

**CHILDCARE REFORMS: CHILDCARE EXPANSION CAPITAL GRANT**

Application Form for Funding

**2025/26**

**CHILDCARE EXPANSION CAPITAL GRANT**

**Information & Instructions for Completing & Submitting Applications for Funding**

The childcare expansion capital grant funding has been provided to local authorities by the Department for Education to support the provision of new places to support the expansion of:

* 30-hours entitlement places for children aged 9-months to 3-year-olds

The funding can be used to provide new places in a range of provider types, where these are offering the free early education and childcare places. We are inviting providers to complete the application form below and submit it via email to [child.care@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:child.care@croydon.gov.uk) by:

**5pm on Friday 25th July 2025.**

**Structure of this document**

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*September 2016*

1. **General Information for applicants**

**Introduction**

* 1. The Childcare Expansion Capital Grant is a one-off payment to local authorities (LAs) to support the expansion of childcare places for working families and to increase wraparound provision in primary schools. Croydon was awarded £712,257 and following allocation of funding to successful bids there is £137,720.70 unspent funds left from this grant, so we are inviting early years providers to bid for a share of this funding.
  2. This opportunity is open to those early years providers who did not bid or were not successful in the previous bidding round. Providers who were successful in the previous round can bid again; however, they are required to provide evidence in their application of additional or increased demand and the specific number of new places they will create with this funding.
  3. In March 2023, the previous Chancellor announced a significant expansion of the free early education entitlements offer. From September 2025, all eligible working parents of children aged nine months and over will be entitled to 30 hours free childcare per week up until their child starts school to support increased parental engagement in the labour market.
  4. The measures announced will expand the existing system by offering up to 30 funded hours of childcare per week over 38 weeks of the year to children aged nine months and over whose parents/cares meet the same income eligibility criteria. The policy will have a phased rollout, with 15 hours per week for 38 weeks a year offered to eligible two-year-olds from April 2024. In September 2024 the new entitlement will be made available to 9-month to 36-month-olds The new entitlement will be offered in full, from September 2025.

1. **Funding available for the Capital Grant**
   1. Childcare Expansion Capital Grant

Childcare Expansion Capital Grant fundingrelates to capital allocation to support the roll-out of the expansion of early years entitlement places from April 2024 and wraparound places from September 2024**.** Croydon has received childcare expansion capital grant of £712,257. The DfE has provided a grant allocation to the Local Authority to help with the creation of additional places to support the expansion of the government’s free early education and childcare places. The suggested approach by DfE is to use 80% of the funding in early years and 20% of the funding in the wraparound sector.

* 1. The Childcare Expansion Capital Grant funding must be spent on capital projects to meet the capital costs associated with projects that help ensure sufficient places for:
* children taking up an early years place through the expanded 30-hours entitlement for qualifying working parents; and
* increasing the supply of wraparound childcare for primary-school aged children.

1. **The intended purpose of this funding**
   1. The Childcare Expansion Capital Grant funding has been provided to local authorities to support the provision of new places focusing on projects that will increase the physical capacity of early years and wraparound provision in local areas where demand is likely to exceed existing supply. It is intended to support the expansion of:

* Children taking up an early years place through the expanded 30-hours entitlement for qualifying working parents (from the term following the child reaching 9-months to the term in which they turn 3-years-old).
  1. It must be spent on capital projects and is being provided to meet the capital costs associated with projects that help ensure sufficiency of places.
  2. Examples of appropriate early years projects:
* Projects that enable and/or increase access to childcare places for eligible children
* Projects that adapt, re-model or improve existing childcare places to make them suitable for a wider range of needs;
* Central capital works required to enable delivery of the entitlement.
  1. These could be achieved through:
* Expansion of existing childcare provision, including expanding existing provision to a different or additional site;
* Remodelling of existing to create additional capacity;
* Creation childcare places, whether via the creation of new settings, or expanding provision in existing providers;
* Modifications or improvements to central IT systems used by the local authority to deliver the entitlements.

1. **Who is eligible to apply for this funding?**
   1. The funding can be used to provide new places in a range of provider types, where these are offering the 30-hours early years entitlement for Two-year-olds and under Two-year-olds.

This includes, but is not limited to:

* State-funded schools
* Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) Providers
* Childminders and childcare on domestic premises
* Childminders on non-domestic premises
  1. All PVIs and childminders intended to deliver entitlements are required to be registered with Ofsted (or in the case of childminders, with Ofsted or a Childminder Agency).
  2. Eligibility for the Capital Grant Funding

1. Projects in settings rated outstanding or good by Ofsted will be prioritised. New providers or existing providers who have not been Ofsted inspected can apply but their application must demonstrate how they will work towards achieving and maintaining quality of provision.
2. New places created should be accessible to all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. The asset must bring an economic benefit, and be able to be depreciated, over more than 12 months. Place creation should be based on internal remodelling, refurbishment, modifications or improvements to create additional places.
   1. **“Additional Places”** are defined as the maximum number of places that could be delivered (according to the space and facilities requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework) from a premises that is currently registered with Ofsted to deliver Early Years childcare, once the proposed capital works are completed minus any existing places.
   2. **“Existing places**” are the maximum number of places that can currently be delivered (according to the space and facilities requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework) from premises that are currently registered with Ofsted to deliver Early Years Childcare.
   3. The creation of additional places must increase access to free childcare places for eligible children where we have identified areas of need and a supporting business case from the applicant outlining how their proposal will address this gap.
   4. The Childcare Provider/Property Owner shall provide evidence of long-term viability and sustainability of the proposed childcare provision.
   5. With the exception of maintained schools, applications will only be accepted from the individual or the legal entity registered as the property owner with the Land Registry.
   6. It is important that the property for which the grant funding is being applied for should already be maintained to a reasonable standard and be appropriate to deliver good quality childcare both internally and externally.
   7. This grant funding is **not** intended for:

* Routine maintenance or refurbishment of premises.
* Capital works to maintain and improve the condition of the school estate, which should continue to be covered by Devolved Formula Capital funding (DFC); Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) or School Condition Allocations (SCA).
* Childcare providers not providing Early Years entitlements.
  1. The funding is provided for capital purposes only and cannot be used for revenue expenditure of any kind, such as training or staff costs, resources/assets that do not meet the definition of capital expenditure given above (such as toys, books, clothing), etc.
  2. If a provider is successful in securing grant funding, they will receive an offer letter from the council confirming the award. This letter will outline the terms and conditions of the grant, including the amount awarded, outputs agreed for your project, and how funds will be paid. The council will also send a Provider Funding Agreement for the provider to sign, formally outlining their obligations and responsibilities.
  3. Please note that due to the limited remaining budget and the anticipated number of successful bids, funding awards may not reflect the full amount requested in your bid. Our goal is to support as many bids as possible, based on demand, within the available grant funding. As such, if your bid is successful, you may be offered a partial award. We encourage bidders to consider how their project could be scaled or adapted to fit potentially reduced funding amount.

1. **How to apply**
   1. If you meet the eligibility criteria, you must:

* complete the application form in English.
* sign the declaration in the application form (must be signed by an authorised person)
* send your completed application electronically with any supporting documents by the closing date of **5pm on Friday 25th July** to [child.care@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:childcare@croydon.gov.uk)
  1. You will be competing for funding so the success of your application will also depend on the number and value of other applications received. You will not automatically get the grant or the amount you applied for.
* Before any funding is allocated, successful applicants must sign a Provider Funding Agreement. Please do not:start work
* commit to any costs (including paying deposits) or
* enter into any legal contracts before the level of funding has been confirmed.

5.4 Any expenses incurred prior to signing are undertaken at your own risk.

1. **Assessment of Applications**
   1. A Capital Funding Panel will be established by the council to assess applications against the assessment criteria and select the successful applicants. The panel will consist of officers from the council.

* 1. Value for money

We will score how well the project costs represent value for money. This includes the amount of grant required to deliver the following outputs:

* 1. Need and demand

Your application needs to provide evidence of current and future demand.

* 1. Criteria and Priority for Funding New Free Entitlements

Priority will be given to providers, in the following order:

a) Shortfall of Places - where data shows that there is / will be insufficient childcare places.

b) Babies and Toddler places - nine months old and two-year-old places where demand exceeds supply

c) Value for Money – the number of places that will be provided for the amount of funding requested.

d) Ofsted Grading – Good or above for existing early years provision.

1. **When you’ll find out if you’re successful**
   1. Croydon aims to give you the outcome of your application within 20 working days from the deadline for applications.
   2. If you are offered a grant, Croydon will send a Provider Funding Agreement for you to sign and return. This will set out the legal terms and conditions of the grant, including the:

* amount of the grant
* outputs we have agreed for your project.
  1. If your application is unsuccessful, Croydon will write to you to tell you why. If you’re unhappy with the decision, you can complain or appeal to council in writing, by email to [child.care@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:child.care@croydon.gov.uk)

| 1. **APPLICATION FORM**   **SECTION 1** | |
| --- | --- |
| **DETAIL REQUIRED** | **APPLICANT'S RESPONSE:** |
| **Project title** |  |
| **Organisation details** | |
| **Organisation name**  This must be the name of the registered name of the provider. |  |
| **Registered Business Address**  This needs to be the official address of the business. |  |
| **Contact person:** |  |
| **Position / Role:** |  |
| **Contact phone:** |  |
| **Contact email:** |  |
| **Please give detail of legal status of organisation** | |
| **Ofsted** |  |
| **Company House** |  |
| **Charity Registration Number** |  |

| **SECTION 2 – PROJECT OUTLINE** | |
| --- | --- |
| **DETAIL REQUIRED** | **APPLICANT'S RESPONSE** |
| **Type of Capital Funding applying for:**   * **Funding New Free Entitlements** |  |
| **Anticipated starting date to provide extended hours / places.** |  |
| **How long will it take to expand your provision?** |  |
| **Project Summary**  Please provide a summary of your expanded offer, including a list of the main steps involved in expanding your provision. |  |

**SECTION 3 – How the grant will be used**

1. How many new or additional free early education and childcare or wraparound childcare places will this grant create, including for children with special educational needs? A place is defined as the maximum number of children you can take on at any one time as per your Ofsted registration for PVIs or EYFS space requirements for DfE registered schools.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Existing Places**  **(places available before grant funding is received)** | **New additional places**  **(places created as a result of the grant funding)** | **Total places (existing plus new places)** |
| **Under 2’s** |  |  |  |
| **2-year-olds** |  |  |  |
| **3- or 4-year-olds** |  |  |  |

1. Times when premises will be available to offer childcare from:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thur | Fri | Sat | Sun |
| *For example:* | *8am-4pm* | *8am-4pm* | *9am-6pm* | *9am-6pm* | *9am-6pm* |  |  |
| Start and finish times |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

1. How many weeks per year will the premises be available to offer childcare from:

* Term Time only (38 weeks per annum) Yes / No
* Term Time + additional weeks (please specify) Yes / No

4 **Capital Works**

Please detail all of the separate aspects of capital building works that will be carried out using the grant funding.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Description of capital building works**, location, number of additional children and their age group. | Include here if you have or will require **planning approva**l for the project. If planning has already been approved, please provide a copy of that planning approval/s as part of this application. | Include here if you have or will require **building regulations approval** for any element of this project. If building regulations has already been approved, please provide a copy as part of this application. | **List below all quotations received** (Name of contractor, address, quotation). Please provide full quotations as part of this application. NB: Copies only. Original documentation remains with you. |
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Note: Please remember to provide copies of all specifications of works, quotations etc as part of this application.

**SECTION 4 – Other information**

If there is any other relevant information that you think will support your application for capital grant funding, please write it in the box below.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**SECTION 5 – DECLARATION STATEMENT**

**PLEASE READ CAREFULLY – YOUR APPLICATION CANNOT PROGRESS UNLESS YOU AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING:**

I have provided ALL RELEVANT EVIDENCE to support my application and understand that any missing evidence will jeopardise the application process.

I confirm that the information I have submitted in this application form is correct to the best of my knowledge.

I confirm that I will advise the council’s Early Years Team of any changes to my circumstances or the information provided.

I confirm that I understand that information contained in this application will be shared within Croydon Council and with relevant wider agencies to confirm my eligibility and to progress and sustain my application.

I understand that falsification of information may lead to my application being rejected without notice.

The Council is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers, and to this end may use the information that you have provided on this form within this authority for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other bodies administering public funds solely for these purposes.

If the application is successful, I confirm that I am prepared to be involved in feedback, evaluation, follow-up and review, as required by the Council.

**I agree to comply with the above terms and conditions: Yes / No**

**Print Name:**

**Signature: Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_**

**Position within organisation:**

**Contact Tel: Mobile Tel:**

1. **Appeals Procedure** 
   1. This appeals procedure applies to early years providers who have applied to Croydon Council for Capital Grant funding as part of the Childcare Reforms.
   2. The appeals procedure only applies to applicants that have an application for Capital Grant funding rejected.
   3. There is no appeals procedure for applicants regarding the level of grant awarded.
   4. **Grounds for appeal**

An appeal can only be made on the basis that the council did not follow the correct procedure in determining the grant application, or the council did not act reasonably in the assessment of the application.

* 1. For the sake of clarity, an applicant cannot appeal the eligibility criteria that has been set by the council.
  2. **Consideration of appeals**

An appeals panel composed of three officers will consider all appeals. These officers will not have been involved in the processing / assessment of the applications for the Capital Grant.

* 1. If the officer panel agree that there are sufficient grounds for appeal, the applicant will be invited to a conference call with the panel. The council will present it’s case first and the applicant will then present their case after which questions may be put.
  2. The appeals panel will inform the applicant of its decision and findings in writing. If the appeal is upheld the council will reconsider the application for Capital Grant. A successful appeal will not automatically result in a different decision. The decision by the appeals panel is final.