

Early Years Funding Newsletter October 2025 Introduction

Welcome to the October edition of the Early Years Funding Newsletter. If you have any comments or topics you would like to be included, please contact us at eyf@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

You can access information you need relating to funding on our website [Early years funding | Cambridgeshire County Council](#) including various Guides such as Making Amendments, Guides for the EY Portal and other supporting information to assist you, with your funding claims. These can be found in the documents section of the webpage. Please scroll down for key task and payment dates.

Reminders

Please be advised the deadline date for parents to apply to HMRC (Childcare Services) for working entitlement expanded/extended hours for the Autumn funding period was 31 August. If a parent applied after this date, they may be eligible and issued a code but the entitlement will not be available in the Autumn funding period.

If there are exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to make a discretion. Please contact the funding team eyf@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Please ensure that you remind parents to reconfirm their details with HMRC, when required, to keep their code valid. You can use the portal to validate codes at any time, not only when the tasks are sent to you.

Check your grace periods by reviewing your expiration dashboard found in the provider portal: https://ems.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ProviderPortal_LIVE/Account/Account/Login

Working Parent Entitlement – Eligibility Codes and How it Works

The website formerly known as Childcare Choices, where parents can apply for Working Parent Entitlement, has been renamed [Homepage | Best Start in Life](#). HMRC check if the parent is eligible and meets criteria for working parent entitlement. The Department for Education have set the criteria for entitlement including DOBs and deadline dates for initial application and for reconfirmation of eligibility (every 3 months) from date of application.

Applying for Eligibility Code

A parent must have the eligibility code by the time the funding period starts. The application process may take up to ten days so we strongly recommend that you advise your parents not to leave it to the last day. Doing so may mean they will be unable to claim funding for that period regardless of whether the code states they are eligible or not. The deadline dates for application by parent for working parent entitlement are as follows:

August 31 for Autumn entitlement

December 31 for Spring entitlement

March 31 for Summer entitlement

If the deadline date is missed the eligibility code does not give entitlement for that funding period. The entitlement does not start or end part way through a funding period. It is either valid from the beginning of the funding period or if the deadline was missed, it is not valid until the next period. When you run a check on the code it states if the entitlement is available for that period or not.

If there are exceptional circumstances the childcare provider should contact the team to discuss, please do not signpost the parent to us.

Reconfirming the Eligibility Code

Once the code is issued it has an 'eligible to date'. The date indicates the last day of a four week period where the code must be reconfirmed by the parent, eligibility is then rechecked by HMRC. If this period is missed it can impact on a seamless funding entitlement and can cause a gap or period in which entitlement may not be available. When you run a check on the code the message will include details of the dates when the parent must to reconfirm the code. Parent should receive reminders from HMRC. The provider can also access the dashboard in the portal to recheck the status of the code and remind parent too.

Falling out of eligibility – the grace period

If the parent is no longer eligible or they have missed the deadline date for reconfirming their eligibility, the government has provided a "grace period".

This is a period when the child can continue to receive the entitlement rather than end part way through a funding period. Once the grace period ends, if the parent remains ineligible, the entitlement will finish. If they are 3+ years they will still be entitled to the universal hours.

The extended entitlement should not be taken up at a new provision if the code has gone into a grace period.

Date Parent receives ineligible decision on reconfirmation:	Grace Period End date:
1 January - 10 February	31 March
11 February - 31 March	31 August
1 April - 26 May	31 August
27 May - 31 August	31 December
1 September - 21 October	31 December
22 October - 31 December	31 March

Here is a link to the Frequently Asked Questions that you may find useful:

[Childcare entitlements FAQs | Best Start in Life](#)

Making Changes to Contracts and Claims Mid Funding Period

We have reviewed and made some changes to our policy and rewritten the guidance on making changes and claims mid funding period.

Please follow this link to our webpage: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/Guidance-on-Changing-Contracts-Claims-Mid-Funding-Period.pdf>

Diary Dates for Tasks and Payments

Please find tables below showing future task and payment dates.

Portal Tasks

	Task Opens	Task Closes
Spring Estimate Task	Monday 10 November 2025	Monday 17 November 2025 at midnight
Spring Headcount Task	Friday 2 January 2026	Monday 19 January 2026 at midnight

Payments

PVI Nurseries, Preschools & Schools	
Estimate and Headcount payments	Payment Date (Week ending)
Autumn Estimate	Friday 15 August 2025
Payment Autumn Headcount Payment	Friday 14 November 2025

PVI Nurseries, Preschools & Schools	
Estimate and Headcount payments	Payment Date (Week ending)
Spring Estimate Payment	Friday 19 December 2025
Spring Headcount Payment	Friday 6 March 2026

Childminders	
Split payments	Payment Date (Week ending)
Autumn Month 1	Friday 22 August 2025
Autumn Month 2	Friday 19 September 2025
Autumn Month 3	Friday 24 October 2025
Autumn Month 4	Friday 21 November 2025

Childminders	
Split payments	Payment Date (Week ending)
Spring Month 1	Friday 19 December 2025
Spring Month 2	Friday 23 January 2026
Spring Month 3	Friday 20 February 2026
Spring Month 4	Friday 20 March 2026