**A group of children smiling

Description automatically generated**

**Expanded / Extended Funding**

**Application form & guidance notes for**

**eligible working Foster Carers**

**Overview**

Early Education Funding Entitlements for Children aged 9 months to 4 years

Information about the type of funding which eligible working families are entitled to can be found:[**https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2024/05/03/how-to-claim-15-hours-free-childcare-code/**](https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2024/05/03/how-to-claim-15-hours-free-childcare-code/)

Children in foster care aged 9 months to 4 years, will be eligible for expanded or extended entitlement funding, where the foster parent/s meet certain eligibility criteria. This ensures that foster families receive the same access to funding as other families, where this is deemed to be in the best interest of the child. Children in the care of foster parents will be able to receive expanded or extended entitlement funding, if the following criteria are met:

* The foster parent is engaged in paid employment outside of their fostering role.
* The foster parents [adjusted net income](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/adjusted-net-income)’ is under £100,000. *There is no minimum income requirement.*
* The appointed social worker must acknowledge that the foster parent/s is engaging in paid work, outside their role as a foster parent. Additionally, the social worker must agreethat accessing an early education place is consistent with the child’s care plan.

Where the foster parent is a ‘single’ foster parent who engages in paid employment outside their role as a Foster parent, the social worker must agree that accessing the expanded / extended entitlement funding is in the child’s best interest and is consistent with the care plan.

* Where foster carers represent a 2 parent foster family household, one of the following must apply
* both parents engage in paid work outside of their roles as foster parents

or

* one partner engages in paid work and the other receives certain qualifying benefits.

The social worker must agree that accessing the extended / expanded entitlement funding is in the child’s best interest and is consistent with the care plan.

* Where a foster parent lives with a partner who is not also a foster parent the foster parent must be in qualifying paid work and earn a minimum of the equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum, unless they are receiving certain qualifying benefits. The Eligibility Checking System (ECS) is unable to perform the additional eligibility checks required so the Department has developed a parallel application process that uses existing delivery arrangements wherever possible.
* The partner who is not a foster parent, must also be in qualifying paid work and earn a minimum of the equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum, unless they are receiving certain qualifying benefits.
* The social worker must agree that accessing the expanded / extended entitlement funding is in the child’s best interest and is consistent with the care plan.

In all circumstances, the agreement that the foster parents can take up the funded childcare entitlement should be recorded on the child’s care plan, which should be updated as appropriate.

Once a Special Guardianship Order is granted, a carer has the same right to benefits and tax credits as a birth parent, therefore you need to apply for expanded or extended hours funding via the national route: <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

**Stage 1:**

**Eligibility:**

Social Workers must establish if the foster carer meets the eligibility criteria to access expanded or extended hours funding entitlement.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Expanded Entitlement Funding  (for children aged 9- 23 months) | https://www.gov.uk/check-eligible-free-childcare-if-youre-working |
| Extended Entitlement Funding  (for children aged 3 & 4 years) | <https://www.gov.uk/30-hours-free-childcare> |

* Once eligibility is obtained the foster parent should speak to the allocated social worker to ensure that supporting the application for access to expanded / extended entitlement funding, is in the child’s best interest and is consistent with the care plan.

*Foster Carers are required to check with the child’s allocated social worker before making an application*.

**Stage 2:**

**Application & Authorisation:**

Where agreement is sought from the social worker, and the foster parent/s meet all qualifying criteria, the application below will need to be completed.

At this point in the process the allocated social worker will need to check evidence of eligibility.

The social worker must be confident that the foster carer(s) are engaging in paid work outside of foster caring responsibilities.

Evidence may include:

* Pay slips
* A job offer letter
* Evidence of self-employment such as a tax return
* Foster Carers must have received their validated expanded / extended entitlement codes in strict accordance with the timeframes stated below;

By 31st December for a January start date,

By 31st March for April start date and

By 31st August for a September start date

* Authorisation of the application takes up to 5 working days as this has to be approved by a Team Manager or Operational Lead from the Children in Care service.
* The form must then be sent to the Early Years Business, Sufficiency and Funding Team (BSF) at: [EYProviderfunding@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:eycentral@coventry.gov.uk)
* The BFS team will issue a code which the Foster Carer must pass on to the identified Early Years Provider, in order to claim funding. This process then takes up to an additional 5 working days.
* **All applications must be re-confirmed every 3 months to ensure eligibility still remains the same.**
* The BFS Team will contact the Foster Carer and nominated social worker in advance of the 3-month deadline, to ensure continued eligibility and to ensure that the childcare offer continues to align with the child’s care plan.

**Stage 3:**

**Accessing a place:**

* Once the relevant funding code has been issued to the Foster Carer/s, they can then secure a childcare place for the fostered child. For a full list of Ofsted registered childcare providers within Coventry please visit: [www.coventry.gov.uk/cid](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/cid)
* Once an appropriate childcare provider has been identified they will ask for the child’s eligibility code and request the completion of the Early Years Parent Funding Agreement.

Please note the following: -

* For extended entitlement funding, 30 hours per week is the maximum amount of funding available however, the code can be used to access fewer hours per week
* For expanded entitlement funding, 15 hours per week is the maximum amount of funding available however, the code can be used to access fewer hours per week
* Foster Carers can choose to **pay** for additional hours above early years funding entitlement, if this is consistent with the child’s care plan
* The cost of any additional hours or items which are not provided as part of the early education entitlement: e.g. food, nappies, suncream etc will not be covered by the funding entitlement.
* Coventry City Council is responsible for the generation of funding codes for all eligible Children in Care in Coventry, whether the child’s address or childcare setting is within the Coventry boundary or another Local Authority areas.

**Coventry City Council**

**Application for expanded /extended entitlement funding for children in foster care**

**Note to foster Carer: You must seek authorisation from the child’s social worker before using this form to apply for expanded or extended entitlement funding.**

**Privacy Summary**

Coventry City Council will use your personal information to provide services which facilitate children to access any entitlement to government funded early years education places. We will also share information about you with other internal Council departments to ensure that Childcare Providers are paid for the provision of Government funded hours. More details about how we use information about you can be found in our full Privacy Notice: <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/eyprivacynotice>

Once you and your partner (if you have one) have signed this form, it must then be counter-signed by a Coventry City Council Fostering Team Manager or the Child’s Social Worker Operational Lead, for Independent Foster Carers

If your application is successful, you will receive your eligibility code from the Early Years Business, Sufficiency and Funding Team ([EYProviderl@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:EYProviderl@coventry.gov.uk))

**If you need more help, please contact your supervising social worker**

This form is for foster carers only. If you are applying for your own children you should use the childcare service information at [www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs](http://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs).

**Section 1 – About you**

1.1 Your details:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** |  |
| **First name** |  |
| **Last name** |  |
| **Date of birth (DD/MM/YYYY)** |  |
| **National Insurance number** |  |
| **Address** |  |
| **Postcode** |  |
| **Email address** |  |

We need your address and email to send the childcare eligibility code to you.

1.2 Are you a foster carer of the children named in this form?

Yes

No

1.3 Do you and the children live in England?

Yes

No

If no, speak to your local council about what childcare schemes are available in your area.

1.4 Are you a British/Irish national?

Yes

No

1.5 If you have answered “no” to 1.3:

 Have you acquired settled or pre-settled status through the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS);

 Have you made an application through the EUSS and are waiting for a decision, or;

 Are you appealing a decision on your EUSS application?

1.6 Are you subject to immigration rules that prevent you from receiving public funds?

Yes

No

**Section 2 – Your employment details**

2.1 Are you employed or self-employed for more than 16 hours, per week outside your fostering responsibilities?

Yes

No

You can still answer yes if you are not currently working. For example, you are on parental leave or sick leave, or expect to start or re-start work in the next 31 days.

2.2. Do you expect to earn more than £100,000 in this tax year (April to March)?

Yes

No

If your income is over the [adjusted net income](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/adjusted-net-income)’ of £100,000 you will not be eligible to claim expanded or extended entitlement funding.

2.3 If you are **not** employed outside your fostering responsibilities, select the circumstance which applies to you:

 For Universal Credit purposes, I am assessed as having limited capability for work

 I receive National Insurance credits because of incapacity or limited capability for work

 I receive a Carer’s Allowance

 I receive an Employment and Support Allowance

 I receive Incapacity Benefit

 I receive a Severe Disablement Allowance

If you get one of these benefits you may still be able to get expanded / extended hours funding, if you have a partner who holds additional employment outside their role as foster carer.

2.4 Do you have a partner who lives with you?

Yes

No

A person is your partner if you are married or in a civil partnership, and live together in the same household, or a couple who live together as if you are married or in a civil partnership.

If **Yes**: go to section 3

If **No**: skip to section 5

**Section 3 – Your partner**

3.1 Your partner’s details

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** |  |
| **First name** |  |
| **Last name** |  |
| **Date of birth (DD/MM/YYYY)** |  |
| **National Insurance number** |  |

3.2 Is your partner also a foster parent?

Yes

No

If **Yes**: go to section 4.

If **No**: please contact your local authority (see page 1) who will help you further.

**Section 4 – Partner’s employment details**

4.1 Is your partner employed or self-employed for 16 or more hours, per week outside their fostering responsibilities?

Yes

No

You can still answer yes if they are not currently working. For example, they are on parental leave or sick leave, or expect to start or re-start work in the next 31 days.

4.2 Does your partner expect their total taxable income in this tax year (April to March) to be more than £100,000? ([adjusted net income](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/adjusted-net-income))

Yes

No

If their income is over the [adjusted net income](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/adjusted-net-income)’ of £100,000 you will not be eligible to claim expanded or extended entitlement funding.

**Section 5 – Details about the child you are applying for?**

If you are fostering non-related children who could both be eligible for expanded / extended hours funding entitlements, you will need to complete a **separate form** for each child.

5.1 Foster child details:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **First name** | **Last name** | **Date of birth (DD/MM/YYYY)** | **When do you expect the child in foster care to join a school reception class?**  **MM/YYYY** |
|  |  |  |  |

**Section 6 – Declaration**

6.1 Your declaration:

I declare that I am applying for expanded or extended entitlement funding, to enable me to work outside of fostering and that the information I have given on this form is correct and complete.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Signature** |  |
| **Date (DD/MM/YYYY)** |  |

6.2 Your partner’s declaration:

I declare that I am applying for expanded or extended entitlement funding, to enable me to work outside of fostering and that the information I have given on this form is correct and complete.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Your partner’s signature** |  |
| **Date (DD/MM/YYYY)** |  |

**Section 7. Fostering Team Manager or Child in Care (CIC) / Area Operational Lead declaration**

Before Coventry City Council can issue you with a code, this form must be counter-signed by either: -

* A Fostering Team Manager – for Coventry City Council Foster Carers
* The Operational Lead for the child’s social worker – for Foster Carers approved by another agency.

I declare that I have seen evidence of employment outside fostering, and it has been discussed how this employment is consistent with the care plan for the child listed in this application.

**7.1** I confirm that I support the application for the child named herein, to access expanded /extended early years entitlement funding.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Signature** |  |
| **Position** |  |
| **Telephone Number** |  |
| **Date (DD/MM/YYYY)** |  |

**Section 8 – Re-Confirmation (every 3 months)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Have there been any changes to your employment status**  **(as described on your application form)** | **Re-confirmation confirmed by Social Worker/ Fostering Team Manager**  **(please sign)** | **Social Worker/Fostering Team Manager Position and print name** | **Telephone contact** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Please re-submit this application to re-confirm the eligibility code to [EYProviderfunding@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:EYProvidervfunding@coventry.gov.uk)

| **Data protection statement**   * **I understand that any information supplied by me in respect of my application for childcare may be held and/or processed in an electronic form and is subject to the relevant provisions in the Data Protection Act 1998, UK-GDPR and other relevant statutes. I understand that any information supplied will form part of the agency’s case record held in respect of my application.** |
| --- |