



## Management information on the number of 30 hours free childcare codes issued and validated for the spring term 2019

The following number of 30 hours eligibility codes have been issued by the Childcare Service<sup>1</sup> and validated by local authorities and childcare providers for the spring term 2019<sup>2</sup>.

Eligibility codes issued by 31 December <sup>3</sup>	353,763
Eligibility codes validated by 28 January	328,950
Eligibility codes validated as a percentage of codes issued	93%

Source: Department for Education's Eligibility Checking System

### Autumn term 2018<sup>2</sup>

On 18 December 2018 the department published ["30 hours free childcare: autumn term 2018"](#) with 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	254,136
Eligibility codes validated	242,646
Eligibility codes as a percentage of codes issued	95%

Source: Department for Education's Eligibility Checking System

There were an estimated 240,000 children in a 30 hours place in the autumn term 2018.

## Background

All three and four-year-olds in England are entitled to 15 hours a week of free early education. In 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

<sup>1</sup> In September 2018, 30 hours free childcare was extended to children in foster care. A foster parent will apply for 30 hours free childcare through their local authority and, if found eligible, they will be given a 30 hours eligibility code generated by the DfE Eligibility Checking System.

<sup>2</sup> Autumn refers to 1 September 2018- 31 December 2018 and Spring refers to 1 January 2019 – 31 March 2019

<sup>3</sup> Further details on the eligibility codes included is under the 'Notes' section

weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage or living wage, and less than £100,000 per year. We are now in the second term of the second year of delivery.

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. In September 2018, 30 hours free childcare was extended to children in foster care. A foster parent will apply for 30 hours free childcare through their local authority and, if found eligible, they will be given a 30 hours eligibility code generated by the Eligibility Checking System. Childcare providers or local authorities will then validate all 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 December 2018, to be eligible for a spring term 2019 place. Local authorities may also consider offering 30 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 January 2019).

## Purpose of this release

This release provides an estimate for the spring term 2019, the second 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 spring term will be published in March, 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 spring 2019 term are:

- a) those with a validity end date during or after the spring term (e.g. 1 January onwards) and,
- b) those with a validity end date in the second half of the autumn 2018 term (e.g. 22 October – 31 December), 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.<sup>4</sup>

- 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 on or after 22 October (the start of the second half of the autumn 2018 term) are included in the spring validated codes total. This is because we expect eligibility codes to have been validated from 22 October if they are intended for spring term use.
- 4) Eligibility codes have been included where an application or reconfirmation was made by 31 December but the eligibility codes have an original validity start date between 1 – 14 January, inclusive.<sup>5</sup>
- 5) Local authorities and childcare providers can validate eligibility codes for spring term childcare places during the term. Therefore, the number and percentage of eligibility 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 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 December 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.
  - e. These figures include 30 hours eligibility codes for foster children which were generated manually through the Eligibility Checking System.
- 7) The spring 2019 table excludes eligibility codes issued and codes validated for children aged four at 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.

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

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<sup>4</sup> 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](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/629544/Early_years_entitlements-operational_guidance.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> More details on reconfirmation and grace periods can be found in the DfE's operational guidance for LAs – as per footnote above