



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

The following number of 30 hours autumn 2018 eligibility codes have been issued by the Childcare Service and validated by local authorities and childcare providers:

Eligibility codes issued by 31 August ¹	254,136
Eligibility codes validated by 24 September	224,560
Eligibility codes validated as a percentage of codes issued	88%

Source: Department for Education's Eligibility Checking System

Background

All three and four-year-olds in England are entitled to 15 hours a week of free early education. Since September 2017 the 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 eligibility codes via the Eligibility Checking System. A parent must have generated an eligibility code and this 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 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. Eligibility codes cannot be used to get 30 hours free childcare once a child has taken up a reception place in a state-funded school.

The child must be three years old and have a valid eligibility code by the termly deadline, 31 August 2018, to be eligible for an autumn term 2018 place. Local authorities may also consider offering 30

¹ Further details on the eligibility codes included is under the 'Notes' section

hours places to parents who applied by, or had attempted to apply by, the termly deadline but received their eligibility code up to 14 days after the termly deadline (e.g. up to 14 September).

Purpose of this release

This release provides an estimate for the autumn term 2018, the first term of the 2018/19 school year and the second year of 30 hours delivery. It continues to fulfil our pledge to provide transparency around the national rollout of the extended entitlement.

Further updates on the number of eligibility codes issued and validated for the autumn term will be published in December, this will also include an estimate of the number of children in a 30 hours place based on voluntary local authority returns. We will continue to publish more data throughout the 2018/19 school year.

Notes

- 1) Eligibility codes considered eligible for autumn 2018 term are:
 - a) those with a validity end date during or after the autumn term (e.g. 1 September onwards) and,
 - b) those with a validity end date in the second half of the summer 2018 term (e.g. 27 May – 31 August), which would therefore mean the child could be in their grace period in the autumn 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.²

- 2) 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.
- 3) Only eligibility codes which have been validated after 27 May (the start of the second half of the summer 2018 term) are included in the autumn validated codes total. This is because we expect eligibility codes to have been validated from 27 May if they are intended for autumn term use.
- 4) Eligibility codes have been included where an application or reconfirmation was made by 31 August but the eligibility codes have an original validity start date between 1 – 14 September.³
- 5) Local authorities and childcare providers can validate eligibility codes for autumn term childcare places during the term. Therefore, the number and percentage of eligibility codes validated may continue to increase during the term.

² 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

³ More details on eligibility codes with validity start dates after the beginning of term can be found in DfE's operational guidance for LAs - https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/629544/Early_years_entitlements-operational_guidance.pdf

- 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 two or more children eligible for 30 hours free childcare
 - b. These figures only include children issued a 30 hours code who were three at 31 August 2018.
 - c. These figures include eligibility codes that could be in their 30 hours grace period.
 - d. These figures include temporary codes which were generated by a manual application route, not by the digital service. Parents in receipt of a temporary code will need to reapply via the Childcare Service at a later date to receive a digital code.

- 7) The autumn 2018 table excludes eligibility codes issued and codes validated for children aged four at 31 August and who did not turn five before the 31 August, 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 tables above.

- 8) A separate table is published as part of this release providing a breakdown of the number of autumn eligibility codes issued and validated by region and local authority.

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