

## GUIDANCE

# Childcare for under five year olds parents guidance: coronavirus

How key workers and parents of vulnerable children can get help with childcare.

Part of: [Childcare for under five year olds: coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#), [Childcare and parenting and Childcare: coronavirus](#)

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## Introduction

The **Childcare Offer for Wales**, which provides up to 30 hours of early education and childcare for 3 and 4 year olds, is closed to new applications.

This is so that the funding can be used to support key workers with their childcare costs and support vulnerable children during the coronavirus pandemic. This funding is provided through the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS).

## Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS)

The C-CAS will fund childcare costs for pre-school children (children aged from 0 to 5 years who do not have a school place) of:

- key workers
- pre-school aged vulnerable children

The fund will cover care for out of hours and weekends. There is no limit to the amount of hours your children can be cared for.

The scheme cannot be used to pay for provider retention fees.

## Pre-school aged vulnerable children

Parents or guardians of vulnerable children can apply for and get childcare until the scheme ends.

## Parents or guardians working in education

Parents or guardians working in education, such as teachers, can apply for and get childcare until the end of the summer school term.

## Other key workers

Other key workers can apply until 12 July 2020. If eligible they can get childcare until the scheme ends.

## Closing the scheme

We expect the C-CAS to close at the end of August. We will review this over the summer and in light of evidence around the virus and transmission.

## Eligibility

Households where a parent is a **key worker** are eligible for the scheme. This includes workers in refuges and other supported accommodation for victims of domestic abuse. Vulnerable children are also eligible.

## What this means for the Offer

Since 1 April local authorities have not been accepting or processing any new applications for the Childcare Offer.

From 22 June 2020, when childcare services can increase the number of children they look after, we will provide Offer funding for children who were eligible for, and taking up the Offer, before the end of March 2020, if this is what the parent would like. No funding will be provided where a child is not attending childcare.

The Offer is suspended for new entrants until September 2020. Children who were due to start getting the Offer from the start of what would have been the summer school term will not be able to get the Offer until the suspension is lifted.

Read the [Deputy Minister's statement made on 9 June about funding for childcare](#).

## Effect on your benefits

Any funding you get from us towards your childcare costs could affect other benefits you get.

## Tax-free childcare

If you get tax-free childcare you need to [report any changes to HMRC on GOV.UK](#) when you reconfirm your details every 3 months.

This includes funding you get from us to help pay for childcare costs. You may be able to use tax-free childcare to pay for extra costs such as food, transport and retainer fees. You need to check with HMRC if you can claim these cost as part of tax-free childcare.

## Universal credit

If you get the childcare part of Universal Credit you need to [report any changes in your family or work life to Department for Work and Pensions \(DWP\) on GOV.UK](#).

## Tax credits

If you get tax credits you need to [report any changes in your family or work life to HMRC on GOV.UK](#). This includes funding from us to help pay for childcare costs.

## How to apply

Please contact your [local Family Information Service](#) to discuss your childcare needs and for information on how to apply.

## Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include all those who are having support from social services, young carers, disabled children and those with statements of special educational needs.

## Key workers with school aged children

From 22 June 2020, older siblings who are already being funded to attend a setting with a younger sibling can do so until the end of the summer term at the latest (your local authority will decide the closing date). Older siblings however are expected to attend school.

Applications received after 19 June 2020 are not eligible.

## Exceptions

There are very limited exceptions, such as vulnerable children to funding older siblings where a local authority may deem it in the best interest of that child or family.

## As a key worker or having a vulnerable child, can I send my child to a different setting if my usual one is closed and I get the C-CAS?

Yes, we will fund your childcare costs apart from any retention fees charged by childcare providers.

## Do key workers have to send their children to a childcare setting?

Many parents working in these critical sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be. This is an offer to parents and carers and there is no requirement for parents and carers to send their children to a childcare setting if they do not need or wish to do so.

## My child is not attending childcare – why is the setting telling me that they will continue to charge me whilst closed?

We acknowledge that, in many cases, the insurance that early years providers have will not cover them for income lost during COVID-19-related closures. There is a range of support for businesses to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on them.

We are asking childcare providers to be reasonable and balanced in their dealings with parents. The Welsh Government is keeping what further support businesses may require under close review.

## Can I choose the setting my child attends for the summer term?

If your current setting is open you can continue to use that one. If it is closed your [local Family Information Service](#) can help you about which settings are open in your area.

## Can I use the Offer during the summer holidays to cover holiday clubs?

Yes, holiday clubs can provide the childcare part of the Childcare Offer. They need to be registered with [Care Inspectorate Wales](#) (or [Ofsted](#) in England). You will need to find a holiday club that provides the Offer that best meets your childcare needs.

We are working with local authorities to determine what provision will be available over the summer.

## Increasing the number of children a childcare service can look after

From 22 June 2020, childcare services including Flying Start can start to reopen or look after more children, at the same time children can return to school. We will be reviewing this throughout the coronavirus pandemic.

## Keeping children safe

Sending your child to childcare is low risk. We have published [guidance](#) to help settings prepare to increase the numbers of children they care for.

Ultimately it is for the parent to decide on whether or not to send their children to childcare.

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