

Guaranteed First Term: Q&A

I (the LA) have heard of a 30 hours 'golden ticket'. What is this?

This is likely to be in reference to parents being able to take up a place where they are no longer eligible for 30 hours free childcare in September 2017.

Parents who apply for 30 hours free childcare will need to reconfirm that they still meet the eligibility criteria every three months. This means that those parents who have already applied for 30 hours free childcare may need to reconfirm before September 2017. We expect that the vast majority of parents will remain eligible, however there are likely to be some who will lose eligibility.

Those parents who do lose eligibility before September should still start taking up their childcare in September for one term only. This is intended to give providers certainty and stability for planning and allocating their childcare places. This will not be repeated for subsequent terms as this is intended to provide certainty for providers and parents for this important first term of 30 hours delivery.

If parents do become eligible during the Autumn term, the provider could continue offering a place from January 2018.

A parent has applied for 30 hours successfully and verified their code. However they'll need to reconfirm their eligibility before the start of term. Do I (the provider) offer the parent a place?

In some circumstances parents may apply for 30 hours free childcare or receive their code more than three months before the start of term. Providers can still reserve a place for the parent but should only start the child in their 30 hours provision if the parent remains eligible before the start of term.

However, for September 2017 entrants only, providers should still offer a place to those parents who have reconfirmed and lost eligibility before 1st September. They should offer the place for one term only (i.e. up to 31st December 2017). If the parent reapplies and is eligible during the course of the term the provider could continue offering a place from January 2018.

So a parent who isn't eligible can still get a place in September 2017?

Not necessarily. Only those parents who have already applied for 30 hours and become ineligible before 1st September 2017 should start their provision for one term only (i.e. the Autumn term).

If the parent reapplies and is eligible during the course of the term the provider could continue offering a place from January 2018.

Will parents who lose eligibility before the start of the Spring/Summer term get a 'golden ticket' as well?

No. This is intended to smooth the first cohort of children moving into 30 hours provision and is therefore only a first term (i.e. September 2017) of childcare for parents who lose eligibility before the start of the Autumn term.

Why won't you do this for subsequent terms?

We think that this provides certainty for providers for this important first term of 30 hours delivery. As the year progresses, providers and LAs should become more accustomed to the flow of applications and reconfirmations and will be better placed to plan and allocate places.

Will the Department provide funding for these places given that these children are technically ineligible?

The Department will make funds available for this specific group of children. We will publish details in due course.

So, what happens to parents who lose eligibility in September?

From September, any child who is taking up provision but then loses eligibility will benefit from a grace period. As set out in the statutory guidance, children of parents who lose eligibility in September will remain in childcare until 31st December (i.e. the end of the term).