



Delivering the Free Entitlement in Wiltshire

What is Free Entitlement funding?

- A universal entitlement of up to 15 hours free early education and childcare per week term time (or stretched equivalent), totalling 570 hours per year. This funding is available to some 2 year olds and all 3 & 4 year olds.
- An extended entitlement of a further 15 hours free early education and childcare per week term time (or stretched equivalent), totalling a further 570 hours per year (overall total of 1140 hours). This funding is available from 1 September 2017 to eligible 3 & 4 year olds of working parents only.
- All providers wishing to deliver and claim Free Entitlement funding must sign up to the [Wiltshire Provider Agreement](#). This document provides information about the registration process, eligibility criteria and outlines the various administrative procedures for claiming funding.

2 year old Free Entitlement

- Not all 2 year old children are eligible to access the funding.
- A child/family must meet at least one criteria – see website for [criteria list](#). Parents need to apply for this funding via the secure [online application form](#) available on the Wiltshire Council website.
- If eligible, a child can access funding the full term following the 2nd birthday – either 1st January, 1st April or 1st September.
- Providers with at least a 'good' Ofsted judgement can offer this funding, or those waiting for their 1st Ofsted inspection.
- Childminders only – you cannot claim funding for your own children, step-children or a relative's child.

3 & 4 year old Free Entitlement (Universal Entitlement)

- All 3 & 4 year old children are eligible to access this funding.
- A child can access funding the full term following the 3rd birthday – either 1st January, 1st April or 1st September.
- Providers with at least a 'requires improvement' Ofsted judgement can offer this funding, or those waiting for their 1st Ofsted inspection.
- Childminders only – you cannot claim funding for your own children, step-children or a relative's child.

3 & 4 year old Free Entitlement (Extended Entitlement)

- Only 3 & 4 year old children of eligible working parents are able to access this funding.
- A child can access funding the full term following the 3rd birthday – either 1st January, 1st April or 1st September.
- Parents must apply for the extended entitlement via the Governments online service – ‘Childcare Choices’, and eligibility is assessed by HMRC.
- Parents are issued with an 11 digit eligibility code which a provider must validate via Wiltshire Council’s online validation checker service. Written consent from the parent must be obtained in order to carry out a validation check.
- Once a code has been validated, an extended entitlement place can be offered.

3 & 4 year old Free Entitlement (Extended Entitlement) continued

- Eligibility codes are valid for approximately 3 months.
- Parents need to reapply for the extended entitlement to continue before their eligibility code's 'valid end' date.
- If a parent becomes ineligible, a Grace Period enables them to retain their child's extended entitlement place for a short period of time.
- If a parent remains ineligible once the Grace Period has expired, providers must inform them that they can only access their child's universal entitlement.

How does Free Entitlement work?

- A new provider can start delivering funding at any point in the year as long as they are fully registered with Ofsted.
- Funding can be accessed over 38 weeks of the year (term time). Alternatively funding can be 'stretched' which means the funding could be accessed over more weeks of the year but with fewer hours per week.
- There is no minimum number of hours that can be accessed in a day, but the maximum is 10 hours.
- The entitlement is split into 3 funded periods - Summer, Autumn, Spring.
- A child can access funded hours at a maximum of 2 sites per day.

Funded periods

- **Summer (1 April – 31 August)**

Term time offer = maximum of 13 funded weeks

Stretched offer = maximum of 21 funded weeks

Maximum hours = 195 hours universal entitlement and 390 hours extended entitlement

- **Autumn (1 September – 31 December)**

Term time offer = maximum of 14 funded weeks

Stretched offer = maximum of 18 funded weeks

Maximum hours = 210 hours universal entitlement and 420 hours extended entitlement

- **Spring (1 January – 31 March)**

Term time offer = maximum of 11 funded weeks

Stretched offer = maximum of 13 funded weeks

Maximum hours = 165 hours universal entitlement and 330 hours extended entitlement

Charging

Please refer to Section 14 of the [Wiltshire Provider Agreement](#) for full details. This applies to 2 year old Free Entitlement and 3 & 4 year old Universal Entitlement and Extended Entitlement.

- The funded hours must be offered completely free at the point of delivery (not paid for in advance and reimbursed at a later date).
- A provider can charge for meals, snacks, consumables such as nappies/sun cream, and for additional services such as trips and activities. These charges must be voluntary for the parent and must not be a condition of accessing their free place.
- A deposit can be charged to secure a child's free place but it must be refunded in full within a reasonable time scale and must not be a barrier to a child accessing their free place.

Charging continued

- Providers must not charge parents additional fees to support a child with SEND.
- Providers cannot charge parents 'top-up' fees (the difference between their usual fee and the funding they receive from Wiltshire Council to deliver free places), or require parents to pay a registration fee as a condition of taking up their child's free place.
- Invoices should be clear and transparent, enabling a parent to see that they have received their free entitlement hours completely free of charge and understand fees paid for additional hours or services.

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

Please refer to Section 15.1 of the [Wiltshire Provider Agreement](#).

- Extra funding is available to all providers for eligible children accessing 3 & 4 year old Free Entitlement only.
- Children need not access the full entitlement; payment will be made on a pro rata basis.
- Providers receive an additional 53p per hour available for eligible children (national rate).
- More [information](#) is available on Wiltshire Council website.

Disability Access Fund (DAF)

Please refer to Section 15.2 of the [Wiltshire Provider Agreement](#).

- Extra funding is available to all providers for eligible children accessing 3 & 4 year old Free Entitlement only.
- Providers receive a one off lump sum of £615 per financial year (national rate).
- Funding can be paid to one early years provider only nominated by the parent per financial year. Where a child is attending more than one provider, the parent can only nominate one provider to receive the funding.
- More [information](#) is available on Wiltshire Council website.

Funding administration

Please refer to Section 15, and sub-section 15.3 of the [Wiltshire Provider Agreement](#).

- Free Entitlement payments are made to providers on a monthly basis using estimated annual hours and operate on a similar basis to utility bills.
- Providers have the opportunity to adjust these estimated hours at the start of each funded period. NB. All childminder estimated hours are set to zero at the start of each funded period, as are 2 year old and extended entitlement hours for settings.
- Actual hours and child level data are collected once per funding period via the 'Headcount' week and headcount claim form. A [Parent Declaration form](#) must be in place for every child a provider wishes to access funding for.
- Estimated payments and actual hours are reconciled at the end of each funded period, and balances due/overpayments are paid or recovered as a lump sum at the next available adjustment month.

Auditing

Please refer to Sections 13 and 19 of the [Wiltshire Provider Agreement](#).

- Wiltshire Council will audit the delivery of the Free Entitlement via your Childcare Officer. Advance notice will be given of any audit to be carried out.

Providers will be audited against:

- The criteria determined by the Local Provider Agreement and national statutory guidance
- Safeguarding policy and practice

Next steps

- Providers need to decide if they wish to apply to be on the directory of registered providers delivering Free Entitlement funding.
- If yes, a provider has to apply to Wiltshire Council by completing the secure [online new provider details form](#) **and** sign up to the [Wiltshire Provider Agreement Declaration](#)
- To set up a new provider takes approximately 6 weeks, so we will aim to start your monthly payments at the next available monthly payment run after your set up has been finalised.
- NB: Childminders – If you wish to apply but currently don't have any eligible children, we would advise you to apply now so that you are set up ready for when you do have an eligible child.

Support – useful information

- Always refer to the [Wiltshire Provider Agreement](#).
- More information is available on the Wiltshire Council website:
 - [2 year old Free Entitlement funding](#)
 - [3 & 4 year old Free Entitlement funding](#)
 - [30 hours - information for providers](#)

Summary

- A universal entitlement of up to 15 hours free early education and childcare per week term time, totalling 570 hours per year. Available to some 2 year olds and all 3 & 4 year olds.
- An extended entitlement of a further 15 hours free early education and childcare per week term time, totalling 570 hours per year. Available to eligible 3 & 4 year olds of working parents only.
- If you wish to start accessing the funding, you now need to:
 - Complete the secure [online new provider details form](#)
 - Sign up to the [Wiltshire Provider Agreement Declaration](#)
 - Print off the [Parent Declaration form](#) ready for parents of eligible children to complete.
- We will then be in contact!