



21 June 2018

This is the third 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 two previous experimental statistical publications¹ and the monthly management information updates². This publication includes estimates for the summer term 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.

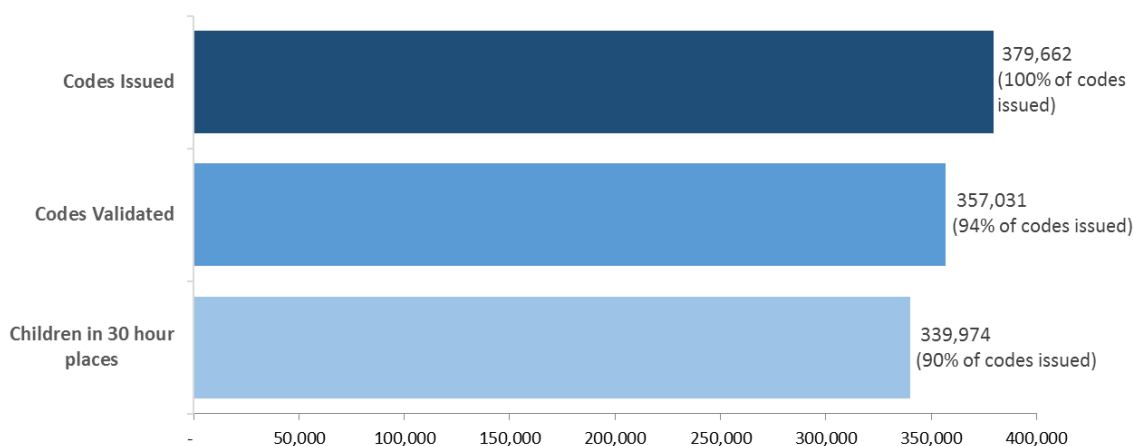
Around 339,974 children were in a 30 hours place during the summer term.

In the third term following the national rollout of 30 hours free childcare, known as the summer term (1 April to 31 August 2018), an estimated 339,974 children were in a 30 hours place. This is according to local authority data returns made during May and June. This compares to 294,000 who were estimated to be in a place during the 2018 spring term (1 January to 31 March 2018) and 202,783 who were estimated to be in a place during the autumn term (1 September to 31 December 2017).

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 379,662 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 95% of validated codes and 90% of all codes issued. These figures were 96% and 89% respectively in the 2018 spring term and 96% and 90% respectively in the 2017 autumn term.

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



¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/30-hours-free-childcare-autumn-term-2017> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/30-hours-free-childcare-spring-term-2018>

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

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About this publication

This statistical publication provides experimental statistics on the use of 30 hours free childcare in the third term of national rollout, from 1 April – 31 August 2018. 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 '*Education provision: children under 5 years of age, January 2018*' national statistics publication, due to be released on the 28th June 2018, gives a definitive picture of the number of children in a 30 hours place in January 2018 (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.

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

Eligibility codes issued and validated so far for the autumn term 2018 – 1 September to 31 December 2018 are to be reported in the next MI publication.

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 SFR:

- 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 339,974³ children in a 30 hours place⁴ during the summer term 2018. This figure is the sum of the voluntary headcount data returns of the number of children in a 30 hours place for the summer term 2018 made by local authorities in England. 51% of local authorities 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 2018, to be eligible for 30 hours free childcare a child will have to have turned 3 on or before the 31 March 2018. Most children who had turned 4 by 31 August 2017 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 2017 are a different academic year to those turning 4 prior to 31 August 2017 and less likely to be in reception.

Furthermore, to secure a 30 hours place for the summer term 2018, a parent must have received their valid 30 hours eligibility code by the 31 March 2018. 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 until shortly after this.

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 numbers of codes issued and validated were included in the March 2018 statistical publication '30 hours free childcare: spring term'⁵ and the codes validated figures were subsequently updated through monthly management information publications⁶. Following data cleansing, these figures have been revised as set out in Table 1 below. This aligns with the process followed in the autumn and spring term and further details are provided in the technical note. In total, 94% of the 379,662 codes issued to parents were validated by providers during the summer term.

Table 1: Eligibility codes issues and validated

England, Summer term 2018

	Eligibility codes issued	Codes validated	Codes validated (%)
Summer term 2018	379,662	357,031	94%

Source: Eligibility Checking System, Department for Education

These figures exclude 5,038 codes issued and 2,074 codes validated for children aged 4 at 31 August 2017, who remained aged 4 as of the 31 March 2018, as it is likely these children will have taken up a reception place therefore 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.

³ See technical notes for details

⁴ 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 universal entitlement that is available to all 3 and 4-year-olds

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/30-hours-free-childcare-spring-term-2018>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/30-hours-free-childcare-eligibility-codes-issued-and-validated>

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 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.

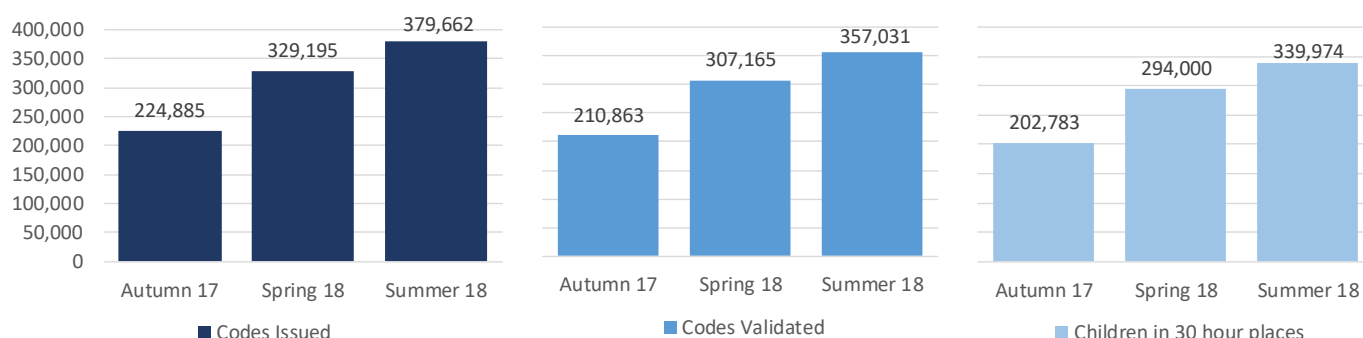
3. Comparison of children in a 30 hours place with codes issued and validated in summer 2018

There were an estimated 339,974 children in a 30 hours place in the summer term, representing 90% of the 379,662 codes issued to parents and 95% of the 357,031 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 checked by a provider without taking up a place. 4-year-olds are included in the estimates of children in 30 hours places 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 for each term in the 2017/18 academic year

This publication when considered alongside the data in the previous two publications for autumn and spring, provides a holistic picture of the first year of national delivery of 30 hours free childcare.

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



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.

Table 2: Percentage of codes validated and children in a 30 hours place
England, 2017/18

	Autumn 17	Spring 18	Summer 18
Codes Validated			
(% of codes issued)	94%	93%	94%
Children in 30 hour places			
(% of codes issued)	90%	89%	90%
Children in 30 hour places			
(% of codes validated)	96%	96%	95%

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.

5. 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 June 2018. 51% of local authorities have provided estimates as final data was not yet available.
- Codes issued for children aged 4 at 31 August 2017, who remained aged 4 as of the 31 March 2018, have been excluded from the codes issued and codes validated data as it is likely these children will have take 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. There were 5,038 codes issued and 2,074 codes validated for children still aged 4 at 31 March 2018.

6. Further information is available

Previous ad-hoc and management information is available on the [30 hours free childcare: eligibility codes issued and validated website](#). A statistical publication relating to the final estimates around the spring term 2018 is available : [30 hours free childcare: spring term](#) and the autumn term 2017 is also available: [30 hours free childcare: autumn term](#).

The following are 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

7. Official Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as Official Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation 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, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as Official Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

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

8. 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.

9. Get in touch

Media enquiries

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Reference: [30 Hours Free Childcare Summer Term, 2018]



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