

CHILDCARE OFFER BRIEFING PAPER

What is the Childcare Offer?

- The Childcare Offer is a Welsh Government funded scheme that aims to support working parents with childcare costs and to help parents progress into work.
- This offer runs alongside the universal offer for Foundation Phase Nursery education.
- In Monmouthshire, parents can access their FPN education at an LA Nursery or with an approved non-maintained provider.
- LA Nursery provision is 12.5 hours per week; approved non-maintained settings are funded for 10 hours per week.
- During term time, the 30 hours available through the Childcare Offer is made up of a combination of FPN and childcare. If parents don't access Foundation Phase Nursery provision, they can only receive funding for up to 20 hours of free childcare.
- The Childcare Offer is available for 48 weeks of the year; during 9 weeks of the school holidays, the full 30 hours can be taken as childcare.

Who is eligible for the Childcare Offer?

- The Childcare Offer is available to working parents from the term following their child's 3rd birthday until they are offered a place in full time education; in Monmouthshire, this is when they enter Reception in the September following their 4th birthday.
- The criteria for working parents is that both parents / lone parent / carer must earn equivalent to at least 16 hours a week at National Living Wage or National Minimum Wage and neither parent must earn more than £100,000 a year.

How has it been implemented in Monmouthshire?

- Monmouthshire is only an engagement authority; Newport City Council is the delivery authority for the Childcare Offer in Monmouthshire.
- As an engagement authority, we are required to engage with parents and childcare providers to promote the Childcare Offer. We appointed a Childcare Engagement Officer who commenced in January 2019; she supports parents and childcare providers through the application process and has advertised the offer extensively throughout Monmouthshire.
- Newport City Council manage the application process with parents and childcare providers, checking eligibility and distributing the funding.
- They had a few problems initially with their database provider, so there were delays to the application process for the autumn term and parents were unable to use the online application form. These issues have now been resolved and parents are able to complete their application and upload documents online, so the process has been much smoother. From the spring term onwards, childcare providers are also able to log into a portal to submit invoices and attendance data.

Where can parents access the Childcare Offer?

- FPN education can only be accessed in an LA Nursery or with an approved non-maintained provider. We currently have 12 LA nurseries and 27 approved non-maintained providers. Take up of places is monitored termly and we currently have surplus places in all areas of Monmouthshire.
- The childcare element can be accessed with any registered childcare provider. To date, we have 90 providers of different childcare types registered to provide childcare through the Childcare Offer for Monmouthshire families, as follows:
 - Childminders – 27 registered
 - Day nurseries and playgroups – 37 registered
 - Out of county providers – 26 registered

How many Monmouthshire families have taken up the Childcare Offer?

- There were 507 applications for the spring term 2019. As of 5th April 2019, 469 of these had been approved, 22 had been refused as parents were not eligible and 16 were awaiting further information.
- To date, there have been an additional 67 applications received for the summer term 2019 and 43 of these have been approved.