Appendix One - Checking Eligibility

It is the responsibility of the early education and childcare provider to check the eligibility of the children that are submitted onto the Headcount (refer to page 37-42 of the Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for LA’s Feb 2018)

Checking the Eligibility of 2-year-olds

Only 40% of 2-year-olds are eligible for early education.

Criteria 1 - Families in receipt of non-working/working benefits and children who attract Disability Living Allowance

Families who wish to take up a funded early education place in Merton must check their eligibility before they take up a place. Parents can check their eligibility by using the Merton checking service at:

www.merton.gov.uk/fsd

Families will need the following information to complete their check:

- The child's first and last name
- The child's date of birth.
- The parent, carer or guardian's National Insurance (NI) number or National Asylum Support Service (NASS) number.
- The parent, carer or guardian's surname.
- The parent, carer or guardian's address.
- The parent, carer or guardian's date of birth.
- An email address

At the end of the application, if it is successful, a voucher can be downloaded with the code on it. The voucher includes the child’s name and tells the parent when the code is valid from (i.e. the date the child could start in their place).

We recommend that parents save their voucher to their computer or other device as they cannot return to it once the application has been closed.

The outcome of the eligibility check will also be sent to the parent by email if they enter an email address in their application.

Providers must see a copy of the parents voucher or email conforming they are eligible before the child can start in their funded place.

The coding system is quite complex and each record will be checked at the headcount against the datastore.
If a child already has already been issued with a TYF Codes these remain valid and parents do not need to reapply.

As usual providers will be required to submit any codes onto the termly headcount.

**Criteria 2 - A child with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)**

Only a few children at the age of two will be in receipt of a Statement or ECHP. However, if they are, the parents will have notification from the Local Authority of their child’s Special Educational Needs. You will need to ensure that you photocopy the first page of their Statement or EHCP letter from the LA. Please ensure that you keep this copy with the Parent Funding Form for audit purposes.

**Criteria 3 - a child who has left care through adoption order, residence order or special guardianships**

Please ask parents/carers to provide a copy of the statement or letter that they have from a Local Authority stating that they have an adoption order (or a copy of their adoption certificate), residence order or special guardianship for the child. Please take a copy of this paperwork and keep it with the Parent Funding Form for the child for audit purposes.

**Criteria 4 – a child who is looked after by a Local Authority**

A child who is looked after by a Local Authority will be referred to you by the Lead Professional. Please keep the contact details of the Lead Professional.

**Checking the Eligibility of 3 and 4-year-olds**

It is the provider’s responsibility to check the residency and age of a child by having sight of their original birth certificate and confirmation of their home address.

Parents who are eligible for the extended entitlement will receive an 11 digit (30 hour) eligibility code from childcare services. Codes will usually commence with 500.

On occasions parents who are having issues getting their codes will be issued a temporary code. These codes begin with 11, as opposed to 500. Temporary codes must be validated before places are confirmed, just as permanent codes are. However, it will be important that providers follow up with parents and validate their permanent code when it is issued. Before the child can commence their place the provider is required to validate the code via the EY Hub. [https://eyp.merton.gov.uk/](https://eyp.merton.gov.uk/)

Codes for children in foster care begin with 400

Codes must be validated by the provider prior to the child commencing their place. The provider will also be required to check the child’s identity and age. Validated codes must be included in the Headcount return.
A guide to validating Extended Entitlement codes can be found on the provider’s information pages on the Merton website.

Mandatory information to validate a code is:

- 30 hour code (11 digit)
- Parent’s NI Number
- Child’s date of birth

Providers should not confirm a place until they have validated the code and the age of the child.

**Checking Eligibility for Early Years Pupil Premium**

Some 3-year-olds are eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) funding.

**Criteria 1 – Economic Criteria**

Providers can now use the Early Years Provider Hub to check the eligibility of a child for EYPP.

Once providers have checked the eligibility they will just need to tick column ** in their headcount return.

**Criteria 2 – a child who is looked after by a Local Authority**

If the child is looked after by the London Borough of Merton, Merton’s Virtual School will liaise directly with your provision regarding the funding.

If the child is NOT looked after by the London Borough of Merton, you will need to liaise with the virtual school of the child’s Local Authority.

**Criteria 3 - a child who has left care through adoption order, a special guardianship order, or child arrangement order**

Please ask parents/carers to provide a copy of the statement or letter that they have from a Local Authority stating that they have an adoption order (or the child’s adoption certificate), residence order or special guardianship for the child. Please take a copy of this paperwork and keep it with the Parent Funding Form for the child for audit purposes, then complete the appropriate fields in the Headcount return in column **.
Disability Access Fund (DAF)

The provider is responsible for identifying eligible children. The parent will be required to provide a copy of the child’s Disability Living Allowance award letter. A copy of this must be kept with the Parent Funding Form for audit purposes.

The provider will claim the funding for DAF via the Headcount return by ticking the appropriate fields.

Foster Carers

From September 2018 the government have extended the eligibility for the 30 hour entitlement for 3 and 4-year-olds to children in foster care.

The eligibility criteria are:

- The child meets the eligibility age range.
- Accessing the extended entitlement is consistent with the child’s Care Plan.
- The foster parent/s is/are working outside of their role as a foster carer.

It will be the role of the Local Authority to confirm the eligibility for the code and the parent will be issued with a code commencing with 400.

Providers will need to validate the code and the code should be submitted onto the Headcount return

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