



BARNSLEY
Metropolitan Borough Council

Early Years Entitlements – Guidance for stretching term time hours

September 2025

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Introduction

The Early Years Entitlements – Guidance for stretching term time hours Stretched Funding document provides comprehensive guidance on how to stretch term time hours for Early Years entitlements. This initiative aims to offer flexibility to parents and guardians by allowing them to spread their funded hours over a longer period, rather than just during term time.

The current process of claiming term time /stretched hours is via the Provider Portal where all early years providers will only be able to claim the funded hours on a term time basis.

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council recognises that both parents and early year providers may still wish to receive their funded hours on a stretched basis and therefore it will be at the discretion of providers if they wish to stretch the term time hours claimed on behalf of the parents attending their setting.

This guidance has been created to assist early years providers wanting to continue to stretch the funding themselves, this guidance has been developed to offer this offer assistance in doing so.

How many funded early education hours are parents entitled to in a year?

As of September 2025 Under 2 year olds–3&4 year old’s working families entitlement funding will be 30 hours a week. This will provide a total 1140 hours a year of entitlements.

2 Year old Families receiving additional support for 2-year-olds are entitled to receive 15 hours of free childcare, 570 hours of childcare annually.

All 3&4 year old children are eligible for 570 universal hours from the term after their third birthday.

The child’s funding year starts from the period after their 9month, second, third and their fourth birthday and covers three periods. It is not aligned to the academic or calendar year.

Relevant dates are as follows for the 9months, 2year old and 3&4 Year old entitlement:

- Children born in the period 1st January to 31st March will be eligible at the start of term beginning on or following 1st April after the child’s 9month, second, third or fourth birthday;
- Children born in the period 1st April to 31st August will be eligible at the start of term beginning on or following 1st September after the child’s 9month, second, third or fourth birthday
- Children born in the period 1st September to 31st December: the start of term beginning on or following 1st January after the child’s 9 month, second, third or fourth birthday.

What is term time funding?

Term time funding is the funded early education entitlement of 570 or 1140 funded early education hours divided across 38 weeks of the year. This means that children can take up to a maximum of 15 or 30 funded hours each week for 38 weeks of the year.

What is stretched funding?

Stretched funding is where the funded early education entitlement of 570 or 1140 hours is divided across more than 38 weeks of the year.

This means that children can take fewer hours each week for more weeks of the year. For example:

570 hours / 51 weeks = maximum of 11.17 funded hours each week

1140 hours / 51 weeks = maximum of 22.35 funded hours each week

How many term time hours are available in each term during the academic year 2025-26?

The number of funded hours available each term during the academic year 2025-26 for children eligible for 570 funded hours are as follows:

Summer Term 2025 – 12 Weeks	Autumn Term 2025 – 15 weeks	Spring Term 2026 – 11 Weeks
180 Funded Hours	225 Funded Hours	165 Funded Hours

The number of funded hours available each term during the academic year 2025-26 for children eligible for 1140 funded hours are as follows:

Summer Term 2025 – 12 Weeks	Autumn Term 2025 – 15 weeks	Spring Term 2026 – 11 Weeks
360 Funded Hours	450 Funded Hours	330 Funded Hours

How do I convert term time hours I have claimed to a stretched offer?

There are two ways that you can convert the term time hours to a stretched offer.

These are:

1) Termly stretched - stretching the term time hours claimed by the number of weeks in each period.

For example:

These are the maximum term time hours available in the academic year

2025/26

Period Maximum term time hours

Summer Term - 180

Autumn Term - 225

Spring Term - 165

A provider who is open 51 weeks of the year can stretch the maximum hours over each period in the following way:

Summer Period 2025

$180 \text{ term time hours} / 19 \text{ Weeks} = 10.5 \text{ Stretched hours offered each week}$

Autumn Period 2025

$225 \text{ term time hours} / 18 \text{ weeks} = 12.5 \text{ stretched hours offered each week}$

Spring period 2026

$165 \text{ term time hours} / 14 \text{ weeks} = 11.7 \text{ stretched hours offered each week}$

When stretching the hours on a termly basis, parents who receive Tax Free .Childcare will need to update their childcare account to reflect the amount to be paid each period as it will vary across the year.

2) Yearly stretched - providers can continue to offer the term time hours stretched over all the weeks they are open in the year.

For example:

A provider who is open 51

weeks of the year can stretch the total term time hours that are available across the year in the following way:

$570 \text{ hours} / 51 \text{ weeks} = 11.17 \text{ stretched hours offered each week across the child's entitlement year}$

These are the maximum stretched hours in relation to the total number of weeks a provider is open across the year:

Number of Weeks Open	Maximum number of stretched hours per week (570 hours)	Maximum number of stretched hours per week (1140 hours)
51	11.17	22.35
50	11.4	22.8
49	11.63	23.27
48	11.87	23.75

Providers would need to be aware that when claiming term time hours but stretching them across a year, if a parent leaves mid-way through the year the parent or carer may not have received the number of funded hours that have been claimed.

When accepting the provider's offer to stretch the funding across the year, the parent or carer must be aware that if they choose to leave the setting part way through the year, they may not be able to receive their full entitlement of 570 hours. This should be specified in the provider's terms and conditions that are signed by the parent on accepting a childcare place.

You may need to calculate the number of funded hours that have been claimed and how many have been delivered to the parent to see whether additional funded sessions need to be offered to the parent, or whether there may be any chargeable hours.

Do I need to inform Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council if I am stretching the term time funded hours for a parent?

This decision will be made between parent and provider and should updated on their parent declaration form and also indicated on the Provider portal if this child is on stretched offer. No prior requirement need for Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council.

Can a parent or carer change from term time funded hours to stretched funded hours during the year?

This would be at the providers discretion. If you choose to allow parents and carers to change taking term time hours to stretched hours during the year, you must make them aware that they may not receive their full years allocation of 570 hours. It should be included in your terms and conditions/ contract which should be signed by the parent or carer.

Will I still receive an estimate payment?

All providers will still receive an estimated payment through the Provider Portal. The estimate payments are based on the number of children you will be expecting to attend your setting for the next term.

Can a parent or carer revert back from stretched funded hours to term time funded hours during the year?

As above this would be at the providers discretion.

Is there any funded period where more funded hours will have been delivered through a stretched offer than those term time hours claimed?

Consideration should be given when making a stretched offer to a child starting in the summer funded period. If the child then leaves at the end of the summer period, more funded hours will have been delivered than the term time hours claimed.

It is important for providers to ensure it is clear in their terms and conditions that if the child leaves at the end of the summer funded period, they will be invoiced for any funded hours received that the provider has not been able to claim. This would be at the providers standard charge.

What happens when a child attends more than one setting? If a child attends at more than one setting?

All claims will be made on a term time basis. It will then be up to each provider if they wish to stretch the term time funded hours over the number of weeks they are each open or deliver them on a term time basis. It may be that the hours are delivered on a term time basis at one provider and stretched at another provider.

What happens if I am stretching the funded hours and a child leaves my setting at the end or part way through a funded period?

How you reconcile the funded hours taken and the funded hours claimed will depend on how you are stretching your hours.

1 - Termly Stretched

As the funded hours claimed are only stretched across one period, if a child leaves at the end of a funded term, all hours claimed should have been delivered to the parent. If the child does leave half way through a funded term, it may be that they have not received the number of hours have been claimed at the point as they leave. Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council may reclaim these funded hours but please contact the Funding team at earlyyearsentitlements@barnsley.gov.uk to agree next steps to be reflect on your funding claims.

2 – Yearly Stretched

When a child's term time hours are being stretched across a funded year and they leave, it may be that child has either received not enough funded hours or too many. You will need to reconcile the number of hours that have been claimed to the number of hours that have been delivered.

It may be that the child will not have received the number of funded hours that you have claimed. Once the hours have been reconciled, you will need to offer the balance of funded hours to the parent or carer, to be taken within their notice period. If the parent or carer does not wish to take up the offer of the balance of funded hours, this will be their choice and the hours will be forfeited.

At certain times of the year, it may be that you have offered more funded hours than you have been able to claim. In this situation, you will need to invoice the parent or carer for these additional hours. This would be at the providers standard rate.

It is very important when stretching term time funded hours that the above mentioned information is incorporated into your provider terms and conditions which should be signed by the parent or carer.

What if I have offer more funded hours than I am able to claim for?

At certain points of the year, it may be that you have offered more funded hours than you have been able to claim. In this situation, you will need to invoice the parent or carer for these additional hours. This would be at the provider's standard charge.

Further Support

If you are requiring further support on stretched funding please contact the Early Years Funding Team at earlyyearsentitlements@barnsley.gov.uk