

Childcare
Choices

Quality early years education
and childcare in **Bolton**

Bolton
Council

Funded Early Years and Childcare Entitlement: Operational Guidance

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1. Introduction

1.1 Summary

The purpose of this guidance is to help early education and childcare providers understand in more detail the local processes for registration and delivery of funded early education and childcare entitlements in Bolton. We would like to thank the many providers that have contributed to the production of this guidance, a full list of acknowledgements are outlined at the end of this document.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with:

- The Model agreement: early years provision free of charge and free childcare, March 2017 which can be accessed [here](#)¹.
- The Department for Education 'Early Years Entitlements: Operational Guidance, July 2017 which can be accessed [here](#)².

This publication provides operational guidance from Bolton Council which has been aligned to associated Department for Education Statutory Guidance. Providers must have due regard to this guidance when delivering funded early education and childcare entitlements in the borough as outline in the early years funding agreement.

1.2 Who is this publication for?

This guidance is for all early years providers who are delivering the funded entitlement, these are referred to as 'providers' throughout this document and include:

- Early Years providers, Out of School Clubs and childminders registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register
- Childminders registered with a childminder agency that is registered with Ofsted
- Schools taking children aged 2 and over and which are exempt from registration with Ofsted as an early years provider.

1.3 Main Points

To provide guidance which applies to the funded 15 hour entitlement for eligible two year olds, the 15 hour entitlement for parents of three and four year olds (the universal entitlement) and the 30 hours funded entitlement for working parents of three and four year olds (extended entitlement).

It introduces elements relating to:

- What Bolton Council does to fulfil its statutory responsibilities associated with the free early years provision, including the support provided to parents and children
- What process providers must follow when registering to become a funded early education and childcare provider in Bolton
- What providers must do to fulfil their agreement with Bolton Council
- What providers may wish to do to support parents and children in accessing their funded entitlement

2. Becoming a Provider who delivers funded entitlement places in Bolton

2.1 Ofsted Registration

In order to deliver the funded entitlement early education and childcare for children under 8 for more than 2 hours a day, providers must ensure that they are registered with Ofsted.

To look after any children under the age of 5, providers must register on the **Early Years Register** to only look after children aged 5 and under. The Early Years Register is for children from birth up to the 31 August after their fifth birthday.

Please note: If you wish to offer childcare to children over this age, you must also register on the Childcare Register in order to look after any children under age 8.

IMPORTANT: You can get an unlimited fine, be sent to prison, or both if you provide childminding or daycare services without being registered.

For further guidance on registering as a childminder please see Ofsted guidance [here](#)³.

All providers registered on the Early Years register must follow **the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017)** which can be accessed [here](#)⁴.

2.2 Schools registering a new nursery provision

Please follow the link [here](#)⁵ for further information on:

- how maintained schools can set up provision for two, three and four year olds
- the process for maintained schools with existing nursery classes to change to governor-run provision.

For advice on how to set up a school nursery, please see the guidance provided by New Schools Network which can be accessed [here](#)⁶.

If a primary school begins to deliver early years funded entitlement places as new provision, the local authority will not receive a notification from Ofsted as primary schools do not need to inform Ofsted of the changes. Maintained primary schools do need to update their role numbers via Edubase using the following link: <http://www.edubase.gov.uk/edubase/home.xhtml>

The information the local authority receive from Ofsted regarding new PVI settings and childminders triggers the local authority to send a 'provider details pack' – the information that we collect through this is added to the council database and is published online (where consent to do so has been given).

To ensure new school based nurseries receive the 'provider details pack' and have their information promoted, the headteacher or business manager is requested to email ec.imu@bolton.gov.uk to confirm the nature of the provision that they will be offering (Eg from September 2017 we will be delivering nursery places for 3 & 4 year olds).

School based nurseries will then need to complete the registration form to deliver funded early education places in the same process as that followed by other settings. This process triggers a

funding agreement being sent out and ultimately providers being marked as a funded early education provider in the council database and details being published online in the list of funded early education providers (where consent has been given).

2.3 Bolton Council Registration and Funding Agreement

Bolton Council administers payment to Providers on behalf of the Department for Education for the early years free entitlements:

- the funded 15 hour entitlement for eligible two year olds
- the 15 hour entitlement for parents of three and four year olds (the universal entitlement) and
- the 30 hours funded entitlement for working parents of three and four year olds (extended entitlement)

Bolton Council also administers payment for:

- Early Years Inclusion fund and Disability Access Fund
- Early Years Pupil Premium (see section 9)

To become a funded provider, the first step in the process is to complete an online registration form which can be accessed [here](#)⁷. Once a registration form has been received the local authority will check that the provider is eligible to deliver the entitlement by checking the information the provider has given against information available to the local authority. Providers are required to enter into a legal agreement with the Council through the early years funding agreement. Providers will be sent a copy of the funding agreement, a sample agreement can be accessed [here](#)⁸

The provider is required to sign the copy and return it to the local authority. On receipt of the signed funding agreement, a local authority officer will countersign the agreement and post/email the provider a signed copy. Providers are advised to keep this copy safe for their future records. Included with the signed copy of the funding agreement, providers will receive a cover letter with information regarding the provider portal, a bank mandate form and headcount headcount return forms.

Providers follow the instructions on the cover letter to arrange log in details for the provider portal. All advice and guidance for the portal/headcount can be found in Section 11 of this document. Providers are paid their funding each term following the completion of their headcount.

Providers opting to change the entitlements that they deliver e.g. having previously registered to deliver early years entitlement for three- and four-year-olds, but now wish to extend their offer to include the funded 15 hour entitlement for eligible two year olds, are required to complete the registration form as outlined above and to sign an updated funding agreement.

2.4 At a glance flowchart explaining the Bolton Council registration process and funding agreements

Provider completes and submits online registration form which can be found [here](#). Please note, providers wishing to offer the funded entitlement for eligible two year olds must be graded 'good' or outstanding by Ofsted.



Once approved to offer funded places, the Local Authority will send the provider a copy of the funding agreement. See an example of the funding agreement [here](#)



Provider signs the Funding Agreement and returns this to the Local Authority.



On receipt the Local Authority countersigns the Funding Agreement and returns a copy to the provider for their reference with associated details to access the Provider Portal (online system for headcount, eligibility checking, etc)

For all queries relating to registering to offer funded early education and childcare places please contact our **Information and Communications Team** on **01204 33 8122** or by email at families@bolton.gov.uk.

2.5 Bolton Council Business Support

The Council provides a number of services which support new early education and childcare providers to deliver the early education entitlements, this includes:

- Annual Sufficiency Assessment
- New to Childminding Training
- Business Support E-Learning
- Professional Advice Service – via Bolton Start Well Service

2.5.1 Business Support - Annual Sufficiency Assessment

Under Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006, local authorities are required by legislation to; 'Secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).'

This duty includes the need for local authorities to make sure that sufficient childcare is available for eligible two year olds and all three and four year olds, in respect of their funded early education entitlement.

The childcare sufficiency assessment is a summary of the childcare position in Bolton and provides useful information for:

- **Parents** – to understand the types of childcare on offer in Bolton, to look specifically at the number of childcare places by provider and help to inform decisions about childcare options for their family.
- **Childcare providers** – to understand the local childcare market and to help them make informed choices about future developments for their business.
- **Councillors and Executive Members** – to have clarity on services available for local residents and to support the decision making process.
- **Local authority officers** – to have a clear picture about childcare in Bolton, to tailor support for providers and to ensure that there is a balanced childcare market meeting local demand.

The childcare sufficiency assessment is created by collating and reviewing:

- **Childcare market analysis** – type of provision, quality of providers, number of children and number of places.
- **Referrals to the Family Information Service for brokerage** (support to find services), where demand has not been met or the area is saturated.
- **Analysis of the local employment market** – to identify employment trends which may result in an increase / decrease in demand for childcare places.

To view the annual sufficiency assessment for year 2016/2017, please click [here](#)⁹.

2.5.2 New to Childminding Training

Please note this must be completed BEFORE Ofsted registration.

Childminders can access further support when setting up their childcare business through Bolton Council's Childminder Training Course. You will be required to attend an introductory session followed by six weekly sessions and also undertake a home visit from the Start Well Service. In addition, you will need to attend a Paediatric First Aid Training course, Safeguarding training and complete a food hygiene course.

For further information please contact the Start well Service on 01204 338149 or email startwellbookings@bolton.gov.uk.

Please note that other organisations also offer new childminders support including St Bede Childminder Agency (www.stbede-childminders.co.uk) or PACEY (www.pacey.org.uk). **Please note that you must attend the Bolton Safeguarding Children Course which is provided by Bolton Council.**

2.5.3 Business Support E-learning

Bolton Council has designed some useful e-learning modules to support providers to make their childcare setting successful and sustainable. These two modules are of the following:

1. **An Introduction for New Start-ups.** This is aimed at people who want to set up a childcare business for the first time.
2. **An Introduction to Early Years Business Planning.** This is aimed at existing childcare providers who want to know more about how business planning can help them build a successful childcare business. It is also suitable for new start-ups.

To register to access these **free** modules, please click [here](#)¹⁰.

2.5.4 Professional Advice Service – via Bolton Start Well Service

Bolton Council has an expert team of Early Years and Childcare Professionals as part of its Start Well Service who can provide professional advice to new early education and childcare providers or those considering expanding their provision. To access this support simply call Bolton Start Well Service on 01204 33 8149 and the Start Well Childcare Partnership Officer will be happy to assist.

In addition Bolton Start Well Service provide a wide range of consultancy and professional development services which are outlined in more detail in section 14, including a funded (no cost to the provider) Early Years Foundation Stage offer tailored to different sectors and a range of traded services.

2.6 Other Business Support Services

2.6.1 Department for Education (DfE) Childcare Business Support Grant

The DfE have introduced a new scheme to help support providers with some costs when setting up their childcare business. The scheme is only open to newly registered businesses. A newly registered business is one that has been registered with Ofsted or a Childminding Agency within the last 3 months. For more information on this grant, please click [here](#)¹¹.

Please note: The scheme is due to end by 31 March 2018, or sooner if all funds have been exhausted.

2.6.2 Out of School Clubs

The Out of School Alliance provide information and support when setting up an out of school club, please click [here](#)¹² to access their website.

3. 15 hours funded entitlement for eligible two year olds

The funded entitlement for eligible two year olds allows eligible children to receive free early education and childcare.

This is part of a national offer from the Department for Education (DfE) and has been developed to improve outcomes for eligible two year olds who would benefit from access to high quality childcare provision.

The table below shows Bolton's current hourly rate funded entitlements for eligible two year olds:

Funding stream	Funding based on	Rate per hour
The funding entitlement for eligible two year olds	Eligibility	£5.10

Eligible children can access up to 15 hours of funded early education or childcare per week, usually taken term time over 38 weeks of the year however, providers can choose a stretched offer over a greater number of weeks (for example 570 hours /50 weeks would be taken as 11.4 hours per week).

The child will become eligible the term after their second birthday and must meet one of the criteria outlined below.

3.1 Eligibility

Children are eligible whose families are in receipt of the following financial support:

- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seekers' Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Universal Credit
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit provided they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Children who have left care through special guardianship or an adoption or residence order
- Children who have a current statement of SEN or an Education, Health and Care plan
- Children whose families receive Working Tax credits and have gross earnings of no more than £16,190 per year
- Children who attract Disability Living Allowance

3.1.1 Where can parents verify their eligibility?

If a parent thinks their child may be eligible for 15 hours funded entitlement for eligible two year olds the following places can run an eligibility check for them:

- A registered approved two year old childcare provider (via the Provider Portal) or by phoning Families Information Service on 01204338122
- Their local Start Well Children's Centre - please see a list below:
 - Oldham Start Well Centre
 - Tonge Start Well Centre
 - Great Lever Start Well Centre
 - Kearsley Start Well Centre
 - Alexandra Start Well Centre
 - Oxford Grove Start Well Centre
- Health Visiting Teams (who can contact the Family Information Service) on their behalf.

3.1.2 What information will parents be required to provide to verify eligibility?

Parents will need to provide the following information for the eligibility check:

- Their own name
- Their own date of birth
- Their National Insurance number or National Asylum Seekers Service number (NASS)
- Their address
- Their child's name
- Their child's date of birth

Parents are advised to take as much information as possible that might help to show their eligibility (TC602 (tax credits award notice) or NASS Number, their child's Personal Child Health Record (Red Book) and their Birth Certificate). If parents are found eligible, they will be given a letter to take to their chosen childcare provider.

When a parent registers their child for 15 hours funded entitlement for eligible two year olds at their chosen provider, they must show their eligibility letter to the provider before the free childcare places can commence.

3.2 Accessing the entitlement

The 15 hours funded entitlement for eligible two year olds can be accessed at providers who have been graded as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted (**Please note, all providers are rated 'Good' until after their initial Ofsted Inspection when this may change**).

These may include:

- Playgroups/ Preschools
- Private day nurseries
- Local Authority (LA) nursery classes or nursery schools
- Independent schools
- Childminders

3.3 Finding an 15 hours funded entitlement for eligible two year olds provider

Families can find information of settings offering 2 year old provision on the 'My Life in Bolton' website accessed by using the following link: <http://www.mylifeinbolton.org.uk/>

If a family experience difficulty finding a suitable place, the Families Information Service brokerage service may be able to help, advise parents to call 01204 338756.

3.4 Choosing a childcare provider outside of Bolton

Sometimes parents want their child to go to a childcare provider in another area, to make it easier for them to get to work for example. All local authorities have access to the national eligibility checker so will be able to carry out 2 year old eligibility checks (and 30hr validation checks).

If a child is eligible under non-economic criteria (eg they are looked after) and is from outside of Bolton but attends a Bolton setting, we may need to contact the local authority in which they live to check eligibility.

Funding is claimed from the government by the local authority where a child is taking up their place. Therefore, funding can be claimed for any child who has evidence to provide eligibility who attends a Bolton setting. Evidence provided must clearly show the child's name and a unique identification number for that child. If the child has evidence from another local authority

that does not have their name or a unique ID they will need to have another check done in Bolton.

Where providers have access to the provider portal, they can add the local authority / ID details to the 'non-economic claim' section of the two year old funding eligibility checker. For guidance on how to use the provider portal, please see [here](#)¹³

Providers need to be aware that when headcounts are submitted, Bolton Council Finance team undertake checks to make sure that funding has not been claimed for each child elsewhere. These checks include all settings in Bolton, and the local authority in which the child lives. If more than one setting are claiming for a child, we speak to providers to try and understand the number of hours accessed at each setting – if there is no resolution, the funding is split equally between each provider. We would therefore encourage providers to ask parents if they are accessing funded places elsewhere and ensure parents have signed a declaration that clearly states the provider reserves the right to claim costs back from a parent where a child has exceeded the hours that they are entitled to through accessing their hours through split sites.

If the local authority and provider has no evidence of eligibility but the child has been added to the headcount, the provider can collect the parent's details and carry out a check. If the check is successful, the child will however only be eligible from the date of that check and not previous terms.

3.4.1 What if a child from outside of Bolton wants to access their funding in a Bolton provision?

The child can access their funding in another local authority. It is important that the provider sees the child's eligibility letter in order to offer them a funded place. **The letter MUST contain a Unique Reference Number.** Please note: If a parent provides alternative proof of eligibility confirmation (such as a postcard), providers are still advised to run an eligibility check on the family.

3.5 When can families benefit from the 15 hours funded entitlement for eligible 2 year olds?

Eligible children will be able to take up their free place from the beginning of the term after the child becomes two. The dates are set nationally and are shown in the following table:

If Child's 2 nd birthday falls between	Child becomes eligible for the free early education place
1 st September - 31 st December	Spring Term In January after their second birthday
1 st January – 31 st March	Summer Term In April after their second birthday
1 st April – 31 st August	Autumn Term In September after their second birthday

3.5.1 Will a child attending a setting two full days per week still receive the full 15 hours per week?

Yes. The 15 hours can be taken over a minimum of two days between 6am and 8pm. If a child only attends for 1 day the maximum free entitlement would be 10 hours per week.

3.5.2 Can a child access their funding over more than one setting?

Yes. If a child attends more than one setting then the funding may be shared proportionately between the settings. The provider must ensure they include this child on their headcount form to ensure the correct funding is provided to the setting. A child can only access their funding across two sites per day, and a total of 3 sites per week.

3.6 Blended Approach to Childcare

Children can access their entitlement over more than one setting, on a maximum of 2 sites per day.

A blended approach is where a partnership of providers shares the delivery of the offer between them. The partnership might include:

- schools
- private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector providers, including sessional and specialist, e.g. for children with SEND and those who currently only deliver out of school (OOS) provision
- childminders
- Start Well Children's Centres

The key features of a blended offer include: maximising the use of space in buildings across the day and the year; using a pool of locally available staff to achieve efficiency in delivery; and ensuring children's wellbeing is at the heart of the model. In some examples of a blended model, children stay in one building, but staff from two providers deliver the joint offer. In another approach, the children move between buildings in the course of the day or year. Finally, there might be a situation where both staff and children move across sites.

It is advised that providers use a parental declaration form for the parent to include which setting they will be splitting their entitlement across, and who they wish to be considered as their 'main setting'. A sample of the declaration form can be accessed [here](#)¹⁴

For further information on the 'blended approach', Family and Childcare Trust have designed a toolkit that can be accessed [here](#)¹⁵

3.7 Charges

3.7.1 What can providers charge parents for?

According to the Statutory Guidance (2017), 'government funding is intended to deliver 15 hours a week of free, high quality flexible childcare.

The Operational Guidance (2017) states 'Parents can therefore expect to pay for any meals offered by the provider alongside their free entitlement.'

It also states 'private, voluntary and independent providers are free to set their own criteria for the admission of children, providing they comply with relevant legislation on equalities and non-discrimination. However, for clarity, all parents should have the same rights to access a free entitlement place, regardless of whether they choose to pay for additional hours of provision, additional activities or meals. Providers should ensure that their admissions information is clear and accessible for parents.'

3.7.2 Free School Meals

For information on Free School Meals, please see page 43 of the [Early Education and Childcare: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities](#).

3.8 Provider Responsibilities

Providers are required to complete their headcounts via the Provider Portal by the deadline date in order to be paid on time. Further guidance to this can be found in Section 11.

Children may only access 15 hours funded entitlement for eligible two year olds in provisions Ofsted rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. It is the responsibility of the provider to maintain these standards in order to continue receiving the funded entitlement. If a provider should be graded 'Requires Improvement' by Ofsted, please see Section 12 which outlines this process.

Providers **must** ensure that when they are completing headcount forms, that they input the exact data corresponding to the child's birth certificate in order for the local authority to confirm the child's eligibility on the system. (See section 11)

To see the full provider responsibilities set out in:

- the Model Agreement (2017), please see [here](#)¹⁶
- the Operational Guidance (2017) please see [here](#)¹⁷
- the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017) please see [here](#)¹⁸

The provider must have arrangements in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These arrangements should include a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND. Providers should utilise the Early Years Inclusion fund to deliver effective support, whilst making information available about their SEND offer to parents. **For more information on SEND support, please see section 8 of these guidance notes.**

4. Rising Threes

- 4.1** Some schools who offer nursery places for three and four year olds take children as 'rising threes'. These children are in their last term before they become a funded three year old (ie the term of their third birthday). Rising threes are sometime registered as part of the child's introduction to the nursery. Rising three children are not automatically eligible for any funded early education places. Funding can only be claimed if the child has had a successful eligibility check for two year old funding , see section 3. If a nursery does provide early education for a 'rising three' child who does not meet the criteria of the two year old funding, they will either need to fund these hours themselves, or charge the parent up to the point of the child becoming a funded three year old. Where rising three children are in a provision, staffing ratios for two year olds needs to be applied.
- 4.2** Funding for any rising three children who have had a successful two year old eligibility check can be claimed through the headcount.

5. The 15 hour entitlement for parents of three and four year olds (the universal entitlement)

All 3 to 4 year olds in England can get 570 hours of funded entitlement per year. It's usually taken as 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year, although providers can choose to offer a 'stretched offer' of 570 hours over more weeks of the year (for example 11.4 hours over 50 weeks of the year).

The table below shows Bolton's current 15 hour funded entitlement for three and four year olds hourly rate:

Funding stream	Funding based on	Rate per hour
three and four year olds funding hourly rate:	Universal	£4.00
three and four year olds funding hourly rate: plus Deprivation supplement (£0.38)	Eligibility	£4.38

The deprivation supplement is generated automatically to the provider following the completion of their headcount.

5.1 Eligibility

A child will become eligible the term **after** their third birthday:

If Child's 3 rd birthday falls between	Child becomes eligible for the 15 hour funded entitlement for three and four year olds funding place
1 st September - 31 st December	Spring Term In January after their third birthday
1 st January – 31 st March	Summer Term In April after their third birthday
1 st April – 31 st August	Autumn Term In September after their third birthday

Example: If a child was born on 15 February 2013, they can access free childcare when the next term starts after 1 April 2016.

5.1.1 What if parents want to use a childcare provider outside of Bolton?

Sometimes parents want their child to go to a childcare provider in another authority, to make it easier for them to get to work for example.

Funding can be accessed in any borough; it is the duty of the provider to report this on their headcount. This is a local agreement between authorities.

5.1.2 What if a child from outside of Bolton wants to access their funding in a Bolton provision?

It is advised that providers ask the parents if the child is accessing their funding anywhere else, prior to registering the child. This can be done by using the Parent Declaration form. An example of a Parent Declaration form can be accessed [here](#)¹⁹. Further background checks will be undertaken by the Local Authority to ensure that children from other boroughs are not accessing funding elsewhere. Payments may need to be reimbursed from providers should an error be found or if a child is found to be accessing funding hours from another setting.

5.2 Blended Approach to Childcare

Please read guidance in section 3.6.

5.3 Charges

5.3.1 What can providers charge parents for?

According to the Statutory Guidance (2017), 'government funding is intended to deliver 15 hours a week of free, high quality flexible childcare.'

The Operational Guidance (2017) states 'Parents can therefore expect to pay for any meals offered by the provider alongside their free entitlement.'

It also states 'private, voluntary and independent providers are free to set their own criteria for the admission of children, providing they comply with relevant legislation on equalities and non-discrimination. However, for clarity, all parents should have the same rights to access a free entitlement place, regardless of whether they choose to pay for additional hours of provision, additional activities or meals. Providers should ensure that their admissions information is clear and accessible for parents.'

5.3.2 Free School Meals

For information on Free School Meals, please see page 43 of the [Early Education and Childcare: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities](#).

5.4 Provider responsibilities

Providers are required to complete their headcounts via the Provider Portal by the deadline date in order to be paid on time. Further guidance to this can be found in Section 11.

Providers must ensure that when they are completing headcount forms, that they input the exact data corresponding to the child's birth certificate in order for the finance teams to confirm the child's eligibility on the system.

To see the full provider responsibilities set out in:

- the Model Agreement (2017), please see [here](#)²⁰
- the Operational Guidance (2017) please see [here](#)²¹
- the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017) please see [here](#)²²

If a provider offering the 15 hour entitlement for parents of three and four year olds (the universal entitlement) receive an Ofsted grade as 'inadequate', they may have their funding withdrawn by the local authority. This is referred to in the [Early Education and Childcare: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities](#) (page 17 & 18). Please see **section 12** for further guidance around the removal of funding.

The provider must have arrangements in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These arrangements should include a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND. Providers should utilise the Early Years Inclusion fund to deliver effective support, whilst making information available about their SEND offer to parents. **For more information on SEND support, please see section 8 in these guidance notes.**

6. The 30 hours funded entitlement for working parents of three and four year olds (extended entitlement).

From **September 2017**, in addition to the 15 hour scheme already in operation, eligible children can receive up to an **additional** 15 hours per week.

The table below shows Bolton’s current 30 hour funded entitlement for three and four year olds hourly rate:

Funding stream	Funding based on	Rate per hour
three and four year olds funding hourly rate:	Universal	£4.00
three and four year olds funding hourly rate: plus Deprivation supplement (£0.38)	Eligibility	£4.38

The deprivation supplement is generated automatically to the provider following the completion of their headcount.

6.1 Eligibility

Both parents are working and/or:

- One parent working in lone parent family (earning equivalent of 16 hours a week on National Minimum Wage or Living Wage including those receiving tax credits or Universal Credit)
- One/both parent(s) is away on leave (parental, maternal, etc.)
- One/both parent(s) on Statutory sick
- Both parents earn less than £100,000 each per annum

or

- One parent is employed and:
- Other parent has either: substantial caring responsibilities and/or disability

6.1.1 What do parents do if they believe they are eligible?

Parents are invited to visit the Childcare Choices website (<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>) to check their eligibility for the 30 hours entitlement and to receive an ‘eligibility code’. The eligibility check should be carried out in the term before the funding is required.

Once the parent has accessed their code, the provider must ensure that they have validated the code before they offer the child a place. As stated in the statutory guidance for local authorities, ‘the eligibility code must be verified in accordance with local procedures before the child is able to take up the additional free hours.’

Providers must ensure that they have been given permission from the parent to validate this eligibility code. Providers can ensure they have the parent’s permission by using a parental declaration form. A sample declaration form can be found [here](#).²³

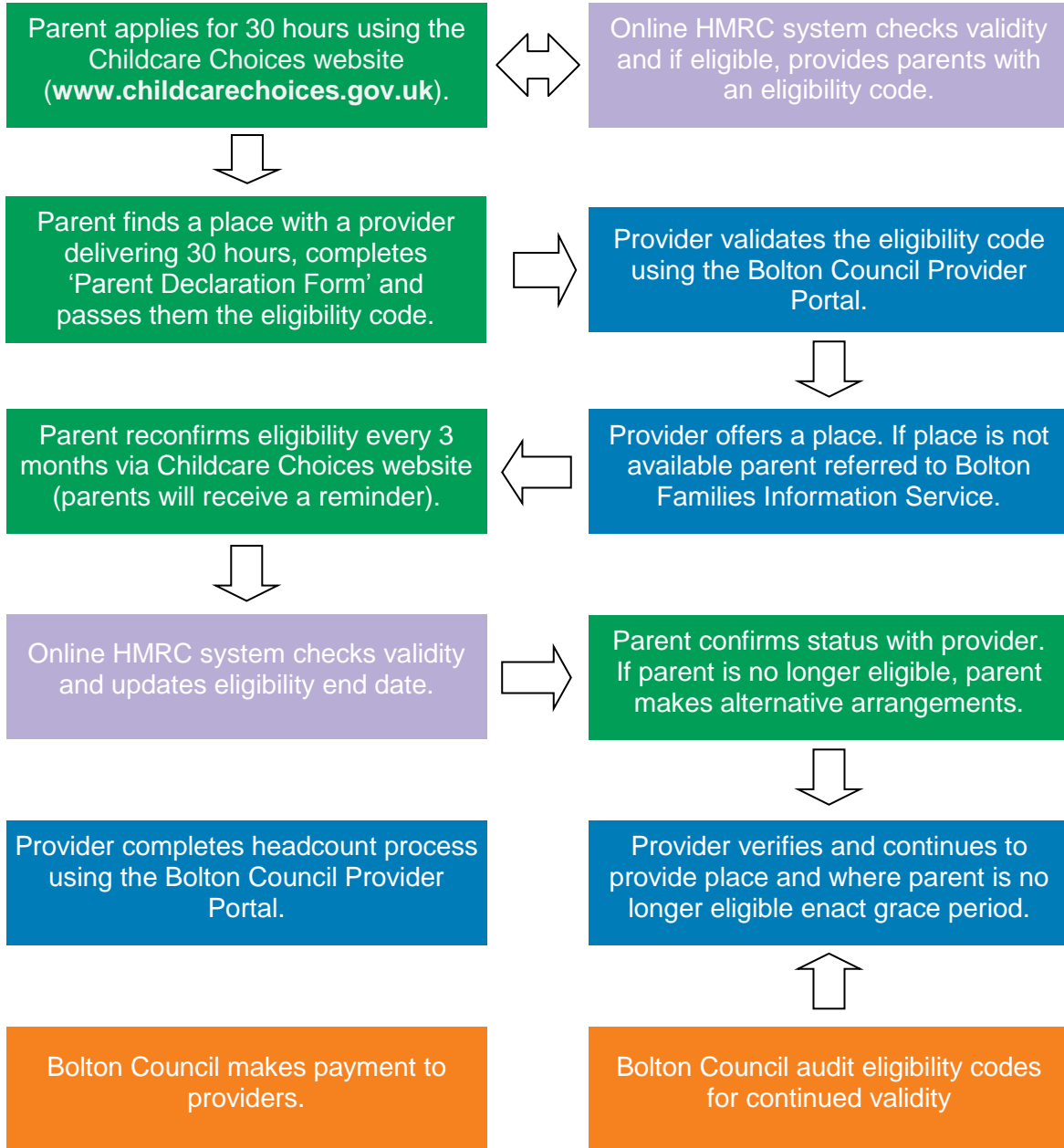
To validate the eligibility code of a parent, providers, except Childminders, must use the Provider Portal. For guidance on this, please see Section 11. Please see below for the flowchart of the Eligibility/Validation process.

6.1.2 What happens if a parent falls out of eligibility (e.g loses their job)?

Please see page 8 of [Model Agreement \(2017\)](#)²⁴ for further guidance on the ‘Grace Period’.

6.2 Flowchart for The 30 hours funded entitlement for working parents of three and four year olds (extended entitlement).

(For childminders, please see separate flowchart in section 6.3)



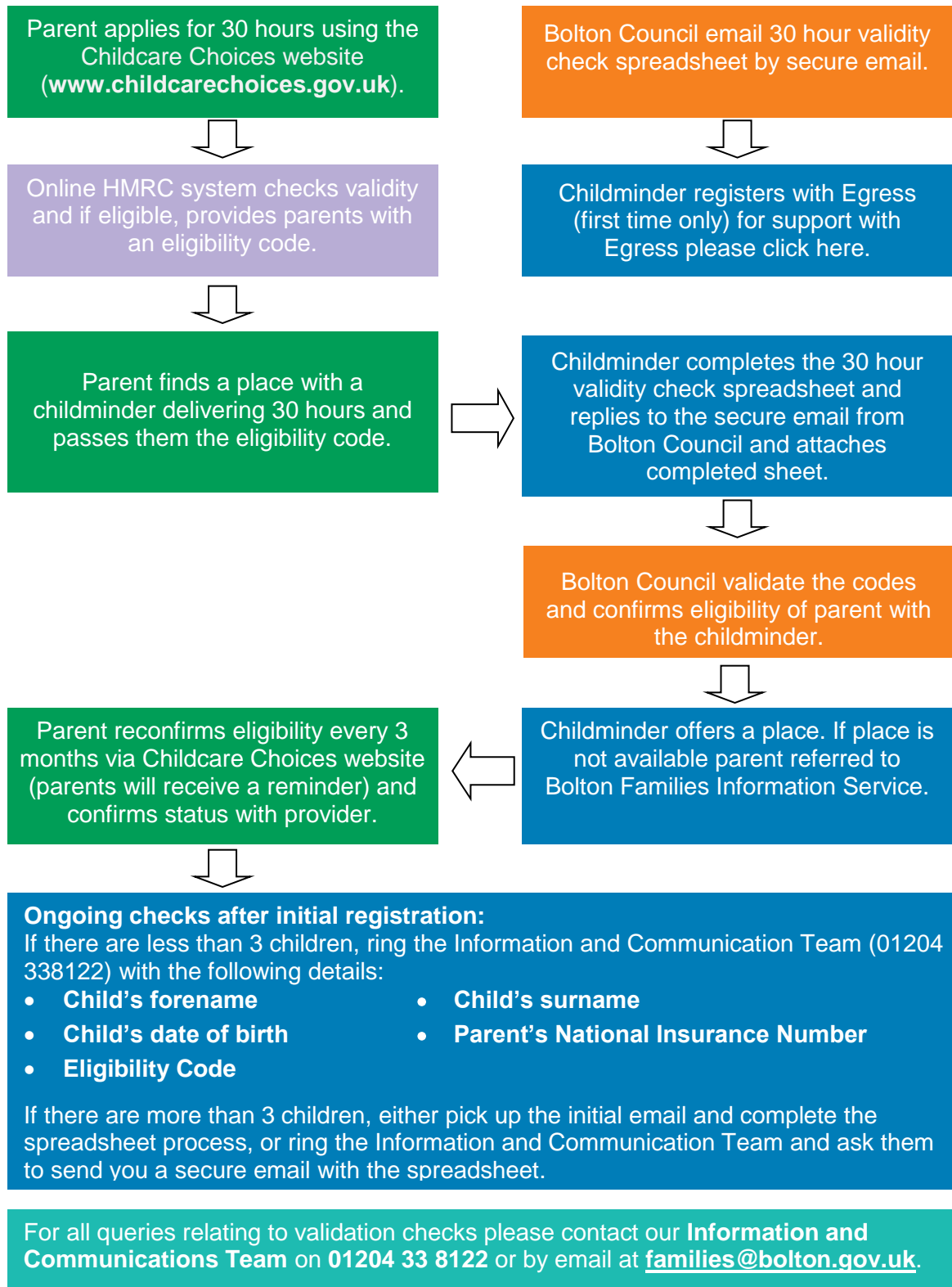
For all queries relating to eligibility criteria and validation please contact our **Information and Communications Team** on **01204 33 8122** or by email at families@bolton.gov.uk.

For all queries relating to the Provider Portal - Headcount Module and payments please contact our **Strategic Finance** on **01204 33 7169** or email earlyyearsfinance@bolton.gov.uk

For all queries relating to eligibility checks please contact **HMRC Childcare Choices** on **03001234097**

6.3 Flowchart for validity checks for the 30 hours funded entitlement for working parents of three and four year olds (extended entitlement) for childminders.

Once a childminder has registered to offer 30 hours funded entitlement (see section 2.4) they will be sent an email with the secure 30 hour validity spreadsheet. Please note that when you receive a secure email you will either be asked to register or log on to Egress – this is the council’s secure email system – you only need to register once, you will just log in on return visits.



6.4 How can the additional hours be accessed?

The 30 hours funded entitlement for working parents of three and four year olds (extended entitlement) can be accessed with any childcare provider who is:

- Registered with Ofsted
- Has a signed funding agreement with the local authority.
- Has been graded Requires Improvement or better

This could be day-nurseries, childminder, Out of School Clubs and playgroups that are registered on the Early Years Register, and childminders registered with an Ofsted-registered Childminder Agency. Schools may also offer it. To find out which providers offer the 30 hours funded entitlement, please see <http://www.mylifeinbolton.gov.uk>

The additional hours may be taken flexibly, for example, in term time over 38 weeks, or stretched over the whole year to meet the needs of working parents. Further information regarding flexibility of places can be found in the Operational Guidance (2017) [here](#)²⁵

Children do not have to access the full entitlement (1140 hours) and it is parental choice the number of hours a child takes from their entitlement. Providers are requested when completing the headcount forms for the funding payments, to state how many funded hours per week that the child attends the setting.

Parents can choose to claim fewer hours than their entitlement but must consider the policy of the provider.

6.5 Blended Approach to Childcare

Please read guidance in section 3.6.

6.6 Charges

6.6.1 What can providers charge parents for?

According to the Statutory Guidance (2017), 'government funding is intended to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of free, high quality flexible childcare.

The Operational Guidance (2017) states 'Parents can therefore expect to pay for any meals offered by the provider alongside their free entitlement.'

It also states 'private, voluntary and independent providers are free to set their own criteria for the admission of children, providing they comply with relevant legislation on equalities and non-discrimination. However, for clarity, all parents should have the same rights to access a free entitlement place, regardless of whether they choose to pay for additional hours of provision, additional activities or meals. Whilst the child continues to take up the 30 hours' entitlement there should be no restrictions on that place e.g. parents should not have to reserve a place each term. Providers should ensure that their admissions information is clear and accessible for parents.'

6.6.2 Free School Meals

For information on Free School Meals, please see page 43 of the [Early Education and Childcare: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities](#)²⁶

6.7 Provider Responsibilities

Providers have the choice whether to offer the 30 hours funded entitlement for working parents of three and four year olds (extended entitlement). However, it would benefit providers to carry out research into their parental demand before making a decision. Please use the following link to find a draft parental demand survey for providers to edit where they feel necessary; [Sample Parental Demand Survey](#)²⁷

All funded provision must deliver the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage. There is no difference in the education and care standards which must be met for both the universal 15 hour and extended 30 hour entitlements. Ofsted ratio requirements do not change.

To see the full provider responsibilities set out in:

- the Model Agreement (2017), please see [here](#)²⁸
- the Operational Guidance (2017) please see [here](#)²⁹
- the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017) please see [here](#)³⁰

The provider must have arrangements in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These arrangements should include a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND. Providers should utilise the Early Years Inclusion fund to deliver effective support, whilst making information available about their SEND offer to parents. **For more information on SEND support, please see section 8 of this guidance document.**

7. The School Census and Early Years Census

Local authorities are funded for early years provision through the early years block in the dedicated schools grant (DSG). The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations are calculated using January school and early years census data. Early years providers and schools provide data on the number of children taking up free entitlement places and the number of hours of free provision. The early years census collects data on all children receiving provision that is funded by the Department during census week (the week in which the census day falls). The school census collects data on all children who were registered pupils of the school on census day.

Which census should be used?

Schools with on-site early years free provision make their return via EITHER the school census OR the early years census, as appropriate for the individual children attending being funded as outlined in the point below:

- registered pupils of the school (2, 3 and 4-year-olds depending on the statutory age range of the school) are recorded via the school census (**and not the early years census**)
- children (aged 2, 3 and 4) attending a separate Ofsted registered PVI provider on a school site, are recorded via the early years census (**and not the school census**)
- children attending s27 (governor run) provision should be either:
 - recorded via the school census where they are registered pupils of the school (can include 2-year-olds if the school's statutory age range covers 2-year-olds); or
 - recorded via the early years census where they are not registered pupils of the school

All other providers will complete the early years Census

Further information can be found in the following documents:

The Early years national funding formula; Operational guide December 2016 -

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/580716/EYNFF_Operational_Guidance.pdf

or in Early years entitlements: operational guidance for local authorities and providers July 2017

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/629544/Early_years_entitlements-operational_guidance.pdf

8. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Support

8.1 Disability Access Fund

In April 2017 the government introduced a new funding measure for early years providers, the **Disability Access Fund (DAF)**, to support children with disabilities or Special Educational Needs.

8.1.1 Eligibility for Disability Access Fund (DAF)

3- and 4-year olds will be eligible for the DAF if they meet the following criteria:

- the child is in receipt of child disability living allowance (DLA) – (for more information on Disability Living Allowance, please click [here](#))³¹ **and**
- the child receives the funded entitlement funding (15 hours universal entitlement)

Please note: 4 year olds who are attending maintained, academy or free school reception classes are NOT eligible for DAF funding.

8.1.2 Entitlement

- The settings of three- and four-year-olds eligible for the DAF will be entitled to receive a one-off payment of £615 per year. The DAF is not based on an hourly rate and is an additional entitlement.
- The lump sum payment can only be paid to one setting. The parents of children who are splitting their Early years funded entitlements across two or more providers, are responsible for nominating the provider who should receive the DAF payment.
- Children who are in receipt of DAF will be eligible in the setting they have chosen to take up their 15 hour entitlement for parents of three and four year olds (the universal entitlement) or in the case of split setting, the setting nominated by the parent. The parent can nominate a setting using the parental declaration form. (Please find link to parental declaration form below)
- Children do not have to take up the full 570 hours of Early years funded entitlements they are entitled to in order to receive the DAF.
- If a child receiving DAF moves from one setting to another within a financial year the money will remain with the original setting. The new setting is not eligible to receive DAF funding for this child within the same financial year.
- The DAF will not be offset against any other funding which Bolton Council may ordinarily be providing for children eligible for the DAF.
- Where a child lives in one authority area but attends a provider in a different local authority, the provider's local authority is responsible for funding the DAF for the child and eligibility checking.
- All early years providers who are eligible to receive the 15 hour entitlement for parents of three and four year olds (the universal entitlement) are also eligible to receive the DAF.

8.1.3 What can providers use the funding for?

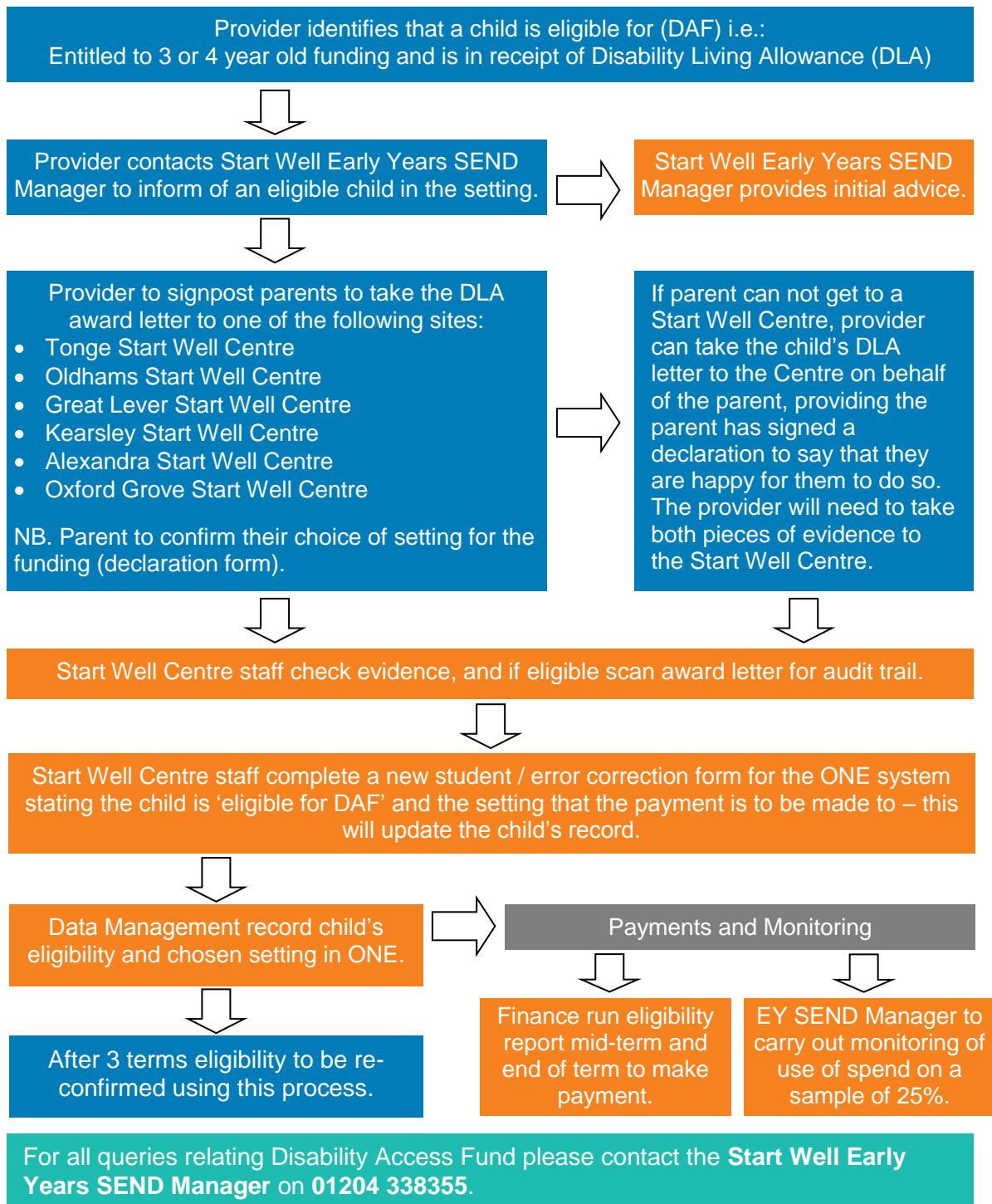
The DAF is to be used by providers to make changes to their environment to help support their children with special educational needs/ disabilities. For example, supporting providers in making reasonable adjustments to their settings and/or helping with building capacity (be that for the child in question or for the benefit of children as a whole attending the setting).

8.1.4 Provider Responsibilities

Early years providers are responsible for identifying eligible children. Providers are encouraged to speak to parents in order to find out who is eligible for the DAF.

Providers will be able to use the parent declaration form template. The template is for parents whose child is attending their setting and will include a box for parents to tick if their child is in receipt of disability living allowance. To access a template of the parental declaration form to use, please follow

8.1.5 Process for provider application for Disability Access Fund (DAF)



8.2 The Early Years SEN Inclusion Fund

Settings, childminders and school nurseries can apply for additional funding to support children with identified Special Educational Needs in their setting.

The Inclusion Fund is available to support funded children who live in Bolton aged 2, 3 and 4 in nursery schools and classes, private or voluntary settings or with childminders.

The Inclusion Fund is for those children who already have identified needs and have agencies working together to support them. It will be based on the needs of the child and will support the practitioners to improve the child's early learning and development outcomes.

The application process will use the existing assessments made by the early years provider and other agencies as a basis for funding allocation. The level of funding awarded will vary depending on the child's level of need and may be used by the provider to enhance staffing ratios for part of the week in order to meet the child's needs.

The Early Help Assessments and review forms must be completed for an application for the Inclusion Fund. It is important that these are completed accurately in order to give a clear picture of the child's needs and what, when and who is required to support the child and their family. It is important that the information is clear, concise and is accurate in telling the 'story of the child'.

For further information and guidance please access the SEND section of the Early Years Exchange web site [here](#)³²

8.2.1 How to apply

Settings apply by submitting an application to the Early Years SEN Inclusion Panel care of: Start Well Early Years SEND Manager, Start Well Service, Bolton Council, Smithills Dean Road, Bolton BL1 6JT; where it will be assessed against a matrix of development to determine a child's level of needs.

- Provider is to submit to the panel, by the deadline:
- Child Information Form
- Early Help Assessment and Action Plan and any Reviews
- Most recent reports from external agencies (eg SLT, OT)

For further information and guidance on the Early Years SEN Inclusion Fund, please visit our Early Years Exchange website using the link [here](#)³³

9. Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

EYPP is for 3 and 4 year olds currently accessing their 15 hour entitlement for parents of three and four year olds (the universal entitlement), although they do not need to be accessing their full 15 hours to receive it. It is additional funding for the provision to help support the child in their learning. Providers do not need to apply for EYPP, they are informed which children are eligible following the return of their headcounts.

9.1 Eligibility criteria

3- and 4-year-olds in receipt of the universal funded entitlement will attract EYPP funding if they meet at least 1 of the following criteria:

- their family gets 1 of the following:
 - Income Support
 - Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
 - Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
 - Child Tax Credit (provided they're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
 - Working Tax Credit run-on, which is paid for 4 weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
 - Universal Credit
- they are currently being looked after by a local authority in England or Wales
- they have left care in England or Wales through:
 - an adoption
 - a special guardianship order
 - a child arrangement order

It is important to be aware that 4-year-olds in primary school reception classes who already receive the [school-age pupil premium](#)³⁴ are not eligible for EYPP funding.

Early years providers are ultimately responsible for identifying eligible children, see **9.2**. With reference to the Model Agreement (2017) 'the provider should ensure that they have identified the disadvantaged children in their setting as part of the process for checking Early Years Pupil Premium eligibility. They will also use EYPP and any locally available funding streams or support to improve the outcomes for this group'. It is advised that providers speak to parents to find out if they think they will be eligible, and providers can use the [Parent Declaration Form](#)³⁵ to gain permission from parents for the local authority to confirm eligibility.

9.2 When will providers know which children are eligible each term?

Bolton Council will send out a list of children who are eligible as near to the beginning of term as possible and the funding for the EYPP children will be paid directly to the setting. You will then need to look at your assessments and tracking of the children on the list.

Please note: there will always be a delay in us providing you with a list of eligible children at the start of each term as we need to import data in to our system and then match them to your headcount forms. We will get this information out to you as soon as possible.

At the end of August each year, your list will cease and we will restart eligibility checks. Once we have sent you the new list for the next year, we will continue to 'top this up' by checking Revenue & Benefits information each **term** – this is done so that we can identify any children

who have moved up from being a 2 year old to 3 year old, or whose change in circumstances has resulted in them meeting the eligibility criteria since the initial check at the end of August.

In the situation where a provider feels EYPP should be eligible then a 'manual check' for EYPP can be carried out.

Manual checks, see **9.4**, can be carried out at any point of the year once we have issued the start of year list. To do this, providers will need to ask parents for their full name, date of birth and national insurance number. **(Please note that if there are two parents in the household, it is more likely that the national system will recognise the person who claims benefits for the household, this does not mean that they will always be eligible, a check still needs to take place)**. Not all criteria are economic.

The data that we use to provide you with a list of eligible children is generated after a number of checks. It is also auditable and the local authority will take the necessary action against any individuals that are believed to be making fraudulent benefit claims.

9.3 Provider Responsibilities

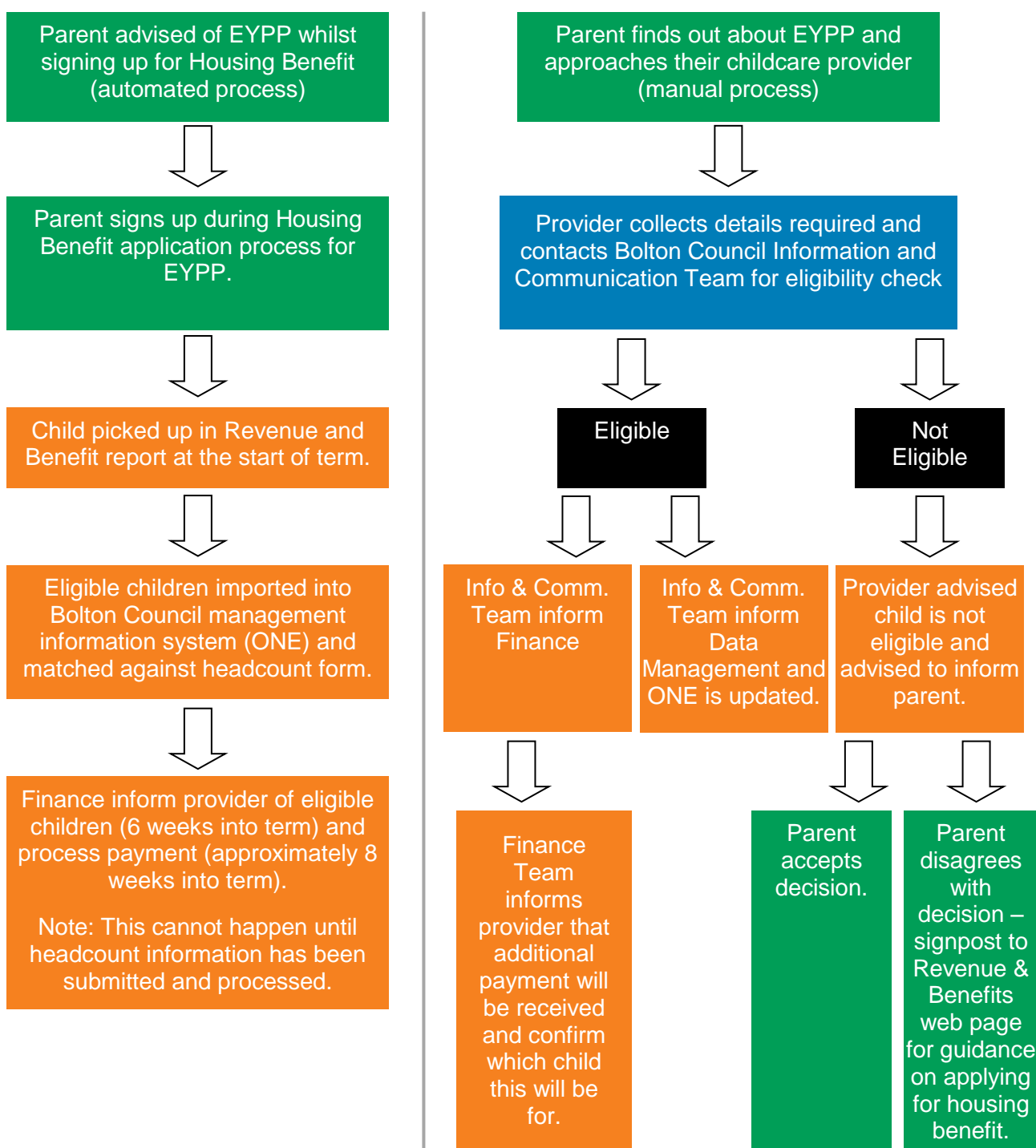
Providers are required to complete their headcounts via the Provider Portal by the deadline date in order to be paid on time. Further guidance to this can be found in Section 11.

Providers must ensure that when they are completing headcount forms, that they input the exact data corresponding to the child's birth certificate in order for the finance teams to confirm the child's eligibility on the system.

To see the full provider responsibilities set out in:

- the Model Agreement (2017), please see [here](#)³⁶
- the Operational Guidance (2017) please see [here](#)³⁷
- the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017) please see [here](#)³⁸

9.4 At a Glance Flowchart for Early Years Pupil Premium Eligibility Checking Process



NB: Eligibility checks only need to be done once per year per child. Termly reports will only need to identify children:

- Where their family's circumstances have changed and they have newly met criteria / have just been identified as meeting the criteria
- The child has started accessing their 3YO entitlement e.g. moved up from a 2 year old to a 3 year old place (using their date of birth)

9.5 OFSTED requirements with regards to EYPP

During your OFSTED inspection you will be asked by the inspector who your EYPP children are and how you are supporting them. They may want to see how you have tracked the development of these children since admission. You need to be able to demonstrate that you have considered the needs of the children and the interventions that will best support them to make progress in their learning and development. If you have a policy which illustrates your approach to this then you will be able to talk confidently about what this looks like in practice. A draft EYPP policy can be found [here](#).³⁹

It is also good to record the interventions that you have planned to use for particular groups of children or individual children as well as the planned impact of these. Your tracking of individual children and groups will also be good evidence to support your decisions on how to spend the money as well as evidence of impact. Please remember that you are responsible for demonstrating the impact of this funding for all eligible children that are registered with you.

The local authority only monitor a small number of children, it may be that some settings will not be asked to provide any monitoring for the local authority.

9.6 What can the EYPP funding be used for?

Settings are required to discuss with the parents the best way to support the child/children using the EYPP funding.

Examples of support may include:

- Training for staff to increase knowledge
- Resources for parents to use at home
- Speech and language support
- Additional multicultural resources
- Enrichment activities – such as dance sessions for physical development
- Time for staff to work with parents

9.7 Case studies

Please see the British Association for Early Years Education website to access more ideas of how to use the EYPP funding:

<https://www.early-education.org.uk/possible-ideas-spending-eypp-funding>.

Rotherham have produced some case studies on how the EYPP was used in some of their settings. These can be accessed via the Foundation Years website:

<http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/2016/02/rotherham-la-eypp-funding-case-studies/>

For further information and guidance on the EYPP, please see **Bolton's Early Years Exchange** website [here](#).⁴⁰

10. Tax-free childcare

Tax-free Childcare offers parents' financial support towards their childcare costs. For every £8 a parent pays in, the government will add an extra £2. Parents can receive up to £2,000 or £4,000 for a disabled child.

Eligible parents entering the scheme will open an online childcare account that they can use to pay providers for childcare. When parents set up their account, they will receive an 11 digit reference number which will show on the provider's banking as a reference for the parent's payment.

10.1 Eligibility

- Parents who are working and earning the equivalent to 16 hours on the National Minimum or Living Wage with children under 12 (or under 17 for disabled children).
- If either parent is on maternity, paternity or adoption leave, or is unable to work because they are disabled or have caring responsibilities, they could still be eligible.

For parents to apply for a tax-free childcare account, or for further information please see [here](#)⁴¹

For providers wanting to accept tax-free childcare payments please see [here](#)⁴²

10.2 Sign up to offer tax-free childcare

For newly registered providers

An email invite will be automatically generated to the provider to sign up for the tax free childcare, once HMRC have received registration confirmation.

For established providers

Please use the following link to sign up to offer tax-free childcare: <https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/ccp/signup/entrypage>

10.3 Childcare Vouchers

The tax-free childcare has been introduced to replace the existing childcare voucher scheme. Providers that already have parents with tax-free childcare vouchers can continue to take them as payment from these parents. However, they will no longer be able to set up new childcare voucher accounts.

For further information for providers on tax-free childcare, please see the Childcare Choices website [here](#)⁴³.

11. Providing Quality Early Education Childcare in Bolton

Bolton Council is committed to supporting the early years sector in delivering high quality early education and childcare in the borough through a range of services and associated systems, this includes:

- Bolton Start Well Service – Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Offer
- Provider Portal
- Payment Administration (Headcount)
- Information for Families

11.1 Bolton Start Well Service – Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Offer

The Start Well Service works with the early years workforce; children and families; and other professionals to ensure the best possible start in life for every child. The service incorporates the former Early Years and Childcare Team and the Children and Family Support Service in the Council. The service includes a series of small expert teams who provide comprehensive advice and support in the following areas:

- Early Years Foundation Stage – Start Well Quality and Outcomes Team
- Early Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – Start Well Early Years SEND Team
- Early Communication and Language – Start Well Communication and Language Development Team

Our services have been developed with the early years sector's needs in mind. So whether you are looking for advice, consultancy, support and challenge, or training to enable your early years workforce to be skilled in teaching, monitoring and assessing children's developmental and learning needs, look no further – we can help.

Through the Early Years Grant (EYG) Local Authority central held budget we have established a fully funded (no cost to providers) EYFS core offer. This offer has been specified for different types of early education and childcare providers reflecting the different needs of their provision which can be accessed at the relevant link below:

- [Start Well EYFS Offer for Schools⁴⁴](#)
- [Start Well EYFS Offer for Providers Delivering Funded Early Education and Childcare⁴⁵](#)
- [Start Well EYFS Offer for Childminders⁴⁶](#)
- [Start Well EYFS Offer for Out of School Clubs⁴⁷](#)

In addition to the EYFS core offer the service provides a wide range of traded professional development services including comprehensive professional development programme, bespoke consultancy and in-house training. Our training programme are specifically designed around the identified learning and development needs of children and the early years workforce, so you can be confident that our services will help you to improve outcomes for the children in your care.

To view details of the Start Well Traded Service Offer click [here⁴⁸](#)

11.2 Provider Portal

The Provider Portal is the Local Authority online system which allows providers to:

- Undertake eligibility checks for two year old early education places
- Check the progress with two year old eligibility checks that you have undertaken
- Complete your headcount form for 2, 3 and 4 year old free education places.
- Validation checks for the 30 hours funded entitlement for working parents of three and four year olds (extended entitlement).

In order to gain access to the Provider Portal, the provider must email one.support@bolton.gov.uk or telephone them on 01204338621.

Then the following process will take place:

- ONE support team will verify with the setting that they want to set the user up
- The user signs the terms and conditions and posts/emails them back. **(Please note: The signature MUST be handwritten and cannot be electronic.)**
- The user is then emailed log in credentials
- Training is available for new providers from our Information Management team.

Should you need further support on using the provider portal please click [here](#)⁴⁹ for further online guidance. If you require any further advice please see the table below on the relevant teams to call:

Portal Query	Team Contact Details
Headcount & support on completing headcount tasks	Strategic Finance Unit: 01204 337169 earlyyearsfinance@bolton.gov.uk
Technical support (Accounts/Password resets)	Information Management: 01204 338621 one.support@bolton.gov.uk
Eligibility checking & support using the eligibility checkers for two years and 30hrs	Families Information Service: 01204 338122 families@bolton.gov.uk

11.3 Payment Administration (Headcount)

The Local Authority will pay all providers:

- monthly for the 15 hour funded entitlement for three and four year olds
- three times per term for eligible two year olds.

Payments will be made using the latest headcount of eligible children supplied by providers through the Early Years Headcount Portal.

11.3.1 Early Years Providers (excluding Childminders – see 11.3.3)

Following the receipt of the signed funding agreement, providers must complete their headcount online by the deadline. These deadlines are timed around Summer, Autumn and Spring term but specific dates will be provided on the headcount task sent to the provider. Providers will receive an email alert about this.

After their initial headcount return, providers must inform the Local Authority of any changes to the funding (children leaving/starting the setting, changing their hours etc.) by using an amendments task. This is done via the provider portal.

It is the duty of the Local Authority to ensure that details of the funding rates paid to providers are submitted to the Department for Education.

11.3.2 Process for Payment

The table below outlines the funding streams; funding amount; frequency of payments and contact information for further support with any aspect of funding.

Funding Stream and amount 2017- 2020	Frequency of Payments	Contact within finance
15 hour entitlement for eligible two year olds £5.10 per hour	Termly Initial payment - end 2nd Month Termly Second payment - end Final Month	earlyyearsfinance@bolton.gov.uk and 337169
15 hour entitlement for three and four year olds (the universal entitlement) £4.00 per hour	Monthly Payment - 3rd Thursday	
15 hour entitlement for three and four year olds (the universal entitlement) Free Deprivation supplement 38p per hour	Monthly Payment - 3rd Thursday	
30 hours funded entitlement for working parents of three and four year olds (extended entitlement) £4.00 per hour	Monthly Payment - 3rd Thursday	
30 hours funded entitlement for working parents of three and four year olds (extended entitlement) Free Deprivation supplement 38p per hour	Monthly Payment - 3rd Thursday	
Early Years Pupil Premium 53p per hour	Single - Mid Term	kevan.hamer@bolton.gov.uk 338609
Early Years Inclusion Fund Amount on application	Single - Mid Term	gemma.harvey@bolton.gov.uk 338605
Disability Living Allowance £615	Single -ad hoc	kevan.hamer@bolton.gov.uk 338609

11.3.3 Childminders

Following the receipt of the signed funding agreement, childminders will receive termly headcount return forms in the post. These deadlines are timed around Summer, Autumn and Spring term but specific dates will be provided on the headcount letter.

After their initial headcount return, childminders must inform the Local Authority of any changes to the funding (children leaving/starting the setting, changing their hours etc.) by using an amendments form [here](#).

It is the duty of the Local Authority to ensure that details of the funding rates paid to providers are submitted to the Department for Education.

11.3.4 Invoicing

As stated in The Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, March 2017:

‘Providers need to ensure their invoices and receipts are clear, transparent and itemised allowing parents to see that they have received their child’s free entitlement completely free of charge and understand fees paid for additional hours or services. Invoices and receipts should include the provider’s full details so that they can be identified as coming from a specific provider.

Providers should publish their admissions criteria and ensure that providers work with parents to ensure parents understand which hours / sessions can be taken as free provision.

The Local Authority will carry out termly checks and or/audits on randomly chosen providers to ensure compliance with the requirements of delivering free entitlements and will provide a written record of such checks, including actions and recommendations to the provider.’

11.4 Information for Families

Under the Childcare Act 2006, the local authority has a statutory duty to provide information for families, including information on early education & childcare. Whilst the local authority is required to publish this information for parents, it is really important for providers across Bolton to regularly share details of the services that they are providing so that the information we publish is accurate. The local authority send out forms for providers to update their service details and also make phone calls to update this information.

In relation to early education and childcare information, as a minimum we must publish the following information termly:

- the registered person’s name;
the business name, if any, under which the childcare is provided by the registered person;
- the address of the relevant premises, except where the relevant premises are the home of any child to whom childcare is being provided;
- the address of the registered person, if different from the address of the relevant premises;
- any telephone number or email address of the registered person or the relevant premises;
- the date of the registered person’s registration;
- any unique reference number or other identifier used by the Chief Inspector in relation to the registered person;
- the conditions, if any, attached to the registration of the registered person;
- whether the registered person is registered as:
 - a childminder, or
 - a provider of childcare other than childminding;
- where the registered person is registered as a childminder, whether the relevant premises are either (or a combination of):
 - the registered person’s home,
 - the child’s home, or
 - other domestic premises;
- information about the most recent inspection by the Chief Inspector of the childcare provided by the registered person, including information as to how to obtain a copy of any report produced by the Chief Inspector in relation to that inspection;

Additional categories of information to be provided on registered childcare providers are:

- the type of childcare provided;
- whether the registered person provides free early years provision;
- the cost of the childcare;
- the time and duration of the childcare provided;
- the time and duration of any free early years provision;
- the number and ages of children to whom childcare is provided; and
- the suitability of the childcare for disabled children.

This same information is used by the local authority to:

- Undertake childcare sufficiency assessments
- Advise prospective childcare businesses about suitable areas for setting up new provision

Under the duty to publish a childcare sufficiency assessment, we are advised to consider:

- the state of the local childcare market, including the demand for specific types of providers in a particular locality and the amount and type of supply that currently exists;
- the state of the local labour market including the sufficiency of the local childcare workforce;
- the quality and capacity of childcare providers and childminders registered with a childminder agency, including their funding, staff, premises, experience and expertise;
- should encourage schools in their area to offer out-of-hours childcare from 8.00am until 6.00pm and in school holidays;
- should encourage existing providers to expand their provision and new providers to enter the local childcare market.
- a specific reference to how they are ensuring there is sufficient childcare to meet the needs of:
 - children with special educational needs and disabilities
 - children from families in receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit
 - children with parents who work irregular hours
 - children aged two, three and four taking up free places
 - school age children
 - any children needing holiday care
- information about the current and projected demand and supply of childcare for particular age ranges of children, and the affordability, accessibility and quality of provision
- details of how any gaps in childcare provision will be addressed

All of the information requested from providers is to help parents make informed choices, or to enable sufficiency assessments to take place.

12. Suspending and removing the funded entitlement in Bolton Council

12.1 Suspension and/or removal of funding

In accordance with the Department for Education [Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance 2017](#)⁵⁰ Bolton council **should** rely solely on the Ofsted inspection judgement of the provider or the childminder agency as the benchmark of quality.

Bolton Council cannot continue to fund provision where there is substantive and well evidenced concerns regarding providers which:

- Do not actively promote fundamental British values or if they promote views or theories as fact which are contrary to established scientific or historical evidence and explanations
- Do not meet the quality criteria as specified within the 2017 statutory guidance relating to Early Education and Childcare
- Are providing two year old funded childcare and have been graded 'satisfactory' or 'requires improvement' by Ofsted
- Have been 'inadequate' by Ofsted
- Have received the Ofsted inspection judgement of 'not met'

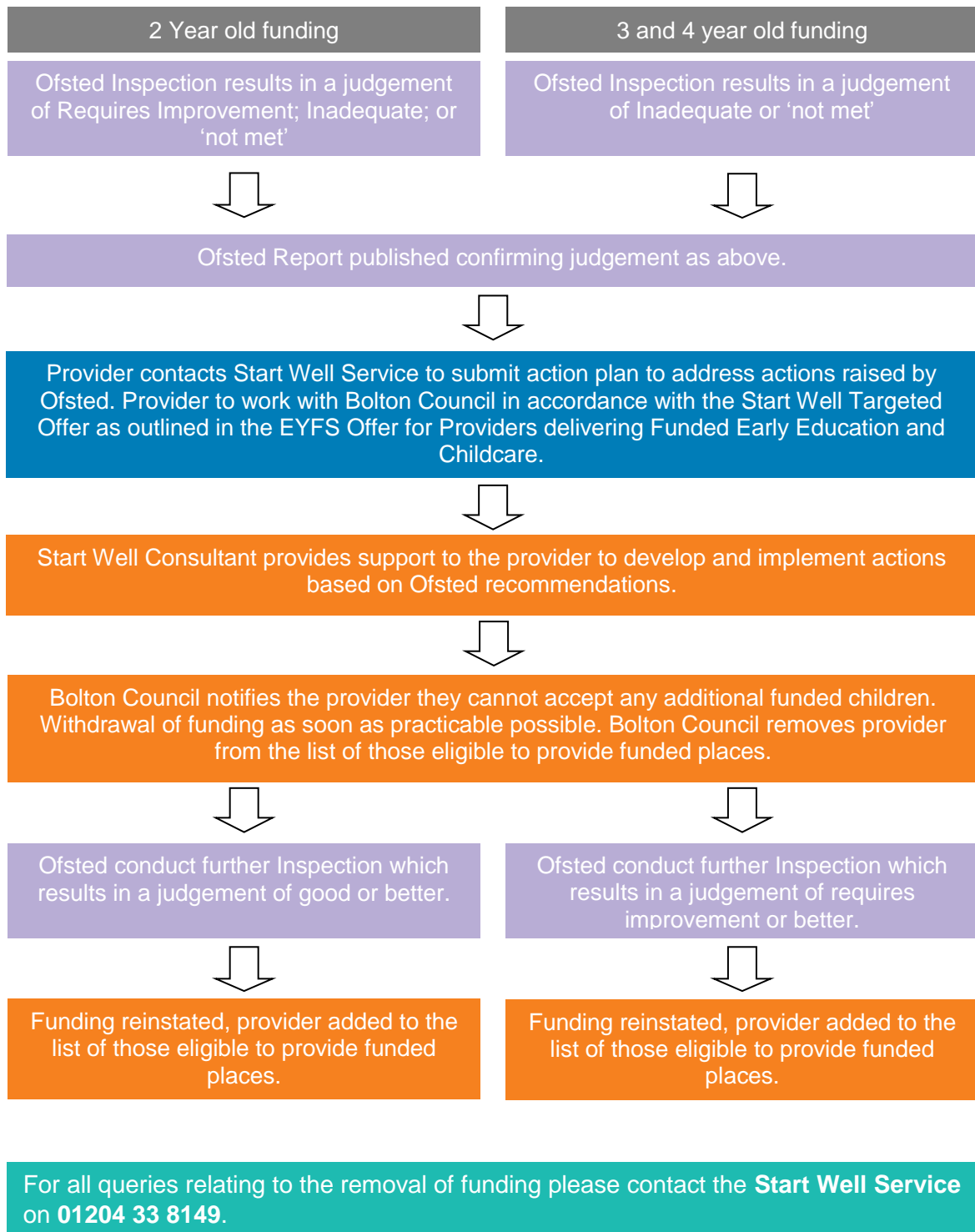
It is the decision of Bolton Council of what is an appropriate timeframe to withdraw funding. It is Bolton Council's duty to ensure they consider the continuity of care for children already receiving funded childcare, monitoring information about the provision. It is the duty of Bolton Council to take appropriate action to improve the quality of the provision at a maintained school which has been judged by Ofsted to require significant improvement or has been places in special measures.

Please see the following page a flowchart of the processes involved when a setting receives the grade 'requires improvement', 'inadequate' or 'not met'.

If a provider has been graded as 'inadequate', the Local Authority will send out a letter to all parents to inform them of the outcome.

For further information on the local authority's duty on the withdrawal of funding, please see pages 17-18 in [Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance 2017](#)⁵¹.

12.2 Flowchart for Suspension and Removal of Early Education and Childcare Funding



12.3 Appeals Process

Providers wishing to appeal against the Local Authority's decision to remove them from the directory must notify Bolton Council of the intention to appeal within 14 calendar days of the date of the letter. **Providers should send their appeal letter to the Start Well: Strategic Lead for Early Years, Bolton Council, Smithills, Smithills Dean Road, Bolton BL1 6JT.**

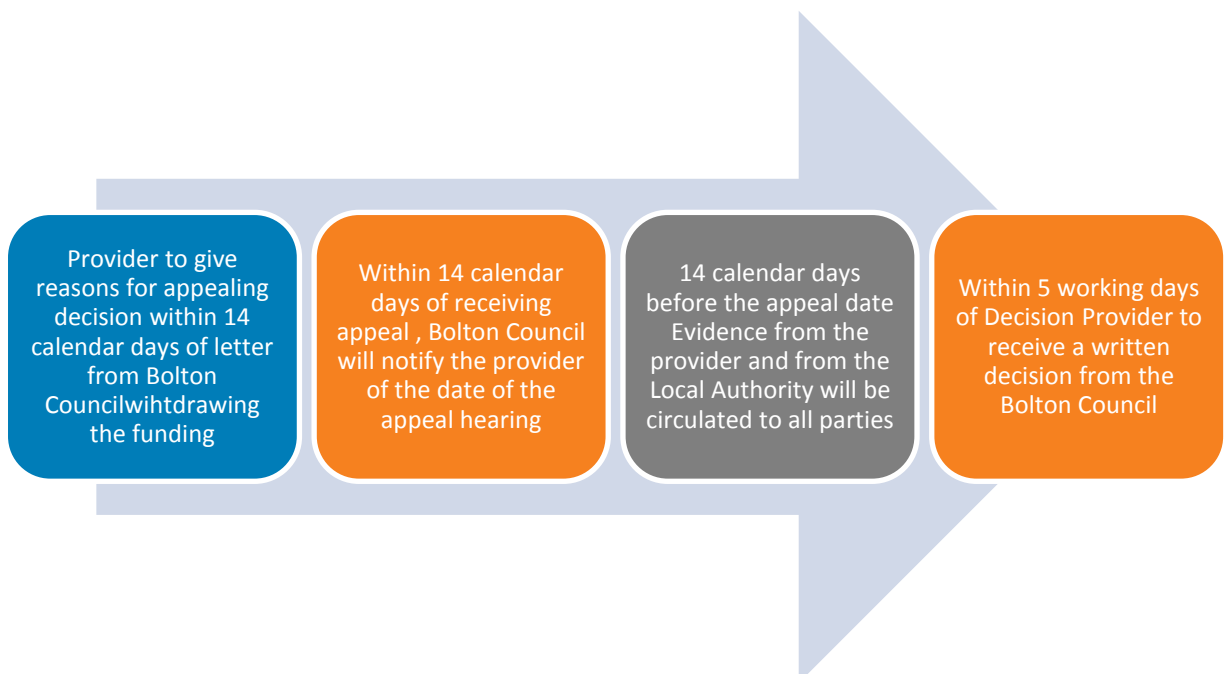
Following receipt of a letter of appeal, the procedure for the withdrawal of a provider from the directory will be halted pending the outcome of the appeal. Bolton Council will notify the provider within 14 calendar days, of a date for an appeal hearing and the procedure and format of the appeal process. At this time the provider will be asked to submit any written evidence to support their appeal.

The provider will be invited to attend the appeal hearing to make representations, and will be entitled to bring appropriate representatives agreed in advance by the Chair.

Evidence from the provider and from the Local Authority will be circulated to all parties, including the appeals panel 14 calendar days before the appeal date.

A panel of three that will be chaired by Chair of Early Years Sub Group of Schools' Forum and include Bolton Council officer, (not involved in the original decision to remove the provider from the List of Providers), and members of Early Years Sub Group of Schools' Forum, will review the decision through a panel interview using supporting documentation, where appropriate, within 35 calendar days of receiving the appeal.

The provider will be notified of the appeal panel's decision within 5 working days.



If a provider wishes to object to the appeals decision, it will then be taken as a complaint towards the Local Authority and be treated as such by progressing it through Bolton Council's Complaints Policy <http://www.bolton.gov.uk/website/pages/complaints.aspx>. The appeal decision will stand and be implemented whilst the complaints procedure is underway.

If a provider is dissatisfied with their treatment under this appeals procedure, they may make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman (see Complaints Procedure section for contact details) after the full appeals procedure with Bolton Council has been exhausted.
<http://www.lgo.org.uk/>

12.4 Closure or sale of a business

In the circumstances where a provision is being sold to somebody else, the previous owner is required to resign their registration with Ofsted in writing. For further information, please see the [Early Years and Childcare Registration Handbook⁵²](#).

It is advised that the provider informs Bolton's Strategic Finance Unit to inform them of the closure/sale of a business:

Strategic Finance Unit
1st Floor
Town Hall
Victoria Square
Bolton
BL1 1RU

13. Complaints Procedure

Bolton Council aims to provide the best possible service to the people and organisations that make up the community of Bolton. To help us deliver this aim we would like you to tell us what you think of our services.

If you have been in contact with the Council but you feel your particular query has not been given proper attention, or had been mishandled, then please let us know. We acknowledge that it will not be possible to satisfy everybody but your complaint will be dealt with properly and our response will be helpful, positive and efficient.

This procedure outlines the aims of the Council in dealing with complaints and sets out what you as the customer can expect when making a complaint to us.

13.1 How can you complain?

- By using our website www.bolton.gov.uk, click on 'Do it online', complete the comments, compliments and complaints form and submit
- By contacting the dedicated Customer Relations line on (01204) 338021
- An Access Bolton Minicom service is also available. Call us on (01204) 331926
- By completing the form on this leaflet, detaching it and returning it to the Freepost address as indicated
- In person at a Council building or office
- By emailing the Council at <mailto:bolton@bolton.gov.uk>

All complaints are dealt with in the strictest of confidence and any information on our files fully complies with the Data Protection Act.

14. Support and Guidance

Bolton Council has a variety of teams which offer help and support covering all Early Years Funding and Childcare topics.

14.1 Information Systems Team

The Information Systems Team maintains the Provider Portal which is used by the early years sector to submit headcount data and carry out eligibility checks for two year old funding and 30 hours.

The maintenance of this involves the following:

- Setting up early years settings with access to the provider portal including password resets.
- Identifying enhancement requests for software supplier
- Configuring and testing the changes to the Provider Portal

Information Systems Team Contact Details

Email Address	one.support@bolton.gov.uk
Telephone	01204 338621

14.2 Data Management Team

The Data Management Team processes any new registrations/de-registrations information they receive from Ofsted. They also contact early years settings to find out about information on a settings services, costs, vacancies and facilities which is then recorded in our local system and the information is then used for childcare brokerage services.

Data Management Team Contact Details

Email Address	ec.imu@bolton.gov.uk
Telephone	01204337461

14.3 The Information & Communication Team

The Information & Communication Team is part of the Bolton Council People Services Department. Our team has a role of delivering information services for children, young people, families (including the local offer where children and young people have special education needs or disabilities) and adults in accordance with the statutory information and advice duties under the Childcare Act 2006, Children & Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014. Our team have a range of roles including updating Bolton Council webpages and undertaking user experience surveys for people of all ages.

The **Families Information Service** is part of the role of our team, through this we:

- undertake childcare sufficiency assessments
- work with partners to develop the communications plan and produce publicity around the funded early education and childcare offer in Bolton
- provide training the Start Well Children Centre staff on delivering quality information services for families and on using eligibility checking systems
- provide training to early education & childcare providers on the use of eligibility checking systems
- update the Bolton.gov.uk website
- support the development of the [My Life in Bolton](#)⁵³ information hub, including the local offer
- carry out 2 year old funding eligibility checks through providers / health visitors (not parents), including investigating children submitted on headcounts who do not appear to be eligible in our systems
- identify children eligible for EYPP

- carry out 30hr validity checks (for all providers in the interim, but for childminders on an ongoing basis)

Information and Communication Team Contact Details

Email Address	families@bolton.gov.uk
Telephone	01204338122

14.4 Bolton Start Well Service

The Start Well Service incorporates the former Early Years and Childcare Team and the Children and Family Support Service in the Council. The service works with the early years workforce; children and families and other professionals to ensure the best possible start in life for every child.

Start Well service builds on the existing partnerships to work together to;

- Improving the quality and impact of early education and childcare for all children so that more children are school ready age 5 years.
- Improving children’s health and wellbeing in the early years and ensuring all children grow up in a safe and secure environment.
- Addressing inequalities, raising aspirations and improving the life chances for the most disadvantaged children and families

Bolton Start Well Service has small expert teams who provide comprehensive advice and support in the following areas:

- Early Years Foundation Stage – Start Well Quality and Outcomes Team
- Early Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – Start Well Early Years SEND Team
- Early Communication and Language – Start Well Communication and Language Development Team

Start Well Service Team Contact Details

Email Address	boltonstartwell@bolton.gov.uk
Telephone	01204338149

14.5 Finance Team

The Finance team is made up of two departments that support early years providers with early years funding payments, processes and enquiries. .

The Strategic Finance Unit

Support early years funding through:

- Operational support of the Early Years headcount portal, including initial headcount and amendment task processes.
- Administration of 15 hour entitlement for eligible two year olds, three and four year olds (the “Universal Entitlement”) and the 30 hours entitlement for working parents of three and four year olds (the “Extended Entitlement”).
- Pupil data enquires
- Collation of Local Authority Funding agreements

Strategic Finance Team Contact Details

Email Address	earlyyearsfinance@bolton.gov.uk
Telephone	01204337169

The Schools Finance Unit

Support early years funding through:

- Application of the Local Authority budgetary requirements and statutory monitoring of the total Early Years Block funding.
- Financial policy, and administrative support of funding issues
- Early education and childcare statutory guidance for local authorities, including determination of funding rates.
- Guidance with regards to Parental funding enquiries.
- Administration of Early Years Pupil Premium and Disability Access Funding payments

The Schools Finance Unit Contact Details

Email Address	kevan.hamer@bolton.gov.uk
Telephone	01204338609

15. Acknowledgements

Bolton Council would like to express its thanks to providers who dedicated their time to support the development of this operational guidance document:

- Janet Lomax-Baker – Croft House Children’s Nursery
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- Beverley Perkins and Janet Kirkman – Stepping Stones Nursery
- Kath Illingworth – Queensbrook Children’s Nursery
- Alison Baron – Blackshaw Primary School
- Barbara Kenny – Alexandra Nursery School
- Danny Lydon – Baby Bede Day Nursery

16. Reference links

¹ [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/604417/Model Agreement FINAL 20170302.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/604417/Model_Agreement_FINAL_20170302.pdf)

² [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/629544/Early years entitlements-operational_guidance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/629544/Early_years_entitlements-operational_guidance.pdf)

³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-register-as-a-childminder-or-nanny-quick-guide>

⁴ [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596629/EYFS STATUTORY FRAMEWORK 2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596629/EYFS_STATUTORY_FRAMEWORK_2017.pdf)

⁵ <http://eye.boltonlea.org.uk/funding-funded-places/guidance-for-the-organisation-of-nursery-provision-in-local-authority-maintained-schools/guidance-for-the-organisation-of-nursery-provision-in-local-authority-maintained-schools>

⁶ <http://www.newschoolsnetwork.org/sites/default/files/Setting%20up%20a%20Nursery.pdf>

⁷ <http://eye.boltonlea.org.uk/>

⁸ <http://eye.boltonlea.org.uk/funding-funded-places/30-hours-free-childcare/parental-declaration-form>

⁹ <http://www.bolton.gov.uk/sites/DocumentCentre/Documents/Childcare%20Sufficiency%20Assessment%20%202016-17.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://eye.boltonlea.org.uk/elearning/>

¹¹ <https://www.childcarebusinessgrants.com/>

¹² <http://www.outofschoolalliance.co.uk/>

¹³ <http://eye.boltonlea.org.uk/funding-funded-places/provider-portal-guidance/provider-po>

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¹⁸ [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596629/EYFS STATUTORY FRAMEWORK 2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596629/EYFS_STATUTORY_FRAMEWORK_2017.pdf)

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³¹ <https://www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children>

³² <http://eye.boltonlea.org.uk/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities>

³³ <http://eye.boltonlea.org.uk/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/send-funding-and-specialist-provision/early-years-sen-inclusion-fund>

³⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings>

³⁵ <http://eye.boltonlea.org.uk/funding-funded-places/30-hours-free-childcare/parental-declaration-form>

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³⁹ <http://eye.boltonlea.org.uk/funding-funded-places/early-years-pupil-premium/eypp-policy-for-settings>

⁴⁰ <http://eye.boltonlea.org.uk/funding-funded-places/early-years-pupil-premium/early-years-pupil-premium-slides-march-2015>

⁴¹ <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

⁴² <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

⁴³ <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/providers/>

⁴⁴ <http://eye.boltonlea.org.uk/training-and-development>

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⁵³ <http://www.mylifeinbolton.org.uk/>