



# **Sheffield Provider Portal**

**Working Parent Entitlement  
Eligibility Checker System (ECS)  
(formerly 30 Hours ECS)**

**PROVIDER USER GUIDE**

**March 2024**

## Contents

Introduction .....	2
SECTION 1 – Logging In .....	3
SECTION 2 – Homepage Navigation.....	5
SECTION 3 – Eligibility Check.....	7
Important Note About Checking Eligibility .....	8
SECTION 4 – Previous Checks.....	10
SECTION 5 – Expiration Dashboard.....	11
SECTION 6 – Local Authority Audits of the HMRC Codes.....	13
SECTION 7 – Further Information .....	14

## Introduction

This guide is designed to support the use of the ‘Sheffield Eligibility Checker System’. Please ensure that you familiarise yourself fully prior to using the Portal and completing any actions.

### Sheffield Portal - Eligibility Checker System (ECS)

Access to this portal will enable providers to:

- Process, check and receive confirmation from HMRC of eligibility when presented with a Working Parent Entitlement (formerly known as 30 hours) reference number from a parent/carer.
- Search on eligibility checks previously made.

The online checker will confirm eligibility instantly. It will also provide the start and end dates of the eligibility, and the grace period end date.

Existing users of the ‘Sheffield Provider Portal’ will automatically have access to the Eligibility Checker.

This guide should contain all the information you need to use the Portal, however should you have any further queries please contact us. E-mail: [EYFEL.Census@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:EYFEL.Census@sheffield.gov.uk)



REFERENCE GUIDE:

# Sheffield Provider Portal – Working Parent Entitlement Eligibility Checking System

## SECTION 1 – Logging In

Using the Web Address provided in your email.

<https://ems.sheffield.gov.uk/ProviderPortal>

Select the address or copy and paste into your Internet Browser address bar.

Login to the EY Portal by completing the username and password fields on the login box; then select

Log In

**Note:** If you cannot remember either your Username or Password you can Select the links below the Login button and follow the instructions.

If this is the first time you login you will be redirected to an information page and an email will be sent to you with a confirmation Web Address, this is to ensure security.

### Register User

We have sent a confirmation email to your registered email address.

The email contains a confirmation link which will bring you back to the main login page.

You must use this link to continue with your registration.

Each subsequent login to the Headcount Portal you will be directed to the Homepage as detailed in Section 2.

After following the Web Address sent in the confirmation email you will see the confirmation message displayed.



#### Registration Confirmed

Thanks, you have confirmed your email address and now may log in

## Change Password

Your password must be changed to allow access to the portal.

Current password \*

New password \*

Confirm new password \*

[Change password](#)

During this login you will be prompted to change your password to a memorable one, this must contain at least 10 characters; and must contain one uppercase, one lowercase, two numbers and one special character. E.g. Password01!

Please do not use Password01! as your new password, this is only an example.

Complete the current password, new password, confirm new password fields; and select.

[Change password](#)

At the Security Details prompt select a secret question and provide a memorable answer; then select.

[Save](#)

## Security Details

Please choose a secret question and provide an answer

Secret Question \*

Secret Answer \*

[Save](#)

Congratulations you have now successfully logged in for the first time, and will have access to the EY Portal.

## SECTION 2 – Homepage Navigation



### Sheffield Provider Portal

Home

Sign out

#### Announcements

##### Provider Portal Update - Other services to use the Provider Portal

The Provider Portal will shortly be opened up to be used by other services within Sheffield. As such, advice for FEL Providers that was previously on the Provider Portal has been removed or moved to other relevant areas of the Provider Portal.

Most information required by FEL Providers can still be found online at <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/schools-childcare/fel-funding-providers>. This includes the Headcount and Payment Dates for the year, the Code of Practice, payment rates, and more. This website should **always** be the first point of reference for information for FEL Providers.

**Please note** that we do not all currently have telephone access, so please continue to email your queries wherever possible or when urgent so they can be picked up by all available colleagues.

Continue

The Announcements page will be visible at every login, please read these carefully; select [Continue](#) to proceed to the Homepage.

Free Early Learning Providers, when you login and land on the home page you will now see three lozenges, one that will take you to the working parent eligibility checks, one to the headcount census portal and the other to the two year old funding portal.



### Sheffield Provider Portal

Home

Sign out

#### Welcome to the Provider Portal.

Below, you will see the services available. Please note that not all lozenges will appear depending on the level of access you have been granted.

Click on the **Headcount** lozenge to access and submit your Funded Early Learning headcount Tasks, and to access your Headcount Messages and Payment reports.

Click on the **30 Hours Free Childcare** lozenge to access the 30-hours Entitlement Checker; for checking child eligibility and reviewing children's eligibility start and end dates.

Click on the **Two Year Old Funding** lozenge to access the 2 Year Old Eligibility Checker; for checking child eligibility and making Placement Notifications.

Click on the **Disability Access Fund** lozenge to make a DAF application for a child and see application result Messages. **Note:** This lozenge is only accessible between the Actual Headcount opening and the Amendment Headcount closing each term.

Click on the **School Admissions** lozenge to see current or recent Admissions groups, view applications to your school, ranking applications to your school (only if your school is an Own Admission Authority), verifying claimed siblings for applications to your school and viewing leavers



2-year-old  
funding



Headcount



Working Parent  
Entitlement

Selecting on your name; Top Right of the screen, brings up a menu where you can change your own password or secret question. You can also sign out securely.

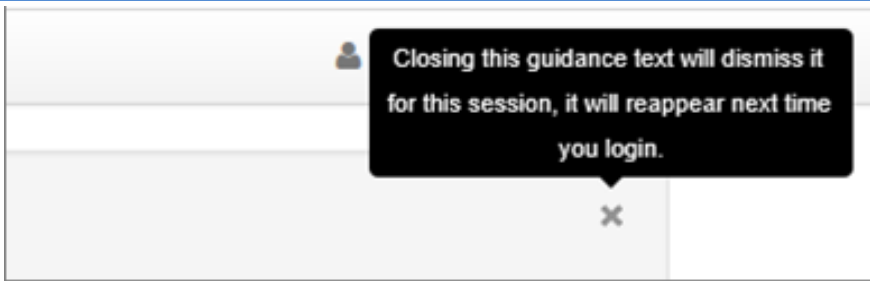
## EY Provider Portal

Bobster Barker

Sign out


Change Password

Change Secret Question



Guidance text can be provided; this text can be closed but will become visible again on each new login.



Clicking on  on the home page will present the details below.

## Welcome to the Thirty Hour Entitlement Portal

The Department for Education (DfE) provides an Eligibility Checking System (ECS) to allow you to check online and in real time the validity of eligibility codes issued by HMRC to working parents eligible for 30 Hours Free Childcare. These hours are also referred to as "extended hours" to differentiate from the first 15 hours that all 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to.

Providers must check if a child is entitled to claim extended hours before offering the place. Children can be approved by HMRC as meeting the **eligible** criteria based on them being from working families, however in order to be **entitled** to claim extended hours, children **MUST MEET ALL** of the below criteria:

1. Be in the term **after** their 3rd birthday at the very earliest
2. Be approved as eligible the term **before** they wish to start claiming extended hours
3. Continue to be in the eligible period **when** they begin their extended hours claim
4. **Not** be in a school reception place

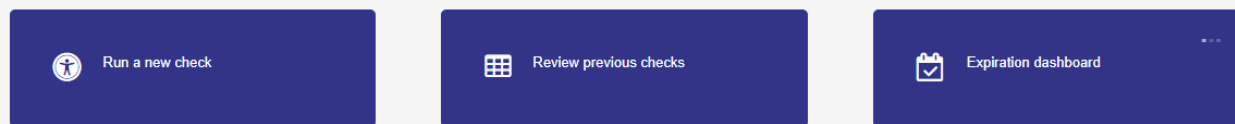
Approved/renewed by:

31st March - Extended hours from Summer (1st April - 31st August)  
31st August - Extended hours from Autumn (1st September - 31st December)  
31st December - Extended hours from Spring (1st January - 31st March)

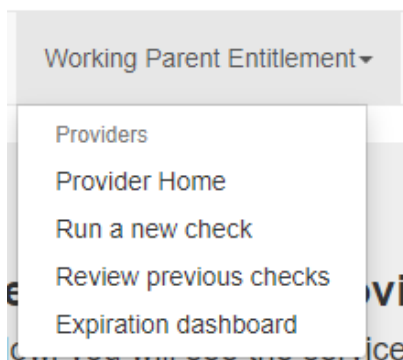
Parents/carers must renew their eligibility with HMRC up to every 3 months or fall into the Grace Period. Children cannot begin a new extended hours claim during their Grace Period, they can only continue an existing extended hours claim to the end of the Grace Period.

More information on extended hours rules can be found in the Code of Practice online at <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/schools-childcare/fel-funding-providers>.

The Local Authority is unable to query the application or reconfirmation processes. HMRC have the sole responsibility for determining 30 hours eligibility. Queries about ineligibility need to be taken up directly with HMRC. Tel: 0300 123 4097



Selecting the 'Working Parent entitlement' text, Top Left of the screen, brings up a menu which replicates the three large buttons on the Working Parent Entitlement home screen.



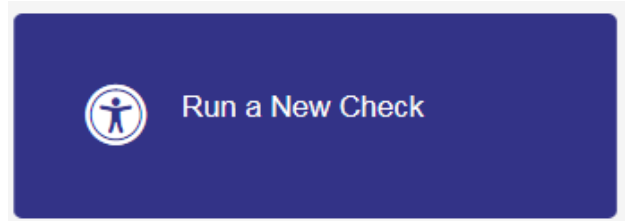
Note: These are particularly useful as shortcuts to the applications if you also use the Headcount Portal

## SECTION 3 – Eligibility Check

When a carer presents a Working Parent reference number for their child, you can check their status by selecting;

[Run a New Check](#)

This will allow you to enter the Child and Carer details to send to the Eligibility Checking System (ECS).



You will be presented with a section like below, and can start typing the child's name.

### Run a new check

The Department for Education (DfE) provides an Eligibility Checking System (ECS) to allow you to check online and in real time the validity of eligibility codes issued by HMRC to working parents eligible for Working Parent Entitlement.

Working Parent Entitlement is an expansion of the 30 Hours Free Childcare scheme, where as of September 2025, working parents will be able to claim up to 30 hours per week from the term after the child turns 9 months old. The system can check 30 hour entitlement for 3&4 year old children, as well as 15 hour entitlements of 2 year old children ready for Summer 2024.

You may only perform checks where the parent/carer has given consent for you to do so and when they have agreed that this check information can be shared with the Local Authority and any other providers the child attends.

**Please note:** Typing in a child's name will search for children already on your headcount. If the child is not there already, you will need to enter their name and then click the "Child not found" button below. This will enable you to complete the remaining details.

Child forename *	Child surname *	Child date of birth *	Parent National Insurance number *	Eligibility code *
<input type="text" value="for example John"/>	<input type="text" value="for example Smith"/>	<input type="text" value="for example 30/11/2012"/>	<input type="text" value="for example NM123456C"/>	<input type="text" value="for example 5000100501"/>

If the child has already been entered on one of your headcounts, they will be attached to your setting and will appear in a list that populates below. You should select the child, then enter the National Insurance Number of the parent that made the application, and the Eligibility Code provided.

If the child does not appear, you should click the "Child Not Found" button below and add them as a new child for checking. This is known as an Ad-Hoc Check.

Child forename *	Child surname *	Child date of birth *	Parent National Insurance number *	Eligibility code *
<input type="text" value="Jill"/>	<input type="text" value="Brown"/>	<input type="text" value="for example 30/11/2012"/>	<input type="text" value="for example NM123456C"/>	<input type="text" value="for example 5000100501"/>

No results

You will then be able to add the date of birth, the National Insurance Number of the parent that made the application, and the Eligibility Code provided. If you have selected the child from a list of children populated, some of this information may be added automatically.

Child forename *	Child surname *	Child date of birth *	Parent National Insurance number *	Eligibility code *
<input type="text" value="Jill"/>	<input type="text" value="Brown"/>	<input type="text" value="01/08/2020"/>	<input type="text" value="AB123456C"/>	<input type="text" value="50012345678"/>

## Important Note About Checking Eligibility

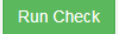
When running an eligibility check for a child already attached to your setting, the system will save their eligibility result to the Local Authority's database. This will ensure that the LA has a record that the child is eligible and can take the working parent entitlement.

If the child is not yet attached to your headcount on the system and you would like to perform a check, you can add the child's details in manually. This is referred to as an "Ad-Hoc Check". You will need to enter the Child's Legal Forename and Surname, Date of Birth, the National Insurance Number of the parent that made the application, and the Eligibility Code provided.

If this is done this will still return a check, but because the LA does not have a matching record for this child it will not be saved to the LA's database. As such, when you perform your next headcount the child will not show as being eligible for the working parent hours. You MUST run another check after they have been added to your headcount to update their record. Without this, the LA will not have a record that the child is eligible for these hours, which could affect your headcount.

You may wish to perform an "Ad-Hoc Check" if, for example, a parent wished their child to start at your setting straight away and you wanted to confirm before the next headcount task that the child is entitled to the working parent entitlement.

Note: You must ensure that any children on your headcount that will be claiming Working Parent Entitlement have had an eligibility check via your setting. You should not take a reference number at face value or take confirmation from elsewhere (e.g. a previous provider saying the child was eligible). The LA will not be held liable for any failure of the provider to confirm a child's eligibility.

When you have added all of the details, click .


If the check is eligible, you will receive a response as per below. The notification will include the Eligibility Start Date, Eligibility End Date, and the Grace Period End Date.

Child forename *	Child surname *	Child date of birth *	Parent National Insurance number *	Eligibility code *
<input type="text" value="Jill"/>	<input type="text" value="Brown"/>	<input type="text" value="01/08/2020"/>	<input type="text" value="AB123456C"/>	<input type="text" value="50012345678"/>


[Eligible code – you must check dates meet Entitlement criteria \(as per Code of Practice 1:8\)](#)

01-Sep-2023 Autumn Term is the earliest start date for working families entitlement

This eligibility code is valid from 07-Aug-2023 to 19-May-2024, with a grace period to 31-Aug-2024. Remember, children cannot start a new Working Parent Entitlement hours claim during their grace period, only continue an existing Working Parent Entitlement hours claim.

 The parent or carer must reconfirm their eligibility with HMRC between 21-Apr-2024 and 19-May-2024 to keep their entitlement. HMRC will notify the parent or carer when they need to reconfirm.

ELIGIBILITY is where a parent meets the working criteria to be approved by HMRC. This is NOT the same as ENTITLEMENT, where a child must be approved as eligible the term before they start claiming and remain eligible by the time they start their Working Parent Entitlement hours claim. For more information, refer to the Code of Practice at <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/schools-childcare/fel-funding-providers>



Providers must ensure they read and understand the message provided, and are aware of how the scheme works (as per the latest version of the Code of Practice). Although a child might be approved by HMRC as meeting the eligible working parent criteria, they are only entitled to claim from the term after this was approved by HMRC at the earliest. Providers will not be funded for children who are not entitled to claim.

The LA will regularly perform checks on all children where their Working Parent Eligibility is known, and inform providers should any children fall into the Grace Period or if the Grace Period is coming to an end.



If the check returns as eligible but “no term available” this is because the child was either applied for too late to claim in the current term, or will need to have their code renewed before they can claim in an upcoming term.

If the check is not eligible, you will receive a “not eligible” result. If the code is correct but the child’s details do not match the HMRC application the check will return as not eligible. It is important that parents and providers only use the child’s legal names as per their birth certificate.

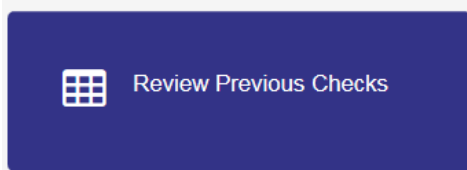
---

Note: The Local Authority do **NOT** have any ability to review any issues with eligibility codes. Queries about ineligibility need to be taken up directly with HMRC.

---

## SECTION 4 – Previous Checks

By selecting **Review Previous Checks** you can check existing application details.



You can filter by Name / Application Reference / etc, and search for specific details.

### Checks run up to the age of 5 years and 6 months

Use this screen to view checks that you have done.

#### Existing child checks

Age	Child	Earliest start date for Working parent entitlement place	Eligibility code	Check last run	Eligible from	Eligible to	Grace period end	Check status	From Citizen Portal	Further action needed
3	Bob Smith (20/04/2020) - AJ987654B	01/Jan/2024 Spring Term	50098765432	14/03/2024	12/09/2023	21/05/2024	31/08/2024	Eligible		<input type="checkbox"/> Show all

#### Adhoc checks

Age	Child	Earliest start date for Working parent entitlement place	Eligibility code	Check last run	Eligible from	Eligible to	Grace period end	Check status	From Citizen Portal	Further action needed
3	Jill Brown (01/09/2020) - AB123456C	01/Sep/2023 Autumn Term	50012345678	14/03/2024	07/08/2023	19/05/2024	31/08/2024	Eligible		<input type="checkbox"/> Show all

Children who are existing on your FEL Headcount already will appear in the “Existing Child Checks” section. The Local Authority will have a record of these children having been checked and will know when they are eligible until because of your check.

Note: Providers should review this page periodically to keep on top of the eligibility and grace periods for children. Where children are nearing the end of the eligibility end date providers may wish to prompt the parent/carer to renew their eligibility to confirm continuing childcare.

After receiving an eligible check result, the LA will be able to conduct further checks against the child, and inform providers if the child falls out of eligibility.

As mentioned in Section 3, children who appear in the “Ad-Hoc Checks” section are children who aren’t already on your headcount, and the system will not send a copy of the check to the LA. You can still review any Ad-Hoc Checks that you have made for your own reference.

Note: Checks that appear as “Not Found” means that the child has not been found as eligible, not that the reference number itself has not been found on Sheffield City Council’s database. All the details must match the application made by the parent to HMRC to find a match. Other issues with the check may detail a more specific result in the Check Status.

# SECTION 5 – Expiration Dashboard

By selecting **Review Previous Checks** you can check existing application details.



This page will show you by default any children you have previously run a check for who will be coming towards their Grace Period End Date in the next 180 days.

You can filter by Name / Application Reference / etc, and search for specific details.

## Entitlement expiration dashboard

Use this screen to track eligibility which is due to expire.

Further action needed **Yes** Days **180** Eligibility filter **Grace period ending in the next 180 days** **Search**

Filter using any keyword

Age	Child	Earliest start date for Working parent entitlement place	Eligibility code	Eligible from	Eligible to	Grace period end	Eligibility was last checked on	Notes (further action needed)
3	Jill Brown (01/09/2020)	01/09/2023 Autumn Term	50012345678	07/08/2023	19/05/2024	31/08/2024	14/03/2024 Eligible Recheck now	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Update
3	Bob Smith (20/04/2020)	01/01/2024 Spring Term	50098765432	12/09/2023	21/05/2024	31/08/2024	14/03/2024 Eligible Recheck now	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Update

The cell highlight colours indicate the below:

**Green:** Code is currently in the eligible period

**Orange:** Code is currently in the eligible period and within the 1 month renewal period

**Red:** Code has fallen into the Grace Period

**Black:** The Grace Period has expired

In addition to the filters, you can change the search settings on the dashboard.

To change between children who need further action and those who don't select one of the options in the

“Further Action Needed” dropdown **Further Action Needed** **Any** **No** **Yes**

You can also change the number of days the system is searching through. The default is 180 days however you can change this to find children who will be falling out of eligibility/etc in a shorter time frame. The “Eligibility Filter” will automatically update based on this figure.

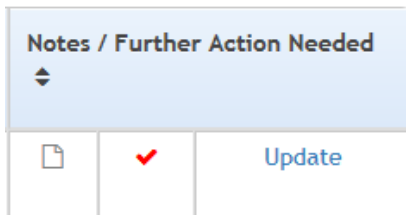
Further Action Needed **Yes** Days **60** Eligibility Filter **Grace Period Ending in the next 60 days**

You can also change the search between upcoming eligibility end dates, upcoming grace period end dates, and expired grace period end dates.

Eligibility Filter **Eligibility Ending in the next 60 days** Grace Period Ending in the next 60 days Grace Period Expired in the last 60 days

Once you have refined your search criteria, click **Search**.

Next to each row in the dashboard, there are 2 icons and an “Update” button. The file icon will change if there are any notes on the record. The tick signifies that the child will still need to be checked (a cross if no follow up action /the record is no longer relevant).



To add notes to a child’s eligibility check, you must click the “Update” button.

Once in the Notes section, you can add any notes necessary for the record. This can be useful for any reminders (such as the parent has stated they will provide evidence by a particular date).

### Notes (further action needed)

Is further action needed?

Case notes. This is not shared with other providers.

Child has left the setting as of 01/03/2024. Our provision does not need to keep checking this code.

101 / 2000

Cancel

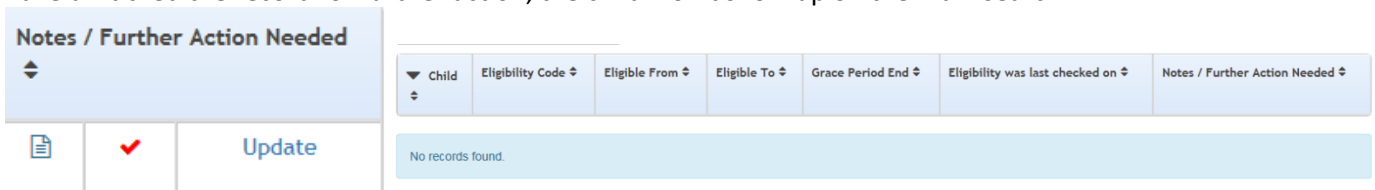
Save

If you do not want the record to appear in the list of “further action needed” file, you can un-tick the “Is further action needed?” box. This is useful if the child has left your setting and you do not need to be reminded that their eligibility is coming to an end.

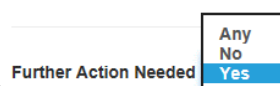
Is further action needed?

When you have finished, click Save to return to the dashboard.

If you have added a note, the file icon will appear with text to indicate that you have added a note to the file. If you have un-ticked the record for further action, the child won’t show up on the main search.



To see any records that no longer need checking, change the



search to “No” or “Any”.

## SECTION 6 – Local Authority Audits of the HMRC Codes

The initial validation checks carried out by providers are:

- Once for existing children already attached to their headcount in the council's database
- Twice for new children not already on the system (an "Ad-Hoc" check done when the child first queries about a place, and an "Existing Child" check once the child has been added onto the headcount)

Providers DO NOT need to carry out subsequent checks when a parent /carer reconfirms their eligibility up to every three months.

The LA will carry out the required audits of the HMRC codes daily. The 'Expiration Dashboard' on the portal (see section 5) will automatically update the start, end and grace period dates for children on the providers list.

The Expiration Dashboard on the portal will highlight all children who may be falling out of eligibility.

Providers are advised to utilise the Expiration Dashboard to keep abreast of start, end and grace period dates. Providers may recheck or reconfirm any child's eligibility at any time, by clicking the 'recheck now' link on the Dashboard results table.

The LA will not fund hours for children who are not entitled to claim in that period. Providers should confirm entitlement using the methods outlined in this document and the Code of Practice before offering any extended hours to the child.

## SECTION 7 – Further Information

### Parent/Carer information

Unlike the Two Year Old Eligibility Checker, childcare providers do not have the facility to assist carers with making applications for their children. This is because all eligibility checks are performed directly by HMRC.

Carers wishing to apply or find out more information should be signposted to the following places;

- Childcare Choices:  
<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>
- Working Parent Childcare and Tax Free Childcare Applications:  
<https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/par/app/applynow>
- Working Parent Childcare Telephone Helpline: 0300 123 4097

It is the responsibility of Parents/Carers to renew their eligibility with HMRC by the eligibility end date. HMRC will notify parents when they need to do this.

For guidance on other areas of the Provider Portal, please review the Provider Portal User Guide or the Two Year Old Funding User Guide. Both can be found online at <http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/schools-childcare/fel-funding-providers>