



30 hours free childcare, England, summer term 2019 (Experimental Statistics)

13 June 2019

This is the sixth termly experimental statistics publication on the use of 30 hours free childcare following the national rollout of the offer in September 2017. It follows the five previous experimental statistical publications¹ and the management information updates². This publication includes estimates for the summer term 2019 of the number of children in a 30 hours place from local authorities, as well as final estimates of the number of eligibility codes issued and validated. Unless otherwise stated the summer term referred to in this document is the summer term 2019. This is the final publication in this series, as it concludes the initial monitoring of the first two years of the national rollout of 30 hours free childcare.

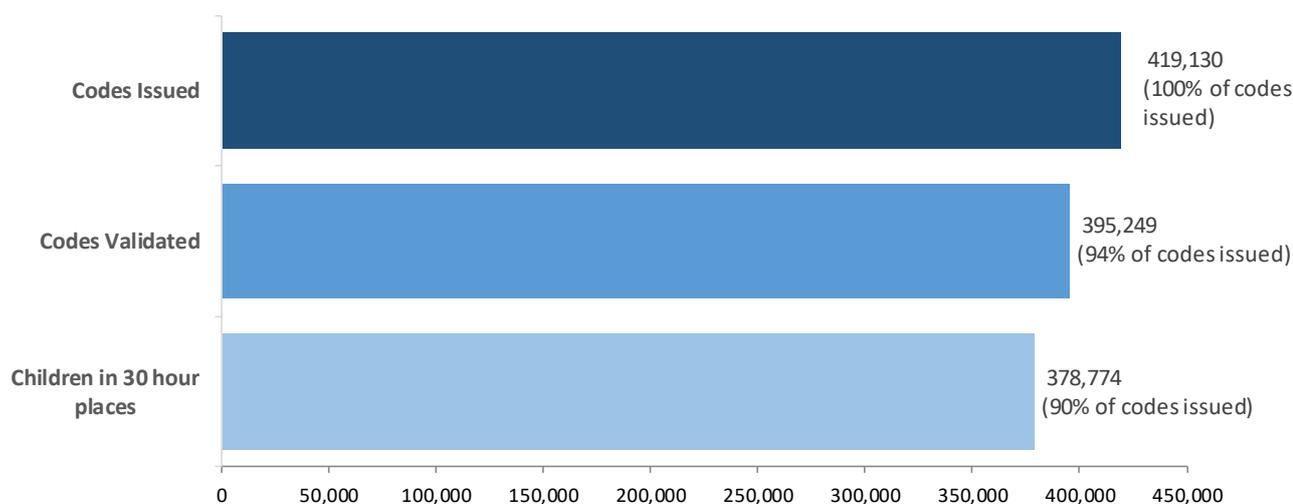
Around 378,774 children were in a 30 hours place during the summer term.

In the sixth term following the national rollout of 30 hours free childcare, known as the summer term (1 April to 31 August 2019), an estimated 378,774 children were in a 30 hours place. This is according to local authority data returns made during May and June. This compares to the 339,974 children who were estimated to be in a 30 hours place during the summer term 2018 (1 April to 31 August 2018).

The total number of children in a 30 hours place is equal to 90% of the eligibility codes issued to parents for the summer term.

There were 419,130 eligibility codes issued to parents for the summer term, of which 94% were validated by local authorities or providers. The number of children in a 30 hours place represents 96% of validated codes and 90% of all codes issued. These figures were 97% and 92% respectively in the 2019 spring term and 99% and 94% respectively in the 2018 autumn term.

Figure A: Comparison of children in a 30 hours place with eligibility codes issued and validated



¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-childcare-and-early-years#30-hours-free-childcare>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/30-hours-free-childcare-eligibility-codes-issued-and-validated>

Contents

1.	Children in a 30 hours place	3
2.	Codes issued and validated	3
3.	Comparison of children in a 30 hours place with codes issued and validated in summer 2019	4
4.	Comparison of children in a 30 hours place, codes issued and validated percentages in summer 2018 and summer 2019	4
5.	Estimate of the number of children in a 30 hours place for year one and two	5
6.	Comparison of children in a 30 hours place, codes issued and validated for each term over the 2017/18 and 2018/19 academic years	6
7.	Accompanying tables	8
8.	Further information is available	8
9.	Official Statistics	8
10.	Technical information	9
11.	Get in touch	9
	Media enquiries	9
	Other enquiries/feedback	9

About this publication

This statistical publication provides experimental statistics on the use of 30 hours free childcare in the sixth term of national rollout, from 1 April–31 August 2019. This is known as the summer term. It includes:

- estimates of the number of children in a 30 hours place during the summer term based on local authority data returns,
- final estimates of number of eligibility codes issued and validated for the summer term,
- the estimate for the number of children in a 30 hours place for year one year two.

The '*Education provision: children under 5 years of age, January 2019*' national statistics publication, due to be released on the 27 June 2019, gives a definitive picture of the number of children in a 30 hours place in January 2019 (the spring term). By comparison, the headcount data reported in this publication, is for the summer term. This means that the figures represent different points in time and will not align.

We are aware that many local authorities were still in the process of finalising and refining their figures when they submitted their summer headcount data, and therefore the headcount data in this publication should be treated as indicative.

This is the final publication in this series, as it concludes the initial monitoring of the first two years of the national rollout of 30 hours free childcare.

Please see the technical note published alongside this publication for further information.

30 hours free childcare

All 3 and 4-year-olds in England are entitled to 15 hours a week, or 570 hours a year of free early education. Since September 2017, 3 and 4-year-olds may be entitled to 30 hours free childcare, or an extra 570 hours of free childcare

a year, so 1,140 hours in total. The additional 15 hours is available to 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. This also includes self-employed parents.

In this publication

The following tables are included in the publication:

- Main Table (Excel.xls)

The accompanying quality and methodology information document, provides information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data.

Feedback

We welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at EY.ANALYSISANDRESEARCH@education.gov.uk

1. Children in a 30 hours place

There were an estimated 378,774 children in a 30 hours place³ during the summer term. This figure is the sum of the voluntary returns from local authorities of the number of children in a 30 hours place for the summer term. 61% of the 151 local authorities that responded provided estimates, rather than actual headcount, of the number of children in a 30 hours place.

Summer term eligibility

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). Children are eligible for 30 hours free childcare from the term after they turn 3 until they reach compulsory school age, the term following their 5th 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.

For the summer term, to be eligible for 30 hours free childcare a child will have to have turned 3 on or before the 31 March 2019. Most children who had turned 4 by 31 August 2018 will be in a reception place in the summer term, however, a small number of parents of these 4-year-olds may have chosen to defer their child's entry into reception and in these circumstances they would still be able to claim 30 hours free childcare. Note, the children who turn 4 after the 31 August 2018 are a different academic year to those turning 4 prior to 31 August 2018 and less likely to be in reception.

Furthermore, to secure a 30 hours place for the summer term, a parent must have received their valid 30 hours eligibility code by the 31 March 2019. However, local authorities may have chosen to exercise discretion and fund 30 hours places in the summer term for parents who applied by, or had attempted to apply by, the 31 March and did not receive their code up to 14 April.

2. Codes issued and validated

The department has previously released figures on the number of eligibility codes issued to parents and validated by local authorities or providers for the summer term. The number of codes issued and validated were included in a management information publication in April⁴. These figures have been updated as set out in Table 1 below. This aligns with the process followed each term in the 2017/18 academic year and further details are provided in the technical note. In total, 94% of the 419,130 codes issued to parents were validated by providers during the summer term.

Due to the fact that parents need their eligibility code by 31 March to be eligible for the summer term and the timing of the April publication, the codes issued figure has been revised slightly after data cleaning. Local authorities and providers can validate eligibility codes throughout the term, as they confirm childcare arrangements with parents and therefore this figure has increased slightly from 90% to 94%.

Table 1: Eligibility codes issues and validated

³ Children in a 30 hours place are those who are in receipt of more than 15 hours of government-funded early education. 15 hours is the funded entitlement (first 15 hours) that is available to all 3 and 4-year-olds

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/30-hours-free-childcare-eligibility-codes-issued-and-validated>

	Eligibility codes issued	Codes validated	Codes validated (%)
Summer term 2019	419,130	395,249	94%

Source: Eligibility Checking System, Department for Education

These figures exclude codes validated for children aged 4 at 31 August 2018, as it is likely these children will have taken up a reception place and are ineligible for 30 hours free childcare. However, some of these children may have deferred their entry into reception and therefore they will continue to be eligible for 30 hours free childcare and may be included in the headcount data returns from local authorities.

Codes issued and validated

Parents apply and have their eligibility checked for 30 hours free childcare via the childcare service, the online application for Tax-Free Childcare and 30 hours free childcare.

If a parent is found to be eligible, they will be given a 30 hours eligibility code. A parent should take this code along with their national insurance number and their child's date of birth to their chosen childcare provider. The provider will either directly, or via their local authority, use the Department for Education's Eligibility Checking System (ECS) to confirm the validity of the code. Once the 30 hours eligibility code has been validated via the ECS, the child will be able to take up their 30 hours place.

Parents will be prompted every 3 months to reconfirm their eligibility, which requires a parent to log into their childcare account and amend any details if necessary, or to confirm that their details have not changed.

On reconfirmation, if a parent is no longer eligible for 30 hours they will enter a grace period where they can continue their childcare for a short period of time, if their child is already in a 30 hours place. A child who becomes ineligible during the first half of a funding block should be funded until the end of that funding block. A child who becomes ineligible in the latter half of the funding block should be funded until the end of the following funding block.

3. Comparison of children in a 30 hours place with codes issued and validated in summer 2019

There were an estimated 378,774 children in a 30 hours place in the summer term, representing 90% of the 419,130 codes issued to parents and 96% of the 395,249 codes validated via the ECS by a provider or local authority. We cannot account for a parents' preference and behaviour and there may be some parents who get a code, but choose not to take it to a provider and some parents may get their codes validated by a provider without taking up a place. 4-year-olds are included in the estimates of children in a 30 hours place provided by local authorities, but are not included in the codes issued and validated figures.

4. Comparison of children in a 30 hours place, codes issued and validated percentages in summer 2018 and summer 2019

Eligibility for 30 hours free childcare increases throughout the academic year as more children turn 3 and decreases in the ensuing autumn term when children move in to reception places. This publication allows for a comparison between the first and second year of national delivery of 30 hours free childcare when considered alongside the data published for summer 2018.

Table 2: Comparison of the number of children in a 30 hours place in summer 2018 and summer 2019

England, summer term 2019

	Summer 2018	Summer 2019	Percentage Change
Children in a 30 hours place	339,974	378,774	+11%

The number of children in a 30 hours place in summer 2019 has increased by 11% in comparison with summer 2018. We would expect to see variation across years as the number of eligible children will change depending on the birth cohort and parental employment.

Table 3: Percentage of codes validated and children in a 30 hours place

England, summer 2018 and summer 2019

	Summer 18	Summer 19
Codes validated (% of codes issued)	94%	94%
Children in 30 hour places (% of codes issued)	90%	90%
Children in 30 hour places (% of codes validated)	95%	96%

Children in a 30 hours place as a percentage of codes issued and codes validated has remained stable in the summer term across the first year and second year of national delivery. Similarly, the number of 30 hours eligibility codes validated as a percentage of those issued has also remained stable.

5. Estimate of the number of children in a 30 hours place for year one and two

It is estimated that in year one and two there were 600,000 children a 30 hours place. Using information about the term of birth for codes validated in summer 2018, an estimated 65% (around 221,000) of children in a 30 hours place in summer 2018 were in reception in 2018/19 (year two). The summer 2019 figure will therefore include some children who were also included in the summer 2018 figure. The following diagram provides further details⁵:

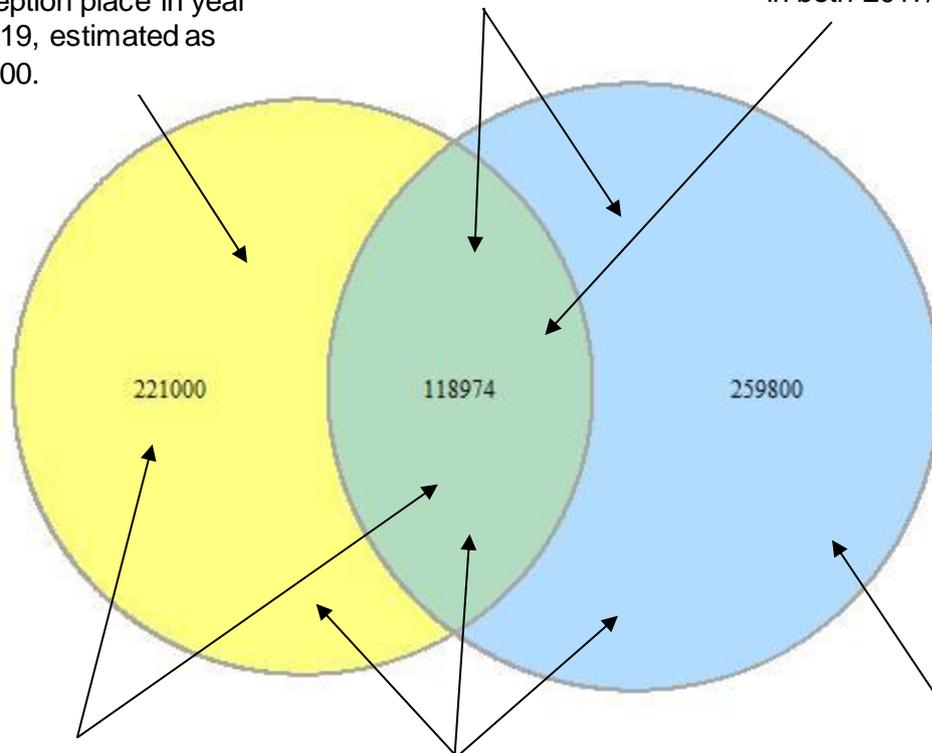
⁵ More details are available in the technical note

Figure B: Illustrative diagram of number of children in a 30 hours place in year 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Yellow: The number of children in a 30 hours place in 2017/18, who subsequently moved into a reception place in year 2018/19, estimated as 221,000.

Blue and Green: The number of children in a 30 hours place in summer 2019: 378,774.

Green: Estimate of the number of children in a 30 hours place in both 2017/18 and 2018/19.



Yellow and Green: The number of children in a 30 hours place in summer 2018: 339,974.

Yellow added to the green and blue gives an estimated **600,000** children in a 30 hours place in 2017/18 and 2018/19, i.e. 221,000 added to 378,774 (rounded to nearest thousand).

Blue: Children in a 30 hours place in 2018/19 only.

6. Comparison of children in a 30 hours place, codes issued and validated for each term over the 2017/18 and 2018/19 academic years

This publication, when considered alongside the data in the previous five publications, provides a holistic picture of the first two years of national delivery of 30 hours free childcare.

Figure C: Comparison of children in a 30 hours place, eligibility codes issued and validated for each term in the 2017/18 and the 2018/19 academic years

The grey bars refer to the 2017/18 academic year and the blue bars refer to the 2018/19 academic year

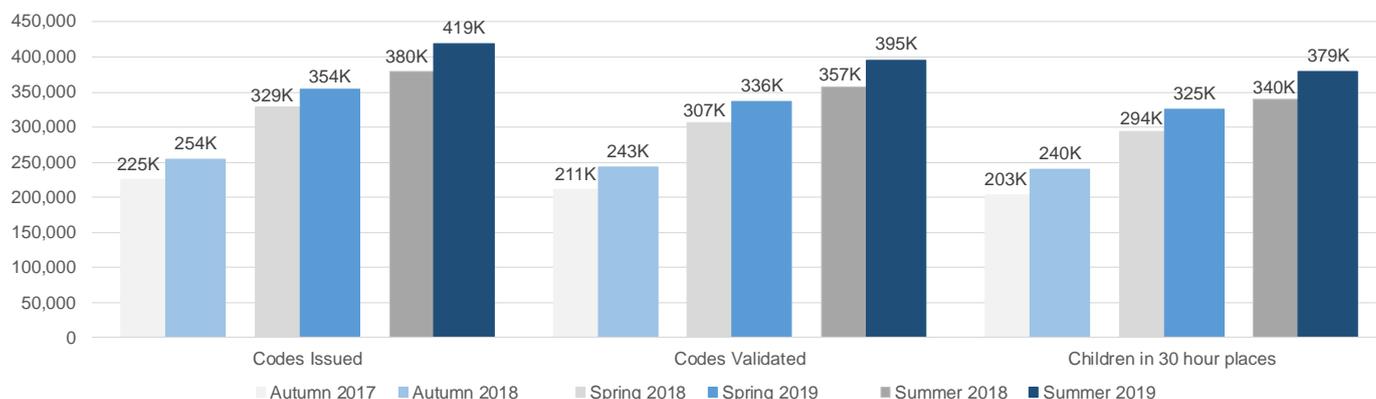


Table 4: Comparison of children in a 30 hours place, eligibility codes issued and validated for each term in the 2017/18 and the 2018/19 academic years

	Codes Issued			Codes Validated			Children in 30 hour places		
	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Spring	Summer
2017/18	224,885	329,195	379,662	210,863	307,165	357,031	202,783	294,000	339,974
2018/19	254,136	353,763	419,130	242,646	335,749	395,249	240,000	325,000	378,774
Percentage Change	+13%	+7%	+10%	+15%	+9%	+11%	+18%	+11%	+11%

For each term, as the number of children who were eligible for 30 hours increased, there was a corresponding increase in the codes issued, validated and the number of children in a 30 hours place. Eligibility for 30 hours free childcare increases throughout the academic year as more children turn 3 and decreases in the ensuing autumn term when children move in to reception places, therefore, this publication should not be used, for example to compare to the data published for the summer term 2018 and autumn term 2019. This publication does allow a comparison of data for the same terms in year one and two.

Table 5: Percentage of codes validated and children in a 30 hours place
England, 2017/18 and 2018/19

	Autumn 2017	Spring 2018	Summer 2018	Autumn 2018	Spring 2019	Summer 2019
Codes Validated (% of codes issued)	94%	93%	94%	95%	95%	94%
Children in 30 hours places (% of codes issued)	90%	89%	90%	94%	92%	90%
Children in 30 hours places (% of codes validated)	96%	96%	95%	99%	97%	96%

Children in a 30 hours place as a percentage of codes issued and codes validated has remained stable across the three terms of the first year of national delivery. Similarly, the number of 30 hours eligibility codes validated as a percentage of those issued has also remained constant.

7. Accompanying tables

The following table is available in Excel format on the department's statistics website:

Local authority and regional tables

- 1 Eligibility codes issued and validated and number of children in a 30 hours place, by region and local authority

When reviewing the tables, please note that:

- The number of children in a 30 hours place is taken from voluntary headcount data returns submitted by local authorities during May and the beginning of June 2019. 61% of local authorities have provided estimates as final data was not yet available.
- Codes issued for children aged 4 at 31 August 2018 have been excluded from the codes issued and codes validated data as it is likely these children will have taken up a reception place and therefore are ineligible for 30 hours free childcare. However, some of these children may defer their entry into reception and continue to be eligible for 30 hours free childcare and may be included in the headcount data returns from local authorities.

8. Further information is available

Previous ad-hoc and management information is available on the [30 hours free childcare: eligibility codes issued and validated website](#). Statistical publication relating to the final estimates for each term since autumn 2017 available on the department's [childcare and early years statistics website](#).

The following are also available on the department's [childcare and early years statistics website](#):

- Statistical publications on provision for children under five years of age in England
- Childcare and early years providers survey
- Childcare and early years survey of parents

HMRC publishes information on [tax free childcare statistics](#). Because Tax-Free Childcare statistics only publishes numbers of open 30 hours free childcare accounts where they also have an open Tax-Free Childcare account, this publication should not be used as the lead source for 30 hours free childcare data. Additionally, HMRC's 30 hours data only shows where an account has been opened, and is within its eligibility period and not all of these families will necessarily be making use of the 30 hours offer.

9. Official Statistics

These are Official Statistics and have been produced in line with Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

This can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

The Department has a set of [statistical policies](#) in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

10. Technical information

A quality and methodology information document accompanies this statistical publication. This provides further information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data, including how it is validated and processed.

11. Get in touch

Media enquiries

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