



Early Years Funded Entitlement (EYFE)

Provider Declaration

1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

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Introduction

The Early Years Funded Entitlement (EYFE) for children over 9 months old to statutory school age is at the heart of the Government's vision for all children to have access to high quality early years education that helps them reach their full potential.

The Department for Education (DfE) provides the Local Authority (LA) with statutory guidance namely 'Statutory guidance Early Education and Childcare (applies from 1 April 2024)' which outlines how to meet the duties set out in the Childcare Act 2006 and subsequent legislation. It also includes information about eligibility and conditions of funding.

EYFE Provider Declaration Form

The purpose of this document is to clarify statutory requirements and expectations of West Sussex County Council (WSCC). This form sets out the conditions for receiving the EYFE in West Sussex, identifying those which **must** or **should** be adhered to. For conditions which are identified as **should**, WSCC has an expectation that these will be met unless the provider can give a 'good reason' why they cannot. For conditions which are identified as **must**, WSCC expect these to be adhered to. (See 6.11-6.15 and Appendix F).

Providers **must** agree and comply with these conditions and sign and return the Provider Declaration form via the Online Provider Portal if they wish to claim the EYFE for children within their setting. WSCC may, from time to time, amend these conditions but all providers will be notified of any such changes.

WSCC offers support to providers with an Ofsted outcome of Inadequate or Requires Improvement and for any provider requiring business support or help to include children, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This is to enable eligible EYFE children to access high quality, inclusive early learning. Where providers do not make the necessary improvements required by Ofsted, WSCC may withdraw EYFE funding as soon as is practicable, securing alternative provision for children accessing their early education place. See also point 3.6

Glossary

Terms Used	Definition
EYFE	Early Years Funded Entitlement
EYFE for Working Families	Early Years Funded Entitlement awarded through the Government HMRC Childcare Service
DAF	Disability Access Fund
EYFS / EYFSP	Early Years Foundation Stage / Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
EYPP	Early Years Pupil Premium
Extended EYFE	Extended (or 30 hours) Early Years Funded Entitlement for eligible 3 and 4 year olds
FIS	Family Information Service
INCo	Inclusion Coordinator
LA	Local Authority
LA issued 2 year old EYFE	EYFE funding awarded by the Local Authority under the income-based benefits or other criteria.
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
Must	Required to do
Ofsted	Office for standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. Whenever we refer to Ofsted, this also includes an independent inspectorate approved by the Secretary of State for Education.
Provider/Setting	This includes Childminders, Childminder Agencies, Childminder without domestic premises, Day Nurseries, Pre-schools, Maintained Nursery Schools, Maintained or Academy Nursery Classes, Independent Schools, Free Schools, Breakfast Clubs, Out of School Clubs or Holiday Play Schemes
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs or Disabilities
SFF	Single Funding Formula
Should	Required to do unless there is a good reason not To
Universal EYFE	Universal Early Years Funded Entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds
WSCC	West Sussex County Council

Statutory Initiatives and Documentation

There are a number of national expectations and regulations for childcare providers. All providers need to have regard to the following:

- The Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities: [Early Education and Childcare - Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities \(April 2025\)](#)
- [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK](#)
- [Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years - Statutory guidance for organisations who work with and support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities \(January 2015\)](#)
- [The Human Rights Act 1998 and The Equality Act 2010](#)
- Any amendment or re-enhancement to the above or any regulations or code of practice that may be implemented to the above.
- Any other Acts of Parliament and all orders, regulations and byelaws made with statutory authority by government departments or by local or other authorities.
- West Sussex Early Years and Childcare Strategy - [Right From The Start 2024-2027](#)
- [Information for childcare providers - West Sussex County Council](#)

Section 1: The Early Years Funded Entitlement (EYFE)

What a parent/carers is entitled to

- 1.1 Children become of eligible **age** for EYFE on the dates set out below:

Eligible 9 month olds

(Appendix B for Working Families criteria)

A child born on or between:	Will turn 9 months old on or between:	Will become eligible age at the start of the term beginning in:
1 April and 30 June	1 January and 31 March	April after turning 9 months old
1 July and 30 November	1 April and 31 August	September after turning 9 months old
1 December and 31 March	1 September and 31 December	January after turning 9 months old

Eligible 2 year olds

(Appendix A for LA issued criteria, Appendix B for Working Families criteria)

A child born on or Between	Will become eligible age at the start of the term beginning in:
1 April to 31 August	September after their 2nd birthday
1 September to 31 December	January after their 2nd birthday
1 January to 31 March	April after their 2nd birthday

3 and 4 year olds

(Appendix B for Extended criteria)

A child born on or Between	Will become eligible for a free place at the start of the term beginning on or following:
1 April to 31 August	September after their 3rd birthday
1 September to 31 December	January after their 3rd birthday
1 January to 31 March	April after their 3rd birthday

- 1.2 Parents/carers can decide how their child accesses their weekly entitlement, subject to a provider's pattern of delivery, and available sessions.
- 1.3 Current eligibility criteria for:
- LA issued 2 year old EYFE are listed in Appendix A
 - EYFE for Working Families, together with grace periods, is listed in Appendix B.
 - Universal EYFE for 3 and 4 year olds has no additional eligibility criteria.

- 1.4 The EYFE does not guarantee a place at any one provider or a particular pattern of provision.
- 1.5 EYFE hours are subject to the following limits:
- no more than 10 hours in one session
 - no minimum session length or quantity of sessions (subject to the requirements of registration on the Ofsted Early Years Register)
 - not before 6am or after 8pm
 - a maximum of two sites in a single day
 - ensure children can take up their EYFE in continuous blocks without any artificial breaks. For example, a provider should not offer 10am to midday and 1pm to 3pm as EYFE and offer only non EYFE hours in between.

EYFE scheme	Maximum hours per week (over 38 weeks)	Maximum hours per year
9 month old EYFE for Working Families	15 (from September 2025, this will increase to 30)	570 (from September 2025, this will increase to 1140)
2 year old EYFE for Working Families	15 (from September 2025, this will increase to 30)	570 (from September 2025, this will increase to 1140)
LA issued 2 year old EYFE	15	570
Universal EYFE for 3 and 4 year olds	15	570
Universal + Extended EYFE for 3 and 4 year olds	30	1140

- 1.6 A child can take up EYFE, subject to availability:
- over up to 52 weeks of the year if the parent is stretching their child's entitlement, reducing the weekly hours accordingly
 - outside of maintained school term times
 - at weekends
- 1.7 A child moving to England from another country is entitled to Universal EYFE on the same basis as any other child regardless of whether they have British citizenship.
- 1.8 Temporary residents, including children with working parents/carers and asylum seekers can claim EYFE funding subject to the eligibility criteria, see point 1.3.
- 1.9 Children visiting or on holiday to the UK from abroad cannot access EYFE funding.
- 1.10 WSCC has set up reciprocal arrangements with neighbouring authorities, whereby they agree to fund EYFE places for children resident in neighbouring areas attending provision in West Sussex and vice versa.
- 1.11 A child may move provider at any point during a term, however parents/carers **should** make sure that they have complied with a provider's notice period (unless leaving before Headcount Day) up to a maximum of four weeks (for any funded hours). If moving provider within West Sussex, the funding **must** follow the child, with no deductions. If a child attended elsewhere between the start of term and prior to Headcount Day, funding for the time attended **must** be passed on to the previous provider.

The table below shows the upcoming Headcount days:

Term	WSCC Headcount Day*
Summer 2025	Thursday 8 May 2025
Autumn 2025	Thursday 18 September 2025
Spring 2026	Thursday 22 January 2026

*Subject to change, dependent on DfE guidance

- 1.12 In the case of nurseries on a school site, the admissions policy **must** make clear that attendance at the nursery does not influence the child's chance of obtaining a place in the reception or foundation class at the school.
- 1.13 It is the responsibility of providers to communicate the following operational aspects of the scheme to parents to ensure they understand which hours can be taken as funded provision. This includes:
- explaining the importance of Headcount and the impact non-attendance at Headcount may have.
 - Ensuring parents receive a clear statement of term dates for the year in advance.
 - ensuring that parents/carers understand that there is a maximum of 15 hours per week (Universal EYFE, 2 year old LA Issued EYFE, 9 month old and 2 Year Old EYFE for Working Families until September 2025) or 30 hours per week (Universal + Extended EYFE, 9 month old and 2 Year Old EYFE for Working Families from September 2025) over 38 weeks irrespective of the type of provider (private, voluntary, independent, academy or maintained)
 - explaining that they can charge parents for meals, snacks and consumables (see Appendix L) as part of an EYFE place, and for services such as trips and specialist tuition. However, these additional charges **must** be voluntary for the parent (see also point 1.18).
 - explaining that any additional, private paid hours taken up will be charged for according to their usual terms and conditions (see also point 1.18).
 - From September 2025, ensuring that where families are eligible for both the LA issued 2 year old funding, and the working parent entitlement, parents should be funded under the LA issued entitlement for the first 15 hours they claim. Any further hours to claim (up to 15 expanded hours) should be claimed from the working parent entitlement.
- 1.14 Providers **must** have clear policies available for parents/carers before signing up. Such policies **must** include:
- any admissions criteria, fees policy, pattern of delivery, notice periods. Private, voluntary, and independent providers are allowed to set their own criteria for the admission of children, providing they comply with relevant legislation on equalities and non-discrimination.
 - If a provider has EYFE vacancies, after the Admissions Policy criteria have been applied, they **must** be offered to parents requesting just the basic entitlement. Whilst the child continues to take up EYFE there should be no restrictions on that place e.g. to support continuity of care, parents should not have to reserve a place each term.
 - drop-off/collection arrangements.
 - how EYFE is offered

- options for reasonable alternatives to additional charges that allow parents to access the entitlement for free, including allowing parents to supply their own meals or nappies, or waiving the cost of meals and snacks.
 - information about Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) and Disability Access Fund (DAF), including what these are, provider policies on how the best use of funding is determined, and what information is required from parents to enable the provider to claim.
- 1.15 Parents **must** understand that they will not be charged for EYFE hours and the circumstances in which fees are payable. Before a child takes up an EYFE place parents **must** be made aware of:
- any additional charges for example, for those parents opting to purchase additional hours or services.
 - any circumstances where a deposit may not be refunded.
 - the process for changing EYFE hours and any costs or fees that are linked to this. In addition, any changes to these fees or charges should be clearly communicated to parents.
- 1.16 The requirements for eligibility codes for EYFE for Working Families to be verified by WSCC or the provider prior to their child taking up the EYFE each term. WSCC can only fund valid codes.
- 1.17 Providers must ensure the following information is available to parents:
- Information about the EYFS is made available to parents and that they will be supported to engage in their children's learning.
 - Information about the provider's Local Offer and how they include children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including pre-entry support, must be made available to parents.
 - By January 2026 information about the costs of chargeable extras must be published on provider websites or, where they do not have any website, on local authority Family Information Services. (childminders and providers caring for 10 children or under at any one time are exempt from publishing this information)
- 1.18 For children accessing EYFE, providers **must** ensure that no fees or conditions of access are levied. Additional services and charges should be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. The following **must not** be a condition of accessing EYFE hours:
- No registration/administration, payment up front or non-refundable deposits for children accessing EYFE hours only.
 - No requirement to take up additional private paid hours
 - General charges, including but not limited to, non-itemised enrichment charges, sustainability charges, business continuity charges, additional charges, enhanced ratios, hourly rates, or any other supplementary charges on top of the EYFE hours.
 - It **must not** be compulsory for parents/carers to pay for meals or snacks provided by the provider in order to access any EYFE hours (see also point 1.25).
 - It **must not** be compulsory for parents/carers to pay for consumables such as nappies or sun cream and for services such as trips and yoga in order to access EYFE hours. Parents/carers **must** be given the option to supply their own consumables instead. See Appendix L for a list of chargeable and non-chargeable consumables.

- Voluntary contributions for non-chargeable items (as listed in appendix L) are acceptable but **must not** be included in any invoice totals or added as a condition of access.
- It **must not** be compulsory for parents/carers to pay for additional support. This includes children with identified SEND. (See point 2.15)

1.19 Where providers charge a refundable deposit to parents accessing the EYFE they should consider if this would prevent take up, especially for disadvantaged families. Any deposits for children solely accessing EYFE hours **must** be re-paid to the parent shortly after Headcount (except in circumstances where a provider would not be obliged to refund the deposit, e.g. if a parent fails to take up their place without giving sufficient notice).

Additional hours and invoicing (see Appendix K for example invoice)

1.20 The rates charged for privately funded hours are a matter for providers to decide. However, parents/carers that pay for additional hours should be provided with an invoice and receipt which is clear, transparent and itemised, showing that parents have only been charged for additional hours/services and not for EYFE hours.

Invoices and receipts must be itemised*, and providers must ensure their invoices break down separately into:

- EYFE hours
- additional private paid hours
- food charges
- non-food consumables charges (see Appendix L)
- activities charges.

Invoices and receipts should include the provider's full details so that they can be identified as coming from a specific provider.

*Providers must ensure these itemised invoices are in place by January 2026.

- 1.21 Parents must be able to see that they have received their child's entitlement completely free of charge and understand fees paid for additional hours or services. EYFE **must not** be shown to parents/carers as a monetary subsidy. Parents/carers that only access EYFE hours **should** be invoiced at least once a term showing hours taken but with a zero monetary value.
- 1.22 Ensure the rates charged for additional paid for hours are no higher than the standard published fees. Parents must be informed of any changes to fees in line with providers Terms and Conditions for fee reviews.
- 1.23 Where a provider's usual hourly rate is more than the EYFE funded hourly rate, additional 'top-up' fees must not be charged to parents/carers. Providers must not deduct the amount they receive from WSCC from parent/carer bills and the rates paid by WSCC must not be shown on any invoices. Similarly, where the normal hourly rate is less than the funded hourly rate, funding should be used to support the learning within the provision, but the difference must not be refunded to parents/carers.

- 1.24 A child will only be funded for EYFE hours. If a parent chooses for their child to attend for hours outside of a provider's written pattern of delivery for EYFE then the parents/carers can be charged for those hours, even if they are not accessing more than the maximum total EYFE hours per week. Charged-for hours should not be a condition of accessing a funded place though as per point 1.15 Providers **must** make clear to parents/carers what their pattern of EYFE delivery is (see section 2).

Meals

- 1.25 EYFE hours may include meals and snacks, if this is incorporated into the EYFS delivery. Providers can charge for meals and snacks the children receive during the day; however, parents/carers **must** be provided with reasonable options for alternatives or have the cost of meals and snacks waived. Where a parent provides their child with a packed lunch or snack instead, this must be subject to healthy eating (including allergies) policies. For further information on food safety advice you can refer to the [DFE guidance](#). Any charge that a provider makes for lunch **must** be agreed with parents/carers in advance. Providers must ensure that children are able to take up their EYFE in continuous blocks if they wish to, and there should be no artificial breaks. For example, a provider should not offer 10am to midday and 1pm to 3pm as EYFE and offer only non EYFE hours in between.

Non-attendance

- 1.26 Funding is paid on participation based on the agreed pattern of hours for the Headcount Week (see Section 4, specifically point 4.22). Children leaving before the Headcount (unless confirmed as short-term sick or taking holiday **cannot** be claimed for, even if the parent has given notice for their child (also see point 1.11).
- 1.27 If a child is frequently absent or absent for a prolonged period or if a child is absent without notification from the parent/carer providers **must** keep a record of this with reasons for children's absence (e.g., a verbal or written statement from the parent/carer) which may be requested as part of the audit to support the claim. When recording what they would judge as poor attendance providers should consider the child's/parent/carer vulnerabilities and home life. Providers must have an attendance policy which they share with parents/carers which includes the actions they will take if a child is absent for a prolonged period for example, following their safeguarding procedures or contacting emergency contacts if they are unable to follow up with the parents. If poor attendance continues or holiday exceeds 4 weeks (including if the holiday spans across more than one term) providers **must** contact WSCC about whether it is appropriate to continue to claim public funds for a child in future periods.
- 1.28 If the child is unable to attend due to short term sickness or a parent chooses to take them out on a short-term holiday, they cannot accrue these hours to be used at another time. The provider **should** explain this to parents thinking of taking holiday.

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

- 1.29 All EYFE children who meet the eligibility criteria will attract additional funding to the hourly base rate, up to 15 hours per week. EYPP **must** be used in ways which improve the quality of the provision for all children but with particular regard to the children it has been paid for. However, for children who attract EYPP as they are cared for by the local authority, the funding **must** be used specifically for that child. Providers **should** produce a written policy or statement which outlines how they plan to utilise the EYPP funding. It is up to the provider to demonstrate to Ofsted, during an inspection, how the EYPP has been spent and evidence how this has improved the learning outcomes for the children in attendance.

To claim EYPP funding, providers **must** gather the information required from parents and record on the Parent Declaration form for submission with Headcount. For additional guidance on submitting your claims, look at the [Help Guide](#) 'How to claim child level funding (actuals)'. To check if a parent/carer meets the economic criteria, providers **must** submit the parent's date of birth, National Insurance (NI) or National Asylum Seekers Service (NASS) number. Children who are Looked After, adopted from care or have left care under a Special Guardianship Order or Residence Order in England or Wales are also eligible. For further information regarding identifying eligible children refer to our [EYPP webpage](#).

Providers can claim EYPP funding for any EYFE children who meet the eligibility criteria for EYPP up to a maximum of 15 hours. For 3 & 4 year old children. It is the parent/carer's choice where they access the Universal EYFE and **must** not be a condition of their place. From September 2025, if a 2 year old is eligible for both the LA issued EYFE and Working Families entitlement, EYPP will be applied to the LA issued EYFE hours.

Disability Access Fund (DAF)

- 1.30 The Disability Access Fund (DAF) is a funding entitlement which aids access to early years places by, for example, supporting providers in making adjustments to their settings.

EYFE children will be eligible for DAF if the child meets both of the following criteria:

- is in receipt of child Disability Living Allowance and
- receives EYFE

Providers with EYFE children eligible for DAF can claim a one-off payment, this is currently £938. The DAF is not based on an hourly rate and is an additional entitlement. If the child changes childcare providers, the new provider is not eligible to receive another payment of DAF for this child until a year after the first payment was made.

The new provider will need to wait until the following year. DAF is not transferable between providers unless agreed between the providers given the circumstances of a child.

Providers must include within their policies information relating to DAF, including what it is, what information is required from parents, and how best use of the funding will be determined. To claim DAF, providers **must** obtain the parent/carer's consent via the Parent Declaration form for submission with Headcount. If the child is splitting their EYFE across more than one provider, WSCC will ask parents to nominate the provider of their choice. This provider will be where WSCC will pay the DAF for the child.

Providers **should** keep a record of DAF payments received and how this money was used and the impact it had for the child for whom the payment was received.

Transfer between providers

- 1.31 Notice periods, outside of EYFE, are a matter for providers to decide and agree with parents/carers. When a child starts at a provider mid-term, providers **must** contact the previous provider, if in West Sussex, to ensure that the notice period at the previous provider had been served. Providers are asked that, where there are exceptional circumstances, the need to serve a notice period is waived.

If transfer of funding is disputed the providers involved **should** contact WSCC to decide or to consider an exceptional funding claim.

- 1.32 The amount transferred **must** include both EYPP and the deprivation supplement paid for the child transferring, as well as any remaining Inclusion funding. DAF cannot be transferred to a new provider; however, the new provider may be able to apply for another DAF payment in the next relevant year, see point 1.30. The new setting should contact the Family Information Service (FIS) to ascertain the next date of eligibility for DAF.
- 1.33 Where a child moves from one childcare provider to another within West Sussex after Headcount Week, providers **must** ensure that the balance of the unused funding is transferred to the new provider. Childcare providers will be expected to work together to arrange the transfer of funding. Monies **must not** be given directly to a parent/carer.

Please note: Parents are expected to honor notice periods agreed to, however, there are occasions when this is not in the interest of the child. If a parent has not kept to a notice period, in exceptional circumstances WSCC request that a notice period is waived. WSCC will only acknowledge a notice period of **up to four weeks** relating to transfer of EYFE. The four weeks is inclusive of periods of setting closure, e.g. half-term.

- 1.34 Settings working in partnership to share funding over a term, including school holidays, **should** have a formal agreement in place. For example, if a parent wishes to access stretched funding during term-time and access holiday provision, the setting where the child is in attendance during Headcount Day will claim the funding and be responsible for forwarding on funds to the holiday provision through an agreement between themselves. This **must** not exceed the maximum weekly EYFE hours (as set out in point 1.5) over standard number of weeks.

New providers

- 1.35 To claim EYFE, new providers **must** contact the FIS in the first instance to register their provision. This is in addition to registration with Ofsted. Providers **must** apply to join the EYFE scheme in the first half of the term prior to the one in which they wish to begin claiming EYFE. Providers will be asked to supply copies of admissions policies, funding policies, pattern of delivery, fees, example invoices that include EYFE hours, and EYPP and DAF policies. Signing up to claim EYFE is conditional on your policies being compliant with the EYFE Provider Declaration. Once we receive all the relevant documents we will review and respond to providers within 6 weeks.

Section 2: Flexibility

Pattern of delivery

- 2.1 Providers can choose how they wish to offer EYFE hours; this is called their pattern of delivery. A parent/carer does not have a right to access EYFE hours outside of the provider's stated pattern of delivery. However, a provider, including maintained nurseries, cannot insist that a parent takes up a full pattern i.e. full 15 or 30 hours. This means that the parent is entitled to access as many or as few EYFE hours as they wish. Where a child is accessing EYFE funding, all rules pertaining to EYFE apply to each WSCC funded hour. Providers **should** work with parents to ensure that as far as possible the pattern of hours meets the needs of the children attending and are convenient for parents/carers to access.

Providers may change their pattern of delivery but must contact the Early Years Funding Team to do so and may be required to re-sign up to offer EYFE. For example, if a provider wishes to amend the number of weeks across the year that they will offer funding, to add a stretched or term time EYFE offer, to add a new age group to their offer or change the days of the week they will offer funded hours, in these circumstances providers would be required to complete the re-sign up process.

Providers **should** provide parents with at least a term's notice following WSCC approval of your revised pattern of delivery and policies.

- 2.2 Providers can choose to deliver the EYFE hours over up to 52 weeks of the year by stretching the EYFE over more than the standard 38 weeks, reducing the weekly hours accordingly. See point 4.29.
- 2.3 Providers **must** have a written pattern of delivery and make this available to parents when they enquire about their child accessing EYFE at the provider as part of the setting's policies and procedures. This **must** be given to WSCC via your online Setting Profile form. **Suggested** patterns of delivery are:

15 hours EYFE	30 hours EYFE
5 hours per day over 3 days of the week	10 hours per day over 3 days of the week
3 hours per day over 5 days of the week	6 hours per day over 5 days of the week

Providers not able to offer the maximum weekly EYFE hours or the full 38 weeks

- 2.4 Providers unable to offer the full 15 or 30 hours EYFE per week **must** inform parents/carers they are entitled to claim the remaining hours at another provider.

Inclusion and Supporting Children with SEND

- 2.5 The EYFS provides an inclusive framework that supports the individual needs of all children. WSCC is committed to effectively implementing this framework, therefore all providers in receipt of EYFE **must**:
- 2.6 ensure that no child is refused admission when space is available, and they are eligible for an EYFE place.

- 2.7 identify an Inclusion Co-ordinator (INCo)/Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) from within the setting to take responsibility for developing and implementing inclusive policies and practice within the setting and ensuring that all members of staff understand their responsibilities in planning to meet each child's individual needs. This must include the production of a Local Offer document in line with the SEND Code of Practice 2015. Your setting Local Offer document **must** be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.
- 2.8 ensure that where there are on-going concerns about a child's inclusion in the setting, supporting online materials and guidance are accessed in the first instance. Following consistent implementation of suitable strategies, if the setting still need support, the provider may request further support from WSCC via the setting support phoneline (see Section 7: Contact List).
- 2.9 ensure that no child is excluded or at risk of being excluded without ensuring that all appropriate strategies are in place, parents are involved, and support has been requested from WSCC;
- 2.10 ensure that they have appropriate policies, facilities and procedures for staff to meet children's personal care needs. An EYFE place cannot be withheld based on child's learning or health care needs, for example because a child is incontinent, or due to allergies or specific medical needs. Early years providers should ensure that their practice enables all children to access the same opportunities as their peers regardless of their needs or stage of development. Policies must not exclude children based on continence, beliefs or immunisation status etc.

Providers **should** contact the FIS in the first instance for advice (see Section 7: Contact List).

- 2.11 ensure strategies are put in place to support children and families for whom English is an additional language. Providers **should** use support information available on our website in the first instance for advice (see Section 7: Contact List).
- 2.12 ensure that, when children move between settings, they are supported to make a smooth transition by, with parental permission, sharing information including records of the child's progress and, if appropriate, organise a transition meeting with the new setting. All safeguarding information **must** be shared with the new provider.
- 2.13 Ensure that where children are attending two or more settings, with parental permission, providers **must** share information including details of the child's progress, safeguarding concerns, and funding information.
- 2.14 All settings **must** monitor the progress of all children, identify children not making progress and put in strategies and support to enable all children to reach their full potential. Settings **must** ensure that vulnerable children and families are enabled to access the services that can support their needs, for example, referrals to health professionals or setting up an Early Help Plan. Settings **should** use appropriate tools to identify vulnerable children and families, including the indicators from the Children's Learning and Well-Being Audit (CLaWBA) and the WSCC's Continuum of Need.
- 2.15 Children in receipt of EYFE with identified SEND may be entitled to Inclusion funding. For further information please see: [Inclusion claims - West Sussex County Council](#)

Section 3: Quality and Safeguarding

Quality of providers

- 3.1 WSCC will only fund EYFE through early years' providers who deliver the full Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (unless specifically exempted by Ofsted) and are either registered with Ofsted, a Childminder agency or Independent school inspectorate as early years providers or are schools taking children aged 2 and over and therefore exempt from registration with Ofsted as early years providers.
- 3.2 WSCC will fund places for children eligible for the LA issued 2 year old EYFE at new providers who have yet to be inspected by Ofsted, and providers rated, 'Met', 'Good' or 'Outstanding', or equivalent ratings, by Ofsted.
- 3.3 WSCC will fund places for children eligible for the Universal 3 and 4 year old EYFE and the EYFE for Working Families at new providers who have yet to be inspected by Ofsted, and providers rated 'Requires Improvement', 'Met' 'Good' or 'Outstanding', or equivalent ratings, by Ofsted.
- 3.4 Providers **must** meet all the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the current EYFS. Appendix J sets out the sharing safeguarding concerns processes between the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and FIS.
- 3.5 For schools inspected after 2 September 2024, including maintained schools, maintained nursery schools, academies and non-maintained special schools, the following definitions now apply: inadequate means a judgement where a state-funded school requires significant improvement or special measures a judgement of less than good means less than good in the early years provision judgement
- 3.6 Providers **must** inform WSCC of any Ofsted inspection outcomes that are 'Inadequate', 'Requires Improvement', 'Not Met', or 'Ineffective' no later than the day after their inspection. This will trigger a process of support to ensure that Ofsted actions are addressed swiftly and effectively.
- 3.7 Settings who receive a published Ofsted report rating of 'Inadequate' will no longer be able to offer EYFE for any new children joining the setting. Existing funded children can continue to access their EYFE place at the setting, should their parent choose to. Where an 'Inadequate' provider fails to improve, EYFE funding for all children will be removed (see Appendix F).
- 3.8 Settings who receive an Ofsted rating of 'Requires Improvement' will no longer be able to offer EYFE for any new LA issued 2 year old children joining the setting. Existing LA issued 2 year old children can continue to access their EYFE place at the setting, should their parent choose to. WSCC will only fund places for new children eligible for the LA issued 2 year old EYFE at 'Requires improvement' rated providers where there is not sufficient, accessible 'good' or 'outstanding' provision (see Appendix F).
- 3.9 Childminders are not required to hold a level 3 qualification to offer EYFE, however we encourage working towards gaining a full and relevant level 3 qualification, if they do not already hold one.
- 3.10 WSCC will secure alternative provision and withdraw funding as soon as is practicable, when Ofsted publish a second consecutive inspection judgement of a childminder agency of 'ineffective' (see Appendix F).

Section 4: Funding the Early Years Funded Entitlement (EYFE)

Conditions of funding

Providers **must**:

- 4.1 sign and return the EYFE Provider Declaration Signature Form;
- 4.2 supply any additional information requested by WSCC or partner organisations, including WSCC annual Census return on behalf of the Department for Education, Termly Childcare Update Form and termly Sufficiency information, in order to support monitoring the use of public funds and childcare sufficiency planning;
- 4.3 **complete the Headcount information.** For the Universal EYFE and EYFE for Working Families, the dates for the Headcount **must** be adhered to. A child who is in regular attendance but is legitimately absent (i.e. sickness or planned holiday for no more than 4 weeks) during Headcount Day can be included in the Headcount). Headcount dates **must** be clearly stated for parents and carers. For LA issued 2 year old EYFE there is no restriction on when children can start during a term. Eligible applications are supported throughout the period through submission of the Post-Headcount/Exceptional Payment request form (see Appendix D and **section 4.14**);
- 4.4 maintain a separate non-personal bank account specifically for their childcare provision. The account **must** be dual signatory unless a provider is a sole trader. EYFE payments will only be made to the specified bank account through the BACS system. Any alterations to the specified bank account **must** be notified to WSCC;
- 4.5 **repay, on demand, any payment of funding if that payment was:**
 - **for provision which did not meet WSCC's conditions of funding; or**
 - **made incorrectly due to an administrative error; or**
 - **estimate overclaim; or**
 - **made for a child due to failure of the provider to make an adjustment at the correct time.**
- 4.6 inform WSCC urgently as soon as you are aware that your provision has any current or anticipated financial difficulties or sustainability issues, especially if there is the possibility of permanent closure. Settings should request [Targeted Setting Support](#) from WSCC. In the event of a permanent closure, you will be expected to repay any unused funding to WSCC;
- 4.7 actively promote fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- 4.8 not promote views or theories as fact, which are contrary to established scientific or historical evidence and explanation;
- 4.9 meet the needs of children with additional needs and/or disabilities;
- 4.10 when a child starts to attend school, even on a part-time basis, EYFE funding will cease. Should a child start school and then return to Early Years provision (before they are of statutory school age – the term after the child turns 5) or parents defer entry/no school places available providers **must** contact WSCC to discuss funding;

Those children who attend reception class in independent schools or are being home schooled can continue to receive the Universal EYFE Funding until statutory school age.

Parents cannot claim their 30 hours in addition to a full-time reception place in a state funded or independent school.

A child born on or between	Must legally be in full time education and therefore EYFE ceases completely beginning on or following:
1 April to 31 August	September following their 5th birthday
1 September to 31 December	January following their 5th birthday
1 January to 31 March	April following their 5th birthday

- 4.11 Childminders must not claim EYFE funding for their own child/ren or any other related child. "Childcare", as defined in section 18 of the 2006 Act, specifically excludes care provided for a child by a parent, step-parent, foster parent (or other relative) or by a person who fosters the child privately or has parental responsibility for the child.

Payment mechanisms

- 4.12 The EYFE is funding provided for eligible children, claimable in half-hour increments. Providers may choose to receive payments in one of the following ways (from Autumn 2025 TBC):

Two payments per term - Payment for each term is in two instalments.

- The **first instalment** is based on the total estimated weekly hours (that is to say, an estimate of EYFE hours expected to be taken up in the Headcount Week). This is submitted by a provider in the previous term, and 70% of the forecast termly grant is paid at the beginning of the term.
- The **second instalment** is based on the return following Headcount Day (which is close to the start of term), and children **must** be attending by that date to receive the grant (for LA issued 2 year old EYFE see 4.3). After submission of the headcount figures (i.e. the exact numbers of children attending, hours taken up and number of **full weeks** - not part of a week - which may vary for each child), the balance of the termly payment is made after half term. This enables adjustments to be made if the estimate and headcount numbers differ.

Monthly payments – Payments for each term are split to enable a payment at the beginning of each month

- **All installments except the final installment** are based on the total estimated weekly hours. Like the first installment above, this is submitted by the provider prior to the term, and the sum of all but the final installment is equivalent to 70% of the forecast termly grant. This 70% is then split between the installments.
 - Spring – two installments of 35%, paid each month in January and February.
 - Summer – four installments of 17.5%, paid each month from April to July
 - Autumn – Three installments of 23.3%, paid each month from September to November
- **The final installment** is based on the return following Headcount Day (which is close to the start of term), and children must be attending by that date to receive the grant (for LA issued 2 year old EYFE see 4.3). After submission of the headcount figures (i.e. the exact numbers of children attending, hours taken up and number of full weeks - not part of a week - which may vary for each child), the balance of the termly payment is made for the final month of the term.

4.13 Where a child accesses fewer than the full entitlement hours, the EYFE is paid based on the hours taken up.

Parents may split the entitlement between more than one provider or on more than one site if they so wish. This **must not** equal more than 15 hours per week or 570 hours per 12 month period for 3 and 4 year old Universal EYFE and Working Families EYFE and 30 hours per week or 1140 hours per 12 month period for 3 and 4 year old Extended EYFE. To ensure correct payments are made to each provider, a copy of the Parent Declaration Form **must** be submitted to WSCC where indicated below:

Scenario	Submit copy of Parent Declaration Form to WSCC
Child is eligible and claiming DAF	Yes
WSCC request a copy to resolve dispute in funding claims	Yes
Child is claiming EYPP	No

4.14 Parents who wish to claim the EYFE **must** have started the child (unless on short-term sick or planned holiday, see 1.26) with the provider no later than Headcount Day. LA issued 2 year old EYFE children can start at any point in the term. For eligible Universal 3 and 4 year olds and EYFE for Working Families), only in exceptional circumstances may claims be accepted for EYFE after this date, for **example**:

- moving from outside of West Sussex after Headcount. Funding is not transferred between local authorities.
- missed Headcount due to serious illness
- children from Traveller communities
- children with an additional need whose start with a provider has been supported by a professional such as a GP, Portage, Speech and Language, Health Visitor etc.
- Children Looked After (foster care etc.)
- asylum seekers/refugees/Afghan families who have resettled in the UK
- Children with a minority ethnic background and/or with EAL
- child of parent who is in a women's refuge or part of a Witness Protection Programme
- other vulnerable children
- families returning to work from parental leave (see appendix B.8)

4.15 Post-Headcount/Exceptional Payment request forms **must** be submitted by the end of the term within which a child began their funded attendance. Providers must use the [latest version of the form and complete it in full](#) otherwise it will be rejected. If not adhered to, WSCC will not pay funding for the child's attendance (see 4.30).

4.16 A child who has left the provider before Headcount Day is not eligible to be part of headcount figures. However, if a child then attended elsewhere on Headcount Day, funding for the time attended only can be claimed from the subsequent provider.

4.17 Debt recovery process: If a provider has been overpaid, an invoice will be raised for payment within 30 days of notification. Failure to clear an account will result in the debt being referred to WSCC Corporate Finance for further action. Debts over £250 will be referred to WSCC Legal Services for court proceedings.

Data submissions

- 4.18 WSCC requires online headcount submissions to be completed using the following guidelines at all times, unless otherwise stated in communications to childcare providers.
- 4.19 The information sheet (i.e. notes on completion of Parent Declaration form) for parents/carers **must** be available to all parents/carers of children within the provision (see Appendix C).
- 4.20 All newly eligible children **must** provide proof of eligibility. Childcare providers **must** confirm that they have seen the **original** of a child's Birth Certificate or Passport and record the number on the Parent Declaration form. For eligible LA issued 2 year old EYFE children, WSCC will have allocated a reference number which **must** be included on the Parent Declaration form. For EYFE for Working Families, parents/carers must provide their date of birth, National Insurance number, together with the valid HMRC-issued 11-digit reference number with a validity end date.
- 4.21 The parents/carers of all eligible children **must** complete and sign an individual Parent Declaration form, which **must** be retained and signed by the provider for audit purposes. Childcare providers **must not** sign on behalf of parents and carers.
- 4.22 The Parent Declaration Form **must** be recompleted and signed **by the parent and the provider** when personal and/or attendance details change. Any change in hours must be made before Headcount Day at the start of the term. Any change to an existing declaration after Headcount Day will not be accepted for funding purposes.
- 4.23 Children's details will be shared with WSCC. Therefore parents/carers **must** be made aware of this when joining the provider and providing information, this can be through use of the Privacy Notice (see Appendix E). Consent for the sharing of information relating to children **must** be explicitly sought and a parental signature obtained at the point of the child's admission to the provision.
- 4.24 It is the responsibility of the provider that parents are informed of any impact that a stretched offer may have should the parent choose to move setting.
- 4.25 Children absent on Headcount Day due to short term illness or a planned short absence (no more than 4 weeks) **must** be entered on to the headcount form. Signed Parent Declaration forms **must** still be retained by the provider.
- 4.26 It is the responsibility of the person completing the headcount form to ensure that all information on the headcount form matches the information given by parents on the Parent Declaration (e.g., dates of birth, address, number of hours accessed, ethnicity). **Any inaccuracies in date of birth or postal address could result in errors such as the School Admissions process.**
- 4.27 It is the responsibility of the provider to ensure that they receive, read and act upon the Early Years and Childcare Newsletters. All information regarding the administration of EYFE funding will be communicated through these emails. Providers who have not received any communication from WSCC a week before the published headcount day **should** urgently contact the FIS by telephone (01243 777807).

EYFE termly payments

- 4.28 Estimate payments are standardised to the following pattern (see table). As providers can set their own term dates and lengths, within the limits set by WSCC, providers may operate to a different pattern. Final payments will be made according to the term length of the individual provider. Providers **must** therefore ensure the term length is accurate for each child's claim on their Headcount submission. Final payments will be based on the headcount information which **must** record the accurate number of hours and weeks for each child. If WSCC is not informed of the term length a provider wishes to claim over, the final payment will also be based on the pattern below. For additional guidance on submitting your claims, look at the [Help Guides](#) 'How to submit an estimate' and 'How to claim child level funding (actuals)'.

Funded weeks for providers open to maximum of 38 per year	Summer	Autumn	Spring
33	11	11	11
34	12	11	11
35	12	12	11
36	12	12	12
37	12	13	12
38	12	14	12

The table below sets out the maximum number of weeks term time only providers should deliver in each term for the year ahead, and what timeframe these weeks should be delivered in.

Term	Number of weeks	Term Dates
Summer 2025	12	22/04/2025 – 22/07/2025
Autumn 2025	14	01/09/2025 – 19/12/2025
Spring 2026	12*	05/01/2026 – 27/03/2026
Summer 2026	12	13/04/2026 – 22/07/2026

*If you are closed during half term week, please note that you would only be able to deliver 11 weeks during the Spring term due to where Easter falls. However, we will fund you for 12 weeks and this will allow you to deliver the extra week in the summer term 2026. Please see more information in our newsletters.

The stretched offer

- 4.29 Providers are encouraged to provide EYFE hours on as flexible a basis as possible to suit the needs of working families. This may include provision outside of the school terms with the EYFE hours reduced accordingly. Payments will be made on a termly basis as set out in 4.12 and 4.25, but providers can stretch the funding to suit parents' preferences, subject to the termly limit set out below.

Term	Stretched Claims – maximum number of weeks available	Term Dates
Summer 2025	19 (includes half term and Summer Holidays)	21/04/2025 – 29/08/2025
Autumn 2025	18 (includes half term and Christmas Holidays)	01/09/2025 – 02/01/2026
Spring 2026	14 (includes half term and Easter Holidays)	05/01/2026 – 10/04/2026
Summer 2026	20 (includes half term and Summer Holidays)	13/04/2026 – 28/08/2026

- 4.30 It is the provider's responsibility to accurately claim funding for each child. Parents/carers **must not** be charged because of any mistakes made by the provider in claiming the funding. For further explanation of the different ways you can claim EYFE, please refer to the [additional information online](#).
- 4.31 Providers **must not** continue to claim for a child beyond the term in which they leave, even if they are within their notice period (see 4.16).

Planned or unplanned temporary closures

- 4.32 If a provider has any planned closures during EYFE time (for example due to holiday, INSET days or bank holidays or planned sick leave) these **should not** be included in the offer, and those EYFE hours offered at another time wherever reasonable. Any planned closures could have implications on funding. For any closures other than INSET days or Bank Holidays, you must **inform** the FIS so that the FIS can offer support to parents to find temporary childcare and discuss funding arrangements
- 4.33 Should the setting need to close in the event of an emergency, it is expected that you make up any loss of EYFE hours wherever reasonable. You **must** contact the FIS to discuss the circumstances and anticipated length of closure.

Early Years Single Funding Formula

- 4.34 WSCC sets the rates at which providers will be funded based on the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) with rates being reviewed annually. The WSCC formula is Base Rate plus a mandatory deprivation supplement if applicable. Deprivation supplement is linked to Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) eligibility. This is calculated using each term's headcount. EYPP is additional to the EYSFF (see 1.29). The Disability Access Fund (DAF) is additional to the EYSFF (see 1.30).

Section 5: Audit Requirements and Compliance

- 5.1 WSCC staff will carry out a number of provider audits each year to verify claims processed against the above framework. These are a combination of self-assessments, parental surveys and documentation reviews (see Appendix H). Providers will usually be given notice of any audit by telephone and/or letter but if the FIS cannot contact a childcare provider or has any cause for concern around a childcare provider's claim for funding, a visit may be made without any prior notice.
- 5.2 WSCC may also carry out a sample check by requesting copies of Parent Declaration Forms and registers to check against Headcount claims. This may be by visit or by requesting submission of paper copies.
- 5.3 In respect of a support/audit visit, childcare providers will be asked to supply:
- the attendance registers and Parent Declaration forms;
 - accounts and supporting documentation as requested;
 - policies relating to admissions, fees etc.;
 - such assistance with interpretation of records shall be required.
- 5.4 Childcare providers **must** ensure that the headcount arrangements are not subject to fraud on the part of directors, governors, staff, or parents with regard to inaccurate, incomplete, or misleading claims for payment. It is the provider's responsibility to ensure that the Parent Declarations are accurate.
- 5.5 Providers **must** retain all documentation related to the EYFE places for the current year plus two years for audit purposes. All Parent Declarations (including signed confirmation that the original of each child's birth certificate or valid passport was seen by the provider representative making the return), registers of attendance, estimate and final headcount claims for the current year plus two years.
- 5.6 Providers **must** maintain a separate non-personal bank account specifically for the childcare provision in order to facilitate payment for the EYFE places through the BACS system. The account **must** be dual signatory unless the provider is a sole trader.
- 5.7 Any providers that are registered charities **must** refer and comply with the Charities Commission guidelines on maintaining financial accounts and records, as well as meeting the relevant requirements above.
- 5.8 If you are signing on behalf of the registered person(s) (for example, an owner, Trustees of the company or the Committee that runs the setting) please ensure they are fully aware of the conditions set out in the EYFE Provider Declaration document (and each time it is updated) and their financial obligations under this agreement.
- 5.9 All or part of the payment may be reduced, suspended, withheld or reclaimed if it becomes evident that:
- there is failure to comply with any obligations under this form of agreement;
 - false, inaccurate or misleading information is provided;
 - the organisation has been, or is about to be, dissolved;
 - the provider is not meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities;
 - the provider is not promoting fundamental British values;
 - the provider is promoting as fact, views or theories which are contrary to established scientific or historical evidence and explanations.

Section 6: Directory of Providers

- 6.1 WSCC is required to keep an up-to-date Directory of all providers within their area that are eligible to claim funding for the provision of EYFE places. Providers **must** update their setting information termly.
- 6.2 Only providers included within this Directory are eligible to receive funding. Providers will not be funded for any period in which they are not included in the Directory. Any funds paid in error for such periods will be recovered.
- 6.3 For providers to be eligible for inclusion in WSCC's Directory, and hence funding of EYFE, providers **must** offer EYFE for eligible children at premises within the WSCC area and **must** be one of the following:
- An Ofsted registered group care provider with provision for under 5s. WSCC must receive Ofsted Notifications;
 - An independent school registered with the DfE;
 - A LA maintained school, or Academy, with a nursery class
 - A registered provider rated Requires Improvement, Good or Outstanding, or equivalent ratings, by Ofsted. To deliver EYFE for LA issued 2 year olds, providers are required to be Ofsted rated Good or Outstanding.
 - Childminders registered with a Childminding Agency who is rated Effective (see Appendix I).
 - A school-based pre-school provision exempt from Ofsted registration.

Adding providers to the Directory

- 6.4 New providers **must** apply to WSCC for entry to the Directory by contacting the FIS prior to offering EYFE places, with a minimum of 6 weeks' notice before making their first claim. Exceptional circumstances can be discussed with FIS.
- 6.5 New providers may be included in WSCC's Directory of Providers in advance of their Ofsted inspection to deliver EYFE, but this is conditional upon their submitting to inspection by Ofsted when required to do so. In the event of the provider not meeting the required standards in the first Ofsted inspection (see 3.5), they will be removed from the Directory.
- 6.6 Before including a provider in the Directory, WSCC will:
- ensure that the provider fits into one of the categories eligible to receive funding for the provision of EYFE and request documentary evidence of this;
 - ensure that the provider has updated their setting information;
 - ensure that the provider is able to meet the conditions that have been set;
 - ensure that the provider operates in West Sussex.
- 6.7 For every provider in the Directory, WSCC will record the address of the premises where the EYFE is provided, the contact details for the head teacher, proprietor, manager, or other contact responsible for administration, the details of the bank account into which funding is to be paid and the Ofsted unique reference number.

6.8 Providers **must** inform WSCC as soon as possible whenever there is a change in the following:

- Ownership, registered person or premises including from an organisation or committee-run to business-run;
- Name or address of the contact responsible for administration;
- The details of the bank account into which funding is paid;
- Change to Ofsted outcome, as a result of an inspection, resulting in Inadequate or Requires Improvement. This includes provision that falls under a school's inspection, unless there is a clear statement in the report that rates the early years provision as Good or Outstanding; or,
- Receipt of a Welfare Notification
- Suspension of Ofsted registration

Failure to inform WSCC of a change which results in a mis-payment of funding will result in the claw back of that funding. In the event of the providers Ofsted registration being suspended, EYFE hours cannot be delivered, claimed or paid during this time. Any funding already paid in relation to the suspension period will be clawed back.

Amending your EYFE offer

6.9 To amend how you offer EYFE including changing your pattern of delivery or your claiming method, or adding a new age group to your offer, providers **must** contact the Early Years Funding team in the first half of the term prior to the one in which they wish to start delivering the new offer. Providers will be asked to supply copies of admissions policies, funding policies, pattern of delivery, fees, example invoices that include EYFE hours, and EYPP and DAF policies. Amending your offer of EYFE is conditional on your policies being compliant with the EYFE Provider Declaration. Once we receive all the relevant documents we will review and respond to providers within 6 weeks.

Rejecting an application to be included in the Directory

6.10 New applicants to join the Directory will be rejected because they are unable to meet the conditions required by WSCC.

6.11 Where a provider's application is rejected, WSCC will give the provider a written explanation of the decision.

Removing providers from the Directory

6.12 At any time, if a provider fails to meet the requirements, they will be sent an "official notice of intention to remove EYFE", explaining what it is they are failing to meet and what is expected of them in order to remain on the Directory in the future.

6.13 If the provider continues to fail to meet the requirements and/or refuses to work in partnership with WSCC, they will be removed from the Directory. In this instance, providers will be given sufficient notice to allow parents/carers to find alternative provision without losing access to funding (see Appendix F).

6.14 If a provider is refused inclusion or is facing removal from the Directory an appeals process is in operation.

6.15 Removal on the grounds of quality will be in line with the Ofsted policy on registration and de-registration of providers.

6.16 Removal on the grounds of not promoting fundamental British values or promoting as fact, views or theories which are contrary to established scientific or historical evidence and explanation, will lead to WSCC securing alternative provision for children accessing their EYFE, as soon as is practicable.

Variation to Agreement

6.17 As new policy is being introduced by central Government on a regular basis, WSCC may need to issue a variation to the requirements. When this happens, the changes will be communicated with providers. If they do not wish to accept the changes, then the provider will be removed from the Directory.

Section 7: Contact List

Family Information Service (FIS)

Support and training for the development of quality provision and practice and the implementation of the EYFS to meet EYFE and Ofsted and statutory requirements (all providers including childminders).

You can find information and support using the web links below:

- [Children and Families](#) - WSCC
- [Early Years](#) - WSCC
- [Business support](#) - WSCC

You can contact FIS either by phone on 01243 777807 or email to family.info.service@westsussex.gov.uk

Early Years Funded Entitlement

Information and guidance for providers on the exceptions, policies, delivery and administration of the EYFE.

- [Copies of key supporting documents](#)

Contact us using the FIS number as above or email free.entitlement@westsussex.gov.uk

Inclusion support

- [Guidance and Strategies to Support Inclusive Practice](#)
- [Tools for Schools and Settings](#)
- [SEND under 5 referral](#)

Support to Settings

- [Request support within your setting](#)
- [Setting support phone line](#)

Contact us using the FIS number as above or email tssrequests@westsussex.gov.uk

West Sussex Virtual School

The West Sussex Virtual School Advisory Service champions the educational experiences and outcomes of children and young people who have, or have ever had social care involvement, and those who have achieved permanence through a court order.

- [Information and support for both parents and professionals](#)

Ofsted

Regulatory body for care and education (South West Regional Centre)

- Phone: 0300 123 1231
- Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Appendix A: Eligibility Criteria for LA issued 2 Year Old EYFE

Families living in West Sussex need to meet the eligibility criteria in order to [apply](#) to WSCC for the LA issued EYFE for 2 year olds.

2 year olds from families who meet one or more of the following criteria may be eligible.

- Income Support;
- Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit;
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Universal Credit and have an annual net earned income equivalent to and not exceeding £15,400;
- Child Tax Credit, provided that you are **not** also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (or any subsequent replacement);
- Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit).

2 year olds will also be eligible in West Sussex if:

- they are a Child Looked After (where the Local Authority acts as the corporate parent);
- the child is adopted*;
- the child has a Special Guardianship Order*;
- the child has special educational needs or a disability (SEND). These children are eligible if the child either:
 - receives Disability Living Allowance*;
 - has a current Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)* or;
- they are a child of a family with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)** (subject to a maximum annual household income threshold of £26,500 for families with one child, and £30,600 for families with two or more children). This includes children of:
 - Zambrano carers (persons from a non-EEA state whose residence is required in order to enable a child or dependent adult, who is British, to live in the UK)
 - families with no recourse to public funds with a right to remain in the UK on grounds of private/family life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights
 - families receiving support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 who are also subject to a no recourse to public funds restriction.
 - those who have [claimed asylum](#) in the UK and are waiting for a decision (known as 'part 6')
 - a subset of failed asylum seekers supported under Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - Chen carers
 - families holding a [BN\(O\) passport](#)
 - spousal visa holders
 - work visa holders

- student visa holders
- those with no immigration status
- those with a UK Ancestry Visa
- those with temporary protection status under Section 12 of the Immigration and Nationality Act
- those with pre-settled status who do not meet the qualifying right to reside test.

*Parent/carers will need to provide evidence when they apply.

** The family will need to provide evidence of a Biometric Residence Permit, or their online immigration status share code. Proof of income is also required.

To ascertain when children become eligible for the EYFE for 2 year olds, refer to 1.1. This continues until the term after their third birthday, at which point they will become eligible for Universal EYFE for 3 and 4 year olds. It is important that you do not allow a child to start accessing their LA issued 2 year old place before eligibility has been confirmed with WSCC.

Appendix B: Eligibility Criteria for EYFE for Working Families (over 9 months old to statutory school age)

- B.1 Working families could be entitled to up to 15 hours EYFE, (for 3 and 4 year olds this is an additional 15 hours, known as Extended EYFE or 30 hours EYFE). Providers should direct parent/carers to check whether they could be eligible for a range of Government childcare offers, including EYFE for Working Families, via Childcare Choices on our [help with childcare costs](#) web page. Parents who could be eligible for EYFE for Working Families will be directed to the online childcare service to apply.
- B.2 Parent/carers will need to meet eligibility criteria. These include:
- the parent earns or expects to earn the equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum or Living Wage over the coming three months. This applies whether you are in paid employment, self-employed or on zero hours contract.
 - the parent (and their partner where applicable) should be seeking the EYFE to enable them to work.
 - where one or both parents are on maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave, or if they are on statutory sick leave.
 - where one parent meets the income criteria and the other is unable to work because they are disabled, have caring responsibilities or have been assessed as having limited capability to work.
 - where a parent is in a 'start-up period' (i.e., they are newly self-employed) they do not need to demonstrate that they meet the income criteria for 12 months.
 - if a non-EEA national, the parent must have recourse to public funds.
 - For foster carers who work in addition to their role as a foster carer, if accessing additional hours is in the best interests of the child. In this instance, the foster carer will apply via the social worker rather than the processes outlined here. This will be considered on a case by case basis by WSCC Children's Social Care and the Virtual School.
- B.3 A parent will not meet the criteria when:
- either parent has an income of more than £100,000
 - either parent is a non-EEA national and subject to immigration control (and has no recourse to public funds)
- B.4 If a parent/carer loses eligibility:
- they will receive a "grace period" – this means they will be able to keep their EYFE place at their existing provider for a short period.
 - once the "grace period" has lapsed, the EYFE place will end for 9 month olds and 2 year olds. 3 and 4 year olds will still be entitled to the Universal 15 hours EYFE.

For full criteria visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

- B.5 HMRC is responsible for checking whether a parent is eligible and issuing an eligibility code, with validity start/end dates and identifying grace periods. For foster children, eligibility is determined by WSCC instead of HMRC.

- B.6 Providers **must** ensure that eligibility codes are valid before offering a place. For more information on how to check eligibility codes including start/end dates and grace periods, see the [guidance](#).

Providers and LAs are responsible for verifying (or confirming) eligibility by checking that the parent's code is valid.

Please note if you are checking a temporary working families code (this is a code beginning with 11) that these can still be checked in the same way through the OPP, however, please be aware sometimes these codes can take several days after being issued to become active.

- B.7 To claim EYFE for Working Families, providers **must** record the child's eligibility code, child's date of birth and the National Insurance number of the parent who made the application via the Parent Declaration for submission with Headcount. A partner who is listed on the application may come in place of the applicant and should bring their own National Insurance number. Parents **must** re-confirm eligibility every three months when prompted by HRMC via text message and/or e-mail. This includes where a parent has applied early and falls within their grace period before taking up their EYFE for Working Families place.

Providers **must** encourage parents to apply for the working families EYFE the term **before** the child becomes of eligible age (see Section 1.1).

- B.8 For parents starting or returning to work on or after 1 February, the following dates will apply:

Date of starting or returning to work	When you can apply from	When you can access your entitlement from
1 October to 31 January	1 September to 31 December	1 January
1 February to 30 April	1 January to 31 March	1 April
1 May to 30 September	1 April to 31 August	1 September

For those families who return to work and start attending funded sessions between the headcount day and the end of January, April or September, providers can submit a Post Headcount Exceptional Payment form, and we will look to approve funding (subject to our standard checks). Families will need to ensure they have a valid code that they applied for before the cutoff date for the term they wish to start.

Children should have started a place at their setting no later than **31 January** for Spring term, **30 April** for Summer term, or **30 September** for Autumn term. For any children starting after these dates, we would need to an exceptional reason to accept a Post Headcount form.

Grace Periods

- B.9 The grace period enables parents to retain their EYFE place until the end of term if they become ineligible for the EYFE for Working Families. The table below shows the specific grace period end dates:

Validity End Date	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

- B.10 Parents reconfirm their eligibility around every three months. The 'validity start date' is the date on which the parent has applied and been issued a code. The 'validity end date' is the parent's 'deadline' for reconfirming. Their 'grace period' date is the last date on which they should receive the EYFE for Working Families. A child should not start accessing their EYFE for Working Families at their current or new provider whilst in their grace period.

The online childcare service will automatically assign grace period end dates to every eligibility code and WSCC will inform providers which children are in their grace period via the Online Provider Portal (OPP).

Appendix C: Parent Declaration Form

The current version of the [Parent Declaration Form](#) **must** be used in the following circumstances:

- When a child starts accessing funded hours for the first time (so all new starters for Summer Term 2025 onwards should use the form that has the last updated date as 'from April 2025').
- When there is a change to any of the details on the form, including address details, change to sessions attended or number of hours claimed.
- When submitting a claim for DAF.
- When submitting a new claim for EYPP.

As a reminder, the declaration should be signed by both provider and parent before headcount day to be able to claim at headcount as noted in point 4.22 of the main agreement.

Appendix D: Post- Headcount/Exceptional Payment request form

- [Post-headcount/Exceptional Payments Request Form](#)

Appendix E: Privacy notice for parents

- [Privacy Notice for parents accessing Early Years and Childcare provision](#)

Appendix F: EYFE Removal

Process for EYFE removal

This process may be triggered when WSCC is notified by Ofsted that a provider:

- Receives an 'Inadequate' Ofsted inspection
- Receives a 'Requires Improvement' Ofsted inspection (LA issued 2 year old EYFE only)
- Receives a 'Not Met' Ofsted inspection.
- Is a childminder agency who receives a second consecutive Ofsted inspection judgment of 'Ineffective'
- Parental complaints received by us – go straight to step 5.
- Concerns identified during another WSCC visit – go straight to step 5.
- Non-compliance to 'musts' in the Provider Declaration – go straight to step 5.

Process steps

1. Restrict EYFE. The Early Years Funding Team will formally write to a provider to advise that they cannot offer a funded space to any new children joining the setting (or just new LA issued 2 year olds if received a 'Requires Improvement' rating); also identify which children will continue to access funding and for how many terms.
2. The Early Years and Childcare Adviser (EYCA) meets with provider to support them in writing a Setting Action Plan to address the issues identified, including clear time frames for actions to be carried out.(up to a maximum of 8 weeks from the publication of the Ofsted report)
3. Early Years Funding Team formally remove the EYFE offer from the providers record (or just LA issued 2 year old EYFE if 'Requires Improvement' rating).
4. Before the deadline the EYCA visits the provider to check that the Setting Action Plan is fully implemented, and checks evidence that proves actions have been carried out. If all actions are completed and evidenced, the process ends here. If actions are incomplete, or limited progress has been made towards the agreed actions, the process continues – go to step 6.
5. If a provider is identified as non-compliant – The Early Years and Childcare Adviser (EYCA) meets with the provider to support them in writing a Setting Action Plan to address the issues identified, including clear time frames, to be completed within a 4-week deadline.
6. Following the deadline, if actions are incomplete, or limited progress has been made towards the agreed actions, the Early Years Funding Team will formally write to the provider within [10 working days](#) to advise they cannot offer a funded space to any new children joining the setting. This will accompany an official notice of intention to withhold the next EYFE payment and remove funding, outlining the reasons why and support offered. The Family Information Service (FIS) will notify existing parents of the warning to withdraw funding and identify suitable alternative providers.
7. Withhold next EYFE payment (either estimate or actuals) if Setting Action Plan not completed. Provider will receive payment once actions to become compliant have been taken/evidenced.

8. Remove EYFE if Setting Action Plan not fully implemented or limited progress has been made towards the agreed actions. The Service Manager to write to provider giving formal notice to remove EYFE funding, including confirmation of date funding will cease. The FIS to write to parents to confirm funding removal date and offer Childcare Brokerage to assist in finding alternative provision (plus evaluation).

All EYFE related funding is removed no less than 6 weeks following formal notice to remove it.

If at any stage, the provider wishes to appeal any of the findings, decisions or outcomes resulting from the process outlined above, please refer to Appendix M.

Appendix G: Appeals Process for Parents

The Family Information Service (FIS) has a role to relay accurate and impartial information to parents. If parents have any queries or concerns about their EYFE funding, they should raise these in the first instance with the childcare provider through which funding is being accessed. However, in some circumstances, parents may wish to seek guidance about EYFE funding and how it should be administered. The FIS can therefore provide impartial information and may initiate support from colleagues within Children, Young People and Learning. However, the complaint is held between the customer (parent) and the supplier (childcare provider). It is the responsibility of all childcare providers to communicate with their customers (parents) regarding the service provided and administration of the EYFE.

The local authority has a role within administration of the EYFE only and not the overall or general fee structure of childcare providers, unless directly contravening the EYFE agreement and principles, for example top-up fees, compulsory services, or different hourly rates for EYFE parents only.

This appendix sets out how FIS will deal with a parent's query:

Step 1 - Receive a potential complaint about EYFE administration. Within 10 working days in line with [our customer promise](#):

- FIS will provide parent with further information about the scheme, providing additional information such as a leaflet, or referring to web pages etc.
- FIS informs parent of the role of WSCC, within the context of EYFE Administration only, and our limitations in terms of a provider's fee structure.
- If after providing additional information the parent still has concerns the FIS will direct the parent to speak to the provider direct.

Step 2 - The parent contacts FIS again after speaking with the provider if still not satisfied that EYFE is being correctly administered.

- FIS confirm the parent has spoken to the provider and still concerned. Reiterate the role of FIS and WSCC in EYFE administration only - not wider fee structure etc.
- FIS inform parent about the role of WSCC colleagues and that we cannot guarantee any outcomes from their involvement, for example, potential fee structure review in provider could lead to fees being increased rather than decreased.
- FIS checks parent happy to continue and gain permission to pass information to WSCC colleagues (or anonymously if parent would prefer). Where possible we would encourage parents to share their details to support WSCC with investigating their concerns.

Step 3 - Involving the wider team.

- FIS ensures that all information passed on is objective and anonymous (unless parental consent gained to share details with the wider team and childcare provider for resolution).
- If the concern/issue is resolved, parent is updated. No further action.
- If the concern/issue is not resolved for parent, concern is logged and may trigger an EYFE monitoring visit by WSCC, ideally before end of the current term but this may not always be possible.

Appendix H: Audit Process

Process of how EYFE Audits are carried out

When selected for an audit, you will be informed that WSCC will contact parents to invite them to take part in an EYFE survey about the provider. You will also be asked to complete a self-evaluation form to assess your compliance with the Provider Declaration.

The survey is open for two weeks. The response rate is monitored after five days, and again after ten days. WSCC will follow up with providers with a low response rate.

When the survey closes, responses are collated and a summary is reviewed by WSCC, alongside the provider's admissions or EYFE policies, to build a picture of how EYFE is provided at the setting.

After the review is complete, one of the following will happen:

- The survey response is 50% or over, and the parental comments and review of policies reveal no concerns. A letter confirming no further action, and a summary of the survey responses, is sent to the provider. The process ends.
- The survey response is 50% or over, and the parental comments and review of policies reveal minor concerns. A letter with a list of findings and required actions on how to ensure EYFE offer is compliant, and a summary of the survey responses, is sent to the provider. Support from an EYCA is made available.
- The survey response rate is under 50% or a self-evaluation is not returned, and/or the parental comments and policy review reveal concerns. A letter confirming what action needs to be taken and the timeframes involved, together with the survey summary, is sent to provider. An EYCA will conduct a full audit with the provider, agree further actions required with the provider to ensure EYFE policies are compliant, and offer further support.

The provider supplies evidence that the actions have been addressed. The evidence is checked within 15 working days, and one of the following will happen:

- If the evidence received shows that the actions have been addressed in full, there is no further action, and the process ends.
- If no evidence is received, or the evidence shows that the provider has not addressed the actions in full, then the process to remove EYFE is triggered.
- If at any stage, the provider wishes to appeal any of the findings, decisions or outcomes resulting from the audit process outlined above, they may do so by writing to the Early Years Funding Team at free.entitlement@westsussex.gov.uk.

Appendix I: Childminder Agencies

WSSC will ensure that none of the funding (including EYPP and DAF payments) paid to childminders registered with an agency to deliver free places is retained by the agency.

WSSC will rely on the childminder agency as the benchmark of quality.

WSSC will fund places for eligible EYFE children at any childminder registered with a childminder agency judged 'effective' by Ofsted if a parent wants their child to take up their free place at that provider and the provider is willing to accept the local authority funding and any other local authority requirements.

WSSC will fund places for eligible EYFE children at a childminder registered with an agency until the agency's first full Ofsted inspection judgement is published if a parent wants their child to take up their EYFE place at that provider and the provider is willing to accept the local authority funding and any other local authority requirements.

WSSC will secure alternative provision and withdraw funding from a provider, as soon as is practicable, after Ofsted publish a second consecutive inspection judgement of a childminder agency of 'ineffective'

WSSC will not fund childminders registered with a childminder agency where the agency has indicated to WSSC that the childminder is not of the appropriate quality unless it is necessary to do so to ensure sufficiency of accessible places or support parental choice. WSSC will also consider any information provided by a childminder agency about the childminder registered with them and the childminder's premises.

WSSC will consider any information published by Ofsted about a childminder agency including the recent history about childcare provision by a particular agency or childcare provision at a particular address. This may include, for example, where WSSC has concerns that a provider judged "inadequate" by Ofsted may have re-registered their setting with Ofsted to avoid making the quality improvements identified by Ofsted.

WSSC will only fund childminders directly as set out in Section 4, and **not** through the childminder agency.

EYFE requirements will apply to the person with whom WSSC makes arrangements to deliver EYFE. As WSSC funds an agency registered childminder directly, WSSC will place requirements on the childminder as outlined in this declaration.

Appendix J: Sharing Safeguarding Concerns

This appendix sets out the processes of communication between FIS and LADO when a safeguarding concern is relating to a member of staff.

Step 1

LADO is notified of a safeguarding concern relating to member of staff by the provider or Ofsted.

Or FIS is notified via the Ofsted data feed of the following notices:

- Welfare Notice
- Improvement Notice
- Ofsted Requires Improvement and Inadequate where a safeguarding issue has been identified
- Supervision of children identified on Ofsted or Welfare Notice.
- Suspensions

Or FIS becomes aware of concerns from conversations with providers, parents or training providers:

- Safeguarding-specific training identified
- Notification of a safeguarding concern/complaint

Step 2

Within 24 hours of initial notification, information is shared with either LADO or FIS.

Step 3

FIS will then track/monitor cases. Checks will be made to see if this concern impacts on EYFE payments (see Appendix F).

Step 4

LADO to provide updates on specific cases providing actions and timeframes. LADO will identify if LADO-case only. If action plan identified, EYCA involved when investigations complete.

Step 5

FIS to feedback to the local Early Help Service Hub on a monthly basis.

Step 6

FIS to log when actions are complete and communicate outcomes relating to EYFE payments.

Appendix K: Example Invoice

In this example, the child is attending the provider for four x five-hour morning sessions a week. Using 15 universal hours across three sessions, with an additional privately charged morning session. The parent has agreed to the meals, snacks and consumables charge.

Provider Details: Name and address (Could also include company or charity or registration number)

Invoice To: Parents name and address

Child's Name:

Date of Invoice:

Billing Invoice period: (Optional – Could include reference or invoices numbers)

Invoice Breakdown	Cost
15 x EYFE hours per week term time only (totalling 60 hours over 4 weeks)	£0.00 (EYFE has no monetary value and so must not be shown as a subsidy or deduction)
4 x additional paid for hours per week @ £6.25 ph x 4 weeks	£100.00
12 x Lunch and snacks @ £4.00 (These should also be optional if accessed during EYFE hours).	£48.00
60 x Consumables @ £0.50 per EYFE hour (These should also be optional if accessed during EYFE hours. – see Appendix L). (Accessed during EYFE sessions) should include a breakdown of what this includes e.g., a contribution towards suncream, and nappies and snacks	£30.00
4 x activity charges (extracurricular lessons) @ £3.00 per lesson (These should also be optional if accessed during EYFE hours).	£12.00
2 x trips (add description of trips and individual costs) (These should also be optional if accessed during EYFE hours).	£6.00
(Discounts – Sibling discount, promotional discount)	-£0.00
Details of other charges i.e., Late charges as applicable. These should be itemised and costed separately. Remember that voluntary contributions should not be included on the invoice.	£0.00
Invoice Total This could include an accumulative balance to show credit/debit balance brought forward from previous months.	£196.00

Terms of Payment

- Include details of when fees are due i.e., Fees are due by DATE or Within xxx days of receipt of this invoice.
- Could include how to pay with Bank Transfer details
- Result if payment is late, is there a charge?
- Refer to which policies have more details and how they access copies e.g., fee policy, late payment policy, Early Years Funded Entitlement policy, terms and conditions etc.
- Could include what a parent should do if they are having difficulty paying their bill

Appendix L: Chargeable consumables/services

To clarify the items, you can include in a charge, please see the lists below of chargeable and non-chargeable items, along with rationale behind these limitations. This is not an exhaustive list. In all cases, these chargeable extras must not be a condition of taking up a funded place. Providers must offer reasonable alternatives that allow parents to access the entitlement for free, including allowing parents to supply their own, or waiving the cost of these items.

Providers should deliver the EYFE consistently, so that all children within a setting accessing EYFE receive the same quality and access to provision, regardless of whether they choose to pay for voluntary hours, voluntary extra services, meals or consumables.

Chargeable

- Meals and snacks –where parents supply their own meals and snacks these must be in line with the setting’s policy on allergies and healthy eating.
- Nappies, nappy sacks and wipes
- Sun cream
- Activities over and above the EYFS such as ballet, French and yoga.
- Trips out - However, consideration must be given to equality of opportunity for any child/ren whose parent/s could not or choose not to pay.

Non-chargeable

- Fresh drinking water. EYFS (3.55).
- General play and learning resources (including but not limited to, craft materials, crayons, paper, books, instruments, toys, or other equipment or learning resources that are necessary for the effective delivery of childcare). A core business expense to enable registration with Ofsted and delivery of the EYFS.
- Gardening activities. A voluntary charge could be considered for a ‘one off purchase or activity’, for example, to buy plants. However, consideration must be given to equality of opportunity for any child/ren whose parent/s could not or choose not to pay.
- Blankets/sheets. This is about providing basic care for children. EYFS (3.71).
- Online journaling and progress tracker tools. Business costs central to tracking and monitoring children’s progress.
- Toilet rolls, soap, hand gel, paper towels, face cloths etc. Must be supplied by setting to meet Health and Safety law and the requirements of the EYFS (3.71).
- Cleaning products, for example, washing powder, hygiene gloves, aprons. Must be supplied by setting to meet Health and Safety law.
- Provision of white goods within the setting such as washing machines, tumble dryers, fridges or cookers. These are an expense to the business as part of providing your service
- Business cost. (including but not limited to, rent, staff wages, cleaning materials, stationery, insurance, or utility bills such as energy, gas or water).
- Insurance. Requirement for registration as stated in EYFS (3.73).
- Staff training costs. Benefit to business and EYFS (3.21) states ‘providers must support staff to undertake appropriate training and professional development opportunities to ensure they offer quality learning and development experiences for children that continually improves’.
- First Aid supplies. Must be supplied by setting to meet Health and Safety law and the requirements of the EYFS (3.29).

If you are unsure if you can charge for an item or service, please contact free.entitlement@westsussex.gov.uk for advice.

Appendix M: Appeals Process for Providers

The Early Years Funding Team is responsible for the administration of the Early Years Funded Entitlements (EYFE) and to support the local authority's role to ensure compliance with the statutory guidance.

This appendix sets out the process to follow if an early years and childcare provider is not satisfied with any aspect of this policy, or a funding decision made as a result of this policy.

This could include the following:

- Outcomes of Post-Headcount/Exceptional Payment Requests
- Disability Access Funding decisions
- Early Years Pupil Premium funding decisions
- Working Families and LA issued eligibility codes
- Restrictions on offering EYFE as a result of an Ofsted outcome or a complaint
- Audit actions/outcomes
- Refunds
- Removal of EYFE (follow from step 3)

Step 1 – Provider to raise concern with the Early Years Funding Team via The Family Information Service (FIS)

- The Early Years Funding Team will aim to respond within 10 working days in line with [our customer promise](#) to offer advice and/or provide additional information. Wherever possible will aim to reference this agreement, webpages or statutory guidance in their response.

Step 2 – Following consultation with Early Years Funding Team

- If the provider is not satisfied, they **should** set out the circumstances in writing to free.entitlement@westsussex.gov.uk who will forward to the Early Years Funding Team Advisers to investigate the matter and aim to respond within 10 working days in line with [our customer promise](#).

Step 3 – Following consultation with Early Years Funding Team

- If providers are still not satisfied, they **should** set out the circumstances in writing, providing additional information to consider, to free.entitlement@westsussex.gov.uk who will forward to the Team Manager Early Years Funding, who will arrange for a further investigation into the matter and aim to respond within 10 working days in line with [our customer promise](#).
- If at any stage the issue is resolved, no further action required.

Step 4 – Following consultation with Early Years Funding Manager

- If providers are still not satisfied after further investigation from the Team Manager Early Years Funding, this should then be escalated to the Early Years and Strategic Lead who will aim to respond within 10 working days in line with [our customer promise](#).

Step 5- Following consultation with Early Years and Childcare Strategic Lead if providers are still not satisfied with the response providers should follow the following formal complaints process:

[Make a complaint or appeal - West Sussex County Council](#)

Appendix N: Change History

First Published: March 2025 / Updated: March 2025
Summary of significant changes from 2024/2025

Section	Summary of changes	Relevant excerpt
Throughout document	Updated the maximum hours and weeks to reflect the expansion of 9 month old and 2 year old working families EYFE throughout the document	Amended 15 hours, to 30 hours from September 2025. Amened 570 hours to 1140 from September 2025.
Introduction	Updated the expectation of WSCC when we say a requirement MUST be complied with.	"For conditions which are identified as must, WSCC expect these to be adhered to."
Glossary	New definition added for LADO abbreviation	Local Authority Designated Officer
Glossary	New provider/setting category added	Childminder without domestic premises
Statutory Initiatives and Documentation	Current useful publications or website bullet points updated to remove previous outdated links and now refer to WSCC webpage and Early Years Strategy	West Sussex information for providers Right From The Start 2024-2027
Section 1: The Early Years Funded Entitlement (EYFE)	WSCC headcount dates added	See table in point 1.11
Section 1: The Early Years Funded Entitlement	1.5 EYFE hours table updated to show new 9-month-old and 2-year-old EYFE offer from September 2025	See 1.5 for table
Section 1: The Early Years Funded Entitlement	Points 1.13 and points 1.14 have now been broken down into further points.	Previous point 1.13 is now covered in 1.3-1.16 Previous point 1.14 is now 1.17-1.19
Section 1: The Early Years Funded Entitlement	Bullet points added to 1.13 following the publication of the new statutory guidance to clarify claiming under the new 2 year old working entitlement alongside the current LA issued entitlement and explaining what providers can charge for in line with the updated guidance.	"explaining that they can charge parents for meals, snacks and consumables (see Appendix L) as part of an EYFE place, and for services such as trips and specialist tuition. However, these additional charges must be voluntary for the parent (see also point 1.18)." "explaining that any additional, private paid hours taken up will be charged for according to their usual terms and conditions (see also point 1.18)." "From September 2025, ensuring that where families are eligible for both the LA issued 2 year old funding, and the working parent entitlement, parents should be funded under the LA issued entitlement for the first 15 hours they claim. Any further hours to claim (up to 15 expanded hours) should be claimed from the working parent entitlement."

Section 1: The Early Years Funded Entitlement	New bullet point added confirming the expectation on providers to make DAF and EYPP policies available to parents.	1.14 "Information about Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) and Disability Access Fund (DAF) must be made available to parents, including what these are, provider policies on how best use funding is determined, and what information is required from parents to enable the provider to claim."
Section 1: The Early Years Funded Entitlement	Timescales for invoicing parents added to Additional hours and invoicing	1.21 "Parents/carers that only access EYFE hours should be invoiced at least once a term showing hours taken but with a zero monetary value."
Section 1: The Early Years Funded Entitlement	New point added following the new statutory guidance on providers responsibility to publish cost of chargeable extras on their websites.	1.17 "By January 2026 information about the costs of chargeable extras must be published on provider websites or, where they do not have any website, on local authority Family Information Services. (childminders and providers caring for 10 children or under at any one time are exempt from publishing this information)"
Section 1: The Early Years Funded Entitlement	Additional hours and invoicing. Further information to include in invoices following the statutory guidance.	1.20 "Invoices and receipts must be itemised*, and providers must ensure their invoices break down separately. Please see new bullet points added for breakdowns to be included in invoices. Invoices and receipts should include the provider's full details so that they can be identified as coming from a specific provider. *providers must ensure these itemised invoices are in place by January 2026."
Section 1: The Early Years Funded Entitlement	New bullet points added to point 1.18 as part of conditions of access that cannot be levied on EYFE hours	"No requirement to take up additional private paid hours" "General charges, including but not limited to, non-itemised enrichment charges, sustainability charges, business continuity charges, additional charges, enhanced ratios, hourly rates, or any other supplementary charges on top of the EYFE hours"
Section 1: The Early Years Funded Entitlement	Point 1.27 expanded to clarify expectations around poor attendance	1.27 "When recording what they would judge as poor attendance providers should consider the child's/parent/carer vulnerabilities and home life. Providers must have an attendance policy which they share with parents/carers which includes the actions they will take if a child is absent for a prolonged period for example, following their safeguarding procedures or contacting emergency contacts if they are unable to follow up with the parents."
Section 1: The Early Years Funded Entitlement	Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) point 1.29 Explanation of how EYPP will be applied to 2 year old entitlements.	West Sussex EYPP weblink added: Early Years Pupil Premium - West Sussex County Council "From September 2025 if a two year old is eligible for both the LA issued EYFE and working families entitlement, EYPP will be applied to the LA issued EYFE hours."
Section 1: The Early Years Funded Entitlement	DAF point 1.30 updated to reflect requirements to be included in DAF policies. DAF rate also updated from Summer 2025 term.	1.30 "Providers must include within their policies information relating to DAF, including what it is, what information is required from parents, and how best use of the funding will be determined." New DAF rate increase to £938

Section 1: New providers	Process for new providers signing up to offer EYFE added and timescale for WSCC to review and respond.	1.35 "Providers will be asked to supply copies of admissions policies, funding policies, pattern of delivery, fees, example invoices that include EYFE hours, and EYPP and DAF policies. Signing up to claim EYFE is conditional on your policies being compliant with the EYFE Provider Declaration. Once we receive all the relevant documents we will review and respond to providers within 6 weeks."
Section 2: Flexibility	Updated point 2.1 to clarify the process around patterns of delivery of EYFE and include the new process for providers changing their pattern of delivery or EYFE offer.	<p>"Providers may change their pattern of delivery but must contact the Early Years Funding Team to and will be required to re-sign up to offer EYFE. Providers should provide parents with at least a term's notice following WSCC approval of your revised pattern of delivery and policies. For example, if a provider wishes to amend the number of weeks across the year that they will offer funding, to add a stretched or term time EYFE offer, to add a new age group to their offer or change the days of the week they will offer funded hours, in these circumstances providers would be required to complete the re-sign up process."</p> <p>"Providers should provide parents with at least a term's notice following WSCC approval of your revised pattern of delivery and policies."</p>
Section 2: Flexibility	New bullet point added for settings to ensure they are sharing information when a child attends more than one provider	2.13 "Ensure that where children are attending two or more settings, with parental permission, providers must share information including details of the child's progress, safeguarding concerns, and funding information."
Section 3: Quality and Safeguarding	Point 3.5 added with definitions for maintained schools, maintained nursery schools, academies and non-maintained special schools Ofsted judgements	"For schools inspected after 2 September 2024, including maintained schools, maintained nursery schools, academies and non-maintained special schools, the following definitions now apply: inadequate means a judgement where a state-funded school requires significant improvement or special measures a judgement of less than good means less than good in the early years provision judgement"
Section 4: Funding the Early Years Funded Entitlement (EYFE)	Amended 4.10 to include circumstance where parents defer entry or no school places are available	4.10 "when a child starts to attend school, even on a part time basis, EYFE funding will cease. Should a child start school and then return to Early Years provision (before they are of statutory school age – the term after the child turns 5) or parents defer entry/no school places available providers must contact WSCC to discuss funding;"
Section 4: Funding the Early Years Funded Entitlement (EYFE)	Payment mechanisms updated to reflect the new monthly payments options available to providers from Autumn 25.	Please see point 4.12 for a breakdown of how monthly payments can be made, and choices providers have for payment instalments.
Section 4: Funding the Early Years Funded Entitlement (EYFE)	Bullet point added to 4.14 to include a new exceptional reason to submit a post headcount form	"families returning to work from parental leave (see appendix B.8)"

Section 4: Funding the Early Years Funded Entitlement (EYFE)	EYFE termly payments- New term dates for 2025/2026 updated	See tables in point 4.28 and 4.29
Section 6: Directory of Providers	Bullet points added to the requirements of providers to notify WSCC of Ofsted changes	6.8 "Change to Ofsted outcome, as a result of an inspection, resulting in Inadequate or Requires Improvement. This includes provision that falls under a school's inspection, unless there is a clear statement, Receipt of a Welfare Notification Suspension of Ofsted registration" "In the event of the providers Ofsted registration being suspended, EYFE hours cannot be delivered, claimed or paid during this time. Any funding already paid in relation to the suspension period will be clawed back."
Section 6: Directory of Providers	Bullet point added to clarify the process for providers amending their EYFE offer.	6.9 Amending your EYFE offer "To amend how you offer EYFE including changing your pattern of delivery or your claiming method, or adding a new age group to your offer, providers must contact the Early Years Funding team in the first half of the term prior to the one in which they wish to start delivering the new offer. Providers will be asked to supply copies of admissions policies, funding policies, pattern of delivery, fees, example invoices that include EYFE hours, and EYPP and DAF policies. Amending your offer of EYFE is conditional on your policies being compliant with the EYFE Provider Declaration. Once we receive all the relevant documents we will review and respond to providers within 6 weeks."
Section 7: Contact List	Setting support- links added for setting support phone line and request form.	Request support within your setting Setting support phone line
Appendix B: Eligibility Criteria for EYFE for Working Families (over 9 months old to statutory school age)	B.8 information for families starting or returning to work	Please see table for eligibility dates. "For those families who return to work and start attending funded sessions between the headcount day and the end of January, April or September, providers can submit a Post Headcount Exceptional Payment form, and we will look to approve funding (subject to our standard checks). Families will need to ensure they have a valid code that was applied for before the cutoff date for the term they wish to start. Children should have started a place at their setting no later than 31 January for Spring term, 30 April for summer term, or 30 September for Autumn term. For any children starting after these dates, we would need to an exceptional reason to accept a Post Headcount form."

Appendix B: Eligibility Criteria for EYFE for Working Families (over 9 months old to statutory school age)	Sentence added to note possible time delay in temporary working families' codes becoming active	B.6 "Please note if you are checking a temporary working families code (this is a code beginning with 11) that these can still be checked in the same way through the OPP, however, please be aware sometimes these codes can take a number of days after being issued to become active."
Appendix C: Parent Declaration Form	Updated link to new parent declaration form	New parent declaration form now available and guidance on completion document is now separated out.
Appendix D: Post Headcount/Exceptional Payment Request Form	Form amended to include full ethnicity list.	See online form.
Appendix F: EYFE Removal	Timescale for removal of EYFE funding amended from half a term to 6 weeks	See point 8 Process for EYFE removal
Appendix G: Appeals Process for Parents	Bullet point updated to encourage parents to share details with WSCC when reporting concerns to support us with clearer outcomes.	Step 2 "Where possible we would encourage parents to share their details to support WSCC with investigating their concerns"
Appendix K: Example Invoice	Example invoice amended.	Following the statutory guidance our example invoice has been amended to be clearer to show EYFE hours as term time only or stretched, and a further breakdown of possible charges has been included.
Appendix L: Chargeable consumables/services	Sentence added around chargeable extras, and the requirement for providers to offer alternatives to ensure parents can access their EYFE for free following new statutory guidance.	<p>"In all cases, these chargeable extras must not be a condition of taking up a funded place. Providers must offer reasonable alternatives that allow parents to access the entitlement for free, including allowing parents to supply their own, or waiving the cost of these items.</p> <p>Providers should deliver the EYFE consistently, so that all children within a setting accessing EYFE receive the same quality and access to provision, regardless of whether they choose to pay for voluntary hours, voluntary extra services, meals or consumables."</p>
Appendix L: Chargeable consumables/services	Non chargeable bullet point amended to provide clearer information on white goods being a business expense.	"Provision of white goods within the setting such as washing machines, tumble dryers, fridges or cookers. These are an expense to the business as part of providing your service"
Appendix M: Appeals Process for Providers	Two further steps added in appeals process for providers.	<p>Step 4 –Following consultation with Early Years Funding Manager if providers are still not satisfied after further investigation from the Team Manager Early Years Funding, this should then be escalated to the Early Years and Strategic Lead who will aim to respond within 10 working days in line with our customer promise.</p> <p>Step 5- Following consultation with Early Years and Strategic Lead if providers are still not satisfied with the response providers should follow the following formal complaints process: Make a complaint or appeal - West Sussex County Council</p>