



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Childcare Offer for Wales Additional Support Grant

October 2021

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Guidance on Childcare Offer for Wales Additional Support Grant

The purpose of the Additional Support Grant

1. The Childcare Offer for Wales (the Offer) provides 30 hours of government-funded childcare and early education to the children of eligible parents for 48 weeks per year. The Offer has been designed in such a way to take account of barriers that eligible parents may face in accessing the childcare element in particular, including those who have children with additional support needs. This may include, for example, children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), Additional Learning Needs (ALN), learning disabilities or other disabilities or health needs which require additional support.¹
2. To ensure that the childcare element of the Offer is inclusive to eligible children who need additional support, help has been made available by means of a separate funding stream called the Childcare Offer for Wales Additional Support Grant. Local authorities can draw on this funding to help ensure that eligible children with additional needs are able to access the childcare element of the Offer in the same way as other eligible children.
3. This Guidance provides advice on how the Additional Support Grant can be used, along with examples of how the money awarded through the Grant can be spent. Please note the examples given in this guidance are not exhaustive. As the Guidance is not intended to cover all potential scenarios and circumstances, there may be occasions when decisions on funding will need to be made on a case by case basis, taking into account broader considerations.

In some, but not necessarily all instances, an Additional Support Grant application may amount to it coming to the local authority's attention that a child may have additional learning needs (ALN). Depending upon the circumstances, this could mean that the local authority is required to decide whether the child has ALN. Paragraphs 11.5 – 11.7 of the ALN Code² deal with when a local authority is required to decide whether a child who is under compulsory school age and not attending a maintained school has ALN.

4. Support is not limited to children whose needs meet the SEN or ALN definition.
5. Should you wish to spend the Additional Support Grant on something not explicitly covered by this guidance, please get in touch with a member of the Welsh Government's Childcare Offer Team to discuss further.

Additional Support

6. The Welsh Government recognises that identifying whether or not a child within the eligible age range for the Offer has additional support needs may be potentially

¹ The Governing Body of a maintained early years setting has duties under the Education Act 1996 and the local authority has statutory duties towards children with SEN in funded non-maintained nursery education. A child in other non-maintained provision, such as a private nursery, is also owed a duty by the local authority under the SEN system where the child has reached the age of 2. From September 2021, the Governing Bodies of maintained nurseries and local authorities have statutory duties under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, and associated Code and regulations.

² The ALN Code can be found at - [210326-the-additional-learning-needs-code-for-wales-2021.pdf](#)

confusing for parents and early years practitioners. We know that identification can often depend on a range of factors, including the type or severity of a child's condition and their age. Many 3-4 year olds may not have received a statement of special educational needs, an individual development plan (IDP) or been formally identified as having an additional learning need. For this reason, we do not require children who access additional support through this grant to have undergone a formal assessment and diagnosis, however there are a range of matters local authorities might want to take into account.

7. When considering an application for support it may be helpful to consider if any assessment of the child's needs has already been undertaken. Children who have previously received Flying Start childcare may have a Schedule of Growing Skills assessment in place or a Health Visitor may have provided such an assessment. These assessments, as well as any IDP or statement already in place in respect of a child, should be taken into consideration in identifying any need for additional support in accordance with this guidance. The local authority should also consider taking advice from the Designated Education Clinical Lead Officer (DECLO) within their Health Board.
8. In broad terms, the Childcare Offer defines children who require additional support as children who have:
 - Cognition and Learning, including specific, moderate, severe or profound learning difficulties;
 - Behavioural, emotional and social development difficulties;
 - Communication and interaction, including autism; speech, language and communication difficulty;
 - Sensory and/or physical, including hearing and/or visual impairment or physical difficulties;
 - Medical conditions;
 - Other health needs (not captured by the formal definitions of SEN and ALN) which mean they need more support than some of their peers to fully benefit from the childcare element of the Offer.
9. It is for the purpose of supporting children who fall into the above categories that the Additional Support Grant should be used. Support is **not** limited to those children with pre-existing statements, IDPs, or diagnoses, or to those children with needs within the SEN or ALN definitions³.
10. Local authorities are, however, encouraged to align as far as possible their arrangements for supporting children requiring additional support and their more established arrangements for supporting children with SEN/ALN as part of their statutory duties. Local authorities will need to consider how best to allocate any resource to provide the best value for money whilst always considering the best interests of the child.
11. The grant can be utilised at any point during the time a child is accessing the Offer and the need for additional support is identified. If a child who has been identified as having additional support needs is transitioning from Flying Start provision to take up the Childcare Offer, Flying Start transition guidance should be followed.

³ For definitions, see [the-additional-learning-needs-code-for-wales-2021.pdf \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/government-asset/government-asset-103277)

How the funding should be used

12. The funding awarded through the Grant is specifically linked to the **childcare element** of the Childcare Offer and should in no way replace existing arrangements which the local authority may have in place for funding support for children with SEN/ALN. Local authorities must continue to comply with their statutory duties related to meeting the needs of children with SEN/ALN, including children under compulsory school age for whom the childcare element of the Offer is paid. Currently, those duties are under Part 4 of the Education Act 1996 regarding SEN, though they are being gradually phased out as the duties provided for by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 are to be implemented over a three year period which began on 1 September 2021.
13. All relevant funding options must be considered before this additional funding is used, including funding provided to local authorities through the Revenue Support Grant for the purposes of meeting their statutory duties in relation to SEN/ALN. Assuming that all other avenues of funding have been explored, the Additional Support Grant should be spent to support children who fall within the Welsh Government's definition of children with additional support needs for the purpose of the childcare element of the Childcare Offer (see paragraph 9 above).
14. The grant should be spent according to each individual child's needs. The Grant can be used to support a range of additional support needs and consideration should be given to how funding can be used to allow equal access to the Offer based on that specific child's needs.
15. Funding should not be used for the following purposes:
 - to support a child who is not accessing the childcare element of the Childcare Offer, either because they and their family are ineligible or because they are not taking it up although they are eligible;
 - for generic training that does not relate to the needs of a child who is accessing the childcare element of the Offer;
 - to fulfil other duties, such as funding local authority members of staff, who are not connected with diagnosing or supporting children with additional needs accessing the childcare element of the Offer;
 - to transport/allow a child to travel to their childcare setting or between their Foundation Phase (early education) setting and childcare setting or vice versa.
16. Funding can be used for the following purposes:
 - **Training for providers** – this may include training on specific medical/healthcare needs or more general training that is directly linked to the provision of care for a specific child with additional needs. This cannot be used for wider training of staff who are not connected with diagnosing or supporting children defined according to this guidance as having additional needs. Funding can be used to backfill for staff who are attending training on specific medical/healthcare needs or more general training that is directly linked to the provision of care for a specific child with additional needs and in receipt of the childcare element of the Offer. In these circumstances, however, the Welsh Government will only fund to back-fill for up to a total of

five days in any financial year; only within the local authorities allocated budget for this grant and only in situations where the local authority is satisfied that the setting cannot meet the cost for sustainability reasons. The use of the grant in this way will be monitored closely to ensure that it meets the intended purposes, which is to remove barriers to children with additional support needs benefiting from the childcare element of the Offer.

- **Additional staffing** – this could be to provide specialised support for children with more severe additional support needs who are accessing the Offer. This could range from helping with additional daily care needs, to developing individual development plans and strategies in consultation with children’s families and external services. Funding can also be used to provide cover for staff who are specialised in providing support for a child with additional needs for the duration of time the child is eligible for the Offer;
- **Helping-hands** – some children may require additional support from a member of staff for part, or all, of the time they are with their childcare provider. This will have an impact on staff ratios within the setting and the grant can be used to cover the costs of the member of staff providing care for the child. This funding can be used to support an individual child or a group of children who all have additional support needs to ensure the setting always maintains its ratios;
- **Equipment** – some children with additional support needs may require additional equipment. This will vary depending on the child’s needs, but could include additional learning materials or specialist play equipment. Specialist equipment that the child requires all of the time (such as mobility aids) should be provided by the local authority’s health service;
- **Physical adjustments to settings** – this could include, for example, adjustments for children with particular access needs, the creation of specific spaces for children with additional support needs, changes to the setting for children with a visual impairment, or making improvements to acoustics for children who are deaf;
- **Administration costs** – some local authorities may need specialist additional staff resources to undertake the assessments or diagnosing of children thought to have additional needs. This spend will only be allowed following submission and approval of a business case to the Welsh Government (no more than 2 A4 pages – template attached at Annex 1).

Applying and allocating the Additional Support Grant

17. Delivery Authorities and their partner Engagement Authorities will need to put in place a process for handling applications for funding in line with this grant which allows determinations to be made by the authority within which a parent lives, with payment and confirmation of the grant being made by the Delivery Authority.
18. Both authorities should ensure that there are no unnecessary delays in the application and allocation of the Grant and should work closely together to ensure that the parent/s and child are not disadvantaged due to the child’s additional support needs.

19. It is expected that an appropriate level of funding would be allocated to reflect the needs of the individual child. Each case will need to be considered on its own merits.
20. Funding awarded through the Additional Support Grant should be reviewed on a termly basis to ensure that the support is still appropriate to the needs to the child. If there has been any change in circumstances then the child should be reassessed to ensure the support is still required/still meets their needs.
21. Any information that is exchanged between a Delivery Authority and an Engagement Authority in arranging additional support for a child in accordance with this grant must be compliant with:
 - the local authority's own GDPR compliance procedures;
 - the 'privacy notice for the monitoring information returns for services used of the childcare offer' produced by the Welsh Government for the delivery of the Childcare Offer; and
 - Schedule 5 of the grant offer letter for implementation of the Childcare Offer.

Claiming Administration Costs

22. The grant funding will be paid directly to the Delivery Authority. Any Engagement Authority that has additional administration costs relating to additional support needs and the Childcare Offer (over and above their allocated budget) will need to have their business case approved by the Welsh Government before they submit a claim to the relevant Delivery Authority for payment. This claim will include the approval from the Welsh Government. We would expect details of this payment relationship and the conditions associated with it to be covered in the Partnership Agreement required under the terms of the Administration Grant.

Purchase of Goods

23. Whilst this grant is a revenue funding stream, it is understood that there will be occasions when there may be a need to purchase items e.g. equipment to support the particular needs of a child. The Welsh Government has a capitalisation threshold of £5,000, which means that the purchase of assets worth less than £5,000 can be classed as revenue expenditure and not capital. The £5,000 threshold applies per distinct group of purchases e.g. the authority may purchase equipment up to the value of £4,999.99 for one child, and may also spend up to this amount again on another. The threshold will not have been exceeded.
24. Resources or equipment purchased through this grant will be the property of the local authority and managed by the local authority. Where practically possible, if a child with additional support needs accesses the Childcare Offer through more than one provider, arrangements should be put in place for the resource or equipment to be available to the child at all settings. The local authority will need to consider how best to allocate and reallocate any resource or equipment to provide the best value for money, whilst always considering the best interest of the child.
25. Local authorities are advised to ensure that childcare settings and parents understand that equipment purchased through this grant remains the property of the local authority and is only available to the child whilst they are accessing the Offer.

Grant Allocations

26. Grant letters on behalf of Engagement Authorities will be issued to the Delivery Authority with the Engagement Authorities copied in.

Claims

27. Delivery Authorities will be able to claim the Additional Support Grant monthly on the same dedicated form as the Childcare Grant. The Welsh Government will monitor the Additional Support Grant through these regular returns as well as the returns provided on the Childcare Offer as a whole.

28. Please note these guidelines are subject to the duration of the grant and are potentially subject to change in the future.

Annex 1 - Additional Support Grant Business Case

LOCAL AUTHORITY

LEAD OFFICER:

CONTACT OFFICER:

GRANT

1 SUMMARY OF REQUEST

2 REASON FOR REQUEST

3 OPTIONS / CONSIDERATIONS

4 COSTS

Total costs required within this business case would be

XXXX Grant – original allocation	£
Additional Funding to meet demand up until xx/xx/xxxx	£
Total	£

5 OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS FROM THE ADDITIONAL FUNDING

6 RISKS IF THE FUNDS NOT RECEIVED

.

7 PERIOD COVERED

.