

**National Wraparound Childcare Programme and
Early Years Expanded Entitlements
Staffordshire County Council Schools Forum
Spring 2024**

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1. Introduction

1.1 In the Government's Spring Budget the Chancellor announced transformative reforms to childcare for parents, children, the economy and women.

1.2 The National Wraparound Childcare Programme is part of the childcare reforms. The government's ambition is that by 2026, all parents and carers of primary school-aged children who need it will be able to access term-time childcare in their local area from 8am-6pm, so that parents can access employment and improve labour market participation.

1.3 They also announced that eligible working parents in England will be able to access 30 hours of funded childcare per week, for 38 weeks of the year from the term after their child turns 9 months old to when they start school.

Wraparound

2. Programme Overview

2.1 The programme will only focus on primary school-aged children from reception to year 6, Monday to Friday during term time. Wraparound provision is expected to be offered 8am-6pm, enabling parents to work unless data shows local demand for different hours.

2.2 Parents are expected to pay for wraparound provision. The fees will be set by providers. Parents eligible for Tax-Free Childcare or Universal Credit will be able to use these to help pay for wraparound provision.

2.3 The programme will be Local authority-led, building on their existing duty to ensure that there is sufficient childcare in their local area, they will lead the strategy and delivery of the programme locally.

2.4 The programme will be school centered, with provision delivered by a variety of childcare providers.

3. Action to Date

3.1 In Staffordshire the wraparound programme delivery will sit within the Early Years Team, part of the Children and Families Directorate in the Wellbeing and Partnerships Service.

3.2 A Continuous Improvement Partner (CIP) has been appointed as the Wraparound Lead and will have clearly defined responsibilities and accountabilities, ensuring that all programme milestones are met. A Wraparound Consultant has also been seconded to the team to support this programme.

3.3 Analysis of current provision to ascertain current and projected supply and demand has been completed. This will inform future programme development and capital allocation strategies.

3.4 Data collection has taken place including:

- A Parent Survey: aimed at parents/ carers with primary school-aged children. This received 946 responses.
- A school Survey: shared with 333 Primary and First schools in Staffordshire. 80% of schools responded.

3.5 An interactive geographic map has been created that shows Staffordshire's primary schools and existing wraparound provision. This will be updated as intelligence is received, and survey information is analysed.

4. Next Steps

4.1 Complete a full analysis from the survey returns and review the data to ensure that supply and demand is fully understood.

4.2 Establish a programme board and steering group. These will be inclusive of delivery partners and key stakeholders, who will provide support and challenge in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for the programme.

The Programme Board will provide a pathway for monitoring programme milestones, ensuring robust systems for capital grant application reviews and allocations. They will monitor action plans and evaluate key decisions and progress.

The Steering Group will support and challenge the work of the Wraparound Childcare Programme team by providing a sector voice to influence and challenge the direction of policy work and support associated engagement activities.

4.3 Create and implement a programme plan.

4.4 Create and launch a communication and engagement strategy.

4.5 Confirm the criteria and process for allocation of capital and programme funding.

5. Funding

5. 1 What the funding can be used for:

Programme funding: This should be used to fund new and expanded wraparound provision, either to meet current demand or guarantee supply to build future demand. It can also be used to cover other costs including staff training and resources and to contribute to running costs whilst demand builds, to remove financial risk to providers of offering additional places before demand is guaranteed.

Local authority capacity funding: Local authorities should use a proportion of their overall grant for local authority capacity costs. This may include staffing, administration, and any other internal costs associated with the delivery of this programme.

Capital funding: This should be spent on capital projects and is split between the Early Years Entitlement project and the Wraparound programme.

[Wraparound childcare: guidance for local authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Extended Entitlements

6. Programme Overview

6.1 Eligible working parents in England will be able to access 30 hours of funded childcare per week, for 38 weeks of the year (although parents can use fewer hours over more weeks of the year), from when their child is 9 months old to when they start school.

6.2 This will be rolled out in stages:

- From April 2024, eligible working parents of 2-year-olds can access 15 hours per week
- From Sept 2024, eligible working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3 year olds can access 15 hours per week
- From Sept 2025, eligible working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3 years old can access 30 hours funded childcare per week

7. Action to Date

7.1 A communication and engagement strategy has been planned and initiated. Activities to date have included providing information and updates through webinars, newsletters and workshops.

7.2 Communication and engagement with key partners to date has included presentations at Family Improvement Board meetings, information sessions for partners at DWP, Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, social work managers, libraries and commissioned family support providers. An internal launch providing details of the new entitlements and wraparound programme was attended by 55 individuals from a variety of partner organisations.

7.4 The market development and sufficiency teams have completed work to ensure our statutory duty to ensure sufficient childcare places continues to be met. Activities have included:

- Detailed analysis to predict the supply and demand of childcare places, including analysis of data provided by DfE alongside local intelligence.
- Recent detained sufficiency survey data analysed to identify areas where additional places may be required.
- Action plans implemented which identify key needs and opportunities.
- Monthly sufficiency meetings held to identify priorities and key areas of work.
- Bespoke support offered to providers to support sustainability, expansion or consideration of a range of delivery models.

7.5 A range of resources are being developed to support the potential increase in new staff working with under 2's post September.

7.6 In collaboration with finance colleagues, providers have been consulted regarding the new funding rates, which have been approved by SLT and shared with the sector.

7.7 Early education and childcare webpages have been updated to include information regarding the new entitlements for parents and providers. This work has been recognised nationally as an example of good practice.

8. Next Steps

8.1 Communication and engagement strategy for parents to launch 8th April. This will include videos, promotional materials offered to all providers to advertise the new entitlements, social media strategy and updated website.

8.2 Further testing and implementation of portal systems and processes for the new entitlements launching in April 2024 and September 2024.

8.3 Confirm the criteria and process for allocation of capital funding. A local authority programme delivery plan will be submitted to DfE in June 2024 detailing how capital funding will be allocated.

8.4 Staffordshire have been invited to take part in a pilot for Early Years Financial Incentives. The pilot will help attract new or returning early years staff by paying an incentive shortly after they start their role. The pilot will take place between April and December 2024.

8.5 Further workshops to be offered to providers to inform them of updates to the programme including how to access promotional materials to advertise the new entitlements and an updated communications toolkit.

9. Funding

9.1 What the funding can be used for:

Local authority delivery support funding: This funding is intended to support in meeting the costs associated with delivering the early years entitlements. For example, system changes, administrative costs, marketing and engagement materials and additional staff capacity.

Capital funding: This must be spent on capital projects and is being provided to meet the capital costs associated with projects that help ensure sufficient places for: children taking up an early years places through the expanded 30-hours entitlement for qualifying working parents.

10. Previously asked questions and answers

1. What are the plans to ensure that there is sufficiency of provision going forward?

See 7.4 above.

2. Capital funding - how it will be allocated?

See 8.6 above.

The criteria and process for allocation of capital funding is to be confirmed. This information will be shared with providers when it becomes available, in line with DfE timescales. A more detailed report can be provided on this by June 2024.

3. The risk to providers going forward will be increased as up to 80% of their business will be State Funded, so if they get a poor Ofsted they need some reassurance that we will not automatically pull the plug on them.

This information is detailed in the newly published statutory guidance. The process that LA's must follow if a setting is graded Requires Improvement or Inadequate is clearly outlined. This will also be referenced in our provider agreement which will be distributed to providers in March 2024.

[Early education and childcare \(applies from 1 April 2024\) - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/early-education-and-childcare)
(www.gov.uk)

4. The previous report had a mix of the terms 'Funded' and 'Free' can we ensure that all our documentation refers to it as 'Funded'?

It has been reiterated that the terminology used within Staffordshire County Council should be 'funded' and not 'free', unless quoting directly from a Department for Education document where the term will be referenced by the source.