

Wraparound Childcare Programme

Application Guidance

Introduction

The DfE has issued local authorities with funding to support the Wraparound Childcare Programme to ensure that all families with primary school age children have access to wraparound childcare from 8am – 6pm. This funding will be used by Staffordshire County Council to fund providers and schools to support them to set up new provision or expand existing provision. This supports the local authority's duty to provide sufficient childcare, particularly for working parents.

The main focus of applications for “programme funding” to support running costs (see below).

The aim is for the majority of new and expanded provision to be self-sustaining from the end of the planned programme (i.e. 2026 onwards), meaning that the provision will be funded by parental demand and payments. A secondary aim is to test flexible ways of providing childcare and gather evidence of what works. This inevitably involves some financial risk. We accept that it will not be possible for 100% of new or expanded provision to prove sustainable: the programme is designed to test new models of provision, for example to create provision in advance of demand increasing to a sustainable level.

Programme funding

Programme funding can be used to cover “revenue” costs including staffing, as well as essential resources it can also be used to contribute to running costs whilst demand builds, to remove any financial risk to providers of offering additional places before demand is guaranteed.

This funding can be spread to support running costs over a 12-month period, for example. Providers should be clear about how this will support provision in the initial stages of the project and how the provision will be sustained in the long term when the funding period ends.

Programme funding will not be allocated to providers to support significant planned profits or surpluses. Applications should clearly show what costs the provider expects the programme funding to cover, for example a specific staff member or resources. Programme funding cannot be used to support capital expenditure but could be used to purchase smaller items of resources that do not meet the definition of capital, such as toys, books, games, arts, crafts, and other resources that support day to day activities. Any equipment or supplies which have an expected shelf life of more than one year where either the purchase price is more than £500 or is a group of lower value items where the combined value is in excess of £500 is classed as capital funding.

Who can apply?

- Private, voluntary, independent providers and childminders delivering provision for one or more schools (on or off-site)
- Schools and academies delivering their own provision.
- New providers – evidence of suitable experience will be required.

Providing quotes

For any equipment or resources applied for below a cost of £500, one quote should be supplied (for example catalogue or online pricing examples). Providers should try and ensure the best value for money possible.

Which areas is the LA targeting?

The local authority has a good understanding of wraparound childcare in Staffordshire following a recent survey. Applications should clearly set out information on the current and expected demand for your provision, and clearly show the reasons for this.

This programme focuses on primary school-aged children from reception to year 6, Monday to Friday during term time. The DfE's expectation is that all wraparound provision is provided from 8am to 6pm, enabling parents to work a full day with travel time, unless data shows that local demand is for different hours, for example reflecting local labour market patterns.

We welcome applications from any provider or school to expand the hours offered or increase the number of places.

Expectations of applicants

The local authority has the following expectations of providers applying for funding:

- Providers should ensure that the funding applied for is realistic and necessary for project delivery to ensure that sufficient places can be developed across the county.
- Providers may contribute their own funding to support the project and therefore provide better value for money. This will be considered to have evidenced commitment to the long-term viability of the project.
- Providers should not consider that applying for funding is a guarantee of a grant being approved.
- Providers must own the freehold of the land or building or hold a lease and landlord approval that cannot be brought to an end by the landlord for at least 5 years.
- Providers must sign a funding agreement, issued to successful applicants by the local authority.
- The local authority will not fund any work that has already been carried out or any programme costs (such as staffing) prior to signing an agreement. Any prior costs incurred are entirely at the risk of the applicant.

- Previous unsuccessful applicants may re-apply if their application is for different work than the previous application, or if a key part of the application (e.g. cost or places provided) has significantly changed.
- Providers should submit all relevant information required at the same time as their application. Please see the checklist within the application form for further details.

Scoring and evaluation criteria

The local authority will review all applications submitted by providers. The following criteria will then be used by the funding panel to score applications. The final decision rests with the panel.

Sufficiency

- ✓ Does data suggest that additional places or hours are required in the area?
- ✓ Does the provider have their own data, such as waiting lists / vacancy rates / information about current parents' requirements?

Value for money

- ✓ An analysis of cost per place created will be used.
- ✓ Due to the expected requirements for additional places and the funding available, it is vital that providers attempt to provide the best cost per place possible.
- ✓ It is unlikely that significant building work will be funded due to value for money provided.
- ✓ Any additional financial contributions from providers will be seen to support value for money.
- ✓ Any additional costs above the amount agreed will be at the expense of the provider and will not be funded by the local authority.
- ✓ If a project creates both funded early entitlement places; and wraparound places for school age children, this will increase the value for money being provided.

Quality of provision – Judged by Ofsted.

- ✓ Applications should describe how the provider will ensure that high quality provision is created or increased.

Evidence of financial sustainability

- ✓ Providers should clearly show how the additional places will support their sustainability and highlight any risks that the project may not be sustainable in the long-term.
- ✓ Providers should submit additional information, such as financial forecasts and a business plan to support the application.

Additional factors (these areas will also be considered)

- ✓ Ownership of the property or length of lease to ensure that the provision is secure over a reasonable period.
- ✓ How quickly the applicant could provide additional places through a delivery plan.
- ✓ Evidence that the applicant will provide inclusive provision, for example for disadvantaged two-year-olds and children with SEND.

Important dates

The local authority review panel will meet regularly to assess applications to ensure applicants receive a prompt response. Once the budget is fully spent, the local authority will not receive any additional funding, and the application process will close.

Funding agreements, monitoring and support

- Successful providers will be required to sign a funding agreement containing the terms and conditions of the funding. Funding will not be approved until this agreement has been signed.
- The Early Years Team is available to provide support and advice to allow you to deliver your project. This advice can be sought prior to applying, if required.
- On successful completion and signing of the agreement, each project will be assigned support from the Early Years Team to ensure your plans are developed.
- Monitoring will take place once the funding agreement has been signed and the project has started. This will include the submission of invoices and receipts for work carried out and equipment purchased. Failure to supply evidence will result in the grant being reclaimed from the provider (this will be set out in the funding agreement).

After reading this guidance, if you require further advice, please contact the Early Years Team at eeac@staffordshire.gov.uk. Applications can be submitted online, with supporting information to this email address.