



04 January 2017

Dear Colleague

Free Entitlement (FE) Online Headcount for 2, 3 and 4 year olds

The Online Provider Portal (OPP) to submit your actuals data for FE 2, 3 and 4 year olds for Spring 2017 opened **Wednesday 07 December 2016**. You are able to view all children on your headcount for Spring 2017. This data has been taken from the previous term's headcount and only includes those children who are still eligible to claim FE.

Date of birth ranges

Eligible 2 year olds with dates of birth between 01 January 2014 and 31 December 2014, 3 and 4 year olds with dates of birth between 01 January 2012 and 31 December 2013 qualify for FE this term. Please note that if a child has taken up a school place, even on a part-time basis, they are no longer eligible to claim FE.

Deadline and Headcount day

The deadline for the actuals figures is **Thursday 26 January 2017**. Headcount day for Spring is **Thursday 19 January 2017**. Please ensure that you have submitted your data by this date to enable your payment to be made on time. Incomplete data or failure to submit the headcount data on time will jeopardise prompt payment. Returns received after the deadline will be actioned when all payments for prompt returns have been completed.

How to submit your actuals data

Support guidance on how to submit your data online can be found at www.westsussex.gov.uk/ecsportal and the portal can be accessed at www.westsussex.gov.uk/fis. If you require us to re-set or re-send your login details for the OPP, please contact us as soon as possible.

You must ensure that all details are correct for each child and complete all details and hours as appropriate. **All hours will be shown as 0 to enable you to do this and minimise the risk of incorrect claims.** The School Admissions team use this data for children about to start school. The ethnicity information and number of unfunded hours per week is mandatory for the Department for Education early years Census. **You must remove any children who have left your setting**, whether to go to school or for other reasons. We will follow this up and re-claim funding made for any false claims.

How do I amend the number of weeks? You can decrease the number of weeks attended in the term for each child via the OPP. However, if you wish to increase the number of weeks as you are claiming FE as per the stretched funding option, please contact the Family Information Service (FIS) on 01243 777807 and ask for the Specialist Team. Once we have enabled our system you will need to log back into the OPP and increase the number of weeks for each child.

If you do not have any eligible children to claim FE for this term, please email free.entitlement@westsussex.gov.uk stating you have no eligible children at present.

Please note that you will only be able to enter actuals data on-line for children who are attending your setting on headcount day. If you wish to request funding for children who start after this date, please contact the Specialist Team through the FIS on 01243 777807 to obtain a Post Headcount/Exceptional Payment Request form.

Ways to claim

There are 3 different ways you can claim the Free Entitlement.

- Standard claim over 38 weeks or less (option 1),
- Stretched funding over more than 38 weeks (option 2), or
- Self-stretched funding over more than 38 weeks (option 3).

Option 1: Standard claim over 38 weeks or less

Funding will be paid over 12 weeks this term, according to the agreed matrix figure in the Free Entitlement Agreement. If a child's claim differs from this, for example if you are open for less than 12 weeks or if a child does not have enough entitlement remaining, you must also change the 'Weeks attended in term' field for all children.

Option 2: Stretched funding over more than 38 weeks

If you are stretching the funding using the reduced weekly hours method, you must ensure that the 'Weeks attended in term' field is accurate for all children. If you do not change this we will have no option but to assume you are making a claim over 12 weeks according to Option 1 above.

Option 3: Self-stretched funding over more than 38 weeks

If you are stretching the funding according to an arrangement between yourself and the parent, please complete the headcount form using the instructions for a 38-week setting as per Option 1 above. If we need further details we will require a copy of the Parent Declaration.

FE for 2 year olds

You will need to submit separate actuals data for your eligible 2 year olds who have already been awarded funding to your eligible 3 and 4 year olds. You will see how to do this on the OPP. Please ensure that funding has been agreed by West Sussex County Council and that you have seen a copy of the award letter before you offer a free place and claim for a 2 year old.

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

Guidance on how to check eligibility and apply for the EYPP is available in the support guidance titled "How to claim child-level funding" which can be found at www.westsussex.gov.uk/ecspportal. All claims for EYPP must be made at the same time as the headcount data.

Parent Declarations

A copy of the current parent declaration form can be downloaded from www.westsussex.gov.uk/ecsfreeentitlement. This must be up to date at all times and any changes, including alterations to hours, must be signed by the parent. This is especially important where the child is claiming FE at more than one setting. The Parent Declaration form can also be used to collect information required to apply for the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP). Please retain copies of the declaration at your setting as usual. Where parents have indicated that the child attends another setting, please submit a copy to us when you make your headcount return. This is to help avoid misunderstandings later should a parent accidentally over claim. The date on the declaration will also help us ensure your setting receives the correct proportion.

If you have any questions, or require support with submitting your data online, please do not hesitate to contact the FIS on 01243 777807 or e-mail free.entitlement@westsussex.gov.uk

Yours sincerely
The Family Information Service