

CHILDCARE OFFER CAPITAL GRANT PROGRAMME

SMALL GRANTS SCHEME

Administration

The Small Grants Scheme (hereafter referred to as the Grant) will be managed by the Local Authority, utilising the systems it already has in place to administer other childcare and early years funding streams.

The Local Authority should ensure that in considering applications that it consults with representatives of the childcare umbrella organisations.

It will be for each Local Authority to determine how frequently it accepts applications but it should ensure that these 'bidding rounds' are frequent enough to allow childcare providers to secure the funding they need as quickly as possible.

The Local Authority will be expected to:

- Keep a record of all the applications it receives;
- Record when the application was considered, who was present, and whether funding was approved or not;
- If funding is approved the amount should be recorded in a formal grant offer letter to the applicant which details the terms and conditions* attached to the offer and the applicant must sign up to those terms and conditions;
- If funding is not awarded, the applicant must be advised in writing; and
- Details of when the funding is paid out must be recorded and what checks have been taken to ensure the work has taken place.

The information detailed above will need to be submitted to the Childcare Offer Capital team within the Welsh Government on an annual basis as part of the final 4th quarter claim in April / May, although a brief summary should be included in the quarterly claim form and progress report.

* See details below regarding the grant terms and conditions.

Eligibility

In considering an application the Local Authority will need to ensure that the applicant is eligible and meets the criteria detailed below.

All settings registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) who are offering Childcare Offer places for 3 and 4 year olds or who intend to offer places are eligible to apply. This includes childminders, private and voluntary sector providers, and maintained settings offering day care, wrap around care, holiday play schemes, out of school childcare clubs, etc. Applications can also be considered from childcare providers who are in the process of applying for registration; the Local Authority will need to be satisfied that provider is genuinely in the process of making that application to CIW.

The childcare setting must be based in Wales; applications cannot be considered for childcare settings located in England even if there are Welsh children attending.

All applications should be made to the Local Authority of the area of the setting's address as registered with CIW; a provider cannot apply to more than one Local Authority even though they may be taking children from more than one Local Authority area. So for example if the address of a registered setting is in Swansea it can only apply to Swansea Council, even though it may be taking children from Neath Port Talbot or Carmarthenshire. If a provider has more than one registered setting then the applicant Authority is based on the address for each and the financial limit applies to each.

In making an application a provider must:

- Be able to demonstrate that there is an un-met demand for childcare;
- Be registered with CIW or in the case of new providers, give a written undertaking that it will register with CIW at the earliest opportunity. If a setting is not registered within 6 months of grant having been drawn down then the Local Authority may take steps to recover the funds;
- Be registered with the Local Authority to deliver Childcare Offer places or give a written undertaking that it will be registering with the Local Authority;
- Be able to demonstrate security of tenure for a minimum of 5 years. Where the number of years remaining of a lease is less than 5 years, consideration may be given to applications where the provider is able to show that there is a clear commitment or intent from the landlord to renew the lease;
- Be prepared to commit to offer Childcare Offer places for a minimum of 5 years from the date on which the final grant payment is made and acknowledge that if it stops providing Childcare Offer places or routinely accepts fee paying children over those in receipt of the Offer, then it will be required to repay all or part of the grant funding paid. The amount repayable will vary depending on the circumstances;
- Acknowledge the investment it has received in any promotional material issued to parents; and

The Local Authority may also wish to consider the following, particularly if the Grant is over subscribed, that:

- The provider is a member of a childcare umbrella organisation such as NDNA, Mudiad Meithrin, Early Years Wales, Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Clubs, PACEY Cymru, etc. However whilst registration with one of these organisations is advisable, it should not be a part of the eligibility criteria;
- The setting will be able to deliver additional childcare places as a result of the investment or the quality of the childcare places will improve;
- The Childcare Offer can be delivered during term time and the school holidays in order to provide the full 48 weeks that the child is entitled to; and
- The setting has a valid quality assurance award.

What can be funded

Grant funding can be awarded to settings to enable them to increase the number of places they are able to offer, to improve the quality of the facilities they offer, or to lower the age range of their provision to include 3 and 4 year olds. We would expect the maximum amount available to any one setting in any given financial year to be as detailed below, however the Local Authority can use its judgement to offer the maximum amount of £10,000 if there are exceptional circumstances.

Childminders and those registered for 8 or fewer	Up to £5,000
Childcare providers registered for 9 to 15 places	Up to £7,500
Childcare providers registered for 16+ places	Up to £10,000

Guidance for grant applications from childcare providers (excluding childminders)

Funding can be offered for various capital works that may be needed such as:

- General refurbishment, including painting, replacing carpets, etc;
- Improving the outdoor play facilities of a setting, such as replacing the outdoor play surface or providing a canopy;
- Replacing / repairing fixtures and fittings such as toilets, kitchen facilities, windows, doors, etc;
- Replacing worn equipment / furniture / toys which could potentially pose a health and safety risk. So for example a rusted outdoor climbing frame, broken or badly worn furniture, which could cause splinters; or a well used and tatty changing table, which can no longer be hygienically cleaned;
- IT equipment provided it can be clearly shown that there is a need in order to deliver Childcare Offer places, this could include laptops, printers, etc;
- Adaptations to the setting to improve access, etc;
- The provision of bespoke equipment / furniture which will enable a provider to accommodate a child with additional learning needs;
- Purchasing equipment which will enable the setting to accommodate 3 and 4 year olds; and
- Toward the purchase of a minibus which would be used to transport children between the childcare and education elements of the Offer. Leasing costs are not eligible for funding and neither are running costs such as insurance, petrol, servicing, etc..

The grant funding is for capital purchases only, essentially something that has a resale value or improves the value of the property. It cannot be used to fund:

- The purchase of consumables, such as paper, cleaning materials, nappies, etc;
- Staff costs such as wages, training, travel and subsistence;
- Utility bills such as gas, electric, rates;
- The provision of WiFi;
- Insurance costs e.g. building insurance, employer's liability insurance, etc.

This list is not exhaustive; if there is any doubt as to whether or not an item is eligible please contact Sandra Owens in the Welsh Government.

Guidance for grant applications from childminders

As childminders work on domestic premises the guidance for applications for Capital Funding is different. Funding can though be offered for various capital works that may be needed such as:

- Improving the outdoor play facilities of a setting, such as replacing the outdoor play surface or providing a canopy;
- Replacing worn equipment / furniture / toys which could potentially pose a health and safety risk. So for example a rusted outdoor climbing frame, broken or badly worn furniture, which could cause splinters; or a well used and tatty changing table, which can no longer be hygienically cleaned;
- IT equipment provided it can be clearly shown that there is a need in order to deliver Childcare Offer places, this could include laptops, printers, etc;
- Adaptations to the setting to improve access, etc;
- The provision of bespoke equipment / furniture which will enable a provider to accommodate a child with additional learning needs.

Childminders should clearly demonstrate evidence of need and how this benefits the childminding setting and children in their care given that they are working on domestic premises.

The grant funding is for capital purchases only, essentially something that has a resale value. In childminding setting it cannot be used to fund:

- The purchase of consumables, such as paper, cleaning materials, nappies, etc;
- Staff costs such as wages, training, travel and subsistence;
- Utility bills such as gas, electric, rates;
- The provision of WiFi;
- Insurance costs e.g. building insurance, employer's liability insurance, etc.
- General refurbishment, including painting, replacing carpets, etc.
- Replacing / repairing fixtures and fittings such as toilets, kitchen facilities, windows, doors, etc;

This list is not exhaustive; if there is any doubt as to whether or not an item is eligible please contact Sandra Owens in the Welsh Government.

Terms and Conditions

All providers in receipt of funds from the Small Grants Scheme will be expected to formally accept the offer in writing (email is acceptable), they must also sign up to the terms and conditions attached to the grant.

The Local Authority should base the terms and conditions it uses for other early years grants that it administers, it should however include the following additional clauses:

- The funding is being provided by the Welsh Government and this must be acknowledged in any literature such as newsletters, issued to parents, and the Childcare Offer branding should be used;
- The provider must also be promoting the Childcare Offer (using the appropriate branding) through social media, flyers, and other forms of advertising;
- In accepting this offer of funding the applicant agrees to provide Childcare Offer places for a minimum of 5 years from the date the grant funding is paid. If the applicant fails to accept children being funded via the Offer, then it will be liable to repay all or part of the funding paid. This will not apply if the applicant can clearly demonstrate that he / she would welcome children under the Offer but there is no take up;
- The funding must be spent solely on those items deemed eligible for funding, if there is evidence that any part of the funding has been used for ineligible items then the applicant will be required to repay that amount;
- A provider may apply for funding for the same setting more than once in any financial year, provided that the total amount awarded to an individual setting does not exceed more than £10,000 in that year.

Please note the Welsh Government will not seek to recover funding from the Local Authority in respect of monies it has failed to recover from a third party, provided it can demonstrate that it has taken all reasonable steps to reclaim the funding from the provider.

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