

Children's Services

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Dear Colleague

As you may be aware, the annual Department for Education (DfE) Census return is due this term. The Online Provider Portal (OPP) opened for you to complete your Census form on Wednesday 4 January 2017 and Census day is Thursday 19 January 2017.

The Census information is used to help monitor use of Government funding and to support implementation and development of policy. It also determines the amount of funding the Local Authority receives. From this term, the Government will only allocate Free Entitlement (FE) funding to the Local Authority based on the information on the Census. It is therefore essential that you complete all sections of the Census form to ensure sufficient funding levels are allocated by the Government and all eligible children can claim their FE. **If insufficient funds are received we will be unable to guarantee meeting all FE claims from settings.** This will result in some children missing out on their FE.

You should already have a username and password to access the Census form online (it is the same username/password that you use to access the online Profile form with the exception of most childminders who have one log-on for Census, Profiles and FE online). To ensure data security and avoid duplication, please do not change your username.

To submit your Census information, firstly please go to our webpage www.westsussex.gov.uk/ecsportal, and click on the "Provider portal – help and guidance" PDF to view the Census 'How to' video and help guide. Once you are ready to complete your Census form, please log on to the [Online Provider Portal](#).

The online Census form comprises of 4 pages, some of the fields will be pre-populated from the information you submitted in last year's Census. You are required to check all answers and update/complete where necessary. Please ensure you complete all questions accurately. We recommend that you print your completed Census form so that you can keep a copy for your own records.

It is important you adhere to the submission deadline which is close of business **26 January 2016**. **Future payments may be at risk if we do not receive your Census return on time.**

If you have any questions or require assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the Family Information Service on 01243 777807 and ask for the Specialist Team, or e-mail free.entitlement@westsussex.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

The Family Information Service