

Press release: Families to benefit from £55 million boost to childcare schemes

Thousands of new childcare places for working parents around the country are being created thanks to a multi-million grant scheme, the Early Years Minister Caroline Dinenage has announced today.

The £50 million capital grants double the government's investment to help nurseries, pre-schools and playgroups invest in new buildings and upgrade facilities. This will deliver more than 9,000 additional childcare places – helping to meet the government's commitment to give working families 30 hours free childcare from September.

The money builds on the £50 million funding announced in January, doubling the total spend to £100 million and altogether providing nearly 18,000 extra childcare places.

Alongside this, nearly £5 million will go to organisations that are helping children from disadvantaged backgrounds or with additional needs to access high-quality early education, so that every child can reach their full potential, regardless of their background.

The 12 opportunity areas announced by the Education Secretary will also benefit from £5 million as part of the government's latest capital investment. These areas, identified as social mobility 'coldspots', are already benefitting from a share of £72 million – today's funding will be a further boost for families living there.

As part of its [Plan for Britain](#), the government is working to create a society where success is defined by work and talent, not birth or circumstance. Supporting parents with the cost and availability of quality childcare to enable them to work if they choose to is an important part of this ambition.

Minister for the Early Years Caroline Dinenage said:

In my visits around the country I have heard from families whose lives have been improved by access to 30 hours. As part of our Plan for Britain we want to make this a country that works for everyone, not just the privileged few, so that means removing the barriers facing parents struggling to balance their jobs with the cost of childcare.

This investment will deliver more childcare places to working parents, giving them the benefits of 30 hours' free childcare while giving their children high-quality early education that sets them up for life. This is backed by our record £6 billion investment in

childcare per year by 2020.

Up to £5 million of voluntary and community sector (VCS) grants will be shared among 13 projects working to improve the quality of early education and supporting professionals to deliver the 30 hours offer. This includes:

- more than £1.5 million for 5 organisations working with parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), delivering workshops and training that will raise awareness of the support available for these families
- nearly £1.7 million to directly support disadvantaged children by boosting outreach programmes in areas such as early literacy and home learning
- more than £1 million to groups working directly with providers, developing tools and resources to support the delivery of 30 hours

The government has also relaunched its [Childcare Business Grant Scheme](#), aimed at supporting new childminders or childminder agencies who are looking to start their own businesses. Eligible professionals could receive grants of £500 or £1,000 to help with the costs of setting up, making it easier for those who want to offer 30 hours free childcare to prepare.

Childminders will also benefit from grants to Action for Children and PACEY, worth £370,000 and £381,000, which will help upskill and empower them to deliver 30 hours and make sure their businesses are sustainable.

The announcement is on top of the government's record £6 billion each year investment for childcare by 2020 and follows the recent publication of a [new fairer funding system](#) for early years education. This formula will see the minimum hourly rate for councils increased to £4.30 per hour, ensuring the 30 hours free offer is sustainable for providers.

The government has recently launched its [Childcare Choices website](#). This sets out details of all of the childcare support available for parents from across the government and allows them to register for email alerts that will notify them when applications for 30 hours open nationally.

[Opportunity areas](#) will see local partnerships formed with early years providers, schools, colleges, universities, businesses, charities and local authorities to ensure all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential. Opportunity areas include:

- Blackpool
- Bradford
- Derby
- Doncaster
- Fenland & East Cambridgeshire
- Hastings
- Ipswich
- Norwich
- Oldham

- Scarborough
- West Somerset

The priority of the council bid round, which closed in August, was to target grants to areas where there was a demonstrable need for additional places to support the delivery of the 30 hours offer. Each bidder was required to contribute at least 25% of the total funding they requested, in order to share the budget around the maximum possible projects around the country.

The capital grants are being matched by around £40 million in additional funding from various local sources across the country, resulting in a total investment of approximately £140 million.

We are providing tools to support childcare providers, including a package of [30 hours delivery resources](#) and an updated [business sustainability toolkit](#).

Successful bids for VCS grants were required to demonstrate they met specific priorities: their positive impact on disadvantaged communities – including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or ethnic minorities – distinct ways of enhancing the quality of the early years workforce, or helping to boost the number of 30 hours places available. The grants run over 15 months to March 2018.