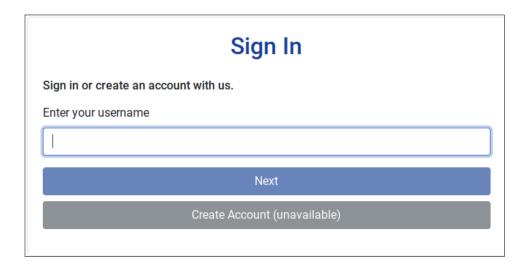
AFC/RBWM PROVIDER PORTAL USER GUIDE

This guide is designed to help childcare providers input funding data into the Synergy Provider Portal, a secure website that allows providers to enter funding data for submission to AfC. The guide will take you through the process step-by-step.

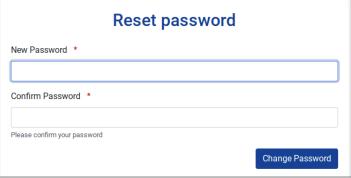
Logging in to Provider Portal

Please go to the following link:-

https://live.cloud.servelec-synergy.com/AFC RBWM/Synergy/providers



Usernames are issued by AfC, and will be sent to new users along with an initial password, which you will then be asked to change:



Add your own choice of new password twice. Passwords will need to meet security requirements. Passwords must include a minimum of 8 characters, one capital letter and one number.

If you forget your password or are locked out, email: rbwm.earlyyears-childcare@achievingforchildren.org.uk or nicola.jordan@achievingforchildren.org.uk or charmagne.niles@achievingforchildren.org.uk

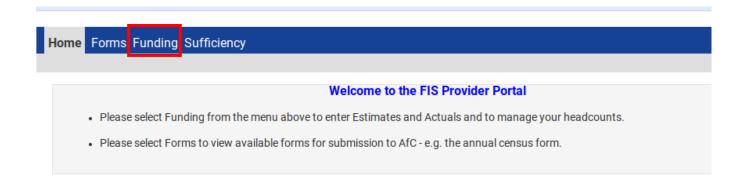
PLEASE do not use the 'Forgot Password' or 'Create Account' buttons as these will not work.

User names and passwords are issued to **individuals only** and are <u>strictly</u> for use **only by that individual**. **THEY MUST NEVER BE SHARED**. A setting can have has as many users as it likes, but they must all access provider portal with their own username.

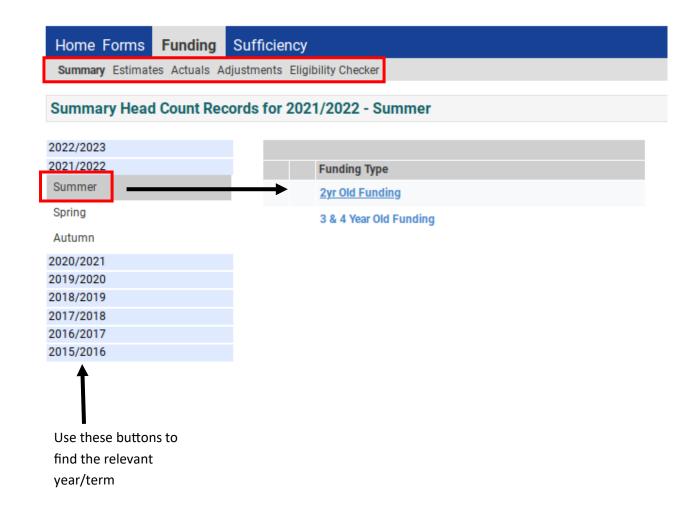
Any setting found to be sharing user names may have its access to the portal suspended.

Getting Started:

To access the funding area, switch the selection in the main menu from Home to Funding...



- You will now see an additional menu for the Funding section.
- The screen will display all terms for which for your setting has funding information recorded. You'll be able to view one dataset per term for 3&4-year-olds, and one for 2-year-olds, provided both are relevant for your setting.
- The information available in Provider Portal will include backdated terms for the current registration (note: if you re-register with Ofsted you become a new setting and history will no longer be displayed)



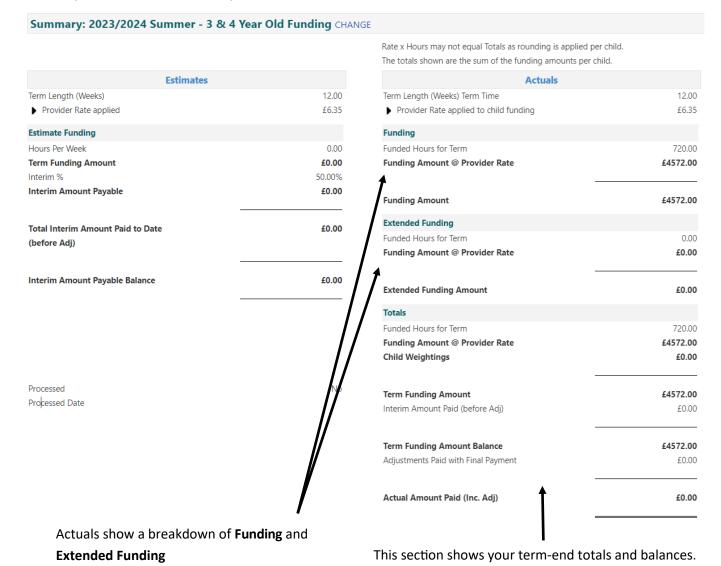
Reading the data:

After selecting your term, click on the relevant funding type to view the data, e.g. 3&4 year-old funding:



- You'll see the breakdown of payments for the selected term. Estimates will show the first (Interim) payment made for the term (70% of the estimated total). Actuals show the real figures after the children have been entered and verified by AFC, and the balance due, minus the Interim.
- The Actuals column for 3&4-year-olds will show a breakdown between **Funding** and **Extended Funding** if this is relevant to your setting. **Extended Funding** refers to any additional hours claimed by children from a 'Working Family' e.g. this could extend their hours from 15 to 30 Hours.
- The Actuals column for 2-year-olds will show a similar breakdown between Funding and Expanded
 Funding. The section titled Funding refers to 2-year-olds claiming a 'Disadvantaged' entitlement, while
 Expanded Funding refers to those claiming a 'Working Family' entitlement.

3&4-year-old breakdown example:



2-year-old breakdown example:

Summary: 2023/2024 Summer - 2yr Old Funding CHANGE Rate x Hours may not equal Totals as rounding is applied per child. The totals shown are the sum of the funding amounts per child. Estimates **Actuals** 12 00 12.00 Term Length (Weeks) Term Length (Weeks) Term Time £9.04 ▶ Provider Rate applied ▶ Provider Rate applied to child funding £9.04 **Estimate Funding** Funding Hours Per Week 0.00 Funded Hours for Term 540.00 Funding Amount @ Provider Rate **Term Funding Amount** £0.00 £4881.60 50.00% Interim % Interim Amount Payable £0.00 Funding Amount £4881.60 **Expanded Funding** £0.00 Total Interim Amount Paid to Date Funded Hours for Term 0.00 (before Adj) **Funding Amount @ Provider Rate** £0.00 Interim Amount Payable Balance £0.00 **Expanded Funding Amount** £0.00 Funded Hours for Term 540.00 **Funding Amount @ Provider Rate** £4881.60 **Child Weightings** £0.00 Processed £4881.60 **Term Funding Amount** Processed Date Interim Amount Paid (before Adj) £0.00 **Term Funding Amount Balance** £4881.60 Adjustments Paid with Final Payment £0.00 Actual Amount Paid (Inc. Adj) £0.00 Actuals show a breakdown of Funding and **Expanded Funding** This section shows your term-end totals and balances.

<u>Important - payment structure</u>: You will receive your total funding amount in two parts - the **interim** payment (70%) at the beginning of term (calculated after your Estimate has been submitted and verified) and the **balance** payment at the end of term (calculated once all children have been submitted and verified).

If you view the summary page at the beginning of term, it will be blank. Bear in mind that the data is live and will update as data goes on to the RBWM/ AfC system, so if you view it mid-term you might see incomplete data

• The information below will only update after AfC have processed your final payment for the term and will not reflect dates you receive payments...

Processed Yes
Processed Date 06-Sep-2017

Submitting data:

Estimates:

At the end of the previous term, you will need to submit an Estimated claim to RBWM/ AfC of the total hours you expect to be funded for in the subsequent term. Once the estimate has been verified, a financial value will be calculated, and you will receive an interim payment that equates to 70% of this projected amount. There are no children's details recorded or needed at this stage.

To submit your estimate, select Estimates from the menu:



You should see this screen:



- The number of funded weeks is set by RBWM/ AfC to the default figure for that term. The autumn term is 14 weeks, the spring term is 12 weeks and the summer term is 12 weeks. If a different (lower) number of weeks applies to your setting, you will need to change this figure
- You need to enter the estimated number of hours per week you expect to be funded for. For example, if
 you expect to have 10 children attending, each claiming 15 hours per week, you would enter 150 hours
 here.
- If you are providing Extended Hours (3&4yo) or Expanded Hours (2yo), your estimate should be a combined total of all estimated hours (e.g. 10 children x 15 Universal + 15 Extended = 300).

Click 'Calculate', and the system will multiply your estimated figure by the number of weeks to give you the estimated total hours for the term.



- If you are happy with the figure, click 'Send Claim'
- Look for the Submission Successful message for confirmation:



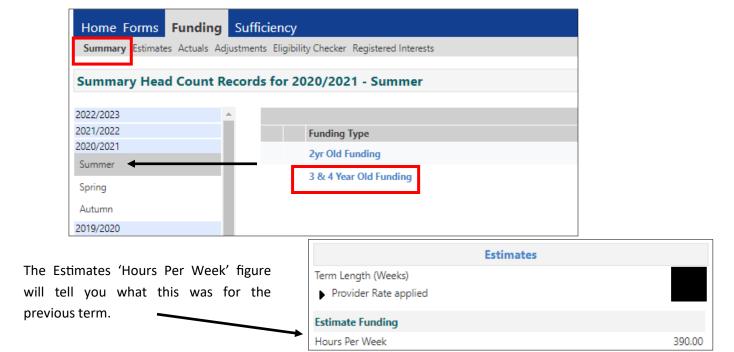
If you have no idea what your estimate should be:

You can access the previous relevant term's data for a guideline. For example, if you needed an estimate for Summer 2023/24 3&4-year-olds, you could view Summer 2022/23's figures from your summary screen...

Click change to view your available terms again:



Select the relevant previous year/term and funding type from your list, and switch the view to Summary:



If this figure is not available, you can still use last term's Actuals to calculate an estimate - divide the Funded Hours by the number of weeks in the term



Points worth remembering about Estimates:

You can submit a revised estimate as many times as you like until the estimate has been processed by AfC. At this point your estimate will be locked in.

Factor into your calculations children attending only part of the term. However, don't worry if your estimate is inaccurate. The balance payments will ensure you receive the correct amount of funding for the term.

Don't overestimate in an attempt to claim your whole payment in advance. AfC will check all estimates and will query and adjust as necessary if the estimates appear too high.

If it transpires that your interim payment is more than the total funding due for the term, AfC may invoice you for overpayment.

Eligibility Checks for Extended and Expanded Hours

Before submitting your Actuals, you will need to check the eligibility of any 'Working Family' children claiming **Extended (3&4yo)** or **Expanded (2yo)** hours. The portal has a built-in Eligibility Checker to enable you to perform these checks both before and during the process of submitting Actuals.

If you do not have any Extended/Expanded hours claims and wish to skip straight to the Actuals submission, please go to page 9 of this guide.

<u>Please be aware at all times</u>: A child's eligibility for funding during the term is still primarily determined by their date of birth. An eligibility check determines a 'Working Family's eligibility for Extended/Expanded hours ONLY. The portal will still block you from entering any children who are not of the correct age at the beginning of the term.

Eligibility Code checks:

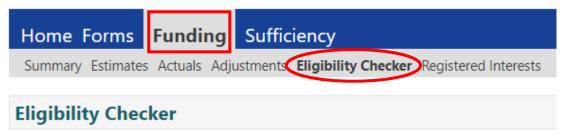
Permission!

Prior to undertaking any online code check you must obtain the parent's written permission in compliance with data processing regulations. The parent must complete at least part 2 of the Parent Authorisation Form and sign it, and this will allow you to gather the necessary information and permission to undertake the validation check.

Checking an eligibility code prior to submitting actuals / For information:

When you come to enter a child's Extended/Expanded hours, the portal will enforce a mandatory online check to validate those hours. It is possible, however, to perform a code check for information only.

From the Funding menu, select Eligibility Checker, then click on Eligibility Check to start:



Use this area to check if a child is eligible for extended hours. Please click the button below and provide the details as required.

Data Protection Notice - a record of the check is maintained for monitoring purposes. The

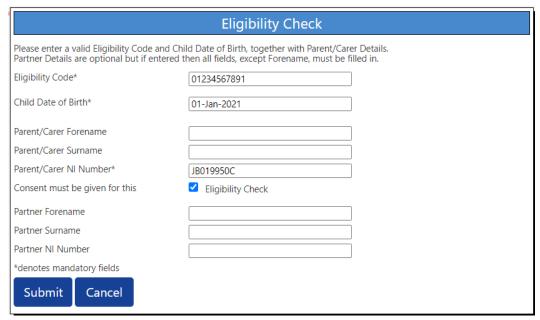


The ECS Checker will pop up.

Only enter the mandatory information as indicated by the asterisks. These are:

- The 11-digit voucher code
- The child's date of birth
- The parent's national insurance number

Then tick the box to indicate that you have permission to perform the check and click Submit.



You should see a result returned instantly. A result displayed in Green with a tick denotes eligibility. This result will display the key dates of when eligibility starts and ends, and when the Grace Period ends.



A result with a red cross denotes that the claimant is not eligible for Extended/Expanded hours:



The portal should also tell you if you have entered an invalid NI number:

Parent/Carer Surname		
Parent/Carer NI Number*	JB199950Z	This field is required and must be valid
Consent must be given for this	☑ Eligibility Check	

These ECS Checks can be performed outside of the process of submitting hours, to inform your offers of extended hours places before the term begins.

However, you will need to perform the check again when entering the child's hours into the Actuals screen.

Submitting data:

Actuals

This is where you submit details of the children attending your setting



If this is your first term, or if you had no eligible children from the previous term to carry over, the screen will look like this. You need to add all your children for this term. Skip to <u>Adding New Children</u> on page 10.



Managing Carried-Over Children.

If you have children carried over from the previous term, you will see them listed like this, with their hours returned to zero.

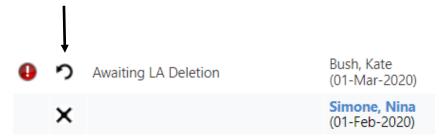


If any of your carried-over children are not attending again this term, you need to request a deletion. To do this click on the cross shown to the left. Then confirm the request when you see this message:

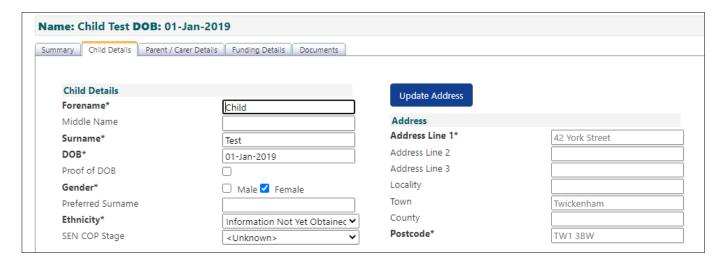


You'll see the status change to 'Awaiting LA Deletion' - the child will not disappear from your headcount until the request has been processed by AfC.

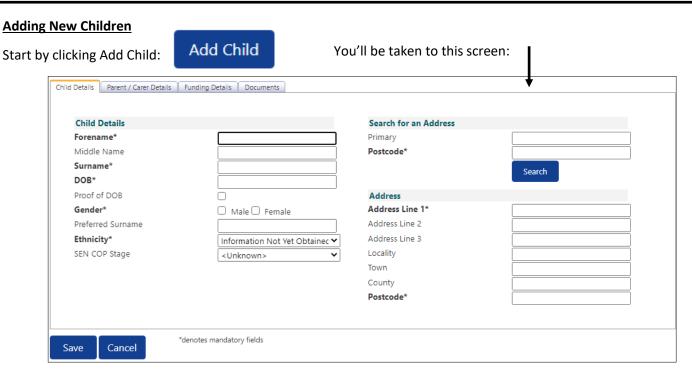
You can still cancel a request for deletion up to the point it is processed by AfC. To cancel the request click the 'Undo' button indicated below.



If the child is attending again, click on their name to update them with the new hours for this term. You will find that any known Child Details or Parent/Carer details are retained in those tabs:



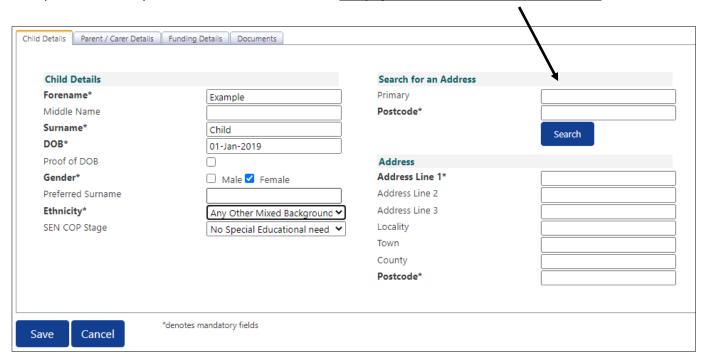
You now need to update the hours in the Funding Details tab (including the addition of Extended/Expanded Hours for any eligible children), then add your new children. Both are explained in more detail in the **Adding New Children** section that follows.



There are three tabs to complete for the child data entry. The first is the Child Details tab

- You do not have to write something in every box. Asterisks denote mandatory fields.
- Complete the child's personal details and move on to the Parent / Carer and Funding Details tabs
- To save time, don't click Save until you have completed all tabs. However, you can save a partial entry and complete it later if you wish.

Complete the child's personal details on the first tab - this page includes an online address search!

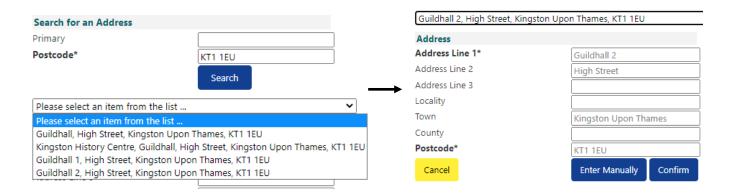


Using the address search:

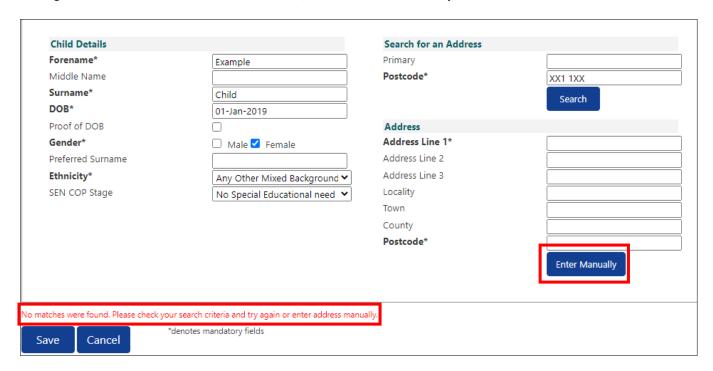
Please use the address search to find the child's address. To do this, type in the postcode and click Search



If there is more than one address for that postcode, you'll be presented with a list to select from. Select that address and you will see it appear in full below. Then click **Confirm**



Manual entry of the address is still available - please only use this if you are unable to locate the address using the search. After an unsuccessful search, click the **Enter Manually** button to activate those fields.



When you have finished click on the Parent/Carer Details tab to continue:



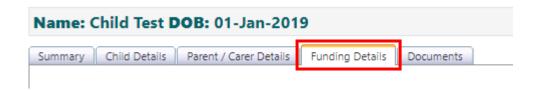
Parent/Carer Details:

- If the child is only claiming standard Funded Hours (3/4yo) or Disadvantaged funding (2yo), the Parent/Carer detail entry is **optional**, however...
- You should still fill in as many Parent/Carer details as you can, as these details are used for EYPP checking.
- This entry is **mandatory** if the child is from a 'Working Family' claiming **Extended** (3&4yo) or **Expanded** (2yo) Hours as the details are required to check the eligibility of the claim.
- Please only fill in the details of one parent do not complete the partner details, this is not required.



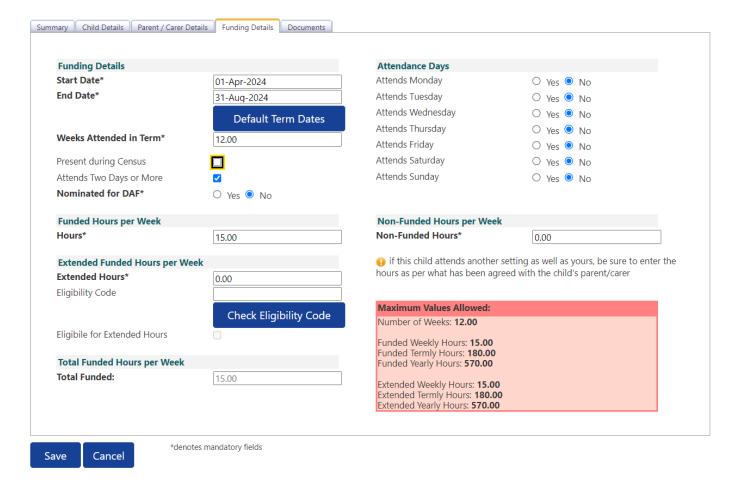
You must indicate that you have consent to use these details to carry out the relevant checks

Now move on to the **Funding Details** tab to continue:



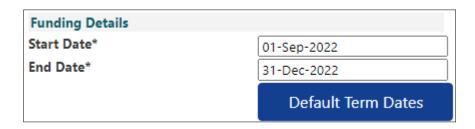
Completing Funding Details

The Funding Details tab requires some key information that needs to be considered carefully, so the guide will now take you through it field-by-field...



Start/End Dates

You can use the 'Default Term Dates' button to automatically add the dates covering the full term. You will need to amend these dates if the child is not attending for the full term (in which case use their exact start and/or end date as appropriate).



Weeks Attended in Term:

Like the Start/End dates, the number of weeks attended will default to the full term (14 in Autumn, 12 in Spring and Summer). You should amend this figure if the child is not attending the full term.

Weeks Attended in Term*	14.00

Attends Two Days or More:

If the number of weekly hours (either Universal or Extended) is to exceed 12.5, you must tick Attends Two Days or More. The system will invalidate your entry when saving if you fill in, for example, 15 hours, but have not ticked the box.

Attends Two Days or More

Nominated for DAF (Disability Access Funding - available once per financial year)

If the child is eligible to receive Disability Access Funding, answer Yes to the next question. This will trigger an automatic addition of funding for this child, which you will see reflected under 'Adjustments' on your statements. If the child is not eligible for DAF, you must answer No here.



Hours per Week (Funded, Extended/Expanded, Non-Funded)

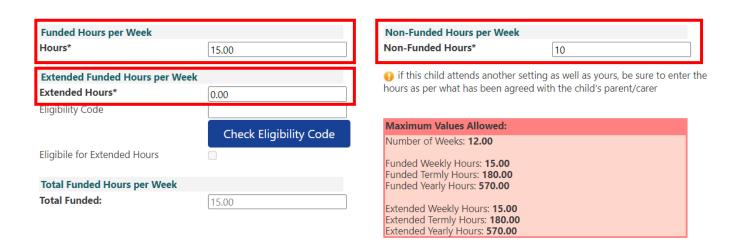
3&4 year-olds

Funded - Refers to standard hours (up to 15 per week) available to all 3/4 year-olds

Extended - Refers to additional hours (up to 15 per week) available to eligible 'Working Family' children (these must be validated by an online check)

Non-Funded - Refers to any other hours attended by the child not covered by either of the above, i.e. paid for in full by the parent.

In the example below, the child is attending your setting for 25 hours a week, claiming the maximum 15 Funded Hours (agreed in your contract with the parent) plus a further 10 hours that are not subject to any EEF Funding (added in **Non-Funded Hours**). There is no claim for Extended Hours, **so this field must be set to zero**. (Extended Hours entries are covered in more detail on page 16...)



Hours per Week (Funded, Extended/Expanded, Non-Funded)

2-year-olds

For 2-year-olds, the basis for Funding must be indicated before you enter the hours. You must select either Disadvantaged or Working Family



The hours you can enter will be depend on the selection.

In both examples below, the child is attending your setting for 15 hours a week, claiming the maximum 15 Funded Hours (agreed in your contract with the parent) only, with no further attendance (no Non-Funded Hours

Disadvantaged Funding:



Funded - Refers to standard hours (up to 15 per week) available to 'Disadvantaged' 2-year-olds. An online check is **not** required to verify eligibility.

Non-Funded - Refers to any other hours attended by the child not covered by either of the above, i.e. paid for in full by the parent.

Working Family Funding:



Expanded Hours - Refers to hours (up to 15 per week) available to 'Working Family' 2-year-olds. An online check <u>is</u> required to verify eligibility (Expanded Hours entries are covered in more detail on page 16...)

Non-Funded - Refers to any other hours attended by the child not covered by either of the above, i.e. paid for in full by the parent.

Extended/Expanded Hours:

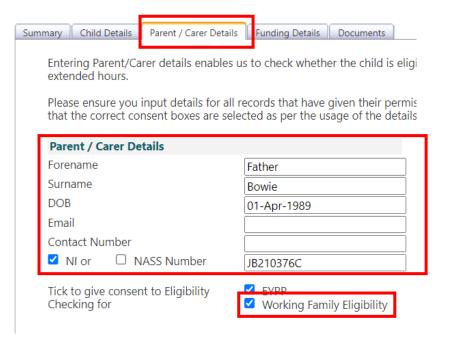
Extended hours (up to 15 additional funded hours for 3/4 year-olds) and **Expanded** Hours (up to 15 funded hours for 2-year-olds) are available to children whose parents meet the 'Working Family' eligibility criteria. Any claim for these hours must be validated before submitting the claim to the LA. The parent will provide you with an 11-digit eligibility code that they obtain from HMRC, and which you need to validate with an online check. The space on the Funding Details screen for Extended/Expanded Hours is supported by a space for the code, a button to perform the live check, and a check box to let you know the claim has been validated successfully.



- For a 3/4year-old, If Extended Hours **do not** apply to the child, **you must enter a Zero in the field.** The Total Funded field calculates the hours you have entered in both boxes:
- If Extended Hours are being claimed, enter the number in the field and enter the 11-digit-code supplied by the parent



- The blue 'Check Eligibility Code' button triggers a live validation check.
- Before you press this, check that the parent details are completed on the Parent/Carer Details tab the
 check will fail unless the parent's Name, DOB and NI Number can be read, and the box to confirm you have
 consent for the check is ticked.



Extended/Expanded Hours validation:



When you press the button to perform the eligibility check, these are the possible results you will see...

Eligibility not found



Eligibility for working family hours was not obtained. You will only be able to claim for funded hours.

Not enough information entered to perform the check



ECS Check returned the following error: Please enter a valid Eligibility Code and Child Date of Birth, together with Parent/Carer Details. Please review your entered values and try again.

If you see this message, any of the following could be missing:

- 11-digit eligibility code
- Valid child DOB
- Parent name, DOB and NI Number (on the Parent/Carer Details tab)

Valid claim, eligibility confirmed



The Eligibility Code has been found and eligibility for extended hours has been obtained.

If you receive the green message, you should also see a tick appear in the box just beneath the Extended/ Expanded Hours to confirm the child's hours are valid.



CLICK SAVE AS SOON AS YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE CHECK!

It's very important after receiving the 'green light' for the Extended Hours code that you save the child in your headcount immediately - if you change anything in the child's record after doing the check, the system will make you perform the eligibility check again.

Advice on entering Hours Attended:

- Any hours entered under either Funded or Extended/Expanded Hours must only be what is agreed in the contract with the parent (a signed Parent Authorisation Form for your setting). Any hours the parent is claiming at a different setting are not a factor.
- The Funding Details tab shows maximum hours allowed for both term and year:

 Maximum Values Allowed: Number of Weeks: 12.00

Maximum Values Allowed:

Number of Weeks: 12.00

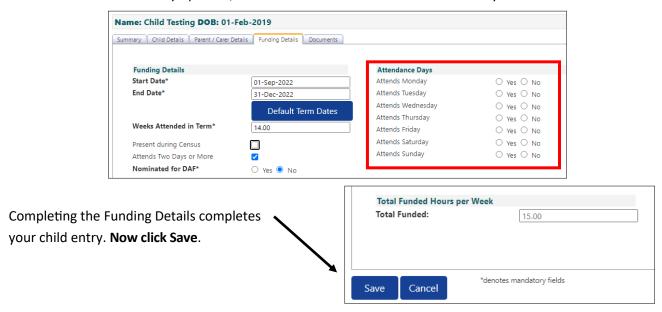
Funded Weekly Hours: 15.00
Funded Termly Hours: 180.00
Funded Vearly Hours: 570.00

Extended Weekly Hours: 15.00
Extended Termly Hours: 180.00
Extended Yearly Hours: 570.00

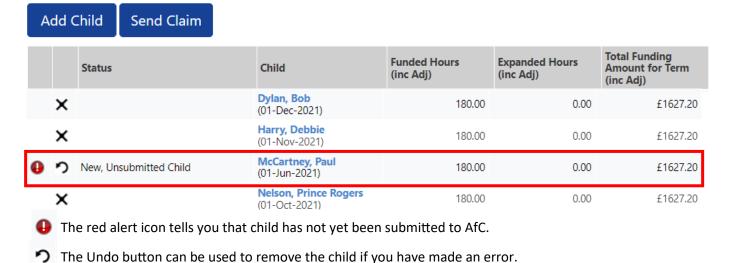
 If you have any queries about what hours you should be entering, please contact the RBWM Early Years team

Attendance Days:

Use of this feature is entirely optional, but could be used as a useful reminder for yourselves.



The new child will appear in your headcount with a status of New Unsubmitted Child



Submitting the Actuals Headcount

To submit your headcount, click the Send Claim button:



If the Send Claim button is not available to click this means that either:



- You have no changes to your headcount to submit
- The window for submission is not currently open full details of submission dates can be found on AfC Info

Changes to headcount management from Autumn 2022:

- The headcount was previously only open for one window in the term
- Due to a change in payment structure, the headcount will now be open in multiple submission windows
- You are now expected to record changes to children already submitted e.g. if you submit a child early in the term with the maximum number of weeks/hours attendance, but that child leaves your setting before the end of term. In these circumstances, you will need to amend the hours, and resubmit the headcount during a later submission window

Grace period alert:

If you have Extended/Expanded hours children in your headcount, it is likely you will see a number of yellow alert symbols. These are telling you that the child has entered the **grace period** for their eligibility. This means they can continue to claim Extended/Expanded hours only until the end of the grace period stated unless the parent renews their claim with HMRC.



• For any carried-over Extended/Expanded Hours child in the headcount, make sure you always re-do the online check on the Funding Details screen. This will update the existing eligibility info (and you will see if the parent has renewed since last term).



For all information about the funding process, visit AfC's information website:

AfC Info

Contact:

For all queries regarding the Early Education Funding process, contact the AfC Early Years team* at:

rbwm.earlyyears-childcare@achievingforchildren.org.uk

^{*}Please be advised that the Early Years team will not be able to assist with technical queries, such as problems with your computer hardware or internet connection.