

# Childcare Offer

Guidance for Early Implementer Local Authorities

September 2018

<b>SECTION 1 - ABOUT THIS GUIDANCE .....</b>	<b>4</b>
ABOUT THIS GUIDANCE .....	4
REVIEW DATE .....	4
WHO IS THIS GUIDANCE FOR? .....	4
<b>SECTION 2 - EARLY IMPLEMENTERS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SECTION 3 - WHAT IS THE CHILDCARE OFFER?.....</b>	<b>6</b>
WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'EARLY EDUCATION'?.....	6
WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'CHILDCARE'? .....	6
WHAT DO WE MEAN BY '30 HOURS'? .....	6
CROSS BORDER FPN PROVISION.....	7
PARENTS NOT ACCESSING FOUNDATION PHASE NURSERY PROVISION .....	7
<b>SECTION 4 - ELIGIBILITY FOR THE CHILDCARE OFFER.....</b>	<b>9</b>
DEFINITION OF AN ELIGIBLE CHILD .....	9
DEFINITION OF AN ELIGIBLE WORKING PARENT .....	9
STATUTORY UNPAID PARENTAL LEAVE .....	10
COMPLEX FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES.....	11
TEMPORARY EXEMPTION PERIODS (TEPs) .....	11
<b>SECTION 5 - WHEN PARENTS CAN ACCESS THE OFFER .....</b>	<b>13</b>
HOLIDAY PROVISION.....	13
<b>SECTION 6 - WHO CAN DELIVER THE OFFER.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>SECTION 7 - SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN).....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>SECTION 8 - PAYMENT RATE .....</b>	<b>17</b>
GUIDELINES IN RESPECT OF SETTING ADDITIONAL FEES .....	17
<b>SECTION 9 - DELIVERING THE OFFER .....</b>	<b>19</b>
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES .....	19
DELIVERY AUTHORITIES WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR .....	19
ENGAGEMENT AUTHORITIES WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR .....	20
LOCAL AUTHORITY OFFICIAL AGREEMENT TO BECOMING AN EARLY IMPLEMENTER .....	21
AGREEMENT OF PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS.....	21
COMMUNICATIONS.....	21
PRE-APPLICATION ELIGIBILITY CHECK .....	22
APPLICATION PROCESS .....	22
SELF DECLARATION.....	22
ELIGIBILITY CHECKING .....	23
MANAGING THE INFORMATION .....	24
DATABASE.....	25
NOTIFYING PARENT.....	25
PROVIDER PROCESS .....	26
PROVIDER CONTRACT .....	26

CODE OF PRACTICE ON ETHICAL EMPLOYMENT IN THE SUPPLY CHAINS.....	27
PROCESS FOR PAYING PROVIDERS.....	27
RE-CHECKING ELIGIBILITY .....	28
RE-CLAIM PROCESS.....	28
APPEALS .....	28
AUDIT REQUIREMENTS .....	29
DUE DILIGENCE .....	29
<b>SECTION 10 - FUNDING.....</b>	<b>30</b>
THE CHILDCARE ADMINISTRATION GRANT .....	30
THE CHILDCARE GRANT .....	30
THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS GRANT .....	30
<b>SECTION 11 - MONITORING AND EVALUATION.....</b>	<b>31</b>
MONITORING.....	31
EVALUATION .....	34

## **Section 1 - About this Guidance**

### **About this guidance**

1. This is non-statutory guidance from the Welsh Government for the local authorities in Wales who will be early implementers of the Welsh Government's childcare offer (the offer) during the period from September 2017 to September 2020. The information contained within this guidance only refers to the duration of the early implementation programme and is for the purposes of testing the offer to inform longer term delivery. The parameters set within this guidance may not be the ones set for the full roll-out of the offer, anticipated from September 2020.

### **Review Date**

2. This guidance will be kept under review and updated as necessary, and will be reissued before full roll-out of the offer across Wales.

### **Who is this guidance for?**

3. This guidance is for the local authorities implementing the childcare offer during the early implementation programme ahead of full roll-out in September 2020.
4. The offer will be delivered in certain areas within early implementer local authorities (EILAs). Full details of which local authorities are taking part and the specific areas where the offer is available can be found [here](#).

## Section 2 - Early Implementers

5. We began testing the offer in selected areas of Wales from September 2017. This testing is important to make sure the offer works for parents, children and childcare providers, and that the childcare element of the offer can be accessed in a way which compliments the education element, delivered through the existing Foundation Phase Nursery provision (FPN). From September 2018 the early implementation programme expanded into additional local authorities, and further expansion is planned in 2019
6. Each EILA will deliver the offer within the parameters set within this guidance but in a way that reflects local circumstances.
7. EILAs will be expected to work with the Welsh Government to deliver the maximum learning from the early implementation stage, and will be asked to test different approaches in different regions to assess and evaluate different elements of the offer.
8. The EILAs who began delivery in 2017 put in place certain processes, procedures and systems to deliver the offer within the agreed parameters, and have collected certain data to assist with the monitoring and evaluation of the delivery of the pilots. They put in place an end-to-end process allowing parents to apply for, and access, the offer, through to payment of provider and subsequent draw down of funds from the Welsh Government. The end-to-end process took account of a number of factors as set out in Section 9 of this guidance.
9. From 2018 onwards, our programme of early implementation will be operating through a model where EILAs work in partnership to deliver the offer. Some EILAs will act as a 'Delivery Authority', taking the lead on the processing of applications and payments for the childcare element of the offer. Those EILAs who are not acting as Delivery Authorities will be referred to as Engagement Authorities, and will take forward promotion of the offer locally. Section 9 provides more detail on the roles of Delivery and Engagement Authorities.
10. We anticipate having around 10 Delivery Authorities, with the EILAs who began early implementation in 2017 taking on this role in most cases. However, some of the EILAs who began delivery in 2018 will also be Delivery Authorities and they will have to establish an end to end process for accessing the offer, as existing EILAs have done.
11. The Welsh Government will work with EILAs, parents and providers to develop, deliver, and test certain approaches, policy thinking and assumptions in order to learn and inform and shape the final offer which will be rolled-out across Wales from September 2020.

### **Section 3 - What is the childcare offer?**

12. The Welsh Government has committed to providing 30 hours of government-funded early education and childcare for 3 and 4 year old children of eligible working parents for up to 48 weeks of the year by the end of this Assembly term. The primary policy aims of the offer are:
- To enable more parents particularly mothers to return to work;
  - To increase the disposable income of those in work and help counteract poverty for those in low-paid jobs; and
  - To encourage child development and school readiness.

#### **What do we mean by ‘early education’?**

13. All children are entitled to access early education through the Foundation Phase curriculum ahead of mandatory schooling, from the term after their third birthday. For the purposes of this guidance, we will be referring to this as Foundation Phase Nursery (FPN) provision, although it might be referred to differently from one local authority to another.
14. All local authorities in Wales are required to provide a minimum of 10 funded hours of FPN per week for all 3 to 4 year olds; this can be in a maintained primary (nursery) school or a funded non-maintained setting.
15. Information on the delivery of the Foundation Phase Nursery is available [here](#)

#### **What do we mean by ‘childcare’?**

16. For the purposes of the offer, we mean regulated childcare, which encompasses a wide range of different types of provision, which are subject to a set of national minimum standards (NMS) and are regulated and inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), or Ofsted if they are located in England. The NMS are intended to allow a flexible approach, allowing providers to develop quality provision tailored to the needs of children, parents and local communities. They are intended to reflect the needs of children from birth to 12 years, and to be proportional in the way in which they are applied.

#### **What do we mean by ‘30 hours’?**

17. During school term time (39 weeks a year), the existing early education entitlement under FPN will form part of the 30 hours of the offer. The exact hourly split between FPN and childcare will depend on the current provision of FPN offered by the EILA, or, where relevant, the individual school, but will comprise of at least 10 hours of FPN and cannot be more than a total of 30 hours of combined early education and childcare. Where a maintained setting chooses to offer additional FPN hours than the number offered and funded by the EILA, the EILA will need to ensure that a child’s total number of hours does not exceed 30 hours for any one child.
18. Outside term-time, the FPN will not be available and there will be 9 weeks where working parents will be entitled to 30 hours of childcare. This will be delivered in

non-maintained childcare settings only, such as private day nurseries, childminders, out of school childcare and sessional care. This will inevitably put additional pressures on these services, especially during the summer holidays.

19. Parents are not able to 'bank' childcare hours i.e. carry over any unused hours from one week to another. Consequently the number of government-funded hours available under the offer will not exceed 30 in any week. Parents can, however, choose to pay for additional hours of childcare, over and above the 30 hours, at their own expense.

### **Cross Border FPN Provision**

20. In some cases a child may be accessing their FPN entitlement in a different local authority area to the one they live in. Their childcare entitlement should be calculated based on the number of hours they are actually accessing and not the number of hours FPN offered. For instance, if the local authority the child lived in offered 30 hours of FPN provision but the child was only accessing 15 hours in a setting in a different local authority, the child would then be eligible for 15 hours of childcare.
21. However, it should be noted that this **only** applies in cases of cross border provision and a child accessing FPN in their own local authority area would be expected to use their full entitlement and would not be eligible for additional childcare provision.

### **Parents not accessing Foundation Phase Nursery provision**

22. Working parents do not need to access FPN as a pre-requisite to accessing the childcare element of the offer. If a parent does not access FPN provision then they will still be entitled to the childcare element of the offer during school term time (39 weeks of the year) and to 30 hours of government-funded childcare for the remaining 9 weeks. However, the number of hours of childcare a parent can access during term time will depend on the number of hours of FPN the EILA offers them. Working parents will be entitled to 30 hours of provision minus the FPN entitlement provided by the EILA. Under no circumstances can hours of FPN be swapped for hours of childcare. EILAs are responsible for ensuring that no child receives more than a combined total of 30 hours early education and childcare per week.
23. At the point a parent is offered a full time education place for their child they will no longer be eligible to take up the offer. For the majority of EILAs children will be offered a full time education place from the September after they turn 4. From this point parents will no longer be able to access the offer, including the holiday provision. In EILAs where children are offered a full time education place earlier than the September after which they turn 4 (for example the day or term after a child turns 4), these children will still be able to access the holiday provision element of the offer until the September after they have turned 4. This is to ensure some consistency in the offer and to prevent parents being penalised for taking up a full time education place for their child. Parents will not be able to turn down a full time early education place at the point it is offered across their EILA in favour of continuing to access the

offer during term time.



## Section 4 - Eligibility for the Childcare Offer

24. A parent is eligible to receive the offer if:

- They have an eligible child within the age range;
- They meet the definition of a working parent; and
- They live within one of the seven EILAs who have been testing the offer from September 2017 or in one of the EILAs who began testing the offer from September 2018.

### Definition of an eligible child

25. The FPN, as set out previously, forms a significant part of this offer. However, whilst the FPN is available to all children, the childcare element of the offer is only available to families who meet all the parental eligibility criteria as set out below.

26. If eligible, children will receive the childcare element of the offer from the term after their third birthday, until they are offered a full time education place - usually the September after their fourth birthday. The exact date from which they can access the offer will depend on the start date of that term, set by the EILA. All local authorities publish their term dates.

27. To support children with special educational needs (SEN) to access the offer, the Welsh Government will provide additional support to EILAs which can fund training, equipment, toys, resources or additional staff time.

### Definition of an eligible working parent

28. The term working parent refers to parents and guardians, step-parents and long-term live in partners within a household. Both parents in a two parent family, and the sole parent in a lone parent family, will need to be working in order to qualify for the offer. The offer will be available to parents who are employed, self-employed or on a zero hours contract and earn on average, a weekly minimum equivalent of 16 hours at national minimum wage (NMW) or national living wage (NLW);

29. All parents, step-parents and long-term live in partners within the household must be able to evidence, through their wages, that they earn the equivalent of at least 16 hours at NLW or NMW per week.

30. From September 2018, any parent who applies for the offer who earns £100,000 or more per year (gross income) will be ineligible to receive the offer. Parents who began accessing the offer before September 2018 and earn £100,000 or over (gross) per year can continue to access the offer in respect of that child.

31. The offer is available to self-employed parents and parents on zero hours contracts, providing they can meet the minimum earnings criteria over a 3 month period. Where one or both parents are newly self-employed and have not yet met the minimum hours eligibility criteria, an initial start up period will be allowed of up to 12

months before the parent needs to evidence that they are earning the equivalent of 16 hours at NMW per week. Parents will need to provide evidence that they are self employed in order to qualify.

32. Kinship carers should be able to access the offer providing they meet the earnings criteria, live in a pilot area and are caring for a child who is the correct age to receive the offer. Kinship carers are family and friends who have taken responsibility for a child or step child who is not their own because:

- the child has no parents or has parents who are unable to care for the child;
- it is likely that the child would otherwise be looked after by a local authority because of concerns in relation to the child's welfare.

33. Foster carers are able use their foster caring allowance as proof of earnings to meet the minimum income criteria for the offer. If a foster parent meets the wider eligibility criteria, they can access the childcare offer for their own child and for their foster child, providing it is line with their foster child's care plan.

34. If a parent is on adoption leave they can continue to receive the offer. However, if they are on adoption leave for a 3-4 year old they will not be eligible to claim the offer for that child.

35. The only exceptions to both parents (in a two parent family) having to meet the earnings criteria is where:

- one parent is employed (and earning the equivalent of at least 16 hours at NLW or NMW per week) and one parent has substantial caring responsibilities based on specific benefits received for caring; or
- both parents are employed (and earning the equivalent of at least 16 hours at NLW or NMW per week) but one or both parents are temporarily away from the workplace on parental, maternity, paternity or adoption leave; or
- both parents are employed (and earning the equivalent of at least 16 hours at NLW or NMW per week) but one or both parents are temporarily away from the workplace on statutory sick pay;
- one parent is employed (and earning the equivalent of at least 16 hours at NLW or NMW per week) and one parent is disabled or incapacitated based on receipt of specific benefits;
- a parent is newly self-employed, and within the initial start up period. Parents will need to register their business with HMRC and provide evidence that they are self employed in order to qualify.

### **Statutory Unpaid Parental Leave**

36. Under section 76 of the 1996 Employment Rights Act, a person can take up to 18 weeks of unpaid parental leave for each child up until the child reaches 18 years of age. This would normally be restricted to a maximum of 4 weeks per year for each child. However, in the case of employees reaching the end of their maternity leave it

is possible to take the full entitlement to unpaid parental leave immediately following the end of their maternity leave. In either case the parent would continue to be eligible for the offer providing they have a letter from their employer stating that they are employed, ordinarily meet the eligibility criteria and are taking qualifying parental leave

### **Complex family circumstances**

37. In cases where parents have separated but do not share equal custody of the child, we advise the parent with primary custody be the one considered as eligible to take up the offer.
38. In cases where parents have equal custody of a child, we advise one of the parents will need to be nominated to act as the lead parent and will need to meet the eligibility criteria for the offer. Where this cannot be agreed by the parents, the matter should be referred to the EILA for determination.
39. Husbands, wives or live-in partners of parents with primary custody, or of nominated lead parents in cases of joint custody, will also need to meet the eligibility criteria for the family to receive the offer.
40. Other adults (such as lodgers, extended family members or siblings) residing in the house will not need to meet the criteria, unless they are also the child's primary guardian. For example, in a case where the parents of a child have separated and the mother has primary custody, if there is a step-father living in the same household he would also need to meet the eligibility criteria for the child to receive the offer. However, if the mother had primary custody but lived with her parents, or had another child over the age of 18, only the mother's circumstances would be considered.

### **Temporary Exemption Periods (TEPs)**

41. The offer is intended to support working parents and to encourage parents to return to work or to increase their hours. Families may at times fall out of eligibility for the offer. One of the most common reasons for this is likely to be where one or both parents lose their job or their hours are reduced below the minimum requirement. In order to provide stability for both children and childcare providers, and to give parents the opportunity to become eligible again, families who fall out of eligibility will still be able to access the offer for a limited amount of time.
42. When a person becomes ineligible for the childcare offer they will enter an 8 week temporary exemption period (TEP). Hours of childcare should not be booked by a parent who is in a TEP if they do not intend on their child attending them. Under no circumstances should a TEP (or the offer as a whole) be used to book hours of childcare that a parent does not intend on taking up, in order to cover a retainer fee charged by a provider. Parents being found to book hours of childcare that are not needed because their child is at home with them will be considered to be claiming fraudulently and may be reported to their local authority. The only exception to this is

where the child is at home for an unexpected or unavoidable reason such as sickness.

43. It is the parent's responsibility to inform both their EILA and their provider that their circumstances have changed. Should a parent's circumstances change and they do not immediately inform their EILA, their TEP will still run from the point at which they stopped being eligible for the offer. For example, if a parent falls out of eligibility but fails to inform their EILA until 4 weeks later, only 4 weeks of their TEP will remain.
44. At the point a parent's TEP ends they will no longer be able to access the offer, and they will become responsible for paying all costs associated with using that childcare provider.

## **Section 5 - When parents can access the offer**

45. Parents can access the offer from the term after their child turns 3, up until the point at which they are offered a full time education place, usually the September after their child turns 4. The first day of term is set by the authority and therefore the exact date a child can access the offer from, may vary between EILAs.
46. Where a local authority sets a different date by which a child must turn 3 to access their FPN entitlement (e.g. by 31 August to access their entitlement in Autumn term), the same rule can be applied to children accessing the childcare element of the offer so that children become eligible to access both the early education and childcare elements of the offer at the same time.
47. EILAs should ensure that eligible children who move into the areas where the offer is being implemented are able to take up the offer, once they have completed the application process. If a parent becomes eligible by, for example, moving into a selected area, by becoming employed or by increasing their working hours, they can apply to take up the offer from the point at which they become eligible, providing their child was eligible from the beginning of that term.
48. If a parent moves out of a pilot area, but they continue to meet the employment criteria and their child continues to access the offer in the same childcare setting, they can continue to access the offer in that setting. This is to ensure that these children are included in the evaluation of the pilots.
49. Parents who become eligible because they either gain employment or increase their hours, but who have not yet received their first pay slip, will be able to prove that they are eligible to receive the offer if they provide a letter from their employer, confirming their salary and start date, and their employers contact details.

### **Holiday Provision**

50. The early education provided through the FPN is only delivered during term time. The exact number of weeks of 'term time' per year may vary between EILAs. However for the purpose of this policy, term time will be treated as 39 weeks, meaning the other 9 weeks of the 48 week offer will be treated as non-term time or 'holiday provision'.
51. During these 9 weeks holiday provision, eligible children will receive 30 hours of childcare only. The Welsh Government will not be specifying which of the 14 weeks non-term time are designated as the 9 weeks of holiday provision in order to allow flexibility for parents who are in different occupations, such as those who have to work over the summer or Christmas holidays.
52. In order to make the administration of this possible, parents will be allowed to use up to 30 hours of childcare per week however they choose (for example for 10 hours a day over a period of 3 days). However parents would not be able to 'stretch' their

entitlement across weeks or transfer unused hours across weeks.

53. Holiday provision will be allocated at the beginning of each term the child is eligible for the offer. Children will be allocated 3 weeks of holiday provision per term. Any unused allocation can be carried over and used in the next term, provided they are still eligible to receive the offer. Children who are eligible for the offer for one or two terms only will receive 3 weeks holiday provision at the beginning of each term, just as any other child would.
54. This allows parents to decide which weeks they access their 9 weeks of non-term time childcare but they are responsible for finding a childcare provider who can offer this provision. However, local authorities will be required to keep a record of the holiday provision actually accessed by parents taking account of any unused provision carried forward.
55. Where a child is offered a full time education place before the September after their fourth birthday (e.g. the day after or term after their fourth birthday), that child is still eligible to receive 30 hours per week of holiday provision up until the September after their fourth birthday. This is to ensure all eligible parents receive the same offer and to avoid penalising parents who take up a full time education place for their child before the September after they turn 4 years of age.

## Section 6 - Who can deliver the offer

56. The childcare element of the offer may be delivered by any childcare setting anywhere in Wales or bordering areas, so long as they are registered with the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) or Ofsted in England. To this end, they will be compliant with the National Minimum Standards for childcare, be familiar with CIW's Quality Framework and inspected accordingly. Providers in England will be inspected by Ofsted and will be compliant with their standards.
57. From September 2018, registered childminders are able to deliver the Childcare Offer for a child who is also a relative, providing that care is delivered outside of the child's home.
58. Although there is a Voluntary Approval Scheme in place for Nannies, they are not regulated to the same extent as registered childcare providers and therefore cannot be funded to deliver the offer.
59. Childcare providers wishing to be involved in the offer will be expected:
- to form an agreement with the relevant EILA to deliver the offer based on the parameters stated, which includes details of the fixed funding rate;
  - not to charge parents any hourly top-up fees for the 3 and 4 year olds who are attending under the terms of the offer;
  - to ensure, as far as possible, childcare is provided flexibly in order to help meet the needs of working parents; and
  - to inform the EILA should a change of circumstances occur, such as if a parent fails to take up the hours funded through the offer.
60. Childcare providers will also be encouraged to:
- provide bilingual or Welsh medium provision and resources, where possible; and
  - provide support for children with special educational needs, where possible.

EILAs should support them in this endeavour.

## **Section 7 - Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

61. A child has SEN if they have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than most other children of about the same age.
62. In respect of the offer, SEN could mean that a child has permanent or temporary:
- Cognition and Learning, including specific, moderate, severe or profound learning difficulties;
  - Behavioural, emotional and social development difficulties
  - Communication and interaction, including autism; speech, language and communication difficulty
  - Sensory and/or physical, including hearing and/or visual impairment or physical difficulties
  - Medical conditions
63. The offer is available to all eligible parents and has been designed in such a way to take account of the barriers that may face eligible parents who have children with SEN. To ensure the offer is inclusive to eligible children with SEN for the early implementation period additional support will be available.
64. Claims for children with SEN can be made on the childcare grant claim form. Where a Delivery Authority is administering the offer on behalf of an Engagement Authority, they will need to work with the partner authority/ies to establish a process for managing decisions and payments in respect of the SEN grant. Separate Guidance is available on the Childcare Offer for Wales SEN Grant Funding.



## Section 8 - Payment Rate

65. For the first year of early implementation a national basic pay rate of £4.50 per hour will be paid to childcare providers delivering childcare under the offer.
66. The national basic pay rate covers childcare only and excludes charges for food, transport and other activities such as off-site activities which incur a cost i.e. day trips. If a childcare provider would usually charge more than £4.50 per hour for childcare, they cannot charge parents an additional hourly amount to top-up the rate under the offer.
67. Childcare providers will be able to charge parents for additional elements such as food, drink, transport and off-site activities which incur a cost. However, childcare providers must take account of the Welsh Government's guidelines in respect of setting additional fees, when charging parents for additional elements of care.
68. Parents accessing the childcare offer should not, as a condition of their child's attendance be required to take and pay for the provider's food and may opt to provide packed meals, if the setting would normally allow this. Parents should also be able to opt their child out of paid for off-site activities and participation in such activities should not be a condition of using the childcare setting. Such activities should be occasional and exceptional, rather than a routine part of the setting's week.
69. Providers should not charge parents who access the offer more for any additional elements than they charge parents who are not accessing the offer. For example, providers who normally charge £5 a day for meals should not increase this charge to £7.50 for parents accessing the offer. Similarly, if a provider usually charges £5 for transport they should not increase these charges for parents accessing the offer.
70. EILAs will need to ensure that the pay rate details outlined in the [Provider Contract](#) take account of and re-enforce the Welsh Government guidelines in respect of childcare providers setting additional fees under the childcare offer. EILAs will have a responsibility in monitoring the additional fees being charged to parents and evaluating whether these are deemed reasonable and in line with the Welsh Government guidelines.
71. If a childcare provider is not following the guidelines and is deemed to be charging excessive or unreasonable additional fees, then the EILAs should consider whether or not this constitutes a breach of the provider contract they have with the provider and inform the Welsh Government.

### **Guidelines in Respect of Setting Additional Fees**

72. The Welsh Government guidelines in respect of setting additional fees under the offer for a full day care session (approximately 10 hours) are that parents should not be charged more than £7.50 per day. This figure is derived from using a value of

£2.00 per meal. A charge of £7.50 for a full day care session would include three meals at £2.00 per meal and 2 snacks at a charge of 75p per snack.

73. Guidelines in respect of setting additional fees under the offer for a half day session (approximately 5.5 hours) are that parents should not be charged more than £4.75. This figure would allow for a child to be charged for two meals at £2.00 per meal plus a snack at a charge of 75p per snack.

74. For sessional care where a meal is not provided but children receive a snack, guidelines are that parents should not be charged more than 75p per day for snack provision.

## Section 9 - Delivering the Offer

75. From September 2019 a new delivery model will be used for early implementation. The model will operate on a regional education improvement consortia basis and will see two categories of Early Implementer Local Authority (EILA):

**Delivery Authorities** - will be responsible for processing applications from parents, determining eligibility and informing them of the outcome. They will also process and make payments to childcare providers for the delivery of the offer;

**Engagement Authorities** - will be responsible for promoting the offer to parents and childcare providers within their areas, training their Family Information Services (FIS) to deal with enquiries on the offer and providing their delivery authority with any information they require to process applications and administer the offer on their behalf.

76. The model is based upon maximising partnership working wherever possible to increase shared learning, and deliver economies of scale and minimise the number of temporary delivery systems operational during the early implementation period.
77. Details of the further roll-out of the childcare offer, including which local authority areas and the partnership arrangements will be published on the Welsh Government website.

### Roles and Responsibilities

78. The operation of the delivery and engagement authority relationship will need to be worked up in detail between the partner local authorities. However, as a minimum, the Welsh government expects the following of each category of authority:

#### Delivery Authorities will be responsible for

- Developing a system to enable parents of their own and their engagement partner authority/ies to know about, understand, and apply for the offer;
- Developing a system/s for checking the eligibility of parents applying for the offer in their own and their engagement partner authority/ies;
- Developing a system/s for handling any enquiries relating to an application from a parent in their own or engagement partner authority/ies;
- Developing a system/s for making payments to childcare providers in their own and their partner engagement authority/ies
- Work with their engagement partner authority/ies to establish a process for handling applications for SEN grant funding. Decisions in respect of the grant

will be made by the engagement authority, however delivery authorities will hold responsibility for managing the payments of the SEN grant for their own and their engagement partner authority/ies;

- Establishing processes to collect and report certain data to the Welsh government and other contracted parties as specified under section 11 of this guidance;

79. It is expected that a delivery authority will be responsible for handling all queries relating to standard applications, whether the application is live, or has been declined. The delivery authority is expected to be the main point of contact for parents or guardians who have applied for the offer either within their own or their engagement partner authority, however a delivery authority may wish to liaise with the engagement authority to resolve certain issues.

80. In developing systems and processes for delivery of the offer, a delivery authority will need to take account of the remainder of section 9 of this guidance.

#### **Engagement Authorities will be responsible for**

- publicising and marketing the offer to parents and providers within their authority;
- providing advice and support to parents and providers within their authority on the childcare offer through their Family Information Service;
- making determinations in respect of SEN grant funding for their authority and working with their delivery authority to develop a process for communicating determinations to enable grant payments to be made. Engagement authorities will need to take account of the separate guidance on the SEN grant funding when making determinations.
- providing evidence for the evaluation of the childcare offer to third party independent evaluators;
- providing information to enable delivery authorities to assess and process applications from parents and guardians from within the engagement authority. This would include, but is not limited to, providing information to enable a parent's eligibility to be checked, such as information on schools admissions or council tax; providing detailed information on the delivery of Foundation Phase Nursery (FPN) within the engagement authority, and information on the engagement authorities assessment of a child's Special Educational Needs (SEN) for the purposes of the childcare offer.

81. Each local authority in Wales will be responsible for publicising and marketing the childcare offer within their own authority.

82. The Welsh Government wants to give local authorities the flexibility to develop partnership arrangements that work best for those concerned. It will be for delivery and engagement authorities to determine and put in place the most appropriate operational model to facilitate delivery of functions under the partnership agreement.
83. Section 10 of this guidance outlines details of the funding available to local authorities to support early implementation. It will be for individual delivery and engagement partnerships to determine how best to use the money available to them to deliver the offer in partnership. For example, authorities may wish to jointly fund a childcare offer post that will work across delivery and engagement authorities to support delivery of the offer within the partnership arrangement.

#### **Local Authority Official Agreement to becoming an Early Implementer**

84. The Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care has agreed a rolling programme of implementation, with an indicative schedule of when each local authority will come on board as an early implementer and whether roll out will be on a phased or full authority basis. This includes the requirement for local authorities to work in partnership and the delivery and engagement authority model.
85. Each local authority will need to obtain official agreement to such proposals. For those local authorities delivering the offer on a phased approach, official agreement will be needed to the prioritisation and order in which wards are brought on board to deliver the offer. Obtaining agreement upfront to the prioritisation of wards will enable us to manage any potential future expansion in a flexible and responsive way without unnecessary delay.

#### **Agreement of Partnership Arrangements**

86. Once official approval to the proposed partnership arrangements has been obtained by all parties concerned, an agreement will need to be drawn up outlining the roles and responsibilities of each party and the partnership working arrangements. It will be for local authorities to determine the nature of this agreement, but each delivery and engagement authority concerned will need to be content with the agreement.
87. Having an agreement outlining the partnership arrangements between a delivery and engagement authority will be a condition of the grant available to support the administration of the offer.

#### **Communications**

88. All EILAs will need to promote the offer amongst childcare providers and potential eligible parents. This could include provider events, promotional materials and current information being available on websites (such as the individual EILA websites). We expect both delivery and engagement EILAs to actively promote the offer and encourage take-up by disadvantaged parents and children. Full use should be made of links with partners who are in contact with relevant parents, such as schools, Families First, Flying Start, Family Information Services, Jobcentre Plus, in addition to opportunities through local newspapers and other publications.

89. Where a Delivery Authority is processing and handling applications on behalf of an Engagement Authority, it must be made clear to parents and guardians who will be holding the information and how the information will be handled.
90. Local authorities are already required by the Childcare Act 2006<sup>1</sup> to provide information, advice and assistance to parents and prospective parents on the provision of childcare in their area. Consequently EILAs should ensure that parents are aware of the offer, respond to any questions about the offer and assist eligible parents, through their Family Information Service (FIS), to apply for the offer and find suitable childcare.

### **Pre-Application Eligibility Check**

91. Delivery EILAs may want to set up an online pre-application screening, which would undertake an initial basic check of eligibility of a parent and child ahead of submission of a full application. Pre-application screening would need to consider the postcode of the parent/s applying, check that parents, step-parents and long-term live in partners within the household can prove they work a minimum of 16 hours per week based on the equivalent earnings at NMW or NLW, do not earn £100,000 or over (gross) per annum and that the child is of eligible age. Such a screening approach would build efficiencies in the application system, reducing the number of applications received from ineligible families.
92. Alternatively, EILAs could publish the eligibility criteria for parents/carers to fast check their own eligibility before full application.
93. Eligibility of parents to receive the offer would be through self-declaration on either a hard-copy application form issued by the Delivery Authority or via an on-line application system.
94. Parents who apply for the offer, or are in receipt of the offer, will be informed that they will need to produce documentary evidence they meet any, or all, of the eligibility criteria on the application form.

### **Application Process**

95. Delivery Authorities will need to establish an application process, whether it be electronically on-line; by paper copy, or a combination of both. The Welsh Government will inform Delivery Authorities about some information we require to be included in the application form, unamended, to allow for monitoring and evaluation which will inform the longer term offer.

### **Self Declaration**

96. It is a requirement that parents provide informed consent to the use of their data and that this is evidenced. Application forms will need to be accompanied with a notice setting out what data is being collected and why, who that data will be shared with,

---

<sup>1</sup> See section 27 of the Childcare Act 2006 (c. 21) (duty to provide information, advice and assistance).

how it will be used and how long it will be retained for. The Welsh Government has prepared a privacy notice which sets this out, and is compliant with the terms of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements due to come into force in May 2018. In relation to the Offer, and under the terms of GDPR, Welsh Government is the Data Controller and EILAs are Data Processors; EILAs collect relevant data on behalf of the Welsh Government and pass that data to the Welsh Government for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

97. We recognise that some EILAs may look to combine the data collection for the childcare element of the Offer for the Welsh Government with the collection of data that they require for the purposes of delivering early education. If this is the approach taken EILAs will need to be satisfied that they have the necessary legal powers to combine these data sets and to develop their own privacy statement covering their data collection, which is compliant with GDPR, and which clearly differentiates between the data collected on behalf of the Welsh Government and data collected on behalf of the local authority. It is advised that these statements are checked with relevant personnel within the EILAs to ensure that they are legally compliant.

### **Eligibility Checking**

98. Delivery Authorities will need to check the eligibility of all applications. Whilst applicants will be signing a disclaimer to confirm that they meet the minimum criteria for eligibility, it is expected that each application is also supported by documentary evidence of eligibility. This could include:
- proof of residency within an eligible area i.e. postcode to be checked against council tax data;
  - proof of earnings, to show that a minimum income equivalent of 16 hours is worked by each parent each week i.e. 3 months worth of pay slips;
  - proof of employment contract, to ensure longevity of eligibility, or agreement from applicant to the Delivery Authority contacting the employer directly to check employment contract details;
  - proof of child's age and date of birth i.e. copy of birth certificate or birth certificate reference number for checking against internal registration details.
99. Consideration will also need to be given to how newly re-located applicants provide proof of address i.e. if not yet registered with council tax.
100. Newly self-employed parents will be exempt from meeting the minimum earnings criteria for the offer for the first 12 months that they are self-employed. These parents will need to evidence that their business is registered by providing their Unique Tax Reference (UTR).
101. Self-employed parents will need to provide EILAs with their UTR in order for an application to proceed. EILAs should check the income of the self-employed parent by looking at their most recent Self-Assessment (SA) return (SA103) for details of

their Total Taxable Profits.

102. If the parent's most recent SA return does not show earnings that equate to 16 hours at NMW/NLW per week on average that parent needs to provide a forward projection of how they will meet the income threshold over the coming year. The eligibility is based on the parents projection of what they will earn over the next year rather than what they have actually earned over the last year.
103. Delivery Authorities will need to develop guidance to sit along side the application form outlining the details of the offer. It is advised that such guidance should cover the following as a minimum:
- Details of the offer, including clarifying that the offer is a mix of FPN provision and childcare, the differences between the two and what hours will be offered as FPN and what hours will be offered as childcare;
  - Full details of eligibility criteria, including details on exemptions, exceptions etc.;
  - The application process for both FPN and childcare elements of the offer, what happens at each stage, what they will need to do in respect of providers etc.;
  - Clarification that the days and hours detailed in the application form may not be met by their preferred provider and that their preferred provider may not agree to take part in the offer at all and what should happen in such circumstances;
  - Clarification where liabilities lie in respect of a contract between a parent and provider i.e. when signing a contract with a provider the parent is entering into a legal contract, independent of the authority;
  - Clarification that any hours the child is cared for by a childcare provider, outside the parameters of the offer and above the 30 hours collectively, the parent is liable to pay for.

### **Managing the information**

104. Delivery Authorities will need to consider how information obtained through the application process is handled, how it is received, how it is stored and how long information is retained. No information should be stored for any longer than is necessary to enable a person to continue to access the offer for the duration of their entitlement or to enable the evaluation of their participation. This should be clearly stated at the time parent consent to the use of their data, along with details of how they can withdraw that consent.
105. The management of information must comply with data protection laws. It is advised that counsel is sought from relevant internal colleagues i.e. Data Information Officers or Data Protection Officers to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements due to come into force in



May 2018.

### **Database**

106. Delivery Authorities will need to develop a database to store and process application information. This database will need to generate a unique identification number which will be assigned to each eligible child under the offer. This unique identification number will help map a child through the system.

107. The database will also need to hold certain information which will be required by the Welsh Government in respect of monitoring and evaluating the early implementation of the offer. This information will need to be stored in such a way that various monthly and quarterly reports can be produced. Further details on Evaluation and Monitoring are at Section 11.

108. Delivery Authorities may explore adapting existing computer systems or, simply use a generic database, such as excel, to capture the information. However, it is considered that any system put in place for the early implementation period will be temporary, with a national system available on full roll out of the offer. Careful consideration therefore must be given to the financial investment in any such system and a cost benefit analysis undertaken to ensure the correct level of investment of time, effort and money.

### **Notifying Parent**

109. A system will need to be put in place to notify parents of the outcome of their application and whether eligibility has been established or not. Delivery Authorities will need to consider the timeliness of this communication and how it will be undertaken, electronically via email or in hard copy via letter.

110. In addition to a decision, parents will also need information on:

- the process for securing a provider, including the process should a provider they approach not already be registered for the offer i.e. advice on where a provider can get information on registering;
- the process should a provider not want to take part in the offer;
- what happens once a provider has agreed to offer a childcare place under the offer;
- details on what cost elements are included in the rate i.e. the rate does not include travel costs, administration and retainer fees etc.;
- details on the differences between a standard contract with the provider and a contract covering the offer. It should be clear that in agreeing to take a childcare place the parent is entering into a private contract with the provider for which they are liable.

111. It should be clear to parents that responsibility for securing childcare, which meets individual parents' needs, lies with the parent and that this should be sought from existing provision. However, the Delivery Authorities should make parents aware

of their local FIS which can provide information on what provision is available.

### **Provider Process**

112. Providers will need to register to deliver the offer and, in so doing, agree to the terms and conditions of the offer.

113. Delivery Authorities will need to establish a process for registering providers and will need to publicise this through their FIS web-sites and those of the Engagement Authorities they are working with.

114. Delivery Authorities will also need to establish a process for confirming with the provider the number of government funded hours for each individual child. It is suggested that as part of this process, a provider is required to complete a form confirming a child's application for childcare and including details on the child's unique identification number, the number of hours a child is claiming for, the pattern and days over which these hours will be claimed and the total number of hours the child is with the provider. The Delivery Authority will then need to undertake a reconciliation exercise to ensure that the number of government funded hours the parent is claiming for mirrors those on their application and can be met from within their entitlement.

### **Provider Contract**

115. Before being able to deliver childcare under the offer a provider will first need to have registered with the Delivery Authority for payments and will need to have agreed the terms and conditions of the offer, as set out in an EILA provider contract.

116. This contract will define and govern the relationship between the EILA and the provider and will provide the legal underpinning of the relationship. The contract will outline responsibilities and liabilities in respect of payments, and re-claims. It is therefore recommended that relevant internal colleagues are engaged in drawing up the contract including, but not limited to legal and audit colleagues, to ensure legal requirements, general data requirements and due diligence for the individual EILA are met.

117. As a minimum it is advised that the following is taken account of when drawing together the provider contract:

- Details in respect of payments, the process and regularity etc.;
- Monitoring and Evaluation requirements - details of reporting requirements; level and timing, and requirements in respect of the independent contractor procured to evaluate the offer. It should be explicit that provision of the data is a pre-requisite of participating in the offer and failure to deliver the required information could be actioned in line with any other violation of the terms and conditions of the offer.
- Details of liabilities in respect of the child's care and any requirements such as health and safety assessments or toolkits required to be undertaken by a

- provider;
- Details of the responsibilities in respect of notifying the other party should one become aware of a change of circumstances of a parent which effects eligibility;
- Details in respect of payments should a parent exceed their eight week temporary exemption period and continue to use the childcare;
- Process should fraudulent behaviour on behalf of the provider be identified.

118. An EILA may also want to consider asking for the following in respect of assurances:

- Sufficient evidence of financial viability of the provider i.e. proof of financials; and
- A copy of the contract between the parent and provider;

### **Code of Practice on Ethical Employment in the Supply Chains**

119. The new [Code of Practice on Ethical Employment in the Supply Chain](#) was published in March 2017. This code commits public, private and third sector organisations to a set of actions that tackle illegal and unfair employment practices.

120. All public sector organisations, businesses and third sector organisations in receipt of public sector funding, directly or indirectly through grants or contracts, are expected to sign up to the Code. Other organisations in Wales are encouraged to sign up.

121. In respect of the offer it is considered that the EILAs will be expected to sign up to the code, however there is no requirement for childcare providers to do the same. Childcare providers as businesses would be encouraged to sign up to the code as good practice but it is not a requirement of the offer. It is not considered that a childcare contract under the offer is part of the public sector supply chain. The childcare contract is negotiated and agreed between the parent and provider.

### **Process for Paying Providers**

122. Delivery Authorities will need to establish a system and process for paying providers. Providers will need to register as a supplier with a Delivery Authority EILA in order to be able to claim for childcare delivered under the offer.

123. Delivery Authorities will need to develop a system that will allow them to pay providers monthly in advance (where possible) and will also need to seek monitoring and evaluation information monthly in arrears.

124. We advise that wherever possible, providers are paid in advance for the hours of childcare delivered through the offer. Should a local authority's internal audit systems not allow payments in advance to be made, payments in arrears should be made as soon as possible after that childcare setting has delivered those hours through the offer.

### **Re-Checking Eligibility**

125. Delivery Authorities will need to develop a system to confirm the continued eligibility of parents accessing the offer. What system is put in place will be for the individual EILA to decide, however, they will need to be satisfied that any system and process meets EILA due diligence.
126. The re-checks to ensure eligibility for the following term will need to be undertaken termly on all existing applicants, in a timely manner, giving parents sufficient time to re-confirm eligibility ahead of term starting. Consideration will need to be given to the timing of the process to ensure re-confirmation occurs within the 8 week temporary exemption period which would apply should a parent fall out of employment.
127. It is not expected that applicants will need to re-submit full applications as part of this process, nor will all applicants be expected to provide documentary evidence in support of their continued eligibility. However it is expected that random spot checks will be undertaken on a minimum of twenty percent of those parents who re-confirm their eligibility, where further evidence will be sought in respect of their continued eligibility.
128. The process and timing of these re-checks will need to be determined by the EILA.

### **Re-Claim Process**

129. The Welsh Government will provide Delivery Authorities with a Childcare Grant to fund the childcare places for the offer. Delivery Authorities are the accountable body in respect of the Childcare Grant and payments to providers (third party providers). Delivery Authorities are therefore responsible for ensuring that this grant is used for approved purposes and should take appropriate action to safeguard the funding provided through the grant.
130. If it is discovered that the childcare grant funding has not been used for approved purposes, where a parent who is not eligible/no longer eligible claims government funding under the offer or where a provider claims government funding under the offer incorrectly or inappropriately, it is the responsibility of the Delivery Authority to retrieve this funding.
131. Delivery Authorities will therefore need to establish a process for re-claiming any funds wrongly administered/fraudulently claimed under the offer.

### **Appeals**

132. Delivery Authorities will need to agree a process for handling any appeals against an application decision. Any process and subsequent decision will need to be made at an officer level and should not involve the cabinet or any other democratically elected official.
133. Delivery Authorities should refer to this guidance to inform decisions on appeals.

However, should an appeal or challenge be forthcoming, the policy decision of which is not covered within the guidance, Delivery Authorities should refer the appeal to the Welsh Government for advice on the policy.

134. Delivery Authorities are expected to notify the Welsh Government and other EILAs on any appeals made. Only the basis of the appeal, the process and the outcome will be shared. No personal information will be shared.

### **Audit Requirements**

135. The Welsh Government expects Delivery Authorities to establish systems and procedures for the administration of the offer which meet with individual EILA audit requirements.

### **Due Diligence**

136. Delivery Authorities , as the accountable body for delivering the offer through the childcare grant, are expected to put in place internal systems and procedures and take appropriate action to safeguard the funding provided through the Childcare Grant, which satisfy themselves and the Welsh Government in respect of due diligence.

## **Section 10 - Funding**

137. During the Early Implementation of the offer the Welsh Government will provide the EILAs with three separate grant funding streams:

### **The Childcare Administration Grant**

138. EILAs receive financial assistance, by way of an administrative grant, to assist with the costs of delivering the offer ahead of national systems and processes being put in place. For Delivery Authorities the purpose of the grant is to enable each Delivery EILA to prepare for, and deliver the early implementation of the offer within specified and agreed areas, and for a specified and agreed number of children, within their own and agreed partner authorities. For Engagement Authorities the purpose of the grant is to enable each Engagement EILA to engage with parents and providers to raise awareness of, and promote the offer, and to provide relevant support to the delivery authority in processing applications.

139. This funding is not to cover the cost of the childcare itself.

### **The Childcare Grant**

140. Funding for the childcare under the offer will be paid to EILAs by way of the Childcare Grant. Payment of the grant will be made, monthly in arrears, to EILAs following completion and submission of a relevant claim. It will be for the individual EILAs to develop a process for paying providers.

### **The Special Educational Needs Grant**

141. The offer should be available to any eligible parent to access. The Welsh Government will provide each EILA with additional funding to remove barriers for providers and eligible parents who have children with SEN to access the offer. This may include, but not be limited to, offering the providers training, equipment, specialised toys or enabling them to hire more staff. Specific guidance on the use of funding for children with SEN will be issued.

## **Section 11 - Monitoring and Evaluation**

### **Monitoring**

142. The work of the EILAs is to test different elements of the delivery of the offer to inform the final offer to be rolled out across Wales. As such, Delivery Authorities will be required to collect and report certain data to the Welsh Government and other contracted parties on a periodic basis. Engagement Authorities will be required to provide evidence for the evaluation of the childcare offer to third party independent evaluators.

143. Delivery Authorities will be expected to use the Monitoring Information Workbook provided by the Welsh Government. Comprehensive desk notes will be provided to assist Delivery Authorities.

### **Monthly**

144. The monthly returns from the Delivery Authorities will consist of two sets of information. Firstly, information will be provided on:

- The number of applications received in the last month
- Number of applications deemed ineligible in the last month
- Total number of hours applied for in the last month
- The number of days over which the childcare has been applied for
- The number of providers (where known) to date
- Number of applications using their first choice provider in the last month

145. The second set of information will consist of:

- Number of children taking part in the offer (different from applications as some successful applications may have not been taken up)
- Number of hours of booked childcare
- Number of hours children have attended childcare
- Number of children receiving childcare either through the medium of Welsh or bilingually
- Number of children whose parents expressed an interest in accessing Welsh Language provision.
- Number of children whose parents expressed an intention to use or currently use a foundation phase nursery place
- Number of SEN referrals
- Number of SEN grants allocated

146. This information will be sent to Welsh Government officials the last working Monday of the month. Dates for the submissions are given below.

		Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
Aggregate level submission from Local Authority	Period reporting on	05/02/18 - 04/03/18	05/03/18 - 01/04/18	02/04/18 - 06/05/18	7/05/18 - 3/06/18	04/06/18 - 01/07/18	02/07/18 - 05/08/18	06/08/18 - 02/09/18	03/09/18 - 30/09/18	01/10/18 - 04/11/18	05/11/18 - 02/12/18	03/12/18 - 30/12/18	31/12/18 - 03/02/19	04/02/19 - 03/03/19	04/03/19 - 31/03/19
	Due by		30/04/18	28/05/18	25/06/18	30/07/18	27/08/18	24/09/18	29/10/18	26/11/18	31/12/28	28/01/19	25/02/19	25/03/19	29/04/19
Aggregate level submission from Local Authority and Providers	Due by		30/04/18	28/05/18	25/06/18	30/07/18	27/08/18	24/09/18	29/10/18	26/11/18	31/12/18	28/01/19	25/02/19	25/03/19	29/04/19



## Quarterly

147. At the end of each school term Delivery Authorities will need to submit a dataset which contains information about each child using the offer. The information will include:

- Unique child ID number
- Provider CIW Registration Number delivering the offer to the child
- Number of childcare providers used per child taking up the offer
- Parental Ethnicity of all parents listed on the application form
- SEN status of the child
- Whether the child is in receipt of SEN funding provided through the childcare offer
- Number of booked hours of childcare for the term, split by month
- Number of used hours of childcare for the term, split by month
- Number of hours of foundation phase childcare being used for the term, split by month
- Total number of days across which the childcare has been booked
- Whether the child accessed Flying Start
- From the application form;
  - How much parents reported currently spending each month on childcare prior to taking up the offer
  - How easy or difficult parents reported to afford childcare
  - How many hours on average parent reported using formal childcare per week
  - How many hours on average parent reported using informal childcare per week
- Salary of all parents
- How many hours a week parents on application form work including paid and unpaid overtime

148. This information will be sent once at the end of September 2017 for base-lining purposes and then at the end of each term containing information for that term.

149. The dates for the quarterly submissions are as follows:

Period reporting on	January '18 - March '18	April '18 - September '18	September '18 to December '18	January '19 to March '19
Anonymised dataset	30/04/2018	28/09/2018	31/01/2019	29/04/2019

## **Evaluation**

150. The Welsh Government has commissioned a third party contractor to undertake an evaluation of the early implementation of the childcare offer. The final report of the evaluation of the first year of the childcare offer will be available late 2018.

151. The evaluation of the first year of the offer has the following aims:

- Evaluate how effectively the offer is being delivered to children and parents in the early implementer areas and provide lessons to inform future delivery;
- Evaluate the impact that the childcare offer for Wales is having on parental employability, wellbeing and disposable income (linked to poverty) - the specification also recognises that evidence of this is likely to be limited in the first year;
- Evaluate the impact of the childcare offer for Wales on the childcare sector, looking at the affect it has on different types of childcare providers, changes to business practices and the affect it has on intervention into the childcare market.

152. As stated previously, the parameters set out throughout this guidance only refer to the duration of the early implementation and are for the purposes of testing the offer to inform the longer term. The findings from the monitoring and the evaluation will be invaluable in shaping what will in due course become the offer available across Wales from 2020.