

February Update

30 Hours Free Childcare for 3 and 4 Year Olds



You may have heard about a national initiative to increase the number of free hours of childcare available to some families across the country from 15 hours a week to 30 hours for 3 and 4 year olds.

Whilst funding for places will not be available until September, 2017. The Council will be working with childcare providers across the borough and the Department for Education to help parents access local childcare that fits with their personal working patterns and hours. To help us to do this we have put together a questionnaire for parents.

We need your help:

By completing the Parent Questionnaire you can help us to make sure that there are enough childcare places available where you need them for September 2017 onwards. The information that you provide will be used by Cheshire West and Chester and by local childcare providers to enable us to build a clear picture of the level of demand for 30 hour places. All answers will be kept anonymous.

To complete the online questionnaire please go to:

<http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/30HoursFree>

The questionnaire will be available until 24/03/17

Families will be entitled to the extended offer where:

- both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family)
- each parent earns, on average, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage (NMW) or national living wage (NLW); and less than £100,000 per year.
- one or both parents is either on maternity/paternity or adoption leave; or where one parent has substantial caring responsibilities and is in receipt of carers allowance, or where one parent is employed and one is disabled or incapacitated based on receipt of specific benefits.

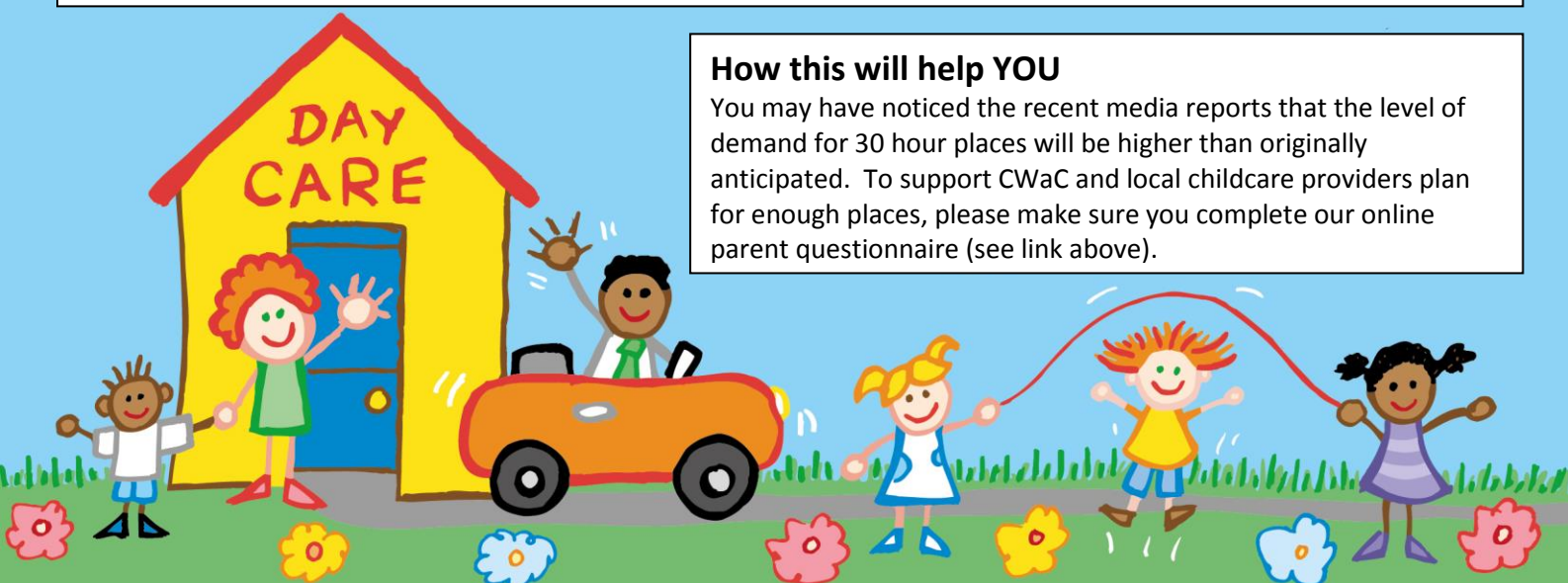
Taking your entitlement:

There will be a number of different ways you may be able to access the additional free hours of childcare, e.g.:

- 30 hours free childcare per week taken over 38 weeks of the year. If your provider is open for more than 38 weeks of the year, or your child attends more than 30 hours a week during term time, you will have to pay for additional hours for the extra hours/weeks that your child attends in the year.
- 23.75 hours per week over 48 weeks – you may require this if your child accesses childcare from a Childminder.
- 22.25 hours for up to 51 weeks of the year – this may be a model you would use if your child attends a private day nursery.

How this will help YOU

You may have noticed the recent media reports that the level of demand for 30 hour places will be higher than originally anticipated. To support CWaC and local childcare providers plan for enough places, please make sure you complete our online parent questionnaire (see link above).



Places will start from September 2017. An online eligibility checking service will be available for parents in late spring/early summer via the GOV.uk website. If you have any queries about the 30 hours free childcare places please call Information, Advice and Support Service on: 0300 123 7001