

## **Q&A – Wraparound webinar 9<sup>th</sup> February**

### **Delivery plans:**

Q. Is there a proforma to submit your delivery plan to the DfE?

A: Yes, there will be a template for the delivery plan. The window for submitting this is 7 May-14 June. We will share further information on the data fields as soon as possible, and will test the template itself with LAs in April to ensure that it is as user-friendly as possible.

### **Funding:**

Q. Can the dept give advice regarding the expectations of procurement processes to allocate programme funding to providers.

A: Local authorities will need a transparent process for dispersing funding to childcare providers and ensuring robust funding agreements are in place. Any procurement should be managed in line with existing local authority procurement policies and processes. Capacity funding can be used to contribute towards the cost of local authority staffing to deliver the wraparound programme, including procurement team capacity where necessary.

Q. Can we use the funding to subsidise fees for parents who are looking for work but haven't got jobs yet?

A: The funding should not be used to directly subsidise the cost of places, as this does not support the sustainability of the programme. Any places created through the programme should be paid for by parents. The exception to this is for the children of wraparound staff where subsidised places can be offered if the local authority identify this as necessary as part of their wraparound recruitment strategy and are confident that the provision can still be sustainable after March 26. However, this does not prevent local authorities or providers using alternative funding to offer subsidised places to parents seeking employment. We would strongly encourage schools and providers to explore options for removing barriers for parents, to enable them to take up places before demand is fully established.

Q. If a provider has registered with Ofsted but currently not opened the provision as not enough demand to make it sustainable, can they be funded if they don't start accepting children until the funding has been agreed.

A: Yes, a provider must be registered with Ofsted and funding can be provided for set up costs. Once they accept funding, we would expect them to start accepting

children, although funding can be used to contribute to running costs to ensure that provision is financially viable while take-up of places increases over the funding period.

Q. Once the LA has approved funding can the provider open anytime even if this is slightly before the summer holidays or do they have to wait until September as in can costs such as staffing only be covered from Sept 24.

A: Yes, a provider can open before September 24 assuming they are ready to do so and have the required Ofsted registration in place. The local authority can determine the start date of funding to providers.

Q. On the grant payment schedule it mentions payment being released upon completion of the capacity plan and delivery plan and its updates. What level of information is required for local authorities on this and when are we to expect more information on guidance for these? Will there be templates/ reports that local authorities are required to complete?

A: All details on the information required in the capacity plan can be found in the National Wraparound Childcare Programme local authority handbook and the additional capacity plan guidance issued to local authorities on 5 February 2024. Information about the delivery plan requirements can be found in the local authority handbook and further detail on the content and submission process was sent to LAs w/c 25<sup>th</sup> March.

Q. Can the DfE provide more guidance around the funding process and agreements between Local Authorities and providers, including decision making process around which providers will receive funding as there may be many providers interested in delivering Wraparound Childcare?

A: Local authorities should manage any procurement necessary through existing local authority procurement processes. Use of funding should be prioritised in line with the outcomes of local authority supply and demand activity and the local authority's delivery strategy. Local authorities must ensure that there is a fair and transparent process for allocation of funding. Childcare Works may also be able to support local authorities.

Q. Can the funding be used to secure and sustain the existing provision that require support in the short term to keep open?

A: Programme funding should be used to either expand existing provision or develop new provision. By exception, and flagged to us/in delivery plans, where mapping of

demand shows that there is a future need for that provision and that it will be sustainable longer-term, funding may be used to sustain existing provision. LAs should consider how sustainable this approach would be, and weigh this up against alternative options that may be more cost-effective and sustainable in the longer term.

Q. If the 25/26 funding is provisional at the moment how much of that indicative allocation can/ should we be planning on spending?

A: In Spring Budget 2023, we announced a £289m funding commitment over two years. Local authorities should plan their delivery for all financial years based on their assessment of supply and demand and maximising delivery of additional places in September 24. They should use as much of their maximum grant allocation for each financial year as needed to deliver the programme objectives whilst being mindful of value for money.

Q. On capacity funding, the Handbook suggests that for LAs who have received relatively less funding they can spend more than 11%. Is this correct?

A: Yes, it is expected that the median average proportion of funding used for local authority capacity is 11% of the total grant allocation (January 2023 - March 2026). We expect that local authorities with relatively low total allocations may need to use a higher proportion of their total grant allocation on capacity funding. As 100% of the FY 2023-24 payment is intended to fund local authority capacity costs for one financial quarter, you can determine the maximum value of capacity funding for the 9 financial quarters of the programme, by calculating the value of 9 x the 2023-24 capacity grant payment. You can spend up to the greater of either of these figures.

### **Programme policy:**

Q. What insurances would be needed for children travelling to another site and then the hosting site?

A: The Department does not advise on what specific insurance a provider would need, and providers should seek their own advice. [Wraparound guidance for schools and trusts](#) offers guidance on how a school may wish to insure provision.

Q. How should deprivation play a role in LA decision making on where additional wraparound places should be commissioned?

A: LAs should develop their own strategy for delivering the programme objectives in their area, including how to consider deprivation when making decisions on place commissioning. However, considering the overarching programme objective is to support and increase parental labour market participation, including where this is currently lower, it is likely that deprivation will be a factor in many areas.

Good quality, reliable, affordable wraparound childcare provision is crucial to enabling parents to work and we expect all parents to be able to access wraparound childcare, regardless of where they live in the country. We know that in areas with high levels of deprivation there will be additional challenges, but this funding should support LAs to work with schools to test what works in these areas and develop more innovative models of delivery if this is needed.

Q. How long are the leads in LAs expected to be appointed for?

A: For the duration of the programme, each local authority must have at least one designated wraparound lead. This can be an individual with a specific 'wraparound' role or be part of an individual's wider duties. They should also have appropriate additional resource to deliver the programme. This will look different in each local authority, but local authority capacity funding could be used to fund this. DfE will offer maximum flexibility for local authorities to decide where and how the programme will sit and operate within the local authority, but the wraparound designated lead should establish links with schools, childcare, quality assurance, local safeguarding partnerships, and business support teams within the local authority.

### **SEND:**

Q. Can you expand on provision for children with SEND. Without further financial support providers are bearing the additional staffing costs ie whereby children have an Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan with 1:1 support in school but no support available for the provider after/before school which is not a sustainable model

A: There is no separate funding pot to cover the costs of 1:1 support in wraparound childcare settings, although additional staffing costs are built into the cost model to reflect that some children will need more intensive support, so this has been reflected in local authority funding allocations. Programme funding should be used to establish inclusive and accessible provision, with the expectation that at the end of the programme provision is self-sustaining. We are encouraging local authorities to explore a range of delivery models to consider what is most appropriate based on the level of need in their area. Examples of approaches planned by some local authorities include provision of training to build workforce expertise and confidence in providing childcare for children with SEND, purchase of suitable resources (capital funding or up to £500 programme funding) and SEND advice/support for provision on specific actions needed,

Q. Can you expand on safe transport to off-site premises including for those children in receipt of free transport

A: The existing home to school transport guidance states that children are only eligible for home to school transport to get to school for the beginning of the school day, and to return home at the end of the school day, provided they meet the criteria set out in existing statutory guidance, and that local authorities are not required to make arrangements to enable children to get to and from before and after school childcare. In rare cases where transport to childcare is stipulated as part of an EHC Plan it is the responsibility of LAs, in line with existing statutory requirements, to provide this.

Q. What funding will be available to support children with medical needs after the life of the project?

A: We cannot commit to any funding beyond the life of the programme. Whilst the programme funding will end in March 2026, the £289m aims to remove the financial barriers so schools and providers can improve the availability of provision for parents. The financial support aims to ensure that places are available and sustainable beyond the programme and gathering evidence of what works is the first step in government's ambition for all parents who need to access it by 2026.

To ensure that all parents and children can access the wraparound support that they need, programme funding should be used to establish provision that is inclusive and accessible to all children and meets the needs of parents in your area. You can use programme funding to purchase resources or upskill staff to support children with medical needs.

For children with disabilities, providers are expected to make reasonable adjustments in accordance with their duties under the Equality Act 2010. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) are clear that if a reasonable adjustment is needed to enable children with disabilities to attend childcare, providers must pay for it, not parents.

### **Schools:**

Q. What is the legal position if the offer provided by a school does not meet a parent's needs?

A: Schools are not legally required to offer wraparound childcare. However, in the [guidance for schools and trusts](#) published in February, we have set an expectation that all schools educating primary aged pupils should have school or PVI provider (including childminder) run wraparound childcare on the school site, unless there is a

reasonable justification not to (having considered all support available, in particular from the national wraparound childcare programme). We expect all schools to work collaboratively with their local authority wraparound lead, and others in the sector, to identify how they can support parents to access wraparound childcare.

Parents (and PVI) also have a right to request that a school considers having wraparound childcare on site. This includes prospective parents. If a school receives a request for wraparound childcare on the school site, it should engage with the designated local authority wraparound lead and make them aware of the request in the first instance. The local authority should work with the parent to consider whether there is suitable wraparound provision in the local area. However, if no suitable provision is available, and the school does not have an up-to-date assessment of their parents' wraparound needs within the last year, then it should proceed with a whole school right to request exercise. Detailed guidance is available in the [responding to requests for wraparound guidance](#).

If schools do offer wraparound childcare, that provision must adhere to the law.

Schools and education authorities have a duty to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils under the Equality Act 2010. The duty to make reasonable adjustments requires a school to take positive steps to ensure that disabled pupils can fully participate in the education provided by the school, and that they can enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services that the school provides for pupils.

Where a parent believes their child has been discriminated against, they may wish to contact the Equality Advisory Support Service, or seek independent legal advice.

### **Quality of care / Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) providers (inc. childminders) / Ofsted:**

Q. What is the expectation around quality for wraparound and the LA role in supporting this?

A: Wraparound childcare settings should inspire confidence in families by ensuring that provision is fun and engaging for children, and something they want to attend. What constitutes 'quality' will look different across settings, depending on the interests, ages and numbers of children attending, the spaces in which provision takes place, and the opportunities and activities that are on offer. For that reason, we do not prescribe what 'quality' wraparound care should constitute. When choosing to fund a provider, local authorities should consider quality factors such as the premises, facilities and environment in which wraparound takes place, positive staff-child interaction being central to provision, and having stimulating and varied resources on offer to children. More information on quality and safety considerations can be found in the wraparound programme handbook, and in the [guidance for schools](#).

Q. Once the project is completed who is responsible for ensuring the quality of the provision?

A: All providers funded through the wraparound childcare programme must be registered on the appropriate Ofsted childcare register for the age range of the children being cared for. We expect that the majority of providers will retain this registration beyond April 2026, and this will help to ensure minimum quality levels in provision are retained. All schools operating wraparound childcare funded through the programme must have a recognised school URN to do so, and will be subject to the Ofsted education inspection framework. We anticipate that the majority of schools will retain their URN and continue to be subject to the Ofsted inspection framework, which will help to ensure minimum quality levels in these settings are retained.

However, we recognise that the requirements for wraparound childcare operated by PVI and childminders are different to the requirements for wraparound childcare operated by schools. And in both cases, we acknowledge that the requirements related to quality of provision are minimal. For this reason, we are working closely with Ofsted to understand how requirements relating to quality of wraparound childcare provision could be made more robust, and applied equivalently to PVI and childminder, and school operated provision.

Q. Is there any guidance for planning departments on childminders working with assistants as this is a barrier to expansion.

A: Childminders can have assistants but can only leave them alone with children for up to 2 hours a day (with parental permission). If childminders wish to leave children alone with assistants for longer periods of time, the assistants must register as childminders in their own right.

Childminder assistants need to [get an enhanced check with barred lists from DBS](#). They will need to use the [Childminder: report new adults in the home](#) service. They cannot work unsupervised until they have received their suitability letter from Ofsted.

[Childminders and childcare providers: register with Ofsted - Childminders and childcare on domestic premises: registration - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Q. When will the changes to childminder registration activity be published? ie the expansion of the 50/50 rule? How will OFSTED adequately manage the compliance of such arrangements do they have capacity?

A: The Department for Education is bringing in new flexibilities for childminders through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, which received Royal Assent in October 2023. The changes being brought in will:

1. Increase from 3 to 4 the total number of people (including childminders and/or assistants) that can work together under a childminder's registration.
2. Increase premises freedoms by giving childminders and childcare on domestic premises (CODPs) greater flexibility to operate outside of their domestic premises (usually their own home) for more of their time. This will remove the requirement that at least half of the provision must be provided on domestic premises.
3. Create a new category of childminder, allowing childminders to operate solely from non-domestic premises. This will mean replacing the existing single "childminder" category with two new categories: "childminder with domestic premises" who provide at least some or all of their childminding on domestic premises; and "childminder without domestic premises" who provide all their childminding on non-domestic premises.

Subject to the legislative timetable, we are aiming to commence the LURA in Autumn 2024. We are working closely with Ofsted and Childminder Agencies to both ensure they are prepared for delivery and to develop guidance that will support the changes. These changes will be made in line with updates to the EYFS.

Q. Any changes to a school having to have a separate Ofsted registration to provide wraparound over 2 hours?

A: There are no planned changes to Ofsted registration requirements for schools operating their own wraparound childcare. However, we are working with Ofsted colleagues to determine how effective the regulatory frameworks that apply to all forms of wraparound childcare – whether operated by a school or PVI provider or childminder – are in meeting the needs of children, parents, and providers.

Q. On proposed hourly rates settings are charging for wraparound - has anyone explored in depth what current providers are charging? Ours vary and it would be interesting to know if there is any guidance.

A: We expect local authorities to work with schools and private providers in their area so that wraparound provision is affordable to parents. We are not prescribing or recommending what private providers should charge as part of this programme, beyond the expectation that the cost of provision should be benchmarked against that of other childcare in that area. We understand that provision must be both affordable to parents in a way that sustains and grows parental demand, but also allows providers to charge the fees they need to ensure the financial viability of their services. We are continuing to work with private providers and the wider sector to understand different operational models for wraparound and any implications on cost for parents.

We strongly support LAs learning from each other in peer support networks and sharing any relevant information, including on benchmarking charges.



## **Tax-free Childcare**

Q. Any updates for the tax-free childcare to be able to link up with systems such as parent pay? this is a big barrier for schools to offer.

A: We understand that there is currently an issue that prevents some school payment systems, such as ParentPay, linking up with Tax Free Childcare systems. We are working closely with HMRC, who are developing a new IT solution to help parents access Tax-Free Childcare to pay for wraparound care via cashless payments. This will facilitate a smoother customer journey for parents who use cashless payments systems and ease access to government childcare support.