



Management information on the number of 30 hours free childcare codes issued and validated for the spring term 2018

The following number of 30 hours spring eligibility codes have been issued by the Childcare Service and validated by local authorities and providers:

Eligibility codes issued by 11 th January	329,505
Eligibility codes validated by 5 th February	303,883
Eligibility codes validated as a percentage of codes issued	92%

Source: Department for Education's Eligibility Checking System

Autumn term 2017

On the 19th December 2017 the department [published](#) its final estimates for the number of 30 hours eligibility codes issued by the Childcare Service and validated by local authorities and providers for autumn as follows:

Eligibility codes issued	224,885
Eligibility codes validated	210,863
Eligibility codes as a percentage of codes issued	94%

Source: Department for Education's Eligibility Checking System

There were an estimated 202,783 children in a 30 hours place in the autumn term.

Background

All 3 and 4-year-olds in England are entitled to 15 hours a week of free early education. From September 2017 this entitlement was extended to 30 hours free childcare for families where both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family), and each parent earns a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage or living wage, and less than £100,000 per year.

Parents apply and have their eligibility checked for 30 hours free childcare via the Childcare Service. If a parent is found to be eligible, they will be given a 30 hours eligibility code which they take to their chosen childcare provider. Childcare providers or local authorities will then validate these codes via the Eligibility Checking System. A parent must have generated a code and this code must be validated to enable a child to access the offer.

A parent can start claiming their 30 hours place the term following their child's third birthday or the term following the date their eligibility code was issued (whichever is the later). Therefore, the number of children eligible for 30 hours free childcare will increase through the academic year as more children turn three. Children are eligible for 30 hours free childcare from the term after they turn three until they reach compulsory school age, the term following their fifth birthday. Codes cannot be used to get 30 hours free childcare once a child has taken up a reception place in a state-funded school.

Purpose of this release

This release provides an update to the spring term figures published in January 2018 and continues to fulfil our pledge to provide transparency around the national rollout of this new entitlement.

An update on the number of codes issued and validated for the spring term will be published in an experimental statistics release in March that will include the number of children in places for the spring term.

Notes

- 1) In an attempt to reflect the fact that we know some local authorities have used their discretion and enabled a child to take up a place if their code was issued after the 31st December the spring demand figure in this publication includes all codes issued up to and including 11th January.
- 2) Codes considered eligible for spring term are a) those with a validity end date during or after the spring term and b) those with a validity end date in the second half of the autumn term which would therefore mean the child could be in their grace period in the spring term. A validity end date is the date at which a code ceases to be valid if a parent has not reconfirmed or is no longer eligible following reconfirmation.¹
- 3) Eligibility codes have been excluded to avoid double counting in instances where a child is issued more than one eligibility code. For example, when a child has received a temporary code via a manual application route and subsequently generated a digital code via the Childcare Service.
- 4) Code validations in the first half of the autumn term (before 21st October) are not included in the spring codes validated total above because we expect codes to have been validated after this date if the parent is still using a 30 hours place this term.
- 5) Local authorities and providers can validate codes for spring term childcare places during the term. Therefore, the number and percentage of codes validated may continue to increase during the term.
- 6) These figures are not directly comparable to figures released by HMRC referring to the childcare service due to a number of definitional differences:
 - a. These figures refer to the number of children rather than families; some families may have 2 or more children eligible for the additional 15 hours.

¹ More details on reconfirmation and grace periods can be found in the DfE's operational guidance for LAs - https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/629544/Early_years_entitlements-operational_guidance.pdf

- b. These figures only include children issued a 30 hours code who were 3 at 31st August and for the spring term, additionally those who turned 3 by 31st December.
 - c. These figures include codes in their 30 hours grace period.
 - d. These figures include temporary codes which were generated by a manual process, not by the digital service. Parents in receipt of a temporary code will need to reapply via the digital service at a later date to receive a permanent code.
- 7) This table excludes 6,794 codes issued and 2,456 codes validated for children aged 4 at 31st August and did not turn 5 before the 31st December as it is likely these children will be in reception or of school age and therefore ineligible for 30 hours free childcare. Some of these children may defer their entry into reception and continue to be eligible for the additional 15 hours offer – these children are not captured in the table above.
- 8) A separate XLSX file is available as part of this release providing a breakdown of the number of spring eligible codes issued and validated by region and local authority.

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