

Buckinghamshire Council's Guidance on:

Local Management of the Funded Entitlement for 9 months to four-years-old



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Introduction, Purpose, and Aims of the Local Guidance

This guide came into effect from 1 April 2025, and then from 1 September 2025 for the roll out of 30 hours of Funded Entitlement for eligible children from age of 9 months to 2 years old. This guidance supersedes the previous Local Guidance of September 2024

Welcome to Buckinghamshire Council's Local Guidance for providers on delivering 'Funded Entitlement' (FE) places for:

- eligible children from the age of 9 months - Equivalent of 30 Funded Entitlement hours of childcare over 38 weeks
- eligible two-year-olds – Equivalent of 15 Disadvantaged Funded Entitlement hours of childcare over 38 weeks
- all three- and four-year-olds – Equivalent of 15 Universal Funded Entitlement hours of childcare over 38 weeks
- eligible three- and four-year-olds – Equivalent of 30 Funded Entitlement hours of childcare over 38 weeks for three- and four-year-olds

This guide is a working document that explains Buckinghamshire Council's processes and their requirements of a provider for the delivery of the Funded Entitlement hours. This includes details of the application and approval process onto Buckinghamshire's directory to deliver Funded Entitlement places (See Section 2.1). There are levels of quality expected from providers in both their business operation and within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and there can be an impact on the claiming of funding following an Ofsted judgement which is less than "Good" or "Met".

Funding cannot be paid retrospectively and providers who have not been confirmed for approval onto the Buckinghamshire directory will not be eligible to claim funding for any Funded Entitlement hours they have provided prior to receiving a Funding URN (Unique Reference Number) from Buckinghamshire Council.

Our aim:

Buckinghamshire Council provides a service that ensures the Local Authority meets its statutory duty to secure sufficient high quality and inclusive Funded Early Education places for eligible 9 months to four-year-olds that reflects local needs and delivers the best possible outcomes for children in ensuring their readiness for school and diminishing differences.

Our objectives:

- to ensure all children entitled to a Funded Entitlement place can access a quality provision that meets their needs
- to adopt an inclusive approach, promoting equality of opportunity, particularly to the most disadvantaged, including looked-after children and those with a disability or special educational need
- to assess and promote the development of high-quality sustainable provision in areas where places are needed
- to ensure providers offer parents who want them free Funded Entitlement places with no conditions of access
- to support providers to comply with Buckinghamshire Council financial regulations and current government legislation

Our commitment:

We will work with Buckinghamshire providers to encourage and increase the take-up of high-quality Funded Entitlement places for eligible 9 months to four-year-olds to improve outcomes for children and give parents the freedom and flexibility to return to work or explore further education opportunities.

Providers offering Funded Entitlement places must meet Buckinghamshire Council requirements and be approved to join the directory of funded providers to deliver the Funded Entitlement for 9 months to four-year-olds.

The Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance and the Local Guidance

The “Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (effective from 1 April 2025)” issued by the Department for Education (DfE), details, for English local authorities, their legal duties required by legislation under the Childcare Act 2016 and sections of the Childcare Act 2006 that apply to the funded early education and childcare entitlements for 9 months to four-year-olds. This includes:

- the Funded Entitlement for disadvantaged two year olds
- the Universal Entitlement for three and four year olds
- the Funded Entitlement for 9 months to four year old children of eligible working parents

It contains statutory guidance to local authorities on:

- securing sufficient childcare for working parents
- providing information and assistance to parents
- providing information, advice, and training to childcare providers

It does not provide guidance on how providers operate their private business, including charges for provision over and above a child’s Funded Entitlement hours.

The full national regulations and operation guidance issued by the DfE can be found at:

[Early education and childcare \(effective from 1 April 2025\) - GOV.UK](#)

[Early years entitlements: local authority funding operational guide 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

The Buckinghamshire Council Local Guidance details the duties specific to Buckinghamshire Council in the delivery of the Funded Entitlement. These are statutory responsibilities required from the DfE for local authorities to set out how they will be undertaken locally, and work alongside the national regulations laid out in [Early education and childcare \(effective from 1 April 2025\) - GOV.UK](#).

The Local Guidance does not replicate the statutory guidance; the documents should be read alongside each other. Each section within this document starts with the “outcome” the DfE is intending to achieve through both legislation and its guidance to local authorities.

Buckinghamshire Council reserve the right to challenge a provider where they feel the intentions set out in the national statutory regulations are not being followed.

Part A: Funded Places for 9 months to Four-years-old children

Section A1: Eligibility

DfE Intended Outcome: all children who meet the eligibility criteria are able to take up a free place if their parent wants one.

Disadvantaged Two-year-olds entitlement.

A child will be entitled to the 15 Funded Entitlement hours for 38 weeks, from the term after both the following conditions are satisfied:

1. the child has attained the age of two by the age criterion date
2. the child or parent meets the eligibility criteria ([Eligibility for funded childcare for 2-year-olds | Family Information Service \(buckinghamshire.gov.uk\)](#))

The relevant dates (in relation to age criterion) are as follows:

- children born in the period 1 January to 31 March: the start of the term beginning on or following 1 April after the child's second birthday
- children born in the period 1 April to 31 August: the start of the term beginning on or following 1 September after the child's second birthday
- children born in the period 1 September to 31 December: the start of term, beginning on or following 1 January after the child's second birthday

For disadvantaged two-year-olds only, as long as they attain the age of two by the age criterion date, they can claim funding as soon as they are found to be eligible. They do not need to wait till the following term to access their funded hours should they be found eligible partway through a term.

The 570 funded hours per child's birth year need to be taken over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year (i.e., 15 hours per week) and up to 51 weeks of the year. Where a stretched offer (taking fewer hours over more weeks) period starts before the academic term, a child will be able to access their place if parents/carers have signed up to the stretched offer and they have attained the age of two by the age criterion date (term cutoff date) i.e.: 31 March, 31 August, or 31 December.

Once eligibility is established for the Funded Entitlement hours, Buckinghamshire Council will continue to fund a child who continues to access a place until they are eligible to take up the funded offer as a three-year-old. This two-year-old place will continue to be funded even if the family circumstances change and they no longer meet the eligibility criteria.

Assessment and proof of eligibility:

Providers are strongly advised to ask the parent/carer for confirmation of eligibility before offering a place as an ineligible child will not be funded. Proof of eligibility exists when the parent/carer is able to show the provider confirmation from Buckinghamshire Council (usually an email) confirming the child's first name and eligibility code. Buckinghamshire Council's Early Years (EY) Service must always check the details of families before eligibility can be confirmed. Providers are welcome at any time, to contact the 2-year-old funding team to check eligibility codes by emailing 2yearoldfunding@buckinghamshire.gov.uk or ringing 01296 38 7000.

Should a two-year-old find they meet the eligibility criteria for the **Disadvantaged Two-year-olds entitlement** and not start at the beginning of term or move into Buckinghamshire part-way through the year, then Buckinghamshire Council will pro-rata the funding accordingly. For example, a child who starts one week after the start of the term will lose one week's funding calculated as 15 hours under the term time only offer and the weekly standard hours under the stretched offer.

Out of county residents:

Buckinghamshire Council will fund eligible two-year-olds for the disadvantaged Funded Entitlement who are not residents of Buckinghamshire. Providers will need to ensure that the parent/carer have an eligibility code from Buckinghamshire Council i.e. parents have applied through the Buckinghamshire Council website and not that of their own local authority.

If you have any queries relating to disadvantaged two-year-old funding, please contact the 2-year-old Funding Team on 01296 387000 or by email at 2yearoldfunding@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

All Three- and Four-year-olds (Universal Entitlement)

All three-year-olds are entitled to access 15 Funded Entitlement hours a week from the start of the term following their third birthday for 38 weeks per year.

The relevant dates are as follows:

- children born in the period 1 January to 31 March: the start of the term beginning on or following 1 April after the child's third birthday
- children born in the period 1 April to 31 August: the start of the term beginning on or following 1 September after the child's third birthday
- children born in the period 1 September to 31 December: the start of term, beginning on or following 1 January after the child's third birthday

They remain eligible for up to two academic years before they reach compulsory school age (the term following their fifth birthday), or until they are admitted to a reception class of a school earlier. The 570 funded hours per child's birth year should be taken over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year (i.e. 15 hours per week) and up to 51 weeks of the year when the entitlement is stretched.

Should a three- or four-year-old take up their Universal Funded Entitlement place after their eligibility date or move into Buckinghamshire part-way through the year, then funding will be applied pro-rata. For example, a child who starts one week after the start of the term will lose one week's funding. This is calculated as 15 hours under the term time only offer, and the weekly standard hours under the stretched offer.

Non-British citizens:

A child moving to England and into Buckinghamshire from another country has a right to a three- and four-year-old Universal Funded Entitlement place on the same basis as any other child irrespective of the immigration status of the child or their parent(s).

Working Parent Entitlements for 9 months to Four-year-old children

A child is entitled to the 30-hour Funded Entitlement for eligible working parents of 9 months to four-years-old, provided they meet the eligibility criteria set out by HMRC. This equates to 30 hours per week over 38 weeks. The child will need to attain the relevant age and have a positive determination of eligibility from HMRC in the form of an eligibility code to access their hours.

The relevant dates (in relation to the age criterion) are as follows:

- children who turn 9 months old in the period 1 January to 31 March: the start of the term beginning on or following 1 April
- children who turn 9 months old in the period 1 April to 31 August: the start of the term beginning on or following 1 September
- children who turn 9 months old in the period 1 September to 31 December: the start of term, beginning on or following 1 January

The child's parent must apply for the working parents entitlements through the [Government's online Childcare Service](#). Eligibility for the funded hours is determined by HMRC through the online application. Parents will also be required to reconfirm their eligibility codes online approximately every 3 months when prompted to do so by HMRC.

The working parent entitlement hours can only be taken up at the beginning of the term following the child and parents meeting the eligibility criteria, provided that the eligibility code remains valid on:

- 31 March to take up a place during the term beginning 1 April
- 31 August to take up a place during the term beginning 1 September
- 31 December to take up a place during the term beginning 1 January

Buckinghamshire Council will not fund the working parent entitlement hours where the parent has applied after the 31 August, 31 December, or 31 March HMRC deadline date.

The 1140 working parent entitlement hours per child's birth year need to be taken over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year (i.e., no more than 30 hours per week) and up to 51 weeks of the year. Where a stretched offer (taking fewer hours over more weeks) period starts before the academic term, a child will be able to access their place if parents/carers have signed up to the stretched offer and they have attained the relevant age by the term cutoff date.

Should a child eligible for the working parent entitlement take up their place part-way through the year, then funding will be applied pro rata. The total number of hours will be adjusted to reflect the portion of the year remaining from the relevant date after the child is first eligible, which will be from 1 April, 1 September or 1 January.

Children in foster care who have attained the relevant age are also eligible for the working parent entitlements.

- provided the foster parent(s) is in paid work outside their fostering role
- does not expect their income to exceed £100,000
- the responsible local authority confirms it is satisfied that the foster parent(s) engaging in paid work other than as a foster parent is consistent with the child's care plan
- the foster parent(s) does not have to meet the minimum income requirement

Please note that foster parents need to apply to the responsible local authority not HMRC for their eligibility decision. See Appendix A for full guidance on Funded Entitlement hours for foster children.

Eligibility Codes for Eligible 9 months to four-year-old children of Working Parents

The Buckinghamshire Council online portal used to verify eligibility codes is available to all funded providers. Access is given to this when a provider joins the Buckinghamshire directory.

Providers must obtain written consent from a parent to check their eligibility code. The parent should sign the relevant section of their Parent/Provider Agreement for Funded Entitlement to indicate written consent – providers only need to verify the code against either the applicant or the partner listed on the application, not both.

Providers – please note that eligibility codes for foster carers will begin “400” and they should be validated as normal via the online portal.

Any parent who disagrees with their eligibility outcome for the Funded Entitlement hours determined by HMRC will need to follow the review and appeals process available to them managed by HMRC. [HMRC Appeals Process](#). Buckinghamshire Council has no authority in determining the eligibility for any child.

Foster carers, who are unhappy about the decision made by Buckinghamshire Council, should seek resolution through their social worker or through the Buckinghamshire Council complaints process. [Refer to Part C of this guidance for details of the complaint's procedure](#).

Buckinghamshire Council **highly** recommend that providers do not sign an agreement with parents until they have verified both the age of the child and the validity of the eligibility code for the term the funding is to be accessed.

For the 30-hour working parent entitlement, the latest a parent could receive an eligibility code is 22 weeks after the child turns five, which is when they may be of compulsory school age.

Once a child has a place in the reception class of a state funded school or an academy, they will not be eligible to receive any Funded Entitlement even if they choose not to take up a full-time reception school place. For example, a child accessing early years childcare provision and a part time reception school place will not be able to claim the

early years Funded Entitlement. Providers are required to inform the Early Years Service where this occurs in their provision.

There may be some circumstances where households are eligible for both the two-year-old working parent entitlement and the disadvantaged funded hours. Buckinghamshire Council must fund the first 15 hours under the disadvantaged entitlement before they fund any of the 15 hours under the working parent entitlement. Buckinghamshire Council has a duty to account for any hours available under the disadvantaged entitlement when determining how many hours a parent should be funded for under the working parent entitlement.

The Grace Period

Where parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria for the working parent entitlement hours upon reconfirmation, Buckinghamshire Council will continue to fund a place for a child for a limited period, known as the “grace period.” Please note that the grace period will not continue beyond the age that a child has reached compulsory school age (the term following their fifth birthday).

The table below details the funding blocks and their respective grace period end date.

Date Parent receives ineligible decision on reconfirmation:	Buckinghamshire Council audit date:	Grace Period End date:
1 Jan – 10 Feb	11 February	31 March
11 Feb – 31 March	1 April	31 August
1 April – 26 May	27 May	31 August
27 May – 31 August	1 September	31 December
1 September – 21 October	22 October	31 December
22 October – 31 December	1 January	31 March

Buckinghamshire Council will complete an audit check on all eligibility codes at 6 fixed points in the financial year, both at the start of the term and at half-term (in line with the dates listed in the above table).

The Eligibility Checking Service will allocate a grace period end date to all eligibility codes, and we will communicate the grace period to providers for parents who are found to be ineligible for their working parent entitlement hours at the time each audit is undertaken. Buckinghamshire Council has an expectation that providers will notify parents within 5 working days from when they receive this information from the Early Years Funding Team. Buckinghamshire Council will also inform providers where parents are no longer eligible, and their grace period has finished. The Eligibility Checking Service updates weekly and when a child enters their grace period an automatic email will be sent to the provider to alert that there has been a change. Buckinghamshire Council strongly advises providers to be vigilant with the eligibility code dates of the eligible children at their provision.

Buckinghamshire Council will consider artificially extending the “grace period” set out in the table for a short time in very exceptional circumstances that are outside the parents’ control. Circumstances may include if the parent has been forced to leave their home and paid employment, for example where a parent is the victim of domestic abuse or in other emergency situations.

To request Buckinghamshire Council to consider an extension of the grace period, providers should email earlyfunding@buckinghamshire.gov.uk with all the relevant information and a decision will be reached within 10 working days.

Children should not start a new working parent entitlement place at a provider during the grace period. This includes the following scenarios:

- where a parent falls into their grace period before the child has started a place
- where a parent falls into their grace period whilst their child is in a place, and the parent seeks to move the child to a different provider

In some exceptional circumstances that are outside of a parent’s control, parents may need to move providers during

their grace period, which is normally not permissible. In such situations Buckinghamshire Council may allow the child to continue their working parent entitlement place in a new setting. Circumstances may include if the provider closes or receives an Ofsted inspection judgement of “inadequate” or “unmet” and funding is withdrawn, or the parent has been forced to leave their home and paid employment, for example where a parent is the victim of domestic abuse or in other emergency situations.

To request this to be considered providers should email earlyfunding@buckinghamshire.gov.uk with all the relevant information and a decision will be reached within 10 working days.

A parent can take up a working entitlement place in their grace period if their eligibility code is valid (i.e. not in its grace period) on the termly deadline (31 August, 31 December or 31 March), even if they fall out of eligibility in the period after the termly deadline but before a provider’s term start date. For example, if a parent’s code was valid on 31 March and the provider’s term starts on 11 April, and the parent falls out of eligibility on the 4 April, the parent is still eligible to access the working parent place.

If a child ceases to be a foster child and the parent has a special guardianship order or has adopted the child, the same guidance relating to the grace period applies.

Where parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria and the “grace period” has expired, Buckinghamshire Council will continue to allow a child:

- if aged three or four to take up their Universal 15 funded hours
- if the parent has been taking up their working parent funded hours and their Universal hours at more than one provider, Buckinghamshire Council will continue to fund the Universal 15 hours at the provider of the parent’s choice which they will have indicated on their Parent/Provider Agreement form
- If the parents of a two-year-old claiming the working parent Funded Entitlement cease to meet the eligibility criteria and the “grace period” has expired, Buckinghamshire Council will ask providers to check eligibility for the disadvantaged entitlement hours

However, providers should note that falling out of eligibility for the working parent entitlement will not necessarily make a two-year-old eligible for the disadvantaged entitlement.

Charging

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 their Funded Entitlement hours. There can be no notice period for parents wishing to withdraw their child from a provision when they are accessing only their Funded Entitlement hours. This is because there is no monetary values attached to these hours for the parents. However, in usual circumstances, funding will still be paid to the provider up until the half term. See section A2 Flexibility for further information.

Government funding is not intended to cover the proportionate cost of meals consumed by the child, other consumables, additional hours, or additional activities. Providers can charge parents for the following extras in connection with the funded entitlement hours, but these charges must be voluntary for the parent:

- consumables to be used by the child, such as nappies or sun cream
- meals and snacks consumed by the child
- 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 EYFS framework. Please note: should a provider decide to use a specific pedagogical approach such as Montessori, Reggio Emilia or Steiner to determine their pedagogy, this is not classed as extra provision and therefore cannot be charged for

Providers can also charge parents for any additional private paid hours according to their usual terms and conditions provided taking up private paid hours is not a condition of accessing a free place.

Buckinghamshire Council will ensure that providers follow these terms in levying any chargeable extras.

The costs of chargeable extras should be published on provider websites or, where they do not have any website, on the [Buckinghamshire Family Information Service](#) website. These should be clear, up to date and easily accessible to parents, to enable parents to make an informed choice of provider. They should set out, for each setting, the amounts charged for all the chargeable extras listed, as well as the pattern of hours that parents can take the entitlements. There is a DfE template available on the [Early Years website](#) for providers to use if they wish. Childminders and providers caring for 10 or fewer children at any one time are exempt from publishing this information. For all other providers, the information needs to be published by January 2026 at the latest as per the timeline set by the DfE.

Invoices and receipts should be itemised, and Buckinghamshire Council will work with providers to ensure their invoices break down separately into:

- the Funded Entitlement hours
- additional private paid hours
- food charges
- non-food consumables charges
- activities charges

Itemised invoices need to be in place by January 2026 as set by the DfE. This is to allow parents to see that they have received their child's Funded Entitlement hours completely free of charge and understand that any fees paid are for additional hours or optional services paid for as part of a private arrangement outside their child's Funded Entitlement hours. Invoices and receipts should include the provider's full details so that they can be identified as coming from a specific provider. A sample invoice is available on the [Early Years website](#).

Parents must be able to opt out of paying for chargeable extras and the associated consumable or activity for their child. For activities and extra services, providers should be aware that participation in any optional extra activity should be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness for a parent to meet the charges. Children who do not participate in optional activities must continue to receive high quality provision that complies with the EYFS.

Providers should be mindful of the impact of charges on families, particularly the most disadvantaged. Providers who choose to offer the Funded Entitlements hours, 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.

In all cases, these chargeable extras must not be a condition of taking up a Funded Entitlement place. All parents, including disadvantaged families, must have fair access to a free place. Buckinghamshire Council will intervene if a provider seeks to make additional hours, optional services or optional consumables a mandatory condition of taking up a Funded Entitlement place.

Providers must deliver the Funded Entitlements consistently, so that all children accessing any of the Funded Entitlements receive the same quality and access to provision, regardless of whether they opt to purchase additional hours or services or pay for their meals or consumables. Buckinghamshire Council will not intervene where parents choose to purchase additional hours of provision or additional services, provided that this is not a condition of accessing a Funded Entitlement place.

Buckinghamshire Council will take all steps available to ensure that the Funded Entitlements are available free of charge and therefore that providers do not charge parents for the following in connection with the funded entitlement hours:

- "top up" fees (any difference between a provider's normal charge to parents and the funding they receive from Buckinghamshire Council to deliver Funded Entitlement places)
- the supply of or use of any materials, including but not limited to, craft materials, crayons, paper, books, instruments, toys or other equipment or learning resources that are necessary for the effective delivery of childcare under 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
- require parents to pay a registration fee as a condition of taking up their child's Funded Entitlement place.
- non-refundable deposits as a condition of taking up a child's Funded 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 Funded Entitlement hours
- any additional fees that are not specifically identified and itemised as being for chargeable extras previously in this document

Buckinghamshire Council will investigate where a parent challenges charging arrangements and may take action against the provider if necessary.

Buckinghamshire Council will ensure that providers adhere to the following terms regardless of whether they charge any chargeable extras:

- that providers work with parents so that parents understand which hours and sessions can be taken as free provision. Not all providers will be able to offer fully flexible places, but providers should work with parents to ensure that as far as possible the pattern of the Funded Entitlement hours are convenient for parents' working hours. Buckinghamshire Council will ensure that children are able to take up their Funded Entitlement hours in continuous blocks if they wish to, and there should be no artificial break in the Funded Entitlement hours. For example, a provider should not offer 10am to midday and 1pm to 3pm as Funded Entitlement hours and offer only privately paid hours in between.

Early Years Pupil Premium and Disability Access Fund

The Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) provides additional funding to providers to support the quality of early education for eligible children in their settings.

- EYPP is only paid against **(up to) 15 hours** of funding
- for **two-year-olds accessing the Disadvantaged Funded Entitlement only**, EYPP is added to **all funded hours**
- for **two-year-olds** eligible for **both the Disadvantaged Funded Entitlement and the Working Parent Funded Entitlement**, EYPP is applied to the **disadvantaged portion** only
- for the under two-year-old and two-year-old **Working Parent-only** Funded Entitlement, EYPP is paid for the **first 15 hours** (or the stretched equivalent)
- for **three- and four-year-olds**, EYPP will continue to be added to all **Universal** Funded Entitlement hours only

The Disability Access Funding (DAF) supports eligible, disabled children's access to the entitlements.

Eligibility for EYPP and DAF is for all children accessing the Funded Entitlement.

Deposits

Providers are allowed to charge parents a reasonable refundable deposit to secure their child's Funded Entitlement place, but this is not compulsory. Buckinghamshire Council requires this deposit to be refunded in full to the parents within six weeks of the date the child starts with the provider. If the place is no longer available to the parent, then the provider must return the deposit immediately. If the child does not take up their place, then the provider may retain the deposit. Providers are encouraged to consider whether charging a deposit to an eligible disadvantaged two-year-old, or to a three-year-old accessing only their Universal hours, may prove to be a barrier to a family accessing a place.

Inclusion

All providers including childminders in the maintained and private, voluntary, and independent (PVI) sector that are approved to deliver the Early Education Funding Entitlement must be aware of their statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 and to have regard to the 'Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years'.

In addition, the Children and Families Act 2014 requires all Local Authorities to produce a Local Offer which sets out in one place information about services available for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Buckinghamshire Council require all providers to publish their Local Offer via the provider portal on the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service (BFIS) website. Providers should be clear, transparent, and consistent about the SEND support available at their setting, and to also have this information readily available to parents both in person and via the BFIS website, so that they choose the right setting for their child.

Buckinghamshire Council and providers must work together to identify children who qualify for the [Early Years Pupil Premium \(EYPP\)](#) and the [Disability Access Fund \(DAF\)](#) and encourage parents to identify eligible children. Any child who is eligible for a Funded Entitlement place may qualify for EYPP and/or DAF.

Buckinghamshire Council will ensure a strong multi-agency focus by securing local partnerships between all joint working professionals including education, health and social care and employment services.

Buckinghamshire Council will look to encourage the take up of Funded Entitlement places and undertake outreach activities to identify disadvantaged children and children who are not taking up their entitlement or their full hours and support them to do so.

Buckinghamshire Council will take action over concerns about providers that do not actively promote fundamental British values or promote as evidence-based views or theories which are contrary to established scientific or historical evidence and explanation. The DfE define fundamental British values as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. (See [Section A3](#) for further information).

Section A2: Flexibility

DfE Intended Outcome: Children are able to take up their full entitlement to a Funded Entitlement place at times that best support their learning and development, and at times which fit with the needs of parents to enable them to work or increase their hours of work if they wish to do so.

9 months to four-years old children (Disadvantaged, Universal and Working Parent Funded Entitlement)

Buckinghamshire Council will act as a broker between overall parental demand in the area and provider capacity. We will also look to encourage strong partnership working between providers from all sectors to ensure the market offers maximum flexibility for parents to access their Funded Entitlement hours to meet their needs and the needs of their child. This includes maintained schools, academies, and free schools, private, voluntary and independent providers and childminders.

Providers will be required by Buckinghamshire Council to offer flexible packages of Funded Entitlement hours subject to the following criteria:

- no session to be longer than 10 hours
- there will be a minimum session length of 30 minutes (subject to the requirements of registration on the Ofsted Early Years Register) and then increments of 15 minutes thereafter
- no sessions before 6am or after 8pm
- sessions split between a maximum of two sites in a single day
- a maximum of three providers may be used in any one term. Where a parent needs to use more than three providers, please contact the Early Years Service via earlyfunding@buckinghamshire.gov.uk who will consider whether an exceptional decision is warranted

Buckinghamshire Council will ensure that children are able to take up their Funded Entitlement hours in continuous blocks if they wish to, and avoid artificial breaks being created throughout the day, for example over the snack or lunch time period.

Funded places can be delivered by providers:

- over a maximum of 51 weeks of the year
- outside of maintained school term times
- at weekends

There is no requirement for these places to be taken on or delivered at particular times of the day or on particular days of the week. There is also no requirement for providers to be open for at least 38 weeks of the year (equivalent of 3 maintained school terms) or that providers must offer all the Funded Entitlement offers to receive funding from Buckinghamshire Council to deliver funded places. However, Funded Entitlement hours cannot be compressed i.e.: a parent cannot take more than 15 or 30 hours per week over fewer than 38 weeks of the year.

Where a parent chooses to take up their entitlement with a provider, who for good reason is open for less than 38 weeks per year, the placement will be funded for the reduced number of weeks. Providers must advise parents that in making this decision the parent waives their right to the full 38-week entitlement.

Model of delivery

Providers should demonstrate their contribution to the local flexible offer following regular consultation with parents and review of their service offer. Providers may offer parents places based on a 38-week (Buckinghamshire term time only) funding model or a stretched offer model (over 45, 47 or 51 weeks) or both. Childminders are only able to offer a 47 week or 45 weeks offer. If parents are accessing more than one provider the hours can be split freely between providers as long as both/all providers are claiming the same funding model e.g. all term time providers with first provider claiming 20 hours, second provider claiming 5 hours, and third provider claiming 5 hours.

Please note: For three- and four-year-olds a 38-week offer and stretched offer can only both be accessed by an individual within the same term if the Universal and three- and four-year-old working parent entitlement offer are treated completely separately e.g. 15 hours accessed over 38 weeks, and an additional 15 hours accessed over 47 weeks. The hours cannot be accessed on different funding models at only one provider; they must be split across two providers. For two-year-olds and under accessing the working parent 30-hour entitlement with two or more providers using different models, Buckinghamshire Council will use the same rules as for three- and four-year-olds.

Up to 15 hours (or stretched equivalent) for each funding model, for example, the first provider 15 hours accessed over 38 weeks, and the second provider 11 hours accessed over 51 weeks. The stretched offer cannot be varied, and a provider can only offer one choice of stretched offer.

General principles

A signed Parent/Provider Agreement for the Funded Entitlement must be in place. This may be one term at a time or for up to three terms, but a new form must be completed for each academic year or, if there is no change, the relevant section on the amendments sheet must be signed and dated by the parent. This must then be filed alongside the original Parent/Provider Agreement form.

- a provider does not have to operate every day of the week (e.g. closed for bank holidays)
- each provider must manage the agreement to ensure that the hours offered meet the statutory entitlement. Parents may choose how many hours to access at each setting, but this must fit within the providers, flexible offer' for session lengths. Any disputes that relate to allocation of funding will be settled by Buckinghamshire Council and the signed Parent/Provider Agreement for Funded Entitlement form will be used to inform the decision
- where a parent of an eligible three- or four-year-old chooses to use more than one provider to access up to their 30 hours working parent entitlement, they must specify on the Parent/Provider Agreement for Funded Entitlement which provider they are accessing for their Universal Funded Entitlement and which provider they are accessing for their additional 15 hour working parent entitlement. This is parental choice and cannot be influenced by either provider
- a child's 15-hour entitlement may not be accessed across both a stretched and a 38-week provider at the same time. A parent may choose to take their 15 Universal hours at one provider and their additional 15 hour working parent entitlement at a different provider where one provider delivers a stretched offer and the other 38 weeks.
- a child may change from stretched offer to term time only and vice versa at the end of a funding period, but not mid-term either at the same provider, or when moving to a new provider
- providers should make it clear in their admission/fee policy to parents, the number of Funded Entitlement hours in each session and be clear about any additional childcare related charges

Where parents feel that the Funded Entitlement is not being made available in the correct way they may raise their concerns to Buckinghamshire Council - [Reference Part C - Information to Parents](#). However, parents must be aware that the entitlement to a funded place does not offer a guarantee of a place at any one provider or a particular pattern of provision.

The 38 weeks (Term Time only model)

As a minimum, a parent can expect, where reasonably practical, the following offers to be available in their local area:

For the disadvantaged two-year old, and the three- and four-year-old Universal 15-hour entitlements:

- 3-hour sessions over 5 days
- 5-hour sessions over 3 days
- 15 hours over two or more days (Minimum 0.5 hours per day / max 10 hours per day)

For the 30-hour working parent Entitlement:

- 6-hour sessions over 5 days
- 10-hour sessions over 3 days
- 30 hours over 3 or more days (Minimum 0.5 hours per day / max 10 hours per day)

Providers offering the Buckinghamshire term time only model should set out how many Funded Entitlement hours parents are getting per day per week and at what specific times of the day, to ensure parents understand what funded entitlement hours they are receiving over the calendar year from when their child first becomes eligible. They are required to clearly state their Funded Entitlement offer in their admission/fee policy for parents alongside any voluntary charges associated with Funded Entitlement hours.

Whilst providers have some flexibility to define their start and end dates, these must fall within the parameters set in the Buckinghamshire Funding Timetable. **Providers still need to consider Buckinghamshire term dates and parental need when setting their term dates.**

Stretched offers.

Providers may select from one of the three following stretched offers – 51 weeks, 47 weeks, and 45 weeks. Childminders are only able to offer a 47 week or 45 week offer. Please note that a provider can only have **one** stretched offer available to parents. For any provider using a stretched offer other than 51 weeks, the provider must advise, via a claim form, which weeks they will not be open and this needs to be done at the start of each academic year.

51 Weeks:

Providers may offer a stretched 51 week offer as long as:

- the funded weeks are continuous (e.g. no closures for half term)
- the stretched offer funding weeks must be whole weeks - they must start on a Monday and end on a Friday (Sunday if open at weekends)

For all 15-hour entitlements the stretched offer will be 11 hours x 51 weeks plus 3 residual hours per term. Residual hours can only be claimed where a child attends a provision for more than their Funded Entitlement hours or where the provider has the capacity to offer the hours in an additional session, and the 3 hours per term can only be claimed by the provider where this benefit is passed on to parents. The residual hours box on the claim form must be completed with a “Y.”

For eligible 9 month to four-year-olds the stretched offer model for the working parent entitlement hours will be 22 hours x 51 weeks plus 6 residual hours per term. Residual hours can only be claimed where a child attends a provision for more than their Funded Entitlement hours or where the provider has the capacity to offer the hours in an additional session, and the 6 hours per term can only be claimed by the provider where this benefit is passed on to parents. The residual hour's box on the claim form must be completed with a “Y.”

47 Weeks:

Providers may offer a stretched 47 week offer as long as:

- the funded weeks are as notified by the provider on the claim form
- the stretched offer funding weeks must be whole weeks - they must start on a Monday and end on a Friday (Sunday if open at weekends)

For all 15-hour entitlements the stretched offer will be 12 hours x 47 weeks plus 2 residual hours per term. Residual hours can only be claimed where a child attends a provision for more than their Funded Entitlement hours or where the provider has the capacity to offer the hours in an additional session, and the 2 hours per term can only be claimed by the provider where this benefit is passed on to parents. The residual hour's box on the claim form must be completed with a “Y.”

For eligible 9 months to four-year-olds the stretched offer model for the working parent entitlement hours will be 24 hours x 47 weeks plus 4 residual hours per term. Residual hours can only be claimed where a child attends a provision for more than their Funded Entitlement hours or where the provider has the capacity to offer the hours in an additional session, and the 4 hours per term can only be claimed by the provider where this benefit is passed on to parents. The residual hour's box on the claim form must be completed with a “Y.”

45 Weeks:

Providers may offer a stretched 45 week offer as long as:

- the funded weeks are as notified by the provider on the claim form
- the stretched offer funding weeks must be whole weeks - they must start on a Monday and end on a Friday (Sunday if open at weekends)

For all 15-hour entitlements the stretched offer will be 12.5 hours x 45 weeks plus 2.5 residual hours per term. Residual hours can only be claimed where a child attends a provision for more than their Funded Entitlement hours or where the provider has the capacity to offer the hours in an additional session, and the 2.5 hours per term can only be claimed by the provider where this benefit is passed on to parents. The residual hours box on the claim form must be completed with a “Y.”

For eligible 9 months to four-year-olds the stretched offer model for the working parent entitlement hours will be 25 hours x 45 weeks plus 5 residual hours per term. Residual hours can only be claimed where a child attends a provision for more than their Funded Entitlement hours or where the provider has the capacity to offer the hours in an additional session, and the 5 hours per term can only be claimed by the provider where this benefit is passed on to parents. The residual hours box on the claim form must be completed with a “Y.”

Parents may use two stretched providers to access Funded Entitlements for any eligible child. It is the providers’ role to agree how the entitlement is accessed across the two settings and which provider will claim the residual hours. The Parent/Provider Agreement for Funded Entitlement form must clearly show how many hours are being accessed at each provider. The total hours across both providers must not exceed the maximum hours available during any week depending on the stretched offer being accessed i.e. 11, 12 or 12.5 hours for the 15-hour Entitlements; and 22, 24 or 25 hours for the 30-hour working parent entitlement. Please refer to the funding timetable for the stretched offer period dates. Providers will be advised of the maximum number of hours available within the Buckinghamshire funding periods.

Please note: It is imperative that providers record on their funding claim form the number of hours per week a child is attending along with the number of hours per week that are being claimed, to determine whether the residual hours may be claimed. If you are providing the full entitlement during the term and the total hours on the funding claim does not equal the full allowance for the term, you should put a “Y” in the Residual Hours box and make a comment that the full allowance is being used.

Accessibility

The stretched offer is available from the start of any stretched offer period. Providers need to be clear and transparent regarding their admissions criteria so that:

- the order of priority for admission is clearly stated in the Admissions Policy
- the requirements of the Equalities Act and SEN Code of Practice are met
- there is no barrier to access for vulnerable children
- a provider does not refuse a child, who only wishes to access their Funded Entitlement place, where that place is available

Switching to and from the standard 38-week model

A child may cease to take part in the stretched offer at the end of any of the stretched offer funding periods. At the start of the next academic term funding block the child would be entitled to access up to 15 hours (or 30 hours) per week of Funded Entitlement for the relevant Buckinghamshire term period. Due to the difference in available hours between term time and stretched offers within each funding period, a child moving from one to the other may not be able to take up maximum hours in the following terms of that funding year if they have accessed more hours previously as this may take them over their 570/1140 annual funding hours limit. Buckinghamshire Council will notify the new provider on submission of the claim forms if this is the case for a particular child.

A child cannot switch funding models mid-term unless there are exceptional circumstances, and this would be decided on by Buckinghamshire Council on a case-by-case basis.

Where a child moves from one provider to another after the start of the term, and has been attending the first provision, the first provider will retain the funding for the remainder of the **half term (inclusive of the holiday period)** providing there is an accurate and up to date Parent/Provider Agreement for Funded Entitlement form in place and the terms of the agreement have been met. Unless the child meets the exceptional criteria, the new provider (including maintained / academy nursery classes and nursery schools) will not be funded until the start of the next half term. Buckinghamshire Council’s published school term dates will be used to determine the half term dates.

Section A3: Quality

DfE Intended Outcome: all children are able to take up their funded hours in a high-quality setting. Evidence shows that higher quality provision has greater developmental benefits for children, particularly for the most disadvantaged children, leading to better outcomes. This guidance reflects the government's intention that, as far as possible, funded places are delivered by providers who have achieved an overall rating of "outstanding" or "good" in their most recent Ofsted inspection report.

For all state funded schools, except maintained nursery schools inspected after 2 September 2024, this means those achieving good or better in the early years provision judgement. For maintained nursery schools this means not being judged to require significant improvement or special measures.

References to a provider's Ofsted judgement in this guidance should be read to include the inspection judgement of an independent inspectorate approved by the Secretary of State for Education.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (EYFS) is mandatory for all early years providers in England (unless granted exemption by the DfE). The EYFS was split into two documents in January 2024 for clarity and to address the different needs of settings. A separate EYFS statutory framework for childminders and a version for group and school-based provision.

The EYFS sets out the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. Ofsted and inspectorates of independent schools have regards to the EYFS in carrying out inspections and report on the quality and standards of provision. All Ofsted early years providers will receive an Ofsted inspection within current Ofsted timeframes. Once the inspection has taken place, providers should notify Buckinghamshire Council of the outcome within 3 working days from the date of the inspection.

NB: All Buckinghamshire providers must be approved to be listed on the Directory and be meeting Buckinghamshire Council's general terms and conditions as set out in our LA/Provider Agreement (FE contract) to be able to apply for their funding, irrespective of their Ofsted judgement. Funding cannot be applied for retrospectively.

Buckinghamshire Council will:

- rely solely on the Ofsted inspection judgement of the provider or the childminder agency as the benchmark of quality
- not withdraw funding from providers until the provider's or childminder agency's Ofsted inspection judgement is published
- fund places for eligible children at providers who are newly registered with Ofsted until the provider's first full Ofsted inspection judgement is published or at a childminder or childcare provider registered with an agency until the agency's first full Ofsted inspection judgement is published. Providers must be compliant with Buckinghamshire Council's general terms and conditions to take eligible 9 months to four-year-olds
- fund providers who are awarded a Good or Outstanding judgement by Ofsted (or a similar judgement within the new Ofsted framework November 2025) or at any childminder or childcare provider registered with a childminder agency judged "effective" by Ofsted, and who are compliant with Buckinghamshire Council's general terms and conditions to take eligible 9 months to four-year-olds. For all state funded schools, except maintained nursery schools, inspected after 2 September 2024, this means those achieving good or better (or a similar judgement within the new Ofsted framework November 2025) in the early year provision judgement. For maintained nursery schools this means not being judged to require significant improvement or special measures
- fund providers who are awarded a Requires Improvement judgement (or a similar judgement within the new Ofsted framework November 2025) only for 9-month-olds to two-year-olds accessing their eligible working parent hours, and all three- and four- year- olds, and who are compliant with Buckinghamshire Council's general terms and conditions for to take eligible 9 months to four-year-olds. From November 2025 this will also apply to providers where Ofsted have graded "Leadership and Governance" as "Needs attention" or below. Funding for disadvantaged two-year-olds will be withdrawn as soon as is practicable following the date of publication of the report. This also includes all state funded schools inspected after 2 September 2024 judged as not requiring significant improvement or placed in special measures.

Providers must be able to evidence that they are working successfully to a robust action plan demonstrating how they plan to make good progress in addressing the quality improvements concerns raised by Ofsted. Buckinghamshire Council may take the decision to fund disadvantaged two-year-olds accessing a funded hours place at providers with a Requires Improvement judgement to ensure sufficiency of places

- withdraw all funding from those with a published judgement of Inadequate (or a similar judgement within the new Ofsted framework November 2025) by Ofsted (other than a local authority-maintained school) as soon as is practicable following the date of publication of the report. From November 2025 this will also apply to providers where Ofsted have given a “Safeguarding” outcome of “Not met” and/or where they have graded “Leadership and Governance” as “Urgent improvement”. Where Ofsted, in their report, have expressed concern about keeping children safe, funding may be withdrawn sooner. Where a parent chooses to move their child partway through the term from an Inadequate provider, Buckinghamshire Council will fund that child with the new provider from their start date and stop funding to the Inadequate provider (or provider achieving an inspection judgement that indicates provision is below Expected Standard) from the date they leave. Buckinghamshire Council reserves the right to vary the defined period depending on the severity of issues raised by Ofsted and the timescale of the Ofsted judgement being published
- withdraw all funding when Ofsted publish a second consecutive inspection judgment of a childminder agency of “ineffective”, except where Ofsted has not identified any concerns about the childminder agency’s assessment arrangements. Where a parent chooses to move their child partway through the term from an “ineffective” childminder agency provider, Buckinghamshire Council will fund that child with the new provider from their start date and stop funding to the childminder agency provider from the date they leave
- not fund childminders or childcare providers registered with a childminder agency where the agency has indicated to the local authority that the childminder or childcare provider is not of the appropriate quality unless it is necessary to do so to ensure sufficiency of places or support parental choice
- Buckinghamshire Council will take appropriate action to improve the quality of provision at a local authority maintained school which has been judged by Ofsted to require significant improvement or has been placed in special measures. The DfE states that because of the different relationship between local authorities and the schools they maintain including the duty for the authority to maintain the schools, there are some differences in the way the entitlement regulations apply to maintained schools compared to other providers. In particular:
 - local authorities are not required to include provision in their arrangements with maintained schools, enabling the local authority to terminate the arrangements in certain circumstances including if the provider does not achieve the specified Ofsted judgements
 - the requirements that local authorities can impose on maintained schools are not limited by the entitlement regulations
- fund providers with an Ofsted judgement of “Met” until their Ofsted quality inspection judgement is published. We will not fund providers who receive an Ofsted inspection judgement of “Not Met”.
- Buckinghamshire Council will not fund providers who do not actively promote fundamental British values or if they promote views or theories as fact which are contrary to established scientific or historical evidence and explanations. The DfE define British values as “democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those of other faiths and beliefs” – Section A1.33 of the Statutory Guidance
- suspend funding or remove their listing on the Directory for those providers that the Local Authority Directory Steering Group (LADSG) determines are at risk of not keeping children safe or who do not meet Buckinghamshire Council’s general terms and conditions of funding. [See Section 2.12 for further information regarding LADSG](#)

As an exception to the above quality categories and subject to budget, Buckinghamshire Council may fund individual disadvantaged children where it is determined to be in the best interest of the child.

- the implementation by Buckinghamshire Council of a funding suspension or the removal of a provider from the Directory will not be delayed pending the outcome of an appeal or complaint to Ofsted, either about an inspector or the outcome of an inspection. However, should the Ofsted judgement change because of the appeal, then Buckinghamshire Council will provide retrospective funding for the children

who remained on roll

- providers should be aware that Buckinghamshire Council, when taking decisions linked to funding, will also consider any information published by Ofsted about a provider or childminder agency, about childcare provision by a particular provider, or childcare provision at a particular address. This may include, for example, where Buckinghamshire Council may have the concern that a provider judged “inadequate” by Ofsted may have re-registered their setting with Ofsted to avoid making the quality improvements identified by Ofsted.

Section A4: Funding Places

DfE Intended Outcome: fair and transparent funding which supports a diverse range of providers to deliver Funded Entitlement places on a sustainable basis and encourages existing providers to expand and a new provider to enter the childcare market. This diversity enables parents to choose a provider(s) that best meets the needs of their child and family.

Requirements on Buckinghamshire Council:

Buckinghamshire Council is committed to working in partnership with providers from all sectors, and actively supporting partnerships between providers, to ensure that funded places are of high quality, flexible, and accessible, giving parents a choice about how and where they take up their child’s Funded Entitlement hours.

Buckinghamshire Council aims to provide fair and transparent funding which will ensure the proper use of public funds whilst supporting a diverse range of providers. Any administration requirements of providers will be made as minimal as possible.

Requirements on providers:

Buckinghamshire Council will not fund FE places with a provider where we have reasonable grounds to believe:

- the provider does not meet the independent school standard in relation to the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of pupils
- there is no active promotion of fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- the provider is promoting as fact, views or theories which are contrary to established scientific or historical evidence and explanations

Please reference the [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage \(publishing.service.gov.uk\) for further guidance](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/guidance).

Buckinghamshire Council will not be proactively inspecting providers, but we will investigate any substantive and well-evidenced concerns regarding any of the three points above with a view to withdrawing funding should these concerns be justified.

School Census and Early Years Census

Providers are required by law to complete either the termly school census or the annual Early Years census. PVI providers, including independent schools and childminders registered with Ofsted or a childminder agency, should complete the Early Years Census. Maintained nursery schools, maintained schools, academies and free schools with an age range of 2 or 3 years upwards complete the school census. Schools with an age range of 4 years upwards who operate early year’s provision under S27 of the 2002 Education Act should make their return via the early years census: full clarification can be found in the [Early Years and Childcare - Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities document](#)

Free School Meals (FSM)

Where a two-, three- or four-year-old is registered to attend a maintained nursery school, nursery class within a maintained school, they may be eligible for FSM. To qualify, the child must be registered with the school and attending Funded Entitlement Early Education sessions both before and after lunch and the family must be in receipt of specific benefits. The school is required to provide a meal to eligible children whose parents wish to take up the entitlement. Please note: FSM Entitlement does not apply to the PVI sector, Section 27 schools or academies.

Schools are funded for FSMs based on October Census for the following academic year.

Local Management of the Funded Entitlement for 9 months to four years old

Part B: Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

DfE Intended Outcome: Parents are able to work, study or train to assist them to obtain work, because childcare places are available, accessible, and affordable and are delivered flexibly in a range of high-quality settings.

Every year Buckinghamshire Council will prepare and publish a [sufficiency assessment of the childcare](#) provision within Buckinghamshire. The latest report is available on the Buckinghamshire Council website.

Part C: information to Parents

DfE Intended Outcome: parents and prospective parents can access online or are provided with comprehensive and up to date information about childcare and early education, including funded places in their area, usually via the Family Information Service.

The Buckinghamshire Family Information Service (BFIS) is a free and impartial information service for parents/carers with children aged 0-19 years (25 years SEND). It provides information to parents/carers on childcare funding, available childcare places within Buckinghamshire, tax free childcare and other key childcare advice and support.

To give parents the best chance to find information on providers able to offer any of the Funded Entitlement offers, providers need to ensure their details are correct on the provider portal and that there is a description of the offers available, whether it is a standalone offer or if there is an existing partnership with other providers to give a combined offer.

If providers do not inform (BFIS) that they are offering the eligible working parent entitlement hours and parents search for only providers offering it, then their setting will not appear in the parents' search results. Providers can update their details through their setting's profile on the BFIS website.

Complaints Procedure

If following a discussion directly with their provider, a parent/carer is not satisfied that their child has received their Funded Entitlement place or with any aspect of the way they have received it and wish to complain, then the following procedure is to be followed:

Stage One	The parent should write to the: Early Years Finance and Regulations Manager at Buckinghamshire Council 1st Floor Walton Street Offices Walton Street Aylesbury Buckinghamshire HP20 1UA Or the parent can email earlyyears@buckinghamshire.gov.uk Within 10 days the parent/carer will be notified that their complaint has been received. Then within 28 days the parent will receive a response to the complaint.
Stage Two	If the parent/carer is still unhappy they can request an independent review of their complaint by writing to the: Compliments and Complaints Team at Buckinghamshire Council Walton Street Offices Walton Street Aylesbury Buckinghamshire HP20 1UA The timescales are the same as Stage One

What if the Complainant is still unhappy?

Finally, if the parent is still unhappy, they can ask the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) to look at the problem. This service is free and independent from Buckinghamshire Council. The Ombudsman will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been considered under Buckinghamshire Council's Feedback and Complaints procedure. Please note that there are a small number of types of complaint which the LGO is unable to investigate - families should contact the LGO for advice as to whether their complaint is something the LGO is able to investigate.

Local Government Ombudsman Website: https://www.lgo.org.uk/	Advice Line: 0300 0610 614 Text: "Call Back" to 0762 481 1595
<i>Please Note: If the complaint is regarding the eligibility outcome from the HMRC website, then the only option open to the parent is to contact HMRC direct – 0300 123 4097</i>	

Admission to School

Children are entitled to start school in a reception class full-time from September if they are four years of age on or before 31 August. Parents may choose to take up this entitlement on a part time basis or to defer entry until a later date if they feel it is in their child's best interest. Where a parent defers entry, the child retains their entitlement to 15 hours of funded childcare (30 hours if applicable) with a private or voluntary provider or in a nursery class up to and including the term in which they turn 5. Parents should be advised, however, that if their child does not take up their place in a reception class by the summer term of the following year that they will need to reapply for year one (refer to the School's Admissions Policy).

Please Note:

- children in an independent school reception class which is not funded by Buckinghamshire Council are entitled to access up to 30 hours of Funded Entitlement childcare up until they reach compulsory school age. The school has to be on Buckinghamshire Council's Directory in order for the funded hours to be accessed
- **All children are legally required to be in school full time by the term after their fifth birthday.** Parents must understand that a school nursery place does not guarantee admission to the school and that parents **must** apply for admission through the routes required for their preferred school

The Buckinghamshire Council's Guidance on the Directory

The Directory is Buckinghamshire Council's list of approved Funded Entitlement childcare providers who are able to offer funded places to eligible children aged 9 months to four-years-old within Buckinghamshire. The definition by Buckinghamshire Council of a provider can be found in the section below. A provider will not receive any funding from Buckinghamshire Council unless they have been through the application process and subsequently approved to go on to the Buckinghamshire Council Directory.

Section 2.1: Who is eligible to join the directory?

- providers registered with Ofsted on the Early Years Register (including childminders, and childminders or childcare providers registered with a Childminding Agency, which is itself registered with Ofsted)
- Maintained Nursery Schools, schools, academies, and free schools with a nursery class
- Independent schools registered with the DfE with a nursery unit/class

Providers currently in receipt of the Funding Entitlement are identified as existing approved providers and are on the current Directory. They are all eligible to take 9 months to four- year-old funded children if they are registered for this age group and have a Good or better Ofsted judgement. "Existing Members" that are judged as Requires Improvement are eligible to take all funded children except for the Disadvantaged Funded Entitlement two-year-olds unless an exception has been agreed on the grounds of sufficiency or the needs of an individual child. – [See Section A3: Quality](#)

Please note: Nannies and home-based carers are currently not permitted to register on the Early Years Register and cannot therefore receive free entitlement funding.

Minimum offer

All funded providers must offer Funded Entitlement places that do not require parents to purchase additional hours or services if they do not wish to. Top-up and/or registration fees must not be applied to Funded Entitlement places only i.e. where no private childcare hours are being purchased by the parent. Top-up charges are deemed to have occurred where, for example, a provider applies a charge to the Funded Entitlement hours (such as a consumables charge) to achieve the exact same level of income as the provider charges for private childcare.

Section 2.2: Application Process for Approval to the Directory

In order to receive funding, providers are required to enter into a contractual arrangement with Buckinghamshire Council which is called the Local Authority/Provider Agreement (FE contract). By signing the Local Authority/Provider Agreement (FE contract) all parties are making a commitment to ensuring that they deliver high quality funded provision for children in Buckinghamshire.

A provider may apply to join the directory before their Ofsted registration is complete. There are up to eight stages to the application process which are detailed below:

Stage One	The provider submits by email earlyyears@buckinghamshire.gov.uk • Admissions Policy – Showing the times a parents can access their Funded Entitlement hours with no conditions of access • Fees Policy – Evidence of information supplied to parents regarding charges for additional private childcare hours and voluntary charges for consumables and additional activities, if applicable • sample copy of a parental invoice
Stage Two	Documents are reviewed by the Early Years Service within Buckinghamshire Council. An Early Years Officer will arrange to visit the premises where they will discuss your policies with you to confirm if the safeguarding policy is compliant and check the safeguarding and welfare procedures. The provider is notified of any changes that are necessary to meet the mandatory requirements. The Officer will also need to see evidence of the Public Liability Insurance certificate with a minimum of £10,000,000 cover and evidence of Food hygiene training certificate (if appropriate). The Officer will also discuss the proposed service, the Funded Entitlement offer(s), and the expectation of Buckinghamshire Council.
Stage Three	Provider submits any changes to meet mandatory requirements if applicable. The Local Offer must be published on Buckinghamshire Family Information Service once the Ofsted registration is Active. From January 2026 providers will also be required to publish their funded sessions times and their charges on their website or on their BFIS record if they do not have a website. This will become a directory application requirement from January 2026. Childminders and providers caring for less than 10 children at any one time are exempt from this requirement only.
Stage Four	Early Years Ofsted Registration status reviewed by Buckinghamshire Council. Where providers have a current Ofsted judgement this is also reviewed to ensure the provider would be eligible under the regulations to offer Funded Entitlement places. Buckinghamshire Council cannot fund a provider until the Ofsted Registration is Active.
Stage Five	Once the requirements have been met by the provider, Buckinghamshire Council will then approve the Directory application.
Stage Six	Buckinghamshire Council notifies provider of the following outcome: (NB: more than one group may apply) • approve listing onto the Directory for 9 months to four-year-olds • approve listing onto the Directory for children accessing the Working Parent Funded Entitlement and the Universal Funded Entitlement • approve under exceptional circumstances for Disadvantaged two-year olds as well as all other funded 9 months to four-year-olds • directory listing declined (subject to an Ofsted judgement of Inadequate or Unmet and/or non- compliance with minimum terms and conditions) – • appeals procedure can be found in Section 2.13
Stage Seven	Provider returns completed and signed LA/Provider Agreement (FE contract) by email to earlyyears@buckinghamshire.gov.uk and uploads via their Anycomms+ secure file transfer account bank details on signed and headed notepaper, relevant to trading status e.g. with company/organisation heading

Stage Eight	Once the above process has been completed the provider is included on the Buckinghamshire Council Directory of approved Funded Entitlement providers and issued with a URN (Unique reference Number). The URN is used by the provider to claim funding from Buckinghamshire Council. Funding continues subject to the provider's compliance with the terms and conditions of the Directory.
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Note: Buckinghamshire Council do not require a copy of the Equality of Opportunities Policy to be submitted with an application, however if a provider is found not to be compliant at a later date, funding may be affected.

Any enquires regarding the overall application process or your current position in the process should be directed to earlyyears@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

The timescale for applications

A provider may submit a request for approval to the Directory whilst their application for registration with Ofsted is progressing. This will enable the Early Years Service to support a provider prior to opening. Where a new setting meets all requirements, funding for eligible 9 months to four- year-olds will be agreed from the start date of opening a new business (i.e. date of registration with Ofsted or the start of service delivery, whichever is the latter). Providers should ensure that all paperwork submitted is in a suitable format and is accurate and complete.

Funding cannot be paid retrospectively and providers who have not been confirmed for approval to the Directory will not be eligible to claim funding for any Funded Entitlement places they have provided prior to receiving a URN (Unique Reference Number).

Providers should be aware that registration with Ofsted can take up to a maximum of 8 weeks to complete. Please note that Ofsted monitors its own timelines and Buckinghamshire Council cannot be responsible for an Ofsted registration process that stretches past 8 weeks.

Individual providers who have more than one Ofsted registration (e.g. more than one premises or a combination of childminding and setting-based provision) will be required to submit a directory application for each separate registration where funding is to be claimed. This is to ensure funding hours can be assigned to the relevant provision and Ofsted registration as required by the Department for Education (DfE).

Directory applications are considered against standard criteria; however, this **will be subject to confirmation of Ofsted/DfE registration**. Notification of the outcome will generally be within three weeks of application if all paperwork is complete and policy standards are met.

For applications that demonstrate unusual circumstances that are outside the standard criteria, the application will be referred to the Local Authority Directory Steering Group (LADSG) for consideration. [Further information on LADSG can be found in Section 2.12](#)

These timescales are advisory only. From time to time, Buckinghamshire Council may take longer to process an application, for example where unusually high volumes of applications are received. Buckinghamshire Council may exercise discretion in relation to the funding start date in order to satisfy its statutory functions.

Section 2.3: Contractual Agreement

In addition to the requirements of the above agreement (FE contract), both Buckinghamshire Council and the provider will agree to the following:

Buckinghamshire Council will:

- target support to providers setting up new businesses and target support where appropriate pre and post Ofsted registration and up until first inspection
- target support to those providers judged as Requires Improvement, Unmet, and Inadequate, supporting them to improve issues raised in the Ofsted inspection report
- target support and resources to broker places and address disadvantage within families and communities. focus of support and resources may change dependent on current priorities
- publish indicative budgets and funding rates by 31 March for the following financial year
- in addition, Maintained Nursery Schools will receive a lump sum (reviewed annually), in recognition of the additional costs of running a school including the requirement to appoint a Headteacher. Details will be included in the indicative budget notification. This is subject to any future amendments as set out in the Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF)

Information regarding the [hourly rate](#) paid by Buckinghamshire Council can be found at: Early Years - National Funding Formula.

For 9 months to four-year- olds	Pay providers an hourly rate based on participation. Additional supplements are included for deprivation and quality. (The quality supplement is directly linked to the qualification information submitted by the provider on the staffing portal)
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Funded providers will:

- sign and return the Local Authority/Provider Agreement (FE contract) and comply with the terms and conditions
- maintain up to date and accurate information regarding staffing qualifications on the staffing portal
- return electronically through Anycomms software Audit, Census and Funded Entitlement claim forms within the prescribed timelines, in order that Buckinghamshire Council can claim government funding and make appropriate payments to providers. Forms received over email will not be processed

Buckinghamshire Council loses all funding from the DfE for providers who do not submit census returns on time.

Section 2.4: General Terms and Conditions

These conditions, together with the LA/Provider Agreement FE Contract and the DfE Statutory Guidance, form the basis of the contractual arrangement between Buckinghamshire Council and all providers listed on the Directory. By offering Funded Entitlement places you are agreeing to the terms and conditions of this contract and work towards achieving and/or maintaining a Good or Outstanding quality Ofsted inspection judgement in a timely manner.

The following conditions only apply to the care and education of children for whom the Funding Entitlement is being claimed.

1. Only providers who have been approved to be listed on the Directory and signed the LA/Provider Agreement (FE contract) will receive funding for eligible children.
2. Early Years provision by a childminder for a related child does not count as childcare in legal terms. Therefore, government funding cannot be claimed by, or spent on, childminders providing childcare for their own child, a related child, or a child they are fostering, even if they are claiming for other children.
3. The funding claim must be made within the timescales and using the procedures set down by Buckinghamshire Council. Claims submitted after the deadline will not be processed and will not be paid until the next payment date. Any funding claims that are submitted after the deadline may not be processed within timescales. (See Appendix B for further details). **Providers must check their claim payments and any errors must be advised within the academic term in which they occurred** and will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Any underpayments notified after the academic term in which they occurred will not be corrected until the next payment cycle.
4. If there are any changes which providers believe might affect their eligibility, such as changes of contact details, correspondence address, registered person or supervisor, number of places, change of location or bank account details, providers must update the provider portal or contact earlyfunding@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
5. Providers must undertake to repay on demand, any payment of funding if that payment was:
 - made to a provider for children not in attendance at the provision
 - made incorrectly, irrespective of fault
6. It is a condition of funding that this recovery may be made by an appropriate reduction in the payment due in the following funding period. However, if a request for repayment of an invoice by cheque or alternative payment method is agreed – a prompt settlement is required.
7. Providers are required to submit annually how many funded childcare weeks will be provided and what arrangements of terms/periods are planned.
8. Providers' claims will only be eligible for:
 - children whose third birthday occurs before 1st January for claiming in the spring term, before 1st April for claiming in the summer term or before 1st September for claiming in the autumn term
 - children whose second birthday occurs before 1st January for claiming in the spring term, before 1st April for claiming in the summer term or before 1st September for claiming in the autumn term **and who are confirmed by Buckinghamshire Council or by HMRC as being eligible for a funded two-year-old place**
 - children who reach 9 months old before 1st January for claiming in the spring term, before 1st April for claiming in the summer term or before 1st September for claiming in the autumn term **and who are confirmed by HMRC as being eligible for a Funded Entitlement place**
9. Providers must also agree to provide Buckinghamshire Council with information relating to the provision of the Funding Entitlement through the annual collection of audit and census data, or as requested, for example, to evidence compliance.
10. Buckinghamshire Council provides funding for 570 hours or 1140 hours under the working parent entitlement for each child's birth year in order that providers meet the statutory annual (or where appropriate pro-rata) entitlement for eligible children under the regulations, irrespective of the allocation of hours set within the funding timetable.

Banking and insurance requirements

11. To support smooth payment of claims providers that are limited companies, **must** provide the Council with a company bank account for the purpose of Early Education Funding Entitlement payments. The account must be dual signatory unless a provider is a sole trader or an LA school. Payments can only be made into that account. The details must be sent through to the Funding Team via the providers Anycomms+ secure file transfer account.

Maintained cheque book schools will be paid into the same account as their school budget share. Non cheque book maintained schools receive Early Years funding as a journal payment.

12. For all PVI providers, any change to the bank account details must be confirmed in writing, on company headed notepaper and signed by the official contact for that provider. The details **must** be sent through to the Funding Team via the providers Anycomms+ secure file transfer account.
13. Providers must ensure that they have a minimum of £10m public liability insurance in place at all times, to cover all claims made by, or on behalf of children, staff, and visitors. This must also cover loss or damage to property or goods, personal injury, disease, and death.
14. When requested by Buckinghamshire Council, providers must produce valid certificates of insurance covering these risks. Providers must notify Buckinghamshire Council within seven days of any claim in respect of personal injury, disease or death made against them, irrespective of the time elapsed since the incident occurred.

Audit and record keeping requirements.

15. Providers are required to keep financial accounts for a minimum of seven years.
16. With reasonable notice, providers must make available to Buckinghamshire Council copies of their accounts, including invoices to parents and fees policies, and if relevant, advise Buckinghamshire Council of the date on which audited or independently checked copies have been submitted to an appropriate body, e.g. Companies House if incorporated, or the Charity Commission if a registered charity.
17. Providers must ensure that birth certificates of children are seen prior to the initial claim for the Funded Entitlement and this information must be recorded as 'evidenced' with a date reference and authorising signature on the Parent/Provider Agreement for Funded Entitlement Form. Please note: copies of birth certificates are not required to be kept. Providers must also ensure that the legal surname and forename is recorded on the Parent/Provider Agreement for Funded Entitlement form.
18. Providers must ensure that the staffing portal is kept up to date and that the Local Offer is maintained on the BFIS website.
19. From January 2026 providers must ensure that their website or their BFIS record (if they do not have a website) is kept up to date with their funded sessions times and their charges. Childminders and providers caring for less than 10 children at any one time are exempt from this requirement.
20. Children eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) must be identified on the Parent/Provider Agreement for Funded Entitlement form and indicated on the claim form. Evidence supplied by the provider on request must demonstrate how funding is spent in accordance with the DfE guidance.
21. Children of service personnel Categories 1 and 2 definitions serving in regular HM Forces, Military Units of all forces, or in the Armed Forces of another nation and stationed in England, must be identified on the Parent/Provider Agreement for Funded Entitlement form and indicated on the claim form. Evidence must demonstrate that the child is living with the relevant forces parent.
22. The provider must record the timed presence or absence of each child for whom funding has been claimed and the reason for absence. Please note: That it is also a requirement of the EYFS that there is a daily record kept of the hours of attendance of every child. Extended periods of absence must be recorded and reported to Buckinghamshire Council. [The definition of extended absence can be found in Section 2.7](#)
23. Childminders, sole traders and owners in partnership will not be funded for their own children, those of a close relative, or a child they are fostering, as set out in Section 18 in the Childcare Act 2006.
24. Providers must use their best endeavors to safeguard these arrangements against fraud on the part of directors, governors, committees, staff, or parents with particular regard to inaccurate, incomplete, or misleading claims for payments.
25. Providers may be audited at any time by Buckinghamshire Council or Buckinghamshire Council External Auditors. Providers will, through the LA/Provider Agreement (FE contract), commit to working collaboratively, permitting entry and sharing necessary paperwork to support the auditing body to ensure that the grant funding has been used for its distinct purpose. Buckinghamshire Council requires providers to make available the following paperwork and policies:
26.
 - admissions policies
 - evidence of information supplied to parents regarding charges for additional hours or services
 - child attendance registers
 - Parent/Provider Agreement for Funded Entitlements
 - invoices for services including purchased childcare
 - evidence of reason for prolonged child absence

Any child specific information must be sent securely via the Anycomms+ Secure File Transfer System. Failure to provide evidence via attendance registers of a child's attendance at a childcare provision will result in Buckinghamshire Council reclaiming the relevant terms funding for that child from the childcare provider.

Section 2.5: Procedure for Claiming

The procedure for claiming the Funded Entitlement, which gives details of the requisite forms for completion, is explained below. All data compiled in the forms must be submitted to Buckinghamshire Council by the dates set out in the [Funding Timetable](#). Failure to do so will result in payments being delayed.

Maintained Nursery Classes, Nursery Schools, Academies and Free School where early years children are on school roll.

Payment is made through the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) element of the school budget share and is based on the census data from the previous three termly counts. Adjustments will be made at each term end to reflect actual take up of provision and hours attended.

Cheque book schools and academies will receive 12 monthly payments and maintained schools will receive one lump sum payment at the beginning of the financial year with any adjustments made once a term.

Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) and Section 27 Schools

All providers will be sent a provisional claim form at the start of the second half of the term on which they will be asked to enter the full names and other details of children for whom they wish to claim funding in the next term. The provisional claim form will carry forward the names of any eligible children already funded with the provider, except for late additions to the previous claim.

Providers can only claim on the provisional claim form for those children who are known to be attending the following term. It is in the providers' best interests to avoid uncertain registrations in the provisional claim form, which could make income forecasts inaccurate.

When submitting the provisional claim form, providers must state the number of weeks they will be providing Funded Entitlement in the next funding period and over the academic year. Providers must also detail any specific days that they will not be open, for example, due to the building not being available.

The total number of funded weeks in the academic year may be no more than 51. If, in unforeseeable circumstances, providers are unable to maintain the number of weeks stated, e.g.: if they are forced to close due to flooding, unavailability of staff etc, they must notify Buckinghamshire Council immediately.

A final claim form will be sent to providers at the beginning of the term they are claiming for. Providers can include on these children whose attendance is due to begin before the return date of the claim form. Children starting after this date should be included on a claim form adjustment sheet (CF4).

Providers should ensure that claim forms are returned using the Anycomms+ secure file transfer facility. Claim forms **MUST NOT** be sent by email as this is not a secure method of exchanging data and the claims contain child specific information.

Claim forms received from providers by any method other than the secure file transfer facility **WILL NOT** be processed without prior agreement from the Funding Team. Claim forms must be returned by the date shown to ensure that funding is paid according to the yearly Funding Timetable. Failure to return the fully completed claim form by the specified date will result in delayed funding. ([see Appendix B](#)).

Leavers and joiners

Where a child joins a setting, they will be immediately eligible for pro-rata funding provided the following conditions are met:

- they have not been claiming funding at another provider
- if they are looking to access a working parent entitlement, the eligibility code was obtained by the cut-off date of that term and is not in its grace period when the child starts at the setting

Where children start or leave the setting after the Final Claim form has been submitted, a Claim Form Adjustment Sheet (CF4) must be completed to inform Buckinghamshire Council of changes in attendance and necessary funding adjustments.

If a child moves from one provision to another after the start of the term, but has been attending the first provision, the first provider will retain the funding for the remainder of the half term providing there is an accurate and up to date Parent/Provider Agreement for Funded Entitlement form in place and terms of the agreement have been met. Unless the child meets the exceptional criteria the new provider (including maintained nursery classes, nursery schools, academies, and free schools) will not be funded until the start of the next half term.

Where a parent signs a Parent/Provider Agreement for Funded Entitlement form to start at more than one setting at the same time, only the provider that the child first attends will be paid for the half term period.

There can be no notice period for parents wishing to withdraw their child from a provision when they are accessing only their Funded Entitlement hours. This is because there is no monetary values attached to these hours for the parents. In usual circumstances, funding will remain with the initial provider until the half term.

Settling in periods

Where appropriate, a provider may phase in hours to meet new children's unique needs, over a maximum period of up to three weeks. By the end of the three-week period, children should be attending for their full hours as set out in the Parent/Provider Agreement for Funded Entitlement form. During the settling in period, children must be attending for some hours each week, and more than one hour at a time, for a maximum of three weeks otherwise they will be treated as a late starter. Visits to a provider where the parent(s) are staying with the child would not count here.

Where a provider decides to stagger their intake over a number of weeks, children will only be funded from the start date recorded on the claim form/school census, as verified in the registers.

Payments and adjustments for PVI providers delivering Funded Entitlement

From September 2025 providers can choose how they wish to receive their funding payments:

- monthly by BACS credit transfer in accordance with the dates on the funding timetable: or
- twice per term, six times per year by BACS credit transfer in accordance with the dates on the funding timetable

The total payment for each term's funding is made of the following two calculations:

- a provisional payment of 50% of funding based on Provisional Claim Form
- final payment of 50% funding adjusted as per any changes made on the Final Claim Form

Monthly payments are made up of the provisional payment amount split into two payments, and the final payment split into two payments.

Providers may only claim funding in respect of entitlement hours for which no private charge is made to parents/carers.

Providers must not charge parents in advance for Funded Entitlement hours and refund them at a later date.

For a provider who is solely a school holiday club, Buckinghamshire Council reserve the right to defer the provisional payment and to fund them on the final claim only, providing there is no adverse effect on the provider's cash flow and subsequent sustainability.

Claim periods / terms and sessions / hours.

The Funded Entitlement is payable for children within the eligible birth date range attending up to 15 or 30 hours per week for up to 38 weeks per year or stretched over up to a maximum of 51 weeks per year. The statutory entitlement is 570 or 1140 hours for the child's birth year. The funding timetable follows the academic year from September to August and the total hours per Buckinghamshire term will remain the same. The 38 weeks are divided into term periods

which stay the same every year. These periods would be as follows:

Autumn Term – 1st September to 31st December (maximum 14 weeks)

Spring Term – 1st January to 31st March (maximum 11 weeks)

Summer Term – 1st April to 31st August (Maximum 13 weeks)

The dates a provider is open and closed will be at their discretion and a provider will not be restricted to only being able to open and close within the Buckinghamshire school term dates. Providers are also able to choose when they close for half term, if applicable. However, so that children can still change providers during the term, the Early Years Funding Team will still use the published Buckinghamshire Council school half term as the date the funding will change. Providers are asked to state their opening and closing term dates on the funding claim forms and will be paid for the number of weeks they are open, up to the maximum hours claimable in any period.

Providers may not claim for more than 570 / 1140 hours funding for each individual child's funding birth year.

Flexible framework

Where possible, providers should organise their Funded Entitlement hours flexibly to meet the needs of parents. Providers should organise their Funded Entitlement hours to meet the following criteria:

The Framework	
Funded Entitlement for eligible nine months to two-year-olds	30 hours a week over minimum of three days (which may include weekends if available)
Funding Entitlement for disadvantaged two-year-olds and Universal hours for three- and four-year-olds	15 hours a week over minimum of two days (which may include weekends if available)
Eligible Working Parent Entitlement for three and four year olds	15 hours a week over minimum of two days (which may include weekends if available)
Minimum Hours in Day	½ hour
Maximum Hours in a Day	10 hours in one day
Number of Providers	Maximum of two sites in one day (unless Buckinghamshire Council deems exceptional circumstances) and a maximum of three providers in total in any one term, unless otherwise agreed by Buckinghamshire Council

A child must attend for the number of hours claimed, unless special circumstances apply and have been agreed with Buckinghamshire Council. Written evidence of agreement should be retained by the provider for audit purposes.

Using multiple providers

Where multiple providers are used, the providers must work together and share information to ensure that the parent is accessing the Funded Entitlement correctly and that the combination of hours fits within the national framework for delivery.

A Parent / Provider Agreement for Funded Entitlement must be completed by both providers, and both signed by the parents.

If a child is attending at more than one provider, including Buckinghamshire Council maintained schools, funding can be split between them but no more than 15 hours per week (maximum of 12.6 hours per week if stretched dependent on the number of weeks) and 30 hours per week (maximum of 25.3 hours per week if stretched dependent on the number of weeks) and eligible for Eligible Working Parent Entitlement, can be claimed in total. The parent/carer must decide how funding should be split and ensure each provider is aware how many hours for which they should claim. Where a parent signs a Parent/Provider Agreement for Funded Entitlement form for more than one provider, Buckinghamshire Council will only fund the provider the child is attending at the start of the term/half term. Where there is a dispute about allocation of funding, Buckinghamshire Council will investigate and make the final decision.

Only one provider may be used if the parent has taken up a 'stretched offer' unless the second provider is also offering the same stretched offer. This is only applicable for parents eligible for 15 hours only.

All children aged four on, or before, 31 August will be offered a full-time school place from September. Parents who wish to defer the place may be required to provide evidence to their provider that they have deferred their child's place.

Where a reception aged child moves into a Reception class in a maintained school, academy, free school, or independent school after the start of term, the previous provider will retain the funding for the current half term period, if there is an accurate and up to date Parent/Provider Agreement for Funded Entitlement form in place and the child attended the setting during the half term. Where a Reception aged child has formally accepted a school place before the start of term, the provider will not be funded. This is not applicable to children in an independent school Reception class (unless they have reached statutory school age)

Funding for part weeks (at the beginning and end of term)

*In accordance with the number of weeks allocated within the FE Funding Timetable

Whole weeks starting from a Monday must be offered under the stretched offer (disregarding bank holidays)

Part Funded Weeks (When added together) = Total Days	Funding Arrangements
2 Days	No Funding
3 – 5 Days	1 Week of Funding
6 – 7 Days	1 Week of Funding
8 – 9 Days	2 weeks of Funding

Closures in case of emergency and approved by Buckinghamshire Council will be fully funded. If a setting plans to be closed if, for example, their premises needs to be used for another event such as a polling station for local elections, then the Early Years Funding Team need to be informed in advance of the closure. A provider will not be penalised in the event of short-term closures outside of the provider's control, for example strike action or premises damage.

Bank holidays are not funded under the Buckinghamshire term time only offer and do not count as an open day. However, when a bank holiday falls into an open week, if the provider is open for three or more days, the week is fully funded. The provider is encouraged to try to deliver the parental missed bank holiday Funded Entitlement hours over the remaining days wherever possible.

Section 2.6: Forms Required by Parents

- [Parent/Provider Agreement for Funded Entitlement Form \(PPA\)](#): This form is for providers to obtain child details from the parent/carer at enrolment and to record the number of funded hours accessed. The agreement secures the child's place and number of hours for the claim period. A form must be completed for each child claiming funding and all sections on the form should be completed and reviewed on an annual basis to ensure funding is not placed at risk. This ruling applies to all providers funded via EYNFF
- [Provision of Information to Parents form \(FE9\)](#): Providers must make available, free of charge to parents of eligible children and prospective parents, information on their Funded Entitlement places as set out in document FE9 along with related general information cascaded or required by Buckinghamshire Council from time to time
- [Privacy Notice \(FE11\)](#): A privacy Notice must be given to Parent/Carers with their Parent/Provider Agreement for Funded Entitlement. Providers may add their own branding to the standard text which should not be altered without prior written agreement from the Early Years Service. The Privacy Notice should be displayed in the setting and may be used in any other documents the provider may supply to parents/carers
- providers must have a clear and transparent Admission and Fees policy available. Invoices must be clear so that parents are able to identify the Funded Entitlement hours as separate from any additional charges for hours or consumables. It should be clear how additional charges are applied and that 'top-up' charges are not being levied
- the completed PPA forms together with attendance records should be kept for seven years alongside other financial records. Providers should not keep copies of birth certificates, HM Forces Category ID, or other documents such as NHS registration numbers as part of their financial records
- all original Parent Provider Agreement forms must be retained and made available on demand for inspection

should you receive a funding claim audit from Buckinghamshire Council or Buckinghamshire Council External Auditors, or in the event of a funding query from the Early Years Funding Team.

Section 2.7: Exceptions to Parent/Provider Agreement

Buckinghamshire Council will consider exceptions on a case-by-case basis on the condition that:

- the provider has entered into an accurate and up to date Parent/Provider Agreement for Funded Entitlement
- the provider has maintained the terms and conditions required for continued inclusion on the Buckinghamshire Council Directory
- the child has not accepted a place prior to the start of term in a reception class in a maintained setting, free school, or academy

Examples of categories of exception

- if a child / parent moves house in the claim period
- if the child's primary carer/s changes in the claim period
- where a sibling moves school, and the child is able to attend a nearby Funded Entitlement provision.
- changes to or loss of employment including maternity leave (Evidence required)
- critical health and safety issues. For example:
 - Child Protection
 - domestic violence
 - Looked After Children in some situations
- referrals / recommendations from the School Improvement Team or Social Care
- Forces family relocations / postings
- sufficiency
- where a setting closes or where Buckinghamshire Council removes funding from inadequate providers
- child with long term sickness
- provision not appropriate to the child's needs – as determined by Buckinghamshire Council

If a parent chooses to move their child to a new setting mid-term, they must understand that their Funded Entitlement will not be available for the remainder of the half-term unless the move is considered to be an exceptional circumstance.

Where exceptions are agreed by Buckinghamshire Council, both providers will be funded until the end of the current half-term period. The first provider that will subsequently have a funded vacancy will be expected to fill the place with an eligible child on their waiting list or another child who wishes to increase their attendance.

Providers are expected to take steps to fill the vacancy. If the vacancy is filled with a fee-paying childcare place, the provider must inform Buckinghamshire Council through a Claim Adjustment Form (CF4) and the funding will be adjusted in their next payment. No new child or increase in hours will be funded until hours already paid have been used up within the term.

If the provider is unable to fill the vacancy the [Buckinghamshire Family Information Service \(BFIS\)](#) should be notified and will provide support including directing parents to the vacancy.

Stretching

- where a child has been accessing the stretched offer at a setting and moves to school in September, their entitlement in the summer term for Funded Entitlement will end on 31 August. If the child continues to attend outside of the stretched offer weeks, they will need to purchase additional childcare from the provider.

Extended absence

Child is absent for long period due to sickness:

- providers should record the reason for absence and ask the parent to sign as confirmation. This evidence must be retained for audit purposes. If the absence is for a long period, perhaps due to hospitalisation, providers should consider if hours can be reallocated on a temporary basis. The provider will retain the

Funded Entitlement payment provided there is a Parent/Provider Agreement for Funded Entitlement in place

Child is absent due to family holidays, travel, pilgrimage, or another reason:

- if a child is absent for a period greater than four weeks the place should be reallocated if it is required by another family. Funding will be stopped after a period of 4 weeks absence, providing the child did attend for funded hours the previous term even if they have not attended at the start of the new term
- parents should be advised of the possible need to reapply for a place on their return should their child be absent for a period greater than four weeks

If a provider feels there are exceptional circumstances for the extended absence that should be considered then they should email earlyfunding@buckinghamshire.gov.uk with all the relevant information and a decision will be reached within 10 working days.

Section 2.8: Part Year Places

Funding will be applied pro-rata for children who start late in the funding term or in the year of eligibility. For example, a child who starts one week after the start of term will lose one week's funding calculated as 15 (or 30) hours under the term time only offer and the weekly Standard Hours under the stretched offer.

This is relevant to:

- two-year-olds who first meet the relevant eligibility criteria for the disadvantaged Funded Entitlement after the start of the term following their second birthday
- 9 months to four-year-olds who move into Buckinghamshire part-way through the year
- 9 months to four-year-olds who first take up their Funded Entitlement place after their eligibility date

Section 2.9: Exemptions

Providers must inform Early Years Service if they have applied to DfE for full or part exemption from the EYFS. Funded Entitlement for providers applying for exemption will be permitted if otherwise compliant with our general terms and conditions. Buckinghamshire Council may fund providers for children who have exemptions from the EYFS Learning and Development requirements.

Section 2.10: Change of Ownership

Where a provider takes over an existing business or changes its legal entity (e.g. becomes a limited company), it is the responsibility of the original owner to advise Buckinghamshire Council of the intended transfer as soon as possible, and no later than the actual legal date of transfer. Funding will normally continue during the transition, providing the application process to join the Directory has been completed by the new owner. However, payment will not be made to a new provider until an active Ofsted registration is in place and the directory application process completed.

If the transfer of ownership occurs following an inadequate Ofsted judgement, funding will continue for a limited period for existing funded children only, as notified by Buckinghamshire Council to the previous owner. Please advise Buckinghamshire Council if an inspection has been carried out where the report has not yet been published.

Where a provider transfers the ownership of their business to a new provider, it is the responsibility of the outgoing owner to include the transfer of responsibility for Funded Entitlement income due or debts owed to or from Buckinghamshire Council in their agreement. A copy of this agreement should be sent to Buckinghamshire Council at earlyyears@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

Without this any adjustment to entitlement funding prior to the transfer date that is required following our exit audit will be the responsibility of the outgoing business.

Section 2.11: Process Where a Provider Moves Premises

Where a provider moves premises within Buckinghamshire, Early Years Service Advisors will arrange a visit to view the premises and discuss the changed provision with the provider to ensure the Safeguarding Policy, relevant documentation, and practice meet requirements in the new venue.

Please note that this includes childminders who move house and are offering the Funded Entitlement.

Funding will normally continue during transition, providing:

- a visit has been carried out by an Early Years Advisor
- a signed LA/Provider Agreement (FE contract) with the new address is submitted by the owner/childminder prior to the change taking effect
- where appropriate, the new premises are registered by Ofsted
- Buckinghamshire Council is kept informed of the reasons for any delays or changes to plan

Where a provider changes premises, the funding may be delayed until the above process is complete.

Section 2.12: Buckinghamshire Council Requirements for Continued Listing on the Directory

Providers will be monitored for continued suitability following publication of Ofsted judgements (see Section A3: Quality for Criteria) or if concerns are brought to our attention from staff, partner services, or the public. These will generally relate to the safety of children or compliance with Buckinghamshire Council's contractual terms and conditions for listing on the Directory. This includes any restrictions, fees, charges or conditions placed on parents to access their Funded Entitlement hours by a provider that Buckinghamshire Council deem inappropriate. Examples of these include, but is not limited to, artificial breaks within snack and/or mealtimes within Funded Entitlement hours; the charging of top up fees by a provider; a parent's occupation affecting their access to Funded Entitlement hours over a specified funding model (term time or stretched); a parent choosing not to pay a voluntary charge aligned with their Funded Entitlement hours.

If a provider is found not to have due regard for the 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years' funding may be suspended or withdrawn.

Concerns may be referred to the Local Authority Directory Steering Group (LADSG) if they remain unresolved.

The Local Authority Directory Steering Group (LADSG)

When presented to LADSG the following available evidence will be considered where appropriate:

- the findings of Early Years Service
- latest Ofsted Report
- local sufficiency needs
- children with exceptional circumstances attending the provision.
- other significant factors

LADSG will then determine whether:

- to continue funding the provider for some or all of the eligible children or;
- to advise the provider that their listing on the Directory will be withdrawn, or suspended (for specified groups), or that funding will be withdrawn subject to:
 - notification Period (Up to one full term)
 - change in Ofsted judgement
 - the provider's right to appeal within two weeks of the date of the letter

Suitability for continued funding is determined by LADSG.

Concern or Event Impacting on Suitability	Role of LADSG
Ofsted Early Years registration where registration is not maintained	The provider's listing is automatically removed from the Directory. In the case of a suspension the listing may be reinstated once the suspension is lifted without the need to submit a new FE contract
An Inadequate or Unmet Ofsted judgement is received, or a second Ineffective Ofsted judgement received by a childminder agency. From November 2025 where Ofsted has graded "Leadership and Governance" as "Urgent Improvement" or a similar judgement within the new Ofsted framework November 2025	From the date of publication of the Ofsted judgement report, the provider's listing is provisionally removed from the Directory and funding for new children is suspended. Funding for current children accessing their Funded Entitlement hours with the provider is withdrawn as soon as is practicable, dependent on the Ofsted report findings and published judgement date.
An Inadequate or Unmet Ofsted judgement is received identifying significant concerns for the safety of children. From November 2025 where Ofsted has graded a "Safeguarding" outcome of "Not met" or a similar judgement within the new Ofsted framework November 2025	From the date of publication of the Ofsted judgement report, the provider's listing is provisionally removed from the Directory and funding for new children is suspended. Funding for current children accessing their Funded Entitlement hours with the provider is withdrawn as soon as is practicable, dependent on the Ofsted report findings and published judgement date.
A Requires Improvement Ofsted judgement is received. From November 2025 where Ofsted has graded "Leadership and Governance" as "Needs attention" or below or a similar judgement within the new Ofsted framework November 2025	From the date of publication of the Ofsted judgement report, funding for new 2-year-old children looking to access disadvantaged funded hours is suspended. Funding for current 2-year-old children accessing their disadvantaged funded hours with the provider is withdrawn as soon as is practicable, dependent on the Ofsted report findings and published judgement date. Buckinghamshire Council reserve the right to still fund all eligible 2-year-old places when there is a need to ensure sufficiency of places. Funding for 2-year-old children accessing an Eligible Working parent hours place will remain.
Inappropriate restrictions, fees, charges, or conditions are applied to the Funded Entitlement offer by a provider.	Providers will be prioritised for review by the LADSG where concerns are significant or remedial action is not taken within an appropriate timescale. Funding and listing on the Directory may be suspended or withdrawn.
Providers do not comply with contract administration terms and conditions, including timely submission of claims and provision of information required at audit.	Providers will be prioritised for review by the LADSG where they do not comply with contract requirements supporting the LA's requirement to ensure compliance and the proper use of public funds. If remedial action is not taken within a reasonable timescale, funding may be forfeited or recovered and their listing on the Directory may be suspended or withdrawn.

Providers who wish to appeal should follow the process in [Section 2.13](#) within 14 days of the receipt of notification of the letter.

Section 2.13: The Appeals and Complaints Process Following a Decision by LADSG

Buckinghamshire Council Notice of Intent

Providers are notified of Directory approval changes or funding changes by the Early Years Service following referral to the Local Authority Directory Steering Group (LADSG).

Notification will include the area of concern, the Directory listing / funding outcome, the areas for improvement and where appropriate, a timescale for completing the required actions.

Directory Listing and Funding Outcomes Include:

- continuation of Directory listing and funding continues for eligible 9 months to four-year-olds. This may be subject to conditions
- continuation of Directory listing and funding continues for three- and four-year-olds, and 9 months to four-year-olds accessing their Eligible Working Parent hours. Directory listing and funding suspended in relation to two-year-olds accessing Disadvantaged Funded Entitlement hours. This may be subject to conditions
- directory listing is suspended for new children. Existing children continue to be funded.
- directory listing is suspended for new and existing children. Some individual exceptions may continue to be funded. This may be subject to conditions

Removal from the Directory and therefore funding withdrawal at date specified (subject to Ofsted judgement and monitoring visits and/ or compliance with Directory terms and conditions).

The Appeal Process

- provider writes to the Buckinghamshire Council Early Years Manager via earlyyears@buckinghamshire.gov.uk within 14 days of receipt of the Outcome letter, expressing intent to appeal and provides supporting evidence
- Early Years Manager convenes the LADSG to review the appeal evidence and either:
 - I. upholds the previous decision to remove the provider from the Directory. Early Years Manager confirms the decision to withdraw funding and confirms or amends timescales for withdrawal of funding
 - II. overturns the previous decision and approves listing on the Directory and funding as appropriate based on the review of the appeal and supporting evidence

Provider notified of the outcome within 10 working days. Providers should be made aware that the whole appeal process can take up to 28 days.

Further Right to Appeal

Providers wishing to dispute the outcome of the Appeal Process have recourse to refer to Buckinghamshire Council Corporate Complaints Procedure.

The further right to appeal process is on Buckinghamshire Council corporate timescales

Procedure for Complaints Against the Appeal Process or Buckinghamshire Council

If a provider wishes to dispute the outcome of the appeal process or complain about other aspects of the service provided by Buckinghamshire Council they should refer to Buckinghamshire Councils [Feedback, compliments and complaints policy](#).

Section 2.14: Process for Withdrawing from the Buckinghamshire Council Directory of Approved Providers

If a provider wishes to withdraw from the directory, they must:

<u>Contact the Early Years Service</u> State the provider's name and EY number, and the reason they wish to withdraw from the directory. This should be done via email earlyyears@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
<u>Required Notice Periods</u> Provide a minimum of one academic term notice of withdrawal from the Directory to enable affected parents to arrange alternative Funded Entitlement places, e.g. a provider wishing to withdraw from the Directory at the end of the summer funding term, should send their withdraw email before the end of the spring term.
<u>Informing Families</u> Confirm their decision in writing to all parents/carers of funded children stating that their Funded Entitlement places will not be available with effect from the relevant date (where possible, giving one term's notice). In the letter, parents/carers should be advised to contact BFIS on familyinfo@buckinghamshire.gov.uk or 01296 383065 to obtain details of other providers that offer the Funded Entitlement.
<u>Contact Information</u> Provide details to the Early Years Service of where the outgoing owners can be contacted in the event a funding payment or adjustment is due.

An Early Years Funding Auditor will contact the provider to arrange a funding exit audit before the provider is due to close. Providers need to be aware that attendance registers for the previous two funded terms will be requested to be submitted for the audit. Failure to provide these registers will result in the funding paid to the provider to be reclaimed for the relevant terms.

Appendix A – Working parent entitlement for children in foster care.

Eligibility

Children in foster care will be able to receive 30 hours Eligible Working Parent Funded Entitlement childcare, if the following criteria are met:

- that accessing the Funded Entitlement hours is consistent with the child's care plan, placing the child at the center of the process and decision making
- that, in single parent foster families, the foster carer engages in paid work outside their role as a foster parent
- that in two parent foster families, both partners engage in paid work outside their role as a foster carer or one partner is working outside their role as a foster carer and the other is on certain forms of family leave from work (including maternity, paternity and shared parental leave) or in receipt of certain forms of statutory pay in connection with sickness or parenting
- the application form will be completed by the foster carer and be counter-signed by the designated person. Foster carers will be required to reconfirm their eligibility every three months to mirror the existing process and support the work enabling objective of the Funded Entitlement policy. Agreement that the foster carers can take up the Funded Entitlement hours will be recorded and the care plan for the child will be updated as appropriate.

Key considerations

The terminology 'responsible local authority' refers to the local authority who is looking after the child and is therefore the child's corporate parent. The funding local authority is the local authority in which the child is taking up their place and who is paying the provider. They do not have to be the same local authority.

When supporting foster carers, Buckinghamshire Council and other local authorities will be aware of the following:

- accessing up to 30 hours (where eligible) will not be appropriate for every child in foster care. This change is to enable those foster carers who are working outside of fostering to access this support where it is right for the child
- there is no expectation or requirement for foster carers to work outside fostering unless they choose to do so, and this decision is supported by the fostering service. There is no requirement on the type of work or number of hours that a foster carer must work to access up to the 30 hours and there is no minimum earnings limit (although they must be engaging in paid work)
- foster carers will only be eligible if this is consistent with a child's care plan
- where eligible, the child in foster care does not have to take up the full 30 hours
- children in foster care will continue to qualify for the Universal Funded 15 hours for 3- & 4-year-olds regardless of the working status of their foster carers
- if circumstances change and a child in foster care ceases to be eligible for the 30 hours working parent entitlement the responsible local authority should assess the child's needs for early years provision as part of the care plan.

Process

The responsible local authority will need to establish that foster carers are engaging in paid work outside their role as a foster carer and ensure that accessing the Funded Entitlement of 30 hours is consistent with the child's care plan.

If Buckinghamshire Council is the responsible local authority, then the following process will apply.

Checking eligibility

The table below sets out when foster carers will be eligible for the Eligible working parent 30 hours for their children in foster care. If the Buckinghamshire Council designated person is not satisfied that accessing a Funded Entitlement place is consistent with the child's care plan, then the child will not be able to take up a Funded Entitlement place and no code will be issued.

Stage One Foster Carer(s) Apply	Foster carers and social workers start discussions, as the child approaches their 2nd or 3rd birthday or is nearly 9 months old, or when a foster carer decides to take up additional work. Buckinghamshire Council would expect this to happen as part of the usual supervision meetings and review process. The foster carer should complete an application form, and once the form has been completed and signed by the foster carers, this will be the declaration as required by the regulations. For the purpose of determining when a foster child is entitled to take up their place, the date of application will be the date the parents signed the form.
Stage Two Buckinghamshire Council (responsible LA) confirms eligibility	<u>Designated Person</u> The designated person is the individual identified by Buckinghamshire Council (the responsible local authority) who can confirm that the foster carers are working outside their role as a foster carer and that accessing Funded Entitlement childcare hours is consistent with the child's care plan. For Buckinghamshire Council the designated person is the Head of Children's Care Services. They can be contacted by email fostering@buckinghamshire.gov.uk or by telephone on 01296 674 973. <u>Evidence</u> The evidence needs to allow the social worker to be confident that the foster carer(s) are engaging in paid work outside their role as a foster carer. Examples of evidence required by Buckinghamshire Council are: • a current pay slip detailing paid employment in the name of the foster carer* • offer letter of employment* • evidence of Self – Employment such as a copy of a HMRC Tax Return* • benefit statement relating to the foster carer. *Where these relate to a partner who is not a foster carer, evidence must support them earning the equivalent of 16 hours per week at minimum wage. The foster carer should expect a response to their application within no more than 4 weeks from the submission of a completed form accompanied with the supporting evidence.
Stage Three Buckinghamshire Council (responsible LA) issues a code to Foster Carers	Buckinghamshire Council will issue the eligibility code to the foster carers, and this will start with the digits 400. This code will then be sent to the foster carer via email and to the designated person. The child's social worker will also be informed when the code is issued. Included in the notification email to the parents of the eligibility code will be further information regarding how to take their code to a provider to confirm a place (the provider does not need to be within Buckinghamshire), and further information on the reconfirmation process.

Stage 4 Provider Checking and Payment	Once the foster carer has received the code, the process is the same as for any other Eligible Working parent hours. The foster carer contacts a provider to agree a Funded Entitlement place, giving the provider the code so that they can verify it via the Buckinghamshire Council online portal. Buckinghamshire Council do ask that providers should bear in mind when trying to verify the child's age, that foster carers may not have access to all the documents (such as birth certificates) relating to the children in their care. In this situation, the letter or email from the LA issuing the code can provide evidence of meeting the age criteria.
Stage 5 Reconfirmation	Foster carers, like all other parents accessing working parent or universal funded hour places, are required to reconfirm their eligibility every three months. The exact dates and intervals for children in foster care are set by the ECS system when the child's record is created. Within Buckinghamshire Council, when reconfirmation is required, the social worker will be sent an e mail asking them to contact the foster carer and for them to declare that nothing has changed and that they still meet the criteria to access the Eligible Working Parent Funded Entitlement. This confirmation email should be returned to earlyfunding@buckinghamshire.gov.uk who will update their records to ensure that funding continues.

Appeals Process

If foster carers are unhappy about the decision made by Buckinghamshire Council, then the foster carer should seek resolution through their social worker or through the Buckinghamshire Council complaints process ([please refer to Part C: Information to Parents](#)).

Appendix B – Funded Entitlement – Late Claims

The funding timetable published on the Buckinghamshire Council Early Years website shows the payment dates and the deadlines for a provider to submit their claims in order to receive payment on this date:

[Early Years Funding Forms](#)

Claims that are more than two terms late being submitted will be subject to a 20% charge of the value of the total claim adjustment. This includes where the adjustment results in a recovery of funding being required. This charge will be taken off the value of the adjustment payment made, or, where a recovery of funding is required, the next processed claim payment.

For reference, please see below when a charge would be made for each term:

Spring Term – a charge will be made if a Claim Adjustment Form (CF4) is received after the 31st August

Summer Term – a charge will be made if a Claim Adjustment Form (CF4) is received after the 31st December

Autumn Term – a charge will be made if a Claim Adjustment Form (CF4) is received after the 31st March