

# 30 Hours Free Childcare

## Your Questions Answered

### What is the current arrangement for government-funded childcare?

- The government currently provides 15 hours of free childcare each week for all 3- and 4-year-olds. This is usually offered over 38 weeks of the year.
- These 15 hours of free childcare can be provided by nurseries, playgroups, childminders and children's centres.
- Some 2-year-olds are also entitled to free childcare; eligibility for this is dependent on income.

### How is this changing?

- From September 2017, the government plans to provide an additional 15 hours of free childcare each week to some working parents of 3- and 4-year-olds. This will mean that these parents will be able to access 30 hours of free childcare per week, over 38 weeks of the year.
- Eight local authority areas will pilot this programme from September 2016.

### Will all 3- and 4-year-olds still be entitled to 15 hours of free childcare each week, as they are now?

Yes, this will remain the same.

### Will all 3- and 4-year-olds be entitled to the additional 15 hours of free childcare from September 2017?

No, there are a number of criteria which must be met for parents to be eligible for this additional 15 hours of free childcare:

- Both parents are working (or in a lone-parent family, the sole parent is working).
- Each parent earns the equivalent of 16 hours per week at the national minimum wage or living wage. Each parent does not necessarily need to work for 16 hours per week but their earnings should reflect at least 16 hours of work at these rates. This includes those on zero-hour contracts.
- Each parent earns less than £100,000 a year.
- It is only available to families living in England.

### Will all settings provide the additional 15 hours of childcare?

Not all settings will offer the flexible 30 hours of free childcare.

### Which local authorities will be piloting the scheme in September 2016?

- Staffordshire, Wigan, Swindon, Portsmouth, Northumberland, York, Newham and Hertfordshire are the pilot areas offering the additional hours of free childcare from September 2016. Although parents will need to meet the eligibility criteria, it will be up to each local authority to decide how they will offer the places during the trial. They may not be open to all parents in those areas.
- In addition to these pilot areas, there are 25 other local authorities, based in local clusters, which will work together to focus on specific issues. These authorities are:
  - North West – Cheshire West and Chester, Stockport, Bolton Trafford, Bury.
  - Midlands – Nottinghamshire, Nottingham City, Walsall.
  - South West – Cornwall.
  - South East – Hampshire, West Sussex, Medway, East Sussex, Brighton and Hove.
  - London and East of England – Kingston and Richmond, Barking and Dagenham, Islington, Ealing, Hillingdon.
  - North East and Yorkshire and the Humber – Gateshead, Bradford, Sheffield, East Riding, Wakefield, North Yorkshire.
- These 'Early Innovators' will consider factors such as special educational needs and disability, flexibility and availability of places. Their experiences will then be used to support the nationwide roll-out of the scheme in September 2017.