

Dear all,

Thank you for your continued support to deliver the childcare entitlements, benefiting thousands of parents and children across England, especially as we approach the start of the new 15-hour entitlement for working parents of 2-year-olds. We also thank you in advance for all the work you continue to do, as parents apply for their codes from now through to the 31 March application deadline.

We recently wrote to your local authority, setting out a solution to an issue faced by a minority of parents who receive Tax Free Childcare (TFC) and who last reconfirmed their eligibility for TFC in late 2023, meaning that their next reconfirmation window does not open until the second half of February or March.

If a parent's reconfirmation window opens on or after 15 February (and before 1 April), HMRC will send them a letter before the middle of February with a temporary code and instructions on how to use it to claim their entitlement. The letter will be posted to the address on the parent's Childcare Service account.

Some parents may want to reserve a place with you while they wait for their code, and we would encourage you to help them do this where possible. If they can provide evidence that they receive Tax Free Childcare, then they will automatically be eligible for the new entitlement as anyone who is eligible for TFC will also be eligible for the new entitlement (although parents don't have to apply for TFC to be eligible for the entitlement).

We also pointed to [our article](#) for parents which we had published on the Education Hub.

We are now following up on that letter with additional information for you on how the process will work, and further information for you to use in conversations with parents, to address questions that have been asked since we published those updates.

When we wrote to local authorities, we communicated to them that the temporary manual codes that will be issued to parents in their letters would begin with 50. Following further work alongside HMRC to make this solution work as well as possible, we will be using the existing temporary code format. This will make it easier for you to differentiate between the single use temporary manual codes and the permanent digital codes. Temporary codes issued to parents will therefore begin with 11, rather than 50.

You should input these single use temporary codes to your local authority in the normal way, and then when the parent comes back to you with their permanent

digital code beginning with 50, you should accept and validate this code as you normally would. Temporary codes starting with 11 will continue to be valid into April and will entitle parents to a grace period. If parents forget to reconfirm their code or fall out of eligibility, the Department is committing to fund a grace period between 1 April and 31 August. This is a temporary alteration to the normal rules, to support the solution that we have put in place for this issue. We encourage you to remind parents who give you a temporary code that they still need to reconfirm when their reconfirmation window opens in order to avoid falling out of eligibility.

If a parent comes to you with two codes applicable for April; one beginning with 11 and the other beginning with 50, please use the code beginning with 50. The code beginning with 50 will be their permanent digital code for their child, which has been produced in their normal reconfirmation of eligibility. In this instance, the code beginning with 11 may be discarded.

You should ensure that you give the codes that you receive to your local authority regularly, so that local authorities can perform their checks in good time.

Since we communicated about this, we know you will have received further questions from parents regarding their eligibility for the 15 hours. We have therefore provided additional FAQs below to include answers to additional questions we have received.

We thank you again for your time and patience in this matter.

Entitlements Team