

Early Years & Education System (EYES)

Guidance for stretching term time hours

September 2023

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Introduction

In 2024, Surrey County Council is changing its online system for claiming funded early education hours to the Early Years & Education System otherwise known as EYES.

This change is to align the management systems across all the teams in Children's Services, enabling a single view of the child to be shared across all services.

The introduction of EYES means that from September 2023 all early years providers will only be able to claim the funded hours on a term time basis.

Surrey County Council recognises that both providers and parents may still wish to receive their funded hours on a stretched basis, and therefore it will be at the discretion of providers if they wish to stretch the term time hours claimed on behalf of the parents attending their setting.

For providers who decide to continue to stretch the funding themselves, this guidance has been produced to offer assistance with doing this.

How many funded early education hours are parents entitled to in a year?

A small number of 2 year old children are eligible for Funded Early Education for Two Year Olds (FEET) which provides 570 funded early education hours from the period after the child's second birthday.

All 3 & 4 year old children are eligible for 570 universal funded early education hours from the period after their third or fourth birthday.

Some parents are also eligible for 30 Hours Funded Childcare which provides them with an additional 570 funded early education hours from the period after their child's third or fourth birthday. This makes a maximum total of 1140 funded early education hours.

From April 2024, 2 year olds of working parents will be eligible for 570 funded early education hours from the period after the child's second birthday. This will increase to 1140 hours from September 2025 for children whose parents meet the criteria.

The child's funding year starts from the period after their second, third or fourth birthday and covers three periods. It is not aligned to the academic or calendar year.

Relevant dates are as follows for the 2, 3 & 4 year old entitlement:

- Children born in the period 1st January to 31st March will be eligible at the start of term beginning on or following 1st April after the child's second, third or fourth birthday;
- Children born in the period 1st April to 31st August will be eligible at the start of term beginning on or following 1st September after the child's second, third or fourth birthday;

- Children born in the period 1st September to 31st December: the start of term beginning on or following 1st January after the child's second, third or fourth birthday.

From September 2024, children who are 9 months old will be eligible for 570 funded early education hours. This will increase to 1140 hours from September 2025. Once further information is available regarding this entitlement, an updated version of this document will be published with relevant dates relating to this entitlement.

What is term time funding?

Term time funding is the funded early education entitlement of 570 or 1140 funded early education hours divided across 38 weeks of the year. This means that children can take up to a maximum of 15 or 30 funded hours each week for 38 weeks of the year.

What is stretched funding?

Stretched funding is where the funded early education entitlement of 570 or 1140 hours is divided across more than 38 weeks of the year. This means that children can take fewer hours each week for more weeks of the year. For example:

570 hours / 51 weeks = maximum of 11.17 funded hours each week

1140 hours / 51 weeks = maximum of 22.35 funded hours each week

How many term time hours are available in each term during the academic year 2023-24?

The number of funded hours available each term during the academic year 2023-24 for children eligible for 570 funded hours are as follows:

| Autumn term 2023 | Spring term 2024 | Summer term 2024 |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 210 funded hours | 165 funded hours | 195 funded hours |

The number of funded hours available each term during the academic year 2023-24 for children eligible for 1140 funded hours are as follows:

| Autumn term 2023 | Spring term 2024 | Summer term 2024 |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 420 funded hours | 330 funded hours | 390 funded hours |

How do I convert the term time hours I have claimed to a stretched offer?

There are two ways that you can convert the term time hours to a stretched offer. These are:

- 1) Termly stretched - stretching the term time hours claimed by the number of weeks in each period.

For example:

These are the maximum term time hours available in the academic year 2023/24

| Period | Maximum term time hours |
|---------------|--------------------------------|
| Autumn term | 210 |
| Spring term | 165 |
| Summer Term | 195 |

A provider who is open 52 weeks of the year can stretch the maximum hours over each period in the following way:

Autumn period 2022

210 term time hours / 17 weeks = 12.35 stretched hours offered each week

Spring period 2023

165 term time hours / 12 weeks = 12.69 stretched hours offered each week

Summer period 2023

195 term time hours / 22 weeks = 8.86 stretched hours offered each week

When stretching the hours on a termly basis, parents who receive Tax Free Childcare will need to update their childcare account to reflect the amount to be paid each period as it will vary across the year.

- 2) Yearly stretched - providers can continue to offer the term time hours stretched over all the weeks they are open in the year.

For example:

A provider who is open 52 weeks of the year can stretch the total term time hours that are available across the year in the following way:

570 hours / 52 weeks = 10.96 stretched hours offered each week across the child's entitlement year

These are the maximum stretched hours in relation to the total number of weeks a provider is open across the year:

| Number of weeks open | Maximum number of stretched hours per week (570 hours) | Maximum number of stretched hours per week (1140 hours) |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| 52 | 10.96 | 21.92 |
| 51 | 11.17 | 22.35 |
| 50 | 11.4 | 22.8 |
| 49 | 11.63 | 23.27 |
| 48 | 11.87 | 23.75 |

Providers would need to be aware that when claiming term time hours but stretching them across a year, if a parent leaves mid-way through the year the parent or carer may not have received the number of funded hours that have been claimed.

When accepting the provider's offer to stretch the funding across the year, the parent or carer must be aware that if they choose to leave the setting part way through the year, they may not be able to receive their full entitlement of 570 hours. This should be specified in the provider's terms and conditions that are signed by the parent on accepting a childcare place.

You may need to calculate the number of funded hours that have been claimed and how many have been delivered to the parent to see whether additional funded sessions need to be offered to the parent, or whether there may be any chargeable hours.

To be able to calculate the number of funded hours that have been taken each week, please contact fundedearlyeducation@surreycc.gov.uk for a copy of our spreadsheet.

Do I need to tell Surrey County Council if I am stretching the term time funded hours for a parent?

Parents will be asked to indicate on the parental Declaration form whether their child is accessing a term-time or stretched offer. Where a child is accessing a stretched offer, you will need to indicate in the provider use only section of the form whether the hours are stretched on a termly or yearly basis, and over how many weeks.

Can a parent or carer change from term time funded hours to stretched funded hours during the year?

This would be at the provider's discretion. If you choose to allow parents and carers to change from taking term time hours to stretched hours during the year, you must make them aware that they may not receive their full years allocation of 570 hours.

You must include this information in your terms and conditions which should be signed by the parent or carer.

Can a parent or carer change from stretched funded hours to term time funded hours during the year?

As above, this would be at the provider's discretion.

1) Autumn and spring funded periods

A child who changes from a stretched funded offer to a term time funded offer during the autumn and spring funded periods may not receive their full year allocation of 570 hours.

You must include this information in your terms and conditions which should be signed by the parent or carer.

2) Summer funded period

Providers should be aware that a child who has been offered stretched hours in the summer funded period who then changes to a term time offer will receive too many funded hours.

You must include information in your terms and conditions that if the parent chooses to change their offer from stretched funded hours to term time funded hour during the year that they will be liable to pay for any funded hours that have been delivered but not claimed. This would be at the provider's standard charge.

Is there any funded period where more funded hours will have been delivered through a stretched offer than those term time hours claimed?

Consideration should be given when making a stretched offer to a child starting in the summer funded period. If the child then leaves at the end of the summer period, more funded hours will have been delivered than the term time hours claimed.

It is important for providers to ensure it is clear in their terms and conditions that if the child leaves at the end of the summer funded period, they will be invoiced for any funded hours received that the provider has not been able to claim. This would be at the provider's standard charge.

Is there any notice period for funded hours?

There is no notice period for funded hours but if a parent or carer leaves a setting without providing notice, it would be usual for the funded hours to remain with the provider until the end of the funded period. You must tell us if another child uses those hours, otherwise you will have been paid for the same funded hours twice.

There are some exceptions to this general rule which are where:

- the provider receives an inadequate outcome following an Ofsted inspection
- the child moves to a new house
- there is a change in a parent's employment circumstances
- a child has special educational needs or a disability and a different setting would be more appropriate
- there has been social worker involvement
- in some cases where the parent or carer has raised a complaint about the provider to Ofsted.

What happens if I am stretching the funded hours and a child leaves my setting at the end or part way through a funded period?

How you reconcile the funded hours taken and the funded hours claimed will depend on how you are stretching the hours.

- 1) Termly stretched

As the funded hours claimed are only stretched across one period, if a child leaves at the end of a funded period, all hours claimed should have been delivered.

If the child leaves part way through a funded period, it may be that they have not received the number of hours that have been claimed at the point they leave. Surrey County Council may reclaim these funded hours but please contact fundedearlyeducation@surreycc.gov.uk to agree next steps.

You must include information in your terms and conditions that if the parent chooses to leave your setting at the end or part way through a funded period, they may not receive their full year allocation of 570 or 1140 funded early education hours.

2) Yearly stretched

When a child's term time hours are being stretched across a year and they leave, it may be that the child has either received too few or too many funded hours. You will need to reconcile the number of hours that have been claimed to the number of hours that have been delivered.

It may be that the child will not have received the number of funded hours that you have claimed. Therefore, once the hours have been reconciled, you will need to offer the balance of funded hours to the parent or carer, to be taken within their notice period. If the parent or carer does not wish to take up the offer of the balance of funded hours, this will be their choice and the hours will be forfeited.

At certain points of the year, it may be that you have offered more funded hours than you have been able to claim. In this situation, you will need to invoice the parent or carer for these additional hours. This would be at the provider's standard charge.

It is important when stretching the term time funded hours either termly or yearly that the scenarios above are incorporated into the provider's terms and conditions which should be signed by the parent or carer.

How do I reconcile the term time and stretched funded hours?

You will need to work out how many funded hours have been claimed and how many funded hours have been delivered at the point that the child leaves your setting.

Surrey County Council has developed a spreadsheet to assist providers in reconciling the funded hours and a stretched funding tracker which you may find useful. Please contact fundedearlyeducation@surreycc.gov.uk for a copy.

Termly stretch example:

*A child has a leave date of Friday 28 October 2022 in the Autumn funded period and is receiving their hours **termly stretched**:*

Term time hours delivered (as of 28 October) = 120 funded hours (210 divided by 8 weeks =

Termly stretched hours delivered (as of 28 October) = 105.04 funded hours

Balance of hours not delivered = 14.96 funded hours

Yearly stretch example:

*A child has a leave date of Friday 28 October 2022 in the Autumn funded period and is receiving their hours **yearly stretched**:*

Term Time hours delivered (as of 28 October) = 120 funded hours

Yearly stretched hours delivered (as of October) = 94.96 funded hours

Balance of hours not delivered = 25.04 funded hours

Sometimes when a child leaves a setting and has attended in a previous funded period, they may not have used all of the funded hours claimed in the previous period. Therefore, it is important to reconcile the hours not only for the current period but also the previous period of attendance.

I have a child starting at my setting who has been taking stretched hours at another provider. How many hours each week can I offer?

Stretched hours should always be calculated according to the child's funding year. The child's funding year starts from the period after they turn 9 months old (from September 2024 for eligible children), or their second, third or fourth birthday and covers three periods. If possible, children should not vary their stretched offer within this year but can change at the point of their new child year, the period after their next birthday.

1) Number of stretched hours each week is the same at each provider

For children who have been receiving the same number of stretched hours each week as your setting offers (you should confirm this with the previous provider), you will be able to just carry on stretching their hours in the same way.

2) Number of stretched hours each week are different at each provider

For children who have been receiving a different number of weekly stretched hours than you normally offer at your setting, you will need to liaise with the previous provider to confirm how many weeks they have been stretching the hours over, to know how many remaining hours the child has available, so that you can assess the weekly stretched hours you are able to offer to the parent or carer. For support with this calculation, you can contact EYcommissioningteam@surreycc.gov.uk.

What happens when a child attends more than one setting?

If a child attends at more than one setting, all claims will be made on a term time basis. It will then be up to each provider if they wish to stretch the term time funded hours over the number of weeks they are each open or deliver them on a term time basis. It may be that the hours are delivered on a term time basis at one provider and stretched at another provider. If the funded hours are being stretched, consideration should be made to reconciliation of hours as described above.

Can I bank funded hours from a previous period or week?

No, funded hours must be used on a weekly basis, if the parent or carer does not take up their full hours in the week, whether these are taken term time or stretched, they are not able to bank them to use later.

Will I still receive an estimate payment?

The process for receiving an estimate payment will remain the same until EYES goes live in 2024.

All group settings will continue to receive an automatic estimate payment of 60% of their universal claims in the same period of the previous year.

New providers, and providers who have re-registered, will need to complete an estimate claim form and send this to the Funded Early Education Team for the first 3 terms of operation, as we will have no history on which to base the payment.

If you are a group setting and wish to receive an estimate payment for Funded Early Education for Two-Year-Olds (FEET), the new entitlement for 2 year olds of working parents (from April 2024) or for the extended hours for 3- & 4-year-olds, you will need to submit an estimate claim form.

If you are a childminder and wish to receive an estimate payment for FEET, universal hours and/or the extended hours, you will need to submit an estimate claim form.

To get an estimate claim form, please visit our webpage [Providing funded early education - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/early-education) or contact us at fundedearlyeducation@surreycc.gov.uk stating which estimate claim forms you require.

When EYES goes live in 2024, the following changes will apply:

Surrey County Council will no longer make automatic estimate payments for universal 3- & 4-year-old children to group settings.

All providers will be able to electronically submit a request for an estimate payment each period within the Establishment Portal.

This will make estimate payments more accurate as they will be based on the numbers of children you will be expecting to attend your setting in the next period.