

Free Early Education Entitlement for Eligible 3 & 4-Year-Olds

How to complete an eligibility check August 2023

To access the eligibility check you need to visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk this is the first page you will see:



You then need to scroll down to the section that talks about 30 hours funding and click apply now:



You will then be transferred to the HMRC site. Here you need to choose 'options 4'

GOV.UK The childcare service

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Access childcare support through the childcare service

- 1. How it works
- 2. Tax-Free Childcare
- 3. 30 hours free childcare
- 4. Apply or sign in to the childcare service as a parent
- 5. Tax-Free Childcare for childcare providers

1. How it works

Tax-Free Childcare and 30 hours free childcare are two separate government schemes, to help parents with the cost of childcare. You can apply for both through one online application - the childcare service.

To qualify for either scheme, parents must be working and each earning at least £120 a week (on average) and not more than £100,000 each a year.

[Check what help you could get with childcare costs](#)
[Childcare calculator](#)

[Find out more about Tax-Free Childcare for childcare providers](#)
[Read the childcare provider guidance](#)

[Find out more about Tax-Free Childcare and 30 hours free childcare for parents](#)
[Read the parent guidance](#)

Elsewhere on GOV.UK
[Tax credits](#)
[Universal Credit](#)

You will then need to click on the green banner at the bottom of the page which says 'apply or sign into your account':

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4. Apply or sign in to the childcare service as a parent

You can either apply for Tax-Free Childcare or 30 hours free childcare or sign into your childcare service account here. It's one single application but we'll check your eligibility for both.

When you start you'll temporarily leave this site to verify your identity. Once your identity's been verified, you'll be brought back to this site to complete your application. You'll then get a childcare service account.

Your application or account will timeout after 15 minutes of inactivity. You should make sure you have all the details you need, before you start.

Applying should take around 20 minutes.

[Apply or sign in to your account](#)

You will then be asked if you have been invited to use this service as part of a trial – choose 'No':

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Were you invited to use this service as part of the trial?

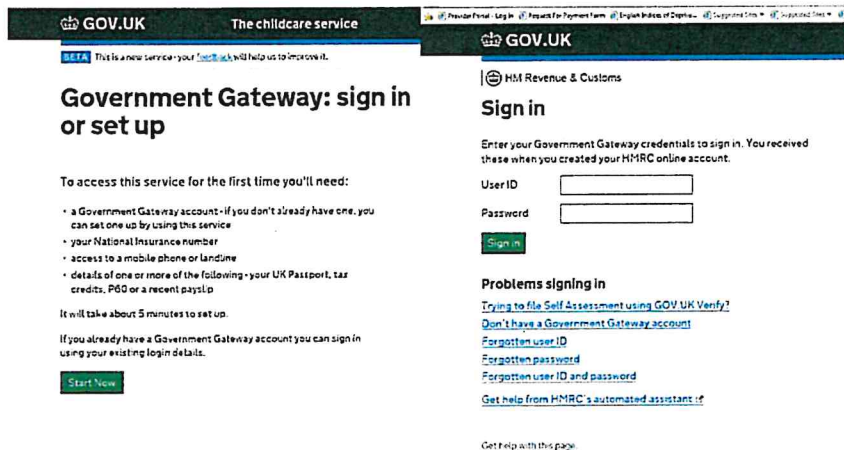
☐ Yes ☒ No

[Continue](#) [Back](#)

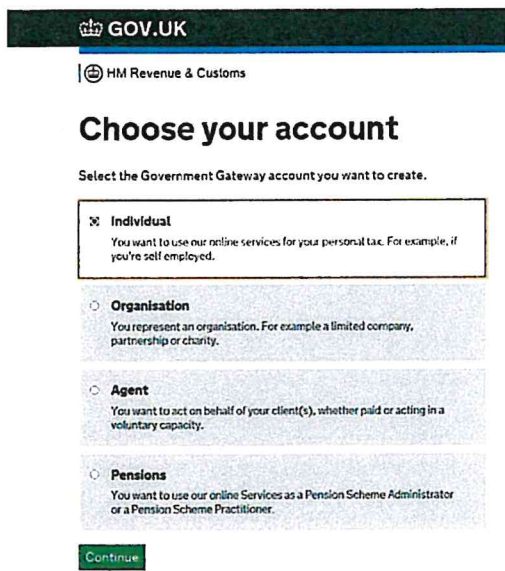
You will then be taken to the follow page and asked for child's date of birth, complete this and press continue:



If you already have a government gateway account you can click 'start now' and log in to the site, if you do not have a government gateway account you will need to choose the link in blue 'Don't have a government gateway account':



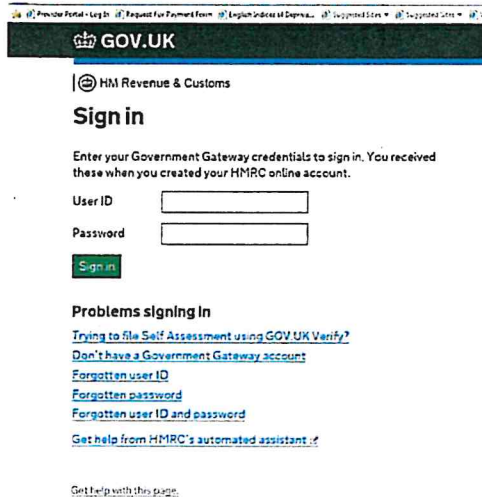
If you are setting up a government gateway account the next page you will see is given below – you should choose the 'individual' option:



Now you will be asked to provide some information and set up your account. If you have a partner, you will also need to enter their information.

Once you have submitted your registration you will receive an email with your user ID on it which is a 12-digit figure.

When you get this email, follow the link they give you and use your user ID and the password you set up previously to login:



The screenshot shows the HMRC GOV.UK Sign in page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the GOV.UK logo and a list of links: Provider Portal - Log in, Request for Payment form, Login/Access to Services, My HMRC online account, My HMRC online account, and My HMRC online account. Below the navigation bar, there is a section for HM Revenue & Customs. The main heading is 'Sign in'. Below this, there is a message: 'Enter your Government Gateway credentials to sign in. You received these when you created your HMRC online account.' There are two input fields: 'User ID' and 'Password'. Below the input fields, there is a green 'Sign in' button. Below the button, there is a section titled 'Problems signing in' with several links: 'Trying to file Self Assessment using GOV.UK Verify?', 'Don't have a Government Gateway account', 'Forgotten user ID', 'Forgotten password', 'Forgotten user ID and password', and 'Get help from HMRC's automated assistant'.

Once you have signed in you will be sent an access code via email or text. This will allow you access the 'Childcare Service Account' page and from here you can choose the option for 're-apply or apply for a new child'.

Everything from here should be self explanatory. You will be asked a number of questions about the child you wish to access funding about as well as details about you and your partners (if relevant) employment status and earnings.

How to find your eligibility code once you have completed a check

Some parents have found it difficult to find the 11-digit code once they have successfully applied online. Here is a step-by-step guide to show you how to find it again.

Click on this link to open the website - <https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/>

The screenshot shows the GOV.UK website for 'The childcare service'. At the top, it says 'GOV.UK' and 'The childcare service'. Below that, a blue banner reads 'BETA This is a new service - your feedback will help us to improve it.' with a 'Get help' link. The main heading is 'Access childcare support through the childcare service'. A list of five steps is shown: 1. How it works, 2. Tax-Free Childcare, 3. 30 hours free childcare, 4. Apply or sign in to the childcare service as a parent, and 5. Tax-Free Childcare for childcare providers. Step 1 is selected and expanded. The text under '1. How it works' explains that Tax-Free Childcare and 30 hours free childcare are two separate government schemes to help parents with the cost of childcare. It states that parents can apply for both through one online application - the childcare service. A note at the bottom says: 'To qualify for either scheme, parents must be working and each earning at least £120 a week (on average) and not more than £100,000 each a year.' To the right of the list, there are links for 'Check what help you could get with childcare costs' (Childcare calculator), 'Find out more about Tax-Free Childcare for childcare providers' (Read the childcare provider guidance), 'Find out more about Tax-Free Childcare and 30 hours free childcare for parents' (Read the parent guidance), and 'Elsewhere on GOV.UK' (Tax credits, Universal Credit).

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Access childcare support through the childcare service

1. [How it works](#)
2. [Tax-Free Childcare](#)
3. [30 hours free childcare](#)
4. [Apply or sign in to the childcare service as a parent](#)
5. [Tax-Free Childcare for childcare providers](#)

1. How it works

Tax-Free Childcare and 30 hours free childcare are two separate government schemes, to help parents with the cost of childcare. You can apply for both through one online application - the childcare service.

To qualify for either scheme, parents must be working and each earning at least £120 a week (on average) and not more than £100,000 each a year.

Check what help you could get with childcare costs
[Childcare calculator](#)

Find out more about Tax-Free Childcare for childcare providers
[Read the childcare provider guidance](#)

Find out more about Tax-Free Childcare and 30 hours free childcare for parents
[Read the parent guidance](#)

Elsewhere on GOV.UK
[Tax credits](#)
[Universal Credit](#)

Click on number "[4. Apply or sign in to the childcare service as a parent](#)"

This screenshot is similar to the previous one, showing the GOV.UK website for 'The childcare service'. The main heading is 'Access childcare support through the childcare service'. In this view, step 4, 'Apply or sign in to the childcare service as a parent', is selected and expanded. The list of steps remains the same: 1. How it works, 2. Tax-Free Childcare, 3. 30 hours free childcare, 4. Apply or sign in to the childcare service as a parent, and 5. Tax-Free Childcare for childcare providers. The text under step 4 is not visible in this screenshot. The right-hand side links remain the same.

GOV.UK The childcare service

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Access childcare support through the childcare service

1. [How it works](#)
2. [Tax-Free Childcare](#)
3. [30 hours free childcare](#)
4. [Apply or sign in to the childcare service as a parent](#)
5. [Tax-Free Childcare for childcare providers](#)

4. Apply or sign in to the childcare service as a parent

Click on the green button at the bottom of the screen labelled 'Apply or sign in to your account'

GOV.UK The childcare service

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Access childcare support through the childcare service

1. Check eligibility
2. Tax-free Childcare
3. 30 hours free childcare
4. Apply or sign in to the childcare service as a parent
5. Tax-free Childcare for childcare providers

4. Apply or sign in to the childcare service as a parent

You can either apply for Tax-Free Childcare or 30 hours free childcare or sign in to your childcare service account here. It's one simple application but we'll check your eligibility for both.

When you start you'll temporarily leave this site to verify your identity. Once your identity's been verified, you'll be brought back to this site to complete your application. You'll then get a childcare service account.

Your application or account will timeout after 15 minutes of inactivity. You should make sure you have all the details you need, before you start.

Applying should take around 20 minutes.

[Apply or sign in to your account](#)

Check what help you could get with childcare costs
[Childcare calculator](#)

Search for childcare providers signed up for Tax-Free Childcare
[Search for a childcare provider](#)

Find out more about Tax-Free Childcare for childcare providers
[Read the childcare provider guidance](#)

Find out more about Tax-Free Childcare and 30 hours free childcare for parents
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Click 'NO' to the question about being 'part of a trial' and then click the green button labelled 'Continue'.

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Were you invited to use this service as part of the trial?

☐ Yes ☒ No

[Continue](#)

[Back](#)

Enter your youngest child's date of birth and then click the green button labelled 'Continue'.



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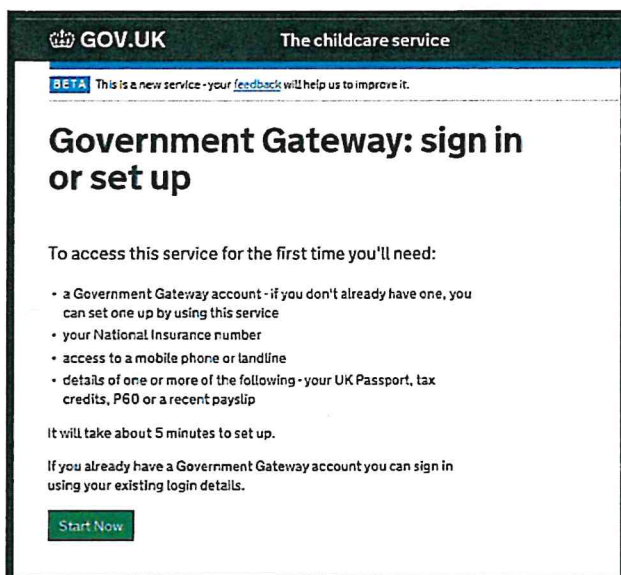
Enter the date of birth of your youngest child

Date of birth
For example, 24 04 1997

Day Month Year

[Continue](#)

Click on the green button labelled 'Start Now'



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Government Gateway: sign in or set up

To access this service for the first time you'll need:

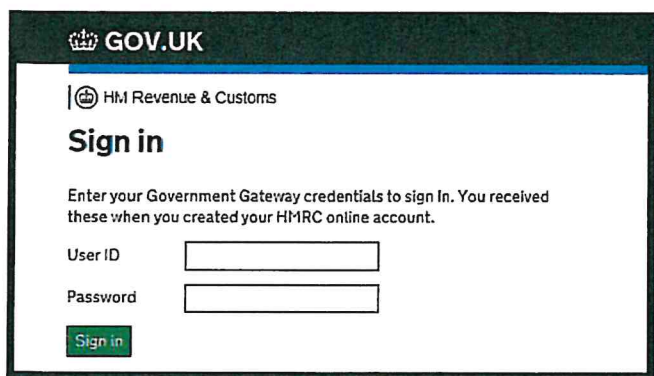
- a Government Gateway account - if you don't already have one, you can set one up by using this service
- your National Insurance number
- access to a mobile phone or landline
- details of one or more of the following - your UK Passport, tax credits, P60 or a recent payslip

It will take about 5 minutes to set up.

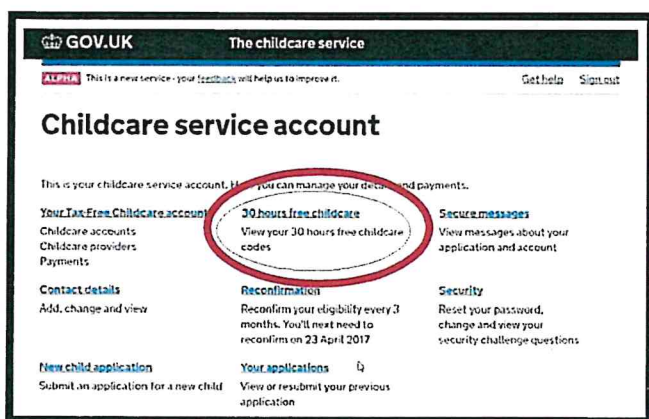
If you already have a Government Gateway account you can sign in using your existing login details.

[Start Now](#)

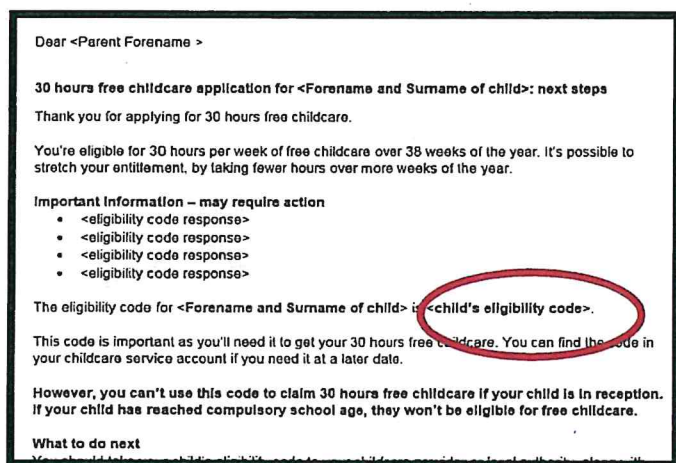
Enter your Government Gateway User ID and Password and then click the green button labelled 'Sign in'



Your childcare account will now be displayed. Click '30 hours free childcare' to see your 11 digit code, which usually starts with '5000...'



Or you can click on 'Secure messages' where you will see a message that looks like this (this would be populated with your information).



Please note that a small number of parents will have been issued with a temporary code which starts "11..." These will only have been issued over the phone by HMRC and parents will have received a letter containing this from HMRC too.

If you are still struggling to access your account, please contact HMRC's call centre on 0300 123 4097