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Childcare expansion capital grant

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Funding to support the expansion of childcare places in Blackpool

The funding supports the introduction of 30 hours of funded childcare for children over the age of nine months.

- Qualifying working parents of 2-year-olds able to access 15 hours a week from April 2024
- Qualifying working parents of children aged 9-months up to 3-years-olds able to access 15 hours a week from September 2024
- And qualifying working parents from 9-months to 3-years-olds able to access 30 hours a week from September 2025

and

- Wraparound provision for primary age children, for projects providing support for 38 weeks per year from 8.00am until 6.00pm

Whilst it is ultimately up to local authorities to determine how best to prioritise this funding to address local priorities, it must be spent on capital projects, and is being provided to meet the capital costs associated with projects that help ensure sufficient places for children taking up an early years place through the expanded 30 hours entitlement for qualifying working parents (from the term following the child reaching 9-months to the term in which they turn 3-years-old); and increasing the supply of wraparound childcare for primary-school aged children.

Eligibility

The funding can be used to provide new places in a range of provider types, where these are offering the 30-hours early years entitlement and wraparound childcare for primary age children. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Private, voluntary and independent providers:
 - Private group-based providers, registered with Ofsted (e.g., pre-schools and day nurseries)
 - Voluntary group-based providers, registered with Ofsted (including community groups, charities, churches, or religious groups);
 - Independent providers offering the early years entitlements.
- State-funded schools:
 - Local authority maintained primary, infant, and junior schools (including special schools) offering early years entitlements
 - primary, infant, or junior academies (including special schools) offering early years entitlements
- Maintained nursery schools
- Childminders and childcare on domestic premises. Where a local authority is considering providing funding to a childcare provider with domestic premises on site (including childminders, childcare on domestic premises or other provision where the provision is situated in or alongside domestic premises), they should ensure the nature of what is being requested and why, and how this benefits the childminding setting and children in their care has been clearly demonstrated. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, we would not expect that funding is provided for general refurbishment, replacement or repairs of fittings within the domestic premises.

This grant funding is not intended for:

- Routine maintenance or refurbishment of premises
- General improvements
- Work that does not create additional childcare places
- Capital works to maintain and improve the condition of the school estate, which should continue to be covered by Devolved Formula Capital funding (DFC), the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) or School Condition Allocations (SCA)

- Childcare providers not providing early years entitlements or wraparound care

The funding is provided for capital purposes only

- Funding cannot be used for revenue expenditure of any kind, such as training or staff costs, resources/assets that do not meet the definition of capital expenditure given above (such as toys, books, clothing), etc. If you have doubts about what is capital expenditure, you should contact us for advice

Examples of appropriate projects

- Projects that enable and/or increase access to childcare places for eligible children
- Projects that adapt, re-model or improve existing childcare places to make them suitable for a wider range of needs
- Central capital works required to enable delivery of the entitlement. These could be achieved through:
 - Expansion of existing childcare provision, including expanding existing provision to a different or additional site
 - Remodelling of existing provision to create additional capacity
 - Creation of new childcare places, whether via the creation of new settings, or expanding provision in existing providers
- When proposing changes to existing school provision, local authorities should ensure they have appropriate regard to statutory guidance on making significant changes to maintained schools or, if working with an academy trust, to equivalent guidance on making significant changes to an open academy

Other considerations

Providers will need to consider if local consultation is necessary, any business rates implications and any planning requirements, and any tax and vat implications.

Next steps

- We are asking interested early years and wraparound providers to submit an initial expression of interest
- Applications will be prioritised to settings rated Good or Outstanding by OFSTED
- Projects that create a significant numbers of additional spaces are likely to be given priority
- Those settings that are also contributing towards the cost of any expansion from their own funds will also be given priority
- We would not expect awards to exceed per £25,000 per project. Our total allocation is approximately £200,000 and priority will be given to those projects that are considered best value for money
- If we have an underspend during early rounds of funding we may consider higher awards

What we expect

- Evidence that supports you have unmet need for additional capacity, or may have in the future
- Information about current number of places, number of capped places due to insufficient staff, numbers of potential additional places that could be created with this capital funding
- We would not expect successful applicants to cap places due to insufficient staff numbers
- Details of costings including proposed works, photographs, plans and estimates that may support your request
- If detailed estimates are not available the expression of interest can be considered on a provisional basis with detailed costings to be provided when available, we appreciate settings may need time to plan projects and obtain detailed costs. You may need to a range of competitive quotations.
- Evidence that you have considered longer term sustainability and that your project is best value for money

How we will we decide

- Your application will be assessed according to our criteria above by a panel of council officers
- We may wish to undertake a site visit or take part in further discussions before any funding being agreed, we may also require monitoring visits during any works

Closing date

- At present we are considering applications on an ongoing basis, but may close the fund without notice.

For an application form or further discussion

Please email freeentitlement@blackpool.gov.uk

Blackpool Council

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