

Frequently Asked Questions

These were updated on 17 July 2018.

1. Details of revised Scheme from 4 April 2018 We are retaining the higher level of award (£1,000) for childminders who care for children with SEN/D and for new Childminder Agencies (CMAs), and introducing two tiers of general award:

- i. A universal award of £300 for new childminders across England;
- ii. Introducing a locality supplement of £200 to the universal award, providing a total grant of £500. This will be paid to new childminders within certain local authorities (LA) where there are low numbers of childminders, and the LA has been highlighted as facing challenges around rurality and disadvantage.

2. Where can I see the list of local authorities that will attract the locality supplement rate?

The published list can be found on the website [here](#).

3. How will the list of target local authority areas be agreed?

The list will be updated each school term by analytical experts within the DfE, drawing on a range of published data to identify a number of target LAs with:

- A low number of Childminders compared to the 30 hours eligible population.
- A significant amount of rural areas.
- A high rate of disadvantage families.

4. Could the list of local authority areas change?

Yes, this list will be reviewed (termly) by analytical experts within the DfE. As 30 hours has time to embed across the country, demand for childcare places could fluctuate across the year. The data will provide an accurate picture of the childcare market and the list may change. We will communicate clearly the specific date when the list will be updated. We plan to issue updates in September 2018; January 2019; and April 2019.

5. Why have you changed the scheme for 2018?

DfE has amended the scheme to ensure it is better aligned with the 30 hours free childcare objectives. We want to target the grant so that we have the right number and mix of childcare places to meet parental demand, especially in those areas where childminder numbers are lower.

6. Why have the award amounts changed for 2018?

We have ensured that all new childminders in England, who wish to set up a new business, can receive a grant (£300) to support them through the initial start-up costs. However, to ensure continued value for money and focus the scheme on our priorities for 30 hours, we have introduced a locality supplement (£200) to the universal grant (£300) to meet the Department's objectives – providing a total grant of £500.

7. What happens if I don't operate within the LA identified as a priority?

You will still be eligible for the universal award of £300; this would be paid following receipt of the application form and your Ofsted certificate and subject to approval of your application.

8. What happens if I don't live in but operate a childminding service within the LA identified as a priority?

You would be able to apply with your Ofsted certificate and be eligible for the locality supplement award of £500. We will need to see evidence that you will be operating within a priority area, for example specific marketing posters/flyers, invoices which will have the relevant postcode.

We will keep your details for audit purposes and you can be audited up to 12 months after you have received your payment. We will need to ensure you are running a business within the priority area at that time.

9. What happens if the list of authorities changes after I've applied?

We will ensure that the updated timetable is communicated clearly on the website that shows a list of the priority LAs and details of application deadlines. As long as you have completed and submitted your application before the deadline and before your LA has potentially fallen off the list of priority authorities, then you will receive the locality supplement.

10. What if my LA is taken off the list before I apply?

When you complete and submit the application form and have your Ofsted certificate, you will be eligible for the universal award of £300. Details of application deadlines will be included in the timetable for the LA list to be updated.

11. What if my LA has fallen off the list after I apply, what grant will I receive?

As long as you completed and submitted your application with your Ofsted certificate before the application deadline, then your application will be processed and you will receive the locality supplement of £500.

12. What if I started an application before 4th April 2018 but submit it after?

All applications submitted on or after 4th April will receive the new rate of grant.

Eligibility Criteria

1. What are the eligibility criteria?

In order to be eligible for any grant from the Childcare Business Grants Scheme you must:

- Be a Childminder or Childcare Provider on Domestic Premises or a Childminder Agency operating in England
- Be registered with Ofsted or a CMA on the **Early Years Register** and be able to provide a copy of your registration certificate
- Be a **NEW** business. This means:
 - i) You must have been registered with Ofsted/CMA for less than 3 months¹
AND
 - ii) Have already started your business (this cannot be before your Ofsted/CMA registration date)
OR
 - iii) If you have not yet started your business you must plan to do so within 6 months of your application date

You must also:

- Plan to offer the 30 hours funded childcare entitlement for 3- and 4-year-olds yourself or in partnership if a childminder or childcare provider on domestic premises and are registered with the Local Authority to do so.
- If you are a CMA, directly encourage and support your registered childminders or providers to offer the 30 hours funded childcare entitlement, either themselves or in partnership with other providers
- Spend the grant on costs directly related to setting up your childminding business and retain proof of how you have spent the grant
- Not have received this grant before
- Not have received or have applied for a grant to support start-up costs through your local authority
- Not be a private nursery, after school club or other type of provider.

2. What are the different types of grants?

There are four types of grant:

- Grants of £300 available for applicants who are a newly registered Childminder or Childcare Provider on Domestic Premises in all areas of England
- A locality supplement of £200 on top of the universal award providing a total grant of £500, will be available for applicants who are a newly registered Childminder or Childcare Provider on Domestic Premises and operate in listed target local authorities.
- Grants of £1,000 available for applicants who are a newly registered Childminder or Childcare Provider on Domestic Premises providing care for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEN/D) across the England.

¹ Up to 30th April 2017 this was 12 months

- Grants of £1,000 available for organisations that are a newly registered Childminder Agency (CMA) across England.

You can only apply for **ONE** grant.

3. I am looking into becoming a childminder. Can I apply for the grant now to help me pay for the courses, health check etc.?

This grant is intended to reimburse you for the costs associated with setting up your childcare business. In order to apply, you need to provide a copy of your Ofsted/CMA certificate and therefore you must be a registered childminder at the time of your application. You also need to have either: started your business within the previous three months from the date of your registration certificate, or be due to start in the next six months.

4. I have been approved by Ofsted, but I am still waiting for my certificate. Can I apply now and send the certificate in later?

Applicants must submit a copy of their Ofsted certificate when applying for the grant.

5. I have completed my childminding course, but still need do my first aid course; can I apply for the grant now?

Applications should only be made for the grant once you have received your Ofsted certificate, which requires both of these courses to be completed.

6. I have been advised that I can apply for the grant without my Ofsted certificate. Is this correct?

No this is not correct. Applicants must have their Ofsted certificate when applying for the grant and the registration date on your certificate must be no more than 3 months prior to the date of your application for the grant.

7. I previously received a grant to set up as a Childminder. I have now registered as a CMA. Am I eligible?

Yes, so long as the CMA is a new business, then you would be eligible to apply if you meet all other criteria.

8. Can I apply for both the Childminder and Childcare provider on domestic premises grant?

No, this is the same grant. You can only apply for one grant (please see Q.2). They are differentiated for monitoring purposes only.

9. I work with another registered childminder at the same address. Can we both apply for the grant?

You will need to be registered separately with Ofsted/CMA and provide evidence that you are separate businesses. This could include a copy of your public liability insurance certificates and business plans.

10. I am a childcare provider on domestic premises who works with registered childminders to provide care for the children. Are they eligible for the grant?

If the 3 other adults that you deliver childcare on domestic premises with are registered childminders in their own right and running a separate business, then they may apply for the childminder grant individually, assuming they meet all other criteria. They cannot then apply for a second grant.

11. I have already received a standard £500 grant, but I now look after children with SEN/D. Can I apply for the higher rate grant?

No, you cannot apply for another grant if your childcare business is the same as your previous application.

12. I have already received a childminder grant, but I am now registered as a childcare provider on domestic premises. Can I apply for another grant?

No, this is the same grant. You can only apply for one grant (please see Q.2). They are differentiated for monitoring purposes only.

13. What sort of costs am I likely to incur when starting my new business?

There are a number of costs associated with setting up a new childminding business and the grant could help towards reimbursing you for the following related-costs (this list is not limited): courses attended, health check, DBS check, public liability insurance, house or commercial building insurance cover, additional car insurance to cover the transportation of the children in your care, and any additional equipment that is purchased.

14. Why is the amount of time I have to apply for the grant after my Ofsted registration date changed to 3 months on 1st May 2017?

The Childcare Business Grants Scheme closed to new applications at the end of March 2016. A large number of newly registered childminders, childcare providers on domestic premises or CMAs will have registered with Ofsted between April 2016 and January 2017. In order to be fair to those that registered during this closed period, from the scheme launch until 30th April 2017 we accepted applications from those with an Ofsted or CMA registration date up to 12 months old. From 1st May 2017, applications can only be made by childminders, childcare providers on domestic premises or CMAs that have a registration date of no more than 3 months old.

15. From 1st May 2017 why can I only apply if I have been registered with Ofsted/CMA within the last 3 months?

This scheme is to encourage the establishment of NEW childcare businesses. Applicants must have their Ofsted/CMA registration certificate in order to apply for the grant, so there is no reason why you would need to delay your grant application.

16. What is the difference between a childminder and someone who is a childcare provider on domestic premises?

A registered childminder is someone who takes care of children on a domestic premises (often the childminder's own) with up to 2 other adults at one time.

A childcare provider on domestic premises is when a group of 4 or more people care for children in a domestic premises (that is someone's home), for example four childminders, or two childminders and two assistants, or one childminder and three assistants.

'Domestic premises' means premises which are wholly or mainly a private dwelling. It does not count as childminding if it is the home of one of the children being cared for, unless the care is for more than two different families at the same time. These providers can spend up to 50% of their time working on approved non-domestic premises.

Your registration certificate will state which you are registered as.

Further information on the different types of registered childcare providers can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/register-childminder-childcare-provider/what-to-register-as>

17. Are nurseries, out of school provisions and academies eligible for a grant?

Unfortunately, nurseries, out of school provision and other providers of childcare on non-domestic premises are not eligible to apply unless they are setting up a CMA.

18. But they used to be. Why have you changed eligibility?

The government wants every type of provider to offer the 30-hour entitlement and to succeed. To achieve this, the eligibility of this scheme has been amended to provide greater support to specific providers in the childcare market who require most help in the run up to the introduction of the 30 hours entitlement. For further information; [http://www.setting-up-a-day-nursery.co.uk/How To Set Up](http://www.setting-up-a-day-nursery.co.uk/How_To_Set_Up)
<http://startups.co.uk/how-to-start-a-day-nursery/>

19. Are childminders registered on the General Register eligible to apply?

No, applicants must be registered on the Early Years Register. This aligns with the Department for Education's priority to increase the provision of early years childcare as government introduces the 30 hours funded childcare entitlement for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds.

20. How do I apply to deliver funded hours for 2, 3 or 4 year olds?

Your Local Authority will advise you on how to apply to deliver the funded entitlement and will also support your parents to apply for the 2 year-old or working parents elements. Further information can be found [here](#).

21. None of the children I look after qualify for the government funded hours. Am I still eligible for the grant?

You are eligible for the grant if you confirm that you will be offering the 30 hours funded entitlement and have registered with the local authority to do so. We acknowledge that as a new business you may not have qualifying children in the early stages.

22. How can I deliver the 30 hours funded childcare for 3- and 4-year-olds entitlement in partnership?

It is possible that other providers in your area, particularly those who currently run half-day sessions, may not want or be able to expand their provision to deliver 30 hours for

some children. You should contact your LA to discuss opportunities in your area. You can also find some useful tools on how childminders can work with groups of providers at <https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/2017/12/partnership-working-toolkit/> and at <https://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/delivery-models-dfes-30-hour-mixed-model-partnership-toolkit>

23. I only look after school age children before and after school. I have no plans to look after younger children. Am I eligible?

If you do not intend to look after pre-school aged children you would not be able to register with the local authority to offer 30 funded hours of early education for 3- and 4-year olds and are therefore not eligible for the grant.

24. I currently do not care for or expect to care for a child with SEN/D. Am I still eligible to apply for the higher rate SEN/D grant?

It is expected that someone applying for the higher rate SEN/D grant will have made a business decision to look after children with SEN/D. It is also expected that they will have purchased items to enable them to look after children with SEN/D. All higher rate SEN/D grants will be audited and you will be required to submit evidence of this. If evidence is not provided then the money will be claimed back.

26. What kind of resources should purchase, if I want to care for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEN/D)?

The grant has already supported many childminders to provide care to children with SEN/D. We have seen the funding used in different ways, for example;

- SEN/D specific training courses
- Improvements to the house – downstairs toilet, sensory rooms
- Improvements to the garden – ramps to cover steps, AstroTurf, outhouse for play or storage, levelling of ground
- Sensory toys or equipment

Further reading for childminders on caring for children with SEN/D, please see;

PACEY [website](#) and Family Childcare Trust – [guide to childcare for children with SEN/D in England](#).

27. Is there an age limit on the children cared for with special needs if I am applying for the higher-level grant?

The children with SEN/D that you provide care for should be within the age ranges of the Early Years Register. You should also have registered with your local authority (LA) to offer the 30 hours funded childcare entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds (you should also inform your LA that you intend to offer childcare to parents with SEN/D children).

28. Is there a limit to the number of applications that I can submit?

You are only eligible for one grant payment. If you have had a payment from any of the old schemes you cannot reapply to this new scheme.

29. I have received a start-up grant through my local authority. Can I apply for the childcare business grant scheme?

No, you are only eligible for one start-up grant. If you have received a similar grant through the local authority, you cannot apply for this scheme.

30. Can I apply for this childcare grant and one from another statutory agency for the same thing?

There is no problem with this, however other agencies may have restrictions – you should ask them.

31. I have been a childminder for a few years. Can I apply for the grant?

This scheme is to encourage the establishment of NEW childcare businesses. If you have been running your childcare business for longer than 3 months (was 12 months up to 30th April 2017), you are not eligible for this grant.

32. I live in Scotland/Wales/Northern Ireland. Can I apply for the grant?

No, the scheme is only available to applicants in England.

33. I have already received a £250 childminder grant and have had to re-register with Ofsted since then. Can I apply for the £500 grant?

The Department for Education have agreed to award an additional £250 to those childminders that were paid £250 under a previous version of the scheme. A number of criteria apply. Applicants must:

- have received the lower amount of £250
- have a new Ofsted or agency certificate registering them as an EY childminder
- be operating a new business that is at a new address
- have resigned their original registration at least 18 months before re-registration
- agree to offer the new 30 hours entitlement
- accept the lower amount of £250.

If you think you are eligible for an additional £250 payment, please contact our helpline.

Applying for the grant

1. How do I apply?

You can apply online through the secure portal. You can find the link in the Apply section of our website; alternatively, you can contact the helpline for a hard copy of the application form to be posted to you.

2. My Ofsted certificate is a paper copy, how can I upload this to my application?

You can scan the document; either using a scanner or an app, alternatively you can take a photograph. Make sure that the full certificate is clearly visible on the scan/photograph, includes a border and the image is not too small. You can then upload this to your application if it is less than 4MB. If it is more than 4MB you will need to email or post us a copy to Childcare Business Grants Scheme, Ecorys UK, 5th Floor, Queen Elizabeth House, 4 St Dunstan's Hill, London, EC3R 8AD.

3. When will the 2017-18 scheme close?

The 2017-18 scheme is due to end by 3 April 2018. Please check the scheme's website for news and updates. We can receive applications up until midnight on Tuesday 3 April 2018. From 4 April 2018 we will assess all applications under the revised terms and conditions, see question 1 - Details of revised Scheme.

4. The application deadline of 3 April 2018 is too soon

We highlighted that terms and conditions of the scheme could change, this includes changes to application deadline for 2017-18 scheme. We have continuously encouraged childminders to apply to the scheme and not to delay in doing so.

5. Will the grants be available throughout the 2018 – 19 financial year?

The scheme is demand-led and operates on a first come / first served basis. Our advice is to not delay your application.

6. Can I appeal if my claim is rejected?

If your application is not approved, we will provide an explanation why via email and an opportunity to follow up with us. If you feel that our feedback does not warrant an application rejection, please let us know and we will investigate. There is no formal appeal process.

7. Can I claim a grant if a previous claim has been paid to my partner or other family member whose business is run from the same address?

You will need to provide proof that you are claiming for a separate business to that which has already been paid. This would be a valid public liability insurance policy in your name.

8. Will the information submitted on the Childcare Business Grants Scheme application form be shared with other statutory bodies?

For legal reasons, we may need to share your details with other statutory bodies in some cases.

9. What happens after I apply?

Your application will be held in a queue and verified. If your application is deemed eligible, it will be approved and paid (if there are still funds available – see Q5).

10. How long do I have to wait from when I submit my application to when approved?

We aim to assess your application within 2 weeks of submission and will contact you within that time with any queries or to confirm approval. If your application is approved, you will receive an email notifying you of this decision alongside a timescale of your payments.

11. I applied online and my application was returned to me because I had given incorrect information. What do I do?

Log into your online account and select the 're-submit your form' button. Update your form accordingly and re-submit your application. We will then review your re-submission claim.

12. I received an email saying I've been approved and I've just logged into my application and realised I have put the wrong bank details. What do I do?

Please phone us immediately and we will return your form to you to update your application – the helpline number is 0207 444 4268.

Being paid

1. How long after I'm approved will I be paid?

If there is still funding available, we aim to pay approved grants within 4 weeks of application approval.

2. How will I be paid?

We will pay you by BACS payment, directly into the bank account details you provide in your application. Please check that these are correct before you submit as if they are incorrect you may not receive your payment.

3. What is the name of the payee of the grant?

The grant payment will come from a company called Ecorys UK and this is what it will show on your bank statement.

4. I received an email to say I've been paid, but the money isn't in my account. What happened and what do I do now?

It is likely that the bank details you provided us with were incorrect, Please contact us for the next steps. Please note that providing incorrect bank details will delay your payment as this will need to be resolved and we will not pay you until our next scheduled payment run.

5. I have a different bank account since I applied. What should I do?

If you applied online, please email us and we can return your form to you to amend and re-submit your application.

6. The long number on my debit card has changed since my application was approved. What should I do?

As we pay directly into your bank account rather than the card, you only need to contact us if you have changed bank accounts i.e. your sort code and account number have changed.

7. Who should the payment be made to?

The grant will be payable to the applicant.

Audit

1. What documents should I keep for audit?

You should keep the receipts, invoices or similar evidence of the costs you incurred to register as a childminder or CMA. These can include:

A Childminder:

- DBS Check costs
- Health Check costs
- Training costs
- Childminding course
- First aid course
- Public liability insurance
- Ofsted/CMA registration
- Equipment costs
- Adaptations made to your home (for children with SEN/D)
- Evidence you are operating in priorities areas – such as advertising to parents, invoices to parents.

A CMA:

- Registration
- Training
- The process of establishing the business
- Marketing / recruitment of childminders
- Advertising to parents

2. How will I be contacted about the audit?

We will email all those who will be audited a few months after you have received your grant. You can be audited up to 12 months after you have received your payment.

3. Why are all of the higher £1,000 grants being audited?

So that we can be sure that the grant money is being used correctly.

The previous schemes

1. How has the scheme changed since 4th April 2018?

The scheme eligibility is very similar but DfE has introduced two tiers of general award going forward from 4th April 2018. Those childminders (CM) within a target local authorities where sufficiency issues have been identified (for transparency - the list will be based on a range of published data sources and is published on the website [here](#)) will receive a locality supplement totalling £500. Those within LA areas deemed to have no sufficiency issues would receive a rate of £300.

3. How has the scheme changed since December 2016?

The scheme application process is now a one stage process. You **must** have your Ofsted certificate when applying for the grant. You cannot apply without this. If you do not have your certificate when you apply, your application cannot be submitted.

The scheme has also been focused on childminders and childminder agencies that plan to offer the 30 hours entitlement. The scheme was revised further in April 2018 to align it better with the 30 hours free childcare policy. The scheme will target the grants at new childminding businesses within certain LAs where there are where there are low numbers of childminders, and the LA has been highlighted as facing challenges around rurality and disadvantage.

4. I was rejected under the 2015-16, 2017 & 2018 scheme, can I re-apply?

This depends on why you were not eligible. Please check the updated guidance on the new scheme at www.childcarebusinessgrants.com.