

[News story: Tax-Free Childcare to open to children under 6](#)

This includes doubling free childcare to 30 hours a week and introducing Tax-Free Childcare, which – for the first time – is available to self-employed parents, and all qualifying working parents regardless of their employer.

In April this year, HM Revenue and Customs started rolling out the childcare service; a single website through which parents can apply for both 30 hours free childcare and Tax-Free Childcare.

On 24 November 2017 we will open the service to parents whose youngest child is under 6 or who has their 6th birthday on that day. Parents can apply online through the childcare service which can be accessed via the [Childcare Choices website](#).

More than 275,000 parents have an open childcare account. Of these, more than 216,000 parents received an eligibility code for 30 hours free childcare for September.

However, while the majority of parents used the childcare service without significant problems, we recognise that over the summer some parents didn't receive the intended level of service when using the website. We have now made significant improvements.

Over the coming months, we will gradually open the childcare service to parents of older children, while continuing to make further improvements to the system. This means we can manage the volume of applications going through the service, so parents continue to receive a better experience and prompt eligibility responses when they apply – almost all parents receive a response within five working days, and most get their decision instantly. All eligible parents will be able to apply by the end of March 2018.