



Frequently Asked Funding Questions 2026

We understand that nursery funding can sometimes feel complicated, and parents often have many questions about how it works in practice. To make things clearer, we've put together answers to the most common questions about funded hours, fees, and what is included. If you have a question that isn't covered here, please speak to a member of our team and we'll be happy to help.

How do I apply for the working parents entitlement? You apply online here on <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-childcare-if-youre-working>

You are only able to claim the entitlements from the term after they become the relevant age because this gives local authorities and us enough time to prepare. If you're not working when your child turns the relevant age for the working parent entitlement, you may have to wait until the term after you start working to be eligible.

When will I find out if I am eligible? When you apply you may find out if you're eligible straight away, but it can take longer if you need to provide further information. Once your application has been approved, you will get a code for funded childcare to give to us.

What happens once I receive my code? You'll need to provide us with your unique code, along with your National Insurance Number and your child's date of birth, and we will check and validate the code. When we have confirmed your eligibility, we will give you a Parental Declaration form from the Local Authority and a contract from us outlining exactly what you have booked and your monthly fee for additional hours/additional services charge. We must have these documents returned to us before your child's first funded session. You must reconfirm your code every 3 months via your HMRC childcare account.

It's important to remember that codes need to be reconfirmed every three months - if you miss the deadline your entitlement will stop and you will be liable for paying the full fees. If your circumstances change and you become eligible for working parents entitlement after your child has turned 9 months, you can apply at any time and your funding will start from the start of the term after you get your code.

How do I apply for universal entitlement for 3 & 4 year olds? You are automatically eligible for the universal 15 hours, you do not need to do anything to apply for these hours, we will do this on your behalf and will give you a parental declaration from the Local Authority and a contract from us outlining exactly what you have booked and your monthly fee for additional hours/additional services charge. We must have these documents returned to us before your child's first funded session. If you think you will be eligible for the 30 hours offer (3 & 4 year old funding), you can apply at www.childcarechoices.gov.uk. You will need to have or set up a Government Gateway account before you can apply.

How does Wellington's Nursery administer these hours? Funding is paid during school term times only (38 weeks per year) The maximum allowance of hours for the academic year (September to July) is 570 for the 15 hour offer (universal 3 & 4 year old funding and those eligible for the special circumstances entitlement) and 1140 for the 30 hours offer. As an all year round provider, we stretch these hours so that you will receive an equal amount of funded hours every week (52 weeks of the year).

Funded hours are completely free if taken up during our core funded hours 8:30am to 2pm Monday - Friday. You can opt in or out of consumable packages such as meals, care package and enrichment activities and resources package. We also offer an option to take up the 22 hours over 3 days a week with our stretched core hours from 8am to 3:15pm, however this carries an additional charge of £5 per day.

What happens if my circumstances change and I am no longer eligible for the working parent entitlement funding? If your circumstances change and you are no longer entitled to this funding, please let us know as soon as possible as this will have an impact on your ability to access funding and you will be responsible for paying for all sessions accessed.

If I'm eligible for Universal Credit can I get the new entitlements? Yes, if you meet the eligibility criteria. Whilst you cannot claim Universal Credit and Tax-Free Childcare at the same time, those on Universal Credit will still be able to claim the working parents

entitlement, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria. This will not affect your ability to claim Universal Credit. If you are taking up more than 15 hours childcare (or 30 hours if you are also using the extended 3&4 year old entitlement), you can claim Universal Credit Childcare, which can support you with up to 85% of the cost of additional childcare you pay for outside your entitlement to 15 hours. Please see the Universal Credit childcare costs page <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-childcare-costs> for more Information. This is separate from the new entitlement for working parents. All parents regardless of employment status, family circumstances, or income levels are eligible for the universal 15 hours for 3 and 4 year-olds.

What happens if I cannot work? If you cannot work, you will receive the universal 15 hours and may still be eligible for the 15 hours working parent entitlement or extended 3 & 4 year old funding to 30 hours if your partner is working (if applicable) and you get Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance, Carer's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance.

How often do I need to log into my childcare account? You need to log into your childcare account every 3 months to reconfirm that your details are up to date and that you remain eligible for the childcare entitlements for working parents and/or Tax-Free Childcare.

Will I be reminded to reconfirm my details? Yes, you will receive a reminder:

- when your reconfirmation window opens
- a week before your reconfirmation deadline
- and on your reconfirmation deadline. This message will come from HMRC. Please remember to make sure that your details are up to date. Please note you will not receive reconfirmation reminders from Wellington's.

What if I am self- employed? As a self-employed parent, you may be eligible for 30 hours of funded childcare if you meet the income criteria, earn at least the equivalent of 16 hours a week at National Minimum Wage , and your income does not exceed £100,000 adjusted net income per year. You are exempt from meeting the criteria in your first 12 months of self employment. If your earnings are variable, you can use your expected earnings over the next three months or a longer period, to meet the threshold.

Can I use Childcare Vouchers, Tax Free Childcare or apply for Universal Credit alongside the 15/30 hours? Yes, you can, see for more information on help with

childcare costs.

Do you charge a Registration Fee or Deposit? There is no registration fee for funded only places. We require a deposit of £100 for funded only places, which will be returned when the child leaves the nursery. For all other places a registration fee of £75 and a Deposit of 50% of your fees is required to guarantee your child's place with us, the deposit is deducted from your last invoice before your child leaves us, as long as you have given us our required one months' notice and your account is up to date.

Can I have my funded hours whenever I want them and are they free? All places are subject to our set sessions and occupancies as we have statutory ratio and space requirements. Our funded sessions run from 8:30am until 2pm. In order to access 15 hours of funding stretched over 52 weeks which equates to 11 hours per week your child will have to attend two days per week from 8:30am until 2pm. In order to access 30 hours (stretched over 52 weeks it equates to 22 hours per week) , your child will need to attend 4 morning sessions per week from 8:30am until 2pm. We also offer an option to access 22hours per week over 3 days. Daily funded sessions in this case run from 8am until 3:15pm in order to make up the weekly entitlement hours and they carry an additional charge of £5 per day. Please refer to our Early Years Funding terms and conditions for the full details and our optional consumable charges.

At Wellington's we offer all inclusive pricing where funded hours , consumables and additional hours are set. There is a discount available on our consumables for these fees as well as a discount for a full time place. Please refer to the tables outlined in our Early Years Funding terms and conditions. We also offer funded only places where sessions run from 8:30 to 2 pm.

You can access these hours completely free of charge if you wish to do so, as the consumable charges and extra hours are charged separately from the funded hours. You will have the option before the start of each term to opt in or out of consumables. These will be broken down into the following categories:

- Intimate care package
- Meals package
- Enrichment activities and resources
- Extra hours outside of the core funding hours 8am to 3:15pm for the 3 day funded option.

If you decide to opt out of any of the above packages you will be responsible for providing the necessary consumables for your child on the days they attend the nursery. Lunch boxes instead of our meals will be permitted from January 2026, but please be aware that due to complicated dietary requirements and strict allergy health and safety laws, we will have strict policies in place and will reserve the right to refuse food brought from home if it is not up to our health and

safety and healthy eating policy standards. In this case the parent will be charged for our cooked meal on the day.

If you decide to opt out from our enrichment activities and resources package we will have alternative options such as arts and crafts available on the day, to ensure the children feel included and entertained.

What does my child get in their funded hours? Government funding pays for your child's time with us, it is not intended to pay for consumables such as: meals, healthy snacks, care packages (nappies, wet wipes, suncream, calpol, antihistamine, milk, formula) and extra activities. The funding we receive from the government is and has always been based on the following statement from the DFE: 'Government funding is intended to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of free, high quality, flexible childcare. It is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional services'.

Can my child attend on a Term Time only basis? Not at Wellington's Nursery, we are an all year round provider offering funding on a stretched only basis. If you are looking for a term time only provision, we can give you the contact details of some local settings.

Can I split my hours between different providers? The law says you can split your 30 hours of funding across different providers but no more than 2 sites per day, if your child will be attending another setting as well as us, we will work with the other setting to ensure the best possible experience for your child. You must let us know if your child will be attending another setting, so we can work out how funding will be split and add the details onto your Parental Declaration. Failure to do so may result in you being charged at our standard fees in the case of an over claim of funded hours and your child's place may be withdrawn.

The law says I do not have to agree to extra hours or additional services to get my funded hours? That's right, your funded hours are free of charge and now you can access funded hours only and opt out of consumables to receive a completely free place for your child. Under the new guidance you do not have to opt in to consumables or additional hours to claim your funded hours. Statutory guidance also clarifies that, we do not have to offer funded hours as a private provider. We do however want to offer more flexible options to our parents and have therefore made a decision to offer stretched hours and offer opting in or out of different packages to allow for the parent to find the best options for their family and ultimately their child. We have set our funding hours from 8:30am to 2pm to allow for continuity of provision and to ensure that children get the best out of their time at the nursery.

What if you do not have my preferred hours available? You are welcome to join our waiting list or we will offer the places we have, and you can change to your preferred sessions as soon as they become available.

When do nursery fees need to be paid? All nursery fees must be received into our account by the 14th of each month. We accept payment via your Tax Free Childcare Account voucher payments or standing orders or bank transfers. For those parent(s)/ carer(s) pay via their Tax Free Childcare account, it takes on average 48 working hours between adding funds and the funds becoming available in your account in order to pay us, therefore this will need to be factored in when setting up the payment. Any payment received after the 14th of the month will have an automatic £25 late payment charge applied to your account every 14 days it is unpaid. If the balance is not cleared within 28 days your space may be revoked until payment is received.

What if my child is ill or we go on holiday? Occasional, short term absence such as illness or a family holiday is no problem at all. Where extended absences occur for medical reasons, or visiting family, the Local Authority requires us to report any unauthorised absence of more than 2 weeks, so we ask that you always notify us if your child will be absent. Your usual fees will still be charged to keep your child's place open.

What about exceptional circumstances? We always strive to be as flexible and family friendly as we can be, we will always consider exceptional circumstances and temporarily adjust our policies to help where we can, please speak to us for more information.

How long do you retain my information? The Local Authority places the responsibility on us of checking original copies of documentation to confirm a child has reached the eligible age for early years, we do this by asking to see your child's Birth Certificate or Passport, we may retain paper or digital copy of this, which will be stored securely, in accordance with data protection and privacy requirements and securely disposed of 2 years after your child has left us or when there is no longer a good reason to keep it. It is part of our agreement with the Local Authority that we retain a copy of your Parental Declaration for 7 years and make it available to them on request . Wellington's Nursery is registered with the Information Commissioners Office ZA343668

Where can I get more information? You can visit or speak to us.

What if I want to change my childcare provider? You can change providers subject to giving us one calendar months' notice, in cases where notice is not given, we will claim 4 weeks' worth of funding as a notice period unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Additional consumables packages (opting out policy) Our standard offer is to stretch funding across 52 weeks a year and an additional services charge for everything not covered by funding as the Department for Education state that 'Government funding is intended to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week* of free, high quality, flexible childcare. It is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional services.' (DfE2025).

Funding is paid during school term times only which is 38 weeks per year, as a full daycare provider we stretch this funding over 52 weeks per year. Providers must set their own policy for parent(s)/ carer(s) who are unable or unwilling to pay additional service fees. If parent(s)/ carer(s) are unable or unwilling to pay our additional services fee, they are responsible for bringing everything that their child will need during their sessions, this will include:

- All meals / snacks needed to the session (please see below)
- All nappies, wipes, nappy cream needed
- A named bottle of sun cream
- Payment and anything needed for adhoc trips/additional activities and special celebrations if they wish their child to participate (for example, forest school, see details below)

Meals Package At Wellington's we follow a healthy eating plan to ensure that children in our care receive balanced , freshly cooked nutritious meals and snacks daily. Our Meals package includes breakfast , snacks , fruit , milk (including alternative milks) and freshly prepared lunch and a low sugar desert. If you decide to opt out of the meals package you will be responsible for providing all of the above as per our healthy eating and strict allergy awareness policy below.

Due to some of our children and staff having food allergies, we ask that no products containing nuts are brought into the nursery. In the case where we have a child with a serious allergy, we will let parent(s)/ carer(s) know which allergen/ s must be avoided and ask that food containing the allergen(s) are not brought into nursery on the day(s) the child is in attendance (we will not identify the child, we will simply advise of the allergen(s)). This will naturally vary from time to time as new children start or new allergens are identified. We ask that foods are provided in their original packaging as far as possible so that we can check for allergens. If the original packaging is not available, we will require a written list of all the allergens to be provided with each snack and meal.

Following further advice from our Environmental Health Team, we are unable to heat any foods that have been brought in from home (or serve any pre-heated food stored in an insulated

container), as we can not complete the required HACCP paperwork on the supply, preparation and storage of the food before it arrives at nursery. Unfortunately, this will mean that a child will only eat cold food during their day at nursery. The Food Standards Agency states that chilled foods can only be out of the fridge for a maximum of 4 hours (this is within a chilled lunch box or other insulated storage containers) before they must be thrown away. We do not have the facilities to store lunch boxes or other insulated storage containers in our fridges. As we eat our lunch at 12 lunch boxes provided at 8 o'clock should still be ok to be consumed at 12, but please do be mindful of the food you provide as they will be stored in the kitchen and not in the fridge.

As part of our healthy eating policy, we ask that parents/ carers do not put chocolate, biscuits, sweets, crisps or juice in the lunchboxes and to avoid choking hazards, for example grapes, cherry tomatoes or other similar foods MUST be cut into quarters and lengthways. In addition, any foods containing stones, such as cherries or peaches, MUST have the stones removed.

Parents/Carers are advised that opting out of the meals package charge that their child will be eating a different meal to their peers and will be unable to have a hot cooked meal during their day at nursery.

Care Package Intimate care package consists of nappies (Aldi/ Gompells) , wipes (Aldi/Gompells sensitive skin wipes), Sudocream, Calpol, Piriton, Nivea sensitive skin sun cream,gloves , aprons).

Please note should you wish to opt out of the Care package you will be opting out of all of the above and will be responsible for providing all the necessary clearly labeled alternatives sufficient for the time your child attends the nursery.

We provide a nursery supply of liquid paracetamol (Calpol) and antihistamine (Piriton - only to be administered to child aged over 12 months and in an emergency situation only) as part of additional services charge, for those parent(s)/ carer(s) who are unable or unwilling to pay for our additional services charge. In the event that your child requires liquid paracetamol or antihistamine, we will contact the parent(s)/ carer(s) to bring their own supply and administer. We are unable to keep a bottle of liquid paracetamol or antihistamine provided by parent(s)/ carer(s). The exception to this would be in an emergency situation where antihistamine may be used as essential first aid, we will administer this as long as we have parental consent or if advised to do so by an ambulance dispatcher.

Our Nappies and wipes are purchased from Aldi or Gompells and we have 4 standard nappie changes scheduled, as well as any additional required on an individual basis. Should you wish to opt out of the intimate care package you will need to provide us with enough nappies and wipes clearly labelled for the time your child is at the nursery. Please note that due to restricted storage facilities we are unable to store large quantities of nappies and wipes.

At Wellington's we follow the NHS guidance for Sunscreen and sun safety and apply Nivea sensitive skin cream from March to October, as well as any other sunny days out. Please ensure you provide us with a labeled Sun cream if you decide to opt out from our intimate care package.

NHS guidance recommends using a barrier cream every nappy change to avoid nappy rash especially in younger babies and at Wellington's we follow this guidance . We apply Sudocream at nappy change and if you wish to opt out of the intimate care package you will be asked to provide your own cream clearly labelled.

Enrichment Activities and Resources At Wellington's, we believe that children learn best through rich, hands-on experiences. For our **2–4 year olds**, we offer **weekly Forest School sessions**. These provide wonderful opportunities for children to:

- explore the natural world,
- learn how to take safe risks,
- challenge themselves with new experiences,
- and develop care and respect for living things.

To make these sessions safe and meaningful, we increase our staffing ratio from 1:8 to 1:4. For our **younger children**, we offer carefully planned **Sensory Play, Cooking, Music and Movement, and Sports sessions with Coach Harry**. These are supported by staff who attend additional training to ensure sessions are fun, safe, and full of learning opportunities.

If you choose not to take part in the **Enrichment Package**, your child will still be included in creative activities such as arts and crafts or alternative activities provided by our staff.

To make sure every child receives a consistent experience, families who opt out of the package are asked to provide all resources their child may need during their sessions. Please note that fees for additional hours remain the same regardless of whether you opt into enrichment or not.

If required items are not provided, we will supply them and the cost will be charged at our additional services rate. Persistent non-payment or failure to provide essential items may result in us seeking guidance from the Local Authority.