents must be included. For full guidance and application materials, please refer to the [DfE's official grant page](#).

### **Top Tips for School-based Nurseries - [childcareworks.org.uk](#)**

### **Registering and inspecting school-based early years provision - [childcareworks.org.uk](#)**

We have already received some expressions of interest for this grant, and we will be reaching out to schools to help them submit applications soon.

### **Important Notice for SBN Applicants**

All applicants for the SBN must receive approval from GCC before submitting their application. If you are interested in applying, please contact us **no later than 7 November 2025**. This will allow us time to review your documents and confirm that all required information has been provided before we approve your application.

Thank you for your cooperation.

### **And finally – over to you**

#### **Let's talk business: A space for your questions**

Here are a few of the questions we have been asked recently with our responses

##### **1. Do we still have to provide an invoice even if the invoice is £0?**

**Yes**, you do.

This is important for:

- Demonstrating that children are accessing their funded entitlement
- Showing how much of the entitlement is being used
- Supporting parents who are claiming **Universal Credit**

*A template invoice is available if needed.*

##### **2. Can you insist that parents and carers pay invoices for voluntary consumables charges?**

You **can follow your usual procedures** for non-payment as long as:

- You comply with **funding regulations** and your **local provider agreement**
- You have a clear **opt-in/opt-out policy** for consumables
- You provide a **reasonable notice period**, such as termly which has been suggested by the **Department for Education (DfE)**

### 3. Is there any flexibility in how stretch funding is applied?

Yes, there is **some flexibility**, but with limits:

- Stretched funding allows parents to access their funded entitlement over more weeks than just the 38 weeks term time only.
- Termly claims must stay within the term's limit
- For the Autumn term, children eligible for the **working parent entitlement** can claim **up to 420 hours**
- Any unclaimed hours in a term cannot be rolled forward to the following term
- Please use the stretched funding calculators available on our webpage to support your claims

Please send in any questions you want answered to [eybusinesssupport@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:eybusinesssupport@gloucestershire.gov.uk) - include the words Lets talk business in your email so we know that you are happy for us to share them.

#### Contact details for the team:

[EYExpansionCapitalFundingApplications@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:EYExpansionCapitalFundingApplications@gloucestershire.gov.uk)  
[wraparound2@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:wraparound2@gloucestershire.gov.uk)  
[eybusinesssupport@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:eybusinesssupport@gloucestershire.gov.uk)  
[Eyfunding@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:Eyfunding@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

Funding Team phone number – 01452 328668

## Training

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As part of the DfE Wraparound Care Pilot Project, **all grant recipients are eligible for FREE places on our two-day 'Inclusion Needs You'**

**training.** This is taking place on:

**Tuesday 4 November and Tuesday 18 November 2025**  
**9:30am - 2:15pm**  
**Northway Community Hub**  
[Inclusion Needs You - 4th and 18th November Tickets, Tue 4 Nov 2025 at 09:30 | Eventbrite](#)

This practical course is designed to boost your confidence and equip you with the skills to welcome and include disabled children in your Wraparound Care setting – including those with physical, sensory, or cognitive conditions, neurodiversity, SEN, and additional needs.

Delivered across two days by a team of two experienced trainers with lived experience, including disabled and neurodivergent professionals and parent carers, this course offers real insight and practical tips.

All participating settings will receive a fantastic sensory resource kit worth £200, including a blackout tent, sensory toys, and foam mats.

Limited spaces are reserved for providers in the GCC DfE-funded pilot – once these are filled, you can still access general tickets.

**Important Information:**

Each participant must book individually so they receive all the advance information to their inbox. If booking on behalf of your team, please make separate bookings using each attendee's email address so they receive the course information directly.

**Each Inclusion Needs You is a two day course. Please ensure you can attend both days listed before booking a place.**

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**Training & Meetings - Book now!**

**Baby Room Network meeting - 27/10/2025 - 6:15 - 7:45pm - All My Friends Childcare (Barnwood), 87 Barnwood Nursery, Barnwood Road, Gloucester GL2 0SF [Book here](#)**

**Sensory Integration Occupational Therapy training (SIOT) – Play to Ignite Development - 03/11/2025 - 4:00 - 6:00pm - Severnbanks**

Primary School, Naas Lane, Lydney, Gloucestershire, GL15 5AU - [Book here](#)

**Early Years SENCo Cluster Meeting** - 04/11/2025 - 4:00 - 5:30pm -  
Mary P's Day Nursery Old Dowty Clubhouse, Ashchurch Pkwy,  
Tewkesbury, GL20 8TU - [Book here](#)

**SIOT Level 2 - Practical strategies: sensory processing in the Early Years** - 06/11/2025 - 4:00 - 6:00pm - Chesterton Primary School, Apsley Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 1SS - [Book here](#)

**Early Years SENCo Cluster Meeting** - 06/11/2025 - 6:30pm - 8.00pm -  
Chesterton Primary School, Apsley Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 1SS - [Book here](#)

**Early Years Conference 2025 (FULL)** - 07/11/2025 - 9:00am - 4.00pm -  
The Cheltenham Chase Hotel, Shurdington Road, Brockworth, Gloucester GL3 4PB - [Book here](#)

**Early Years SENCo Cluster Meeting** - 10/11/2025 - 4:00 - 5:30pm -  
Hesters Way Children Centre, Dill Avenue, Cheltenham, GL51 0ES - [Book here](#)

**Early Years SENCo Cluster Meeting** - 11/11/2025 - 4:00 - 5:30pm -  
Steam Mills Primary School, Steam Mills, Cinderford, GL14 3JD [Book here](#)

**Early Years SENCo Cluster Meeting** - 12/11/2025 - 6:00 - 8.00pm -  
Slimbridge Primary School, St John's Road, Slimbridge, Gloucester, GL2 7DD [Book here](#)

**Leaders and Managers Network Meeting (Gloucester Farmers Club)** - 12/11/2025 - 1:00 - 3:30pm - Gloucester Farmers club , Agricultural House, Greville Close, Gloucester, GL2 9RG - [Book here](#)

**SIOT Level 2 - Practical strategies: sensory processing in the Early Years** - 13/11/2025 - 4:00 - 6:00pm - Alderman Knight School, 46 Ashchurch Road, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, GL20 8JJ - [Book here](#)

**Early Years SENCo Cluster Meeting** - 13/11/2025 - 4:30 - 6:00pm -  
Kings Stanley Playgroup, Kings Stanley Village Hall, Broad Street, Kings Stanley, Stonehouse GL10 3PN - [Book here](#)

**Childminder Play Session** - 18/11/2025 - 9:30 - 12.00pm - The Beacon Children's Centre, Valley Gardens, Gloucester, Gloucestershire, GL2 2AR - [Book here](#)

**Early Years SENCo Cluster Meeting** - 18/11/2025 - 4:00 - 5:30pm - Longford Primary Academy, Clock Tower Road, Gloucester, GL2 9FP - [Book here](#)

**Early Years SENCo Cluster Meeting** - 19/11/2025 - 4:00 - 5:30pm - The Rissington School (Upper Rissington Site) Mitchell Way, Upper Rissington, Cheltenham, GL54 2PL - [Book here](#)

**Childminder Network Meeting - Adult Education (GCC)** - 19/11/2025 - 7:00 - 8:00pm - Online via TEAMS - [Book here](#)

**SIOT Level 2 - Practical strategies: sensory processing in the Early Years (FULL)** - 20/11/2025 - 4:00 - 6:00pm - Great Oldbury Primary Academy, Veterans Way, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire, GL10 3WH. - [Book here](#)

**SIOT Level 2 - Practical strategies: sensory processing in the Early Years (FULL)** - 27/11/2025 - 4:00 - 6:00pm - Kingsway Primary School, Valley Gardens, Gloucester, Gloucestershire, GL2 2AR - [Book here](#)

**Sensory Integration Occupational Therapy training (SIOT) – Play to Ignite Development** - 04/12/2025 - 4:00 - 6:00pm - Oakwood Primary School, Cotswold Road, Cheltenham, GL52 5HD - [Book here](#)

**Childminder Network Meeting** - 11/12/2025 - 7:00 - 8:00pm - Online via TEAMS - [Book here](#)

**Childminder Play Session** - 16/12/2025 - 9:30 - 12:00pm - The Beacon Children's Centre, Valley Gardens, Gloucester, Gloucestershire, GL2 2AR - [Book here](#)

**Total Communication Training in the Early Years** - This training is provided in house at your setting.

You can now book Total Communication in the Early Years through GCC+. To do this you will need to log into your setting's GCC+

account. Go to the **search bar** on the **home page**, and type in Total Communications and **press the search key**.

You will then see the link for the Total Communications for you to book.

**(Please note – if you search in the ‘training section’ or the ‘services’ section, you won’t find it. It must be searched for in the home page search and the search key pressed). NB - If you just press enter, it won’t find it.**

Once you have booked and checked out your training, you will be contacted by an EY Inclusion Advisor to arrange the date and time for the delivery of your course. If you have not heard from us within 2 weeks, please contact the EY Admin Team: [eyservice@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:eyservice@gloucestershire.gov.uk).

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**Please note:** Most training and all events (excluding some meetings) are subject to a charge. Please check the price when you make your booking. If you are in any doubt, please email [eyservice@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:eyservice@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

*Please refer to the cancellation policy for your event, as charges may apply.*

## CANCELLATION POLICY

- 2 weeks before the training course is due to take place – 100% refund
- Less than 2 weeks before the training course is due to take place – 0% refund
- If GCC cancels a training course, we will issue a refund automatically. If you paid by credit card, the refund will be paid back to the same card. If you paid by invoice, you will receive a credit note.
- If you need to cancel your place on a training course within two weeks of the course and there are special circumstances, please contact [eyservice@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:eyservice@gloucestershire.gov.uk) and we will consider your request on a case-by-case basis.



COUNTY COUNCIL



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