

Suffolk Provider Portal

Frequently Asked Questions



Click on a heading in the contents list to quickly navigate this guidance document.

Contents

Passwords and logging in	3
I need to change my Provider Portal password. Why won't the Provider Portal accept the password I change it to?	3
I've forgotten my password, can you reset it for me?.....	3
What if I have clicked "forgotten password" on the Provider Portal and I haven't received an email containing the link?	3
Why is the Provider Portal asking me to change my password?.....	3
Registered users.....	3
I know that I'm going to miss my deadline, or the registered user is unable to submit the claim on time. What do I do?	3
What do I do if someone from my setting has requested I log into the Provider Portal on their behalf, and I don't have my own log in? Can I use their username and password?	4
Why can there only be one registered user per setting?	4
Headcounts tasks	4
Where is my task?.....	4
How can I look at my previous tasks?	4
What do I do if I do not have any funded children this term?	4
How can I check if my task has been submitted?	4
Is Parent/Carer information mandatory, and can it be retracted from the Provider Portal if the parent/carers wishes to do so?	5
A child on my task has an S, N, P, EH, 2, or X on their record. What does this mean and what do I need to do?	5
Funded hours and stretched offers.....	6
Can I claim fewer weeks than a full funded term on my headcount task, or do I do an additional task?	6
Can I claim funding for a child who is also attending a reception class in a school?	6
I have had a child leave halfway through term. Do I need to change the hours or weeks on my claim?	6
Can I change a child's hours on the additional headcount task?	6
A child has started with me but was somewhere else on headcount week. Can you transfer over the funding to me?	6
Will the Provider Portal tell me if a child is being claimed for too many hours?	7
A parent signed their PAF for funded hours saying the child is not going anywhere else, but the funding claims reveal the child is taking some of their entitlement somewhere else.	7
How can I tell which children I received EYPP for?	7
How do I record a stretched offer over a whole year on the Provider Portal?	7

Two Year Old Funding (Disadvantaged/Non-Economic Entitlement)	8
What do I do with a Golden Ticket?	8
What is a Two Year Old Funding reference number?	8
I've run a check, but now the Provider Portal is saying the child's start date is after the child actually started.	8
I've added a new 2-year-old to my task, but they have a blue N and I can't add the hours.	8
Why do I have to run a check when I've already seen a Golden Ticket?	9
Why have you rejected my Golden Ticket information?	9
Expanded/Extended Hours Funding	9
Why can't I add expanded/extended hours to a child in my headcount task?	9
Why can't I add expanded/extended hours for a child? I've done the check.	9
The Provider Portal extended hours checker says that a child's code is 'not found'. Does this mean that they are ineligible?	10
Payments and Reports	10
What is this payment for?	10
When will I get paid?	10
Do I request an advance payment through the Provider Portal?	10
I received an overpayment and have now paid it back. Will I get a new report?	11
Why can't I access older reports in the Provider Portal?	11
Early Years Census	11
Do maintained schools still need to add Early Years children to the School Census?	11

Passwords and logging in

I need to change my Provider Portal password. Why won't the Provider Portal accept the password I change it to?

- Your password to the Provider Portal must contain at least 10 characters, but no more than 128.
- It must also contain a minimum of 2 numbers, 1 lower case letter, 1 upper case letter, and 1 special character.
- Certain special characters are not recognised by the Provider Portal. If you are trying to use a £ symbol or a dash, this may be why the Provider Portal is rejecting your new password.

I've forgotten my password, can you reset it for me?

- If you've forgotten your password, you can reset it yourself by clicking the "forgotten password" button on the Provider Portal log in page. This will automatically send you an email containing a link and a temporary password.
- Click on the link in the email and you will be taken back to the log in screen, where you can log in using the temporary password and your username. You'll then be prompted to change the password back to something you'll remember.
- When re-setting your password, the Provider Portal will ask for your 'current password' – this will be the temporary password you have just received.

What if I have clicked "forgotten password" on the Provider Portal and I haven't received an email containing the link?

- Please check your spam or junk folder, to make sure the email has not arrived there. If the email still has not arrived after a reasonable period, please contact the Early Years and Childcare Service by emailing: provider.ProviderPortal@suffolk.gov.uk

Why is the Provider Portal asking me to change my password?

- The Provider Portal requires passwords to be changed every year for data protection reasons. This is built into the Provider Portal and cannot be changed.

Registered users

I know that I'm going to miss my deadline, or the registered user is unable to submit the claim on time. What do I do?

- Please send an email to provider.portal@suffolk.gov.uk informing us of the issue straight away. We will work out a solution with you to ensure that you do not miss out on your funding – most likely this will involve either a change of user, or giving you another task with a later deadline, which may delay your payment slightly.
- The sooner you let us know about the issue, the less likely it is that your payment will be delayed.

What do I do if someone from my setting has requested I log into the Provider Portal on their behalf, and I don't have my own log in? Can I use their username and password?

- **No** - only the registered user to the Provider Portal should have their login details. Registered user logins **must not be shared**.
- If you need to become the sole registered user for the Provider Portal, please complete the registered user pro-forma found on Suffolk Learning: [How to register for the Provider Portal – Suffolk Learning](#)

Why can there only be one registered user per setting?

- To manage the level of risk in using this system, it has been agreed by the Data Protection Team at Suffolk County Council that Provider Portal access is restricted to one user per setting.
- Restricted use means less users in the system therefore less opportunities for data being accessed and shared by unauthorised personnel.

Headcounts tasks

Where is my task?

- The first task for any term will be sent out during headcount week. If it is after headcount week and you still do not have a task, please contact the Suffolk Family Information Service.
- Headcount week information can be found on Suffolk Learning: [2, 3 & 4 Year old funding – Suffolk Learning](#)
- The second task in any term (additional task) is usually sent out in the week following half term.

How can I look at my previous tasks?

- You can access your previous tasks by selecting “view all tasks” from the main tasks screen, then choosing “historical” from the dropdown menu in the top right. This will show you all the tasks that you have previously been sent – you can review them for your records.

What do I do if I do not have any funded children this term?

- If you are not claiming for any children this term, then you can safely ignore the task on the Provider Portal. We will treat any unsubmitted tasks as a nil claim.

How can I check if my task has been submitted?

- When you press “submit” and agree to the declaration, you should see a green box in the top right corner informing you that your task has been submitted. Additionally, when you go back into the tasks screen, your task should show with a submitted status.
- See the Provider Portal Headcount guidance on Suffolk Learning: [Headcount Guidance – Suffolk Learning](#)

Is Parent/Carer information mandatory, and can it be retracted from the Provider Portal if the parent/carers wishes to do so?

- Parent/Carer information is not mandatory. However, Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) eligibility is checked via the Parent/Carer information, so you are encouraged to obtain information from any parent/carers you believe may qualify to ensure your setting does not miss out on EYPP funding.
- If a parent/carers provides information, and later wishes to have it removed from the Provider Portal, please contact the Suffolk Family Information Service, who will be able to do so.

A child on my task has an S, N, P, EH, 2, or X on their record. What does this mean and what do I need to do?

- An “S” in a coloured circle means that the child is currently registered with multiple providers on our system and may be sharing their funding. An “S” in a black circle means that the child has shared funding in the past.
- An “N” means that you have added a 2 year old directly to your task. **If you see this, you will not be able to add funded hours for this child and will not be paid for them** (unless they also have the “EH” symbol for the expanded hours). You must delete this record and link the child to your task using the 2 Year Old Funding checker. If you are unable to delete the record, or you’re seeing this for a child who isn’t 2, please let us know by email and we will investigate.
- A child with a “P” is claiming EYPP or has done in the past. You can use this to check which of your funded children has attracted EYPP.
- A child with an “EH” can claim expanded/extended hours funding. The “EH” will not appear until you have used the Provider Portal’s expanded/extended hours checker to confirm the child’s eligibility. The “EH” symbol can be different colours – these colours are related to the status of their eligibility. Please see the expanded/extended hours checker guidance for more information on this:
[Expanded/Extended Hours Checker Guidance – Suffolk Learning](#)
- A child with a “2” is/was eligible for 2 Year Old Funding via the ‘disadvantaged/non-economic’ entitlement. You can hover over the symbol to see the ‘TYF’ reference number linked to the child.
- A child with an “X” to the right of their entry is a new child. The “X” is a delete button – if you have made a mistake in adding the child, you can press this button to delete them before adding them again. Otherwise, you can ignore it.
- A child with a warning symbol - the symbol appears due to the parent/carers information not being included. You will need to rectify this prior to submitting.

Funded hours and stretched offers

Can I claim fewer weeks than a full funded term on my headcount task, or do I do an additional task?

- If a child is with you on Headcount week, then you are entitled to claim for the full number of weeks in the term, or more if using a stretched offer.
- You should not be claiming for fewer weeks than the length of the term on your first headcount task unless you are an independent school with different term lengths, or unless you know that a child will be leaving your provision on a certain date before the end of term.
- Additional headcount task - When you add children to your additional headcount task, you will need to make sure that you reduce the number of weeks claimed to the number of weeks that the child has been/will be with you.
- Because headcount is in the second week of term, the maximum number of weeks that you can claim on the additional task for a child joining after headcount week is the length of the term minus 2 – e.g., 12 weeks for autumn.

Can I claim funding for a child who is also attending a reception class in a school?

- No, children who have been admitted to primary school and are attending a state-funded or independent school reception class are not entitled to any additional funded hours outside their school reception class place.

I have had a child leave halfway through term. Do I need to change the hours or weeks on my claim?

- No, please do not alter your claim even for children who have left partway through a term. If the child was with you on headcount week, then you are entitled to the full term's funding, even if the child leaves.

Can I change a child's hours on the additional headcount task?

- No. Your claim should be based on the child's attendance on headcount week, and what you agreed with the parent on the original PAF. If a parent wants to increase their hours with you after headcount, they will need to pay for any additional hours. If a parent decides to reduce their hours with you after headcount, we will not invoice you for the unused hours.

A child has started with me but was somewhere else on headcount week. Can you transfer over the funding to me?

- No. We fund based on headcount week attendance, and once that has been paid, we cannot change it. In this situation you would be entitled to charge the family for the sessions they attend with you until you are able to claim for them in the next term or contact the other provider to discuss a private transfer between the two of you. However, if the child has not claimed all their entitlement at the previous provider, you are able to claim the remaining funding. E.g. if a child is entitled to 15 hours funding per week but has only used 10 hours at provider 1, provider 2 can claim the remaining 5 hours per week.

Will the Provider Portal tell me if a child is being claimed for too many hours?

- Both “hours claimed” columns in the Provider Portal will not allow you to input any numbers higher than 15, so it is impossible to claim for too many hours at your setting alone. However, the Provider Portal cannot provide you with any information on the child’s hours at other settings, so try to ensure that the information parent/carers are giving you on the Parental Authorisation Forms (PAFs) regarding shared funding is accurate. Communicate with the other childcare provider as required. Special attention should be paid to which provider in a shared offer is taking the universal funding and which is taking the extended funding (for children entitled to 30 hours).

A parent signed their PAF for funded hours saying the child is not going anywhere else, but the funding claims reveal the child is taking some of their entitlement somewhere else.

- If this happens, both providers will receive an email from us with the details, including the child’s name and the hours being claimed – this is known as an ‘overclaim’. You should contact the other childcare provision to discuss this further. Ultimately it is an agreement between childcare providers and the parent/carer. We cannot make any assumptions about which claim is correct. Neither provider will be paid for the child until the issue has been resolved, either by resubmitting the correct hours on the additional task, or through both providers emailing provider.portal@suffolk.gov.uk.

How can I tell which children I received EYPP for?

- After all funding claims have been processed and sent for payment, your registered Provider Portal user will receive a report through the Provider Portal with information on which children qualified for EYPP. You will receive this report by half term to allow you to spend the money in the rest of the term.

How do I record a stretched offer over a whole year on the Provider Portal?

- The Provider Portal will not allow you to claim for an entire year during a task.
- You will only ever be able to claim the total amount of hours available in a term.
- If you are offering a full year stretched offer, please work out how many hours in total you will need to claim for across the year, and make sure that you claim for enough across the three terms.
- This might involve you claiming for more hours in one term than the child attends to make sure you get enough hours – this is known as ‘banking’ hours.
- To work out yearly stretched offers, you need to keep the total number of hours claimed in mind, rather than the hours per week. There are 570 hours available for both universal and extended, adding up to a total of 1140.
- Stretching over a year does require extra pre-planning and thought. You will need to make sure that your process is clearly defined on the stretched offer agreement in case you are audited in one of the terms that you’re claiming extra for.
- Full guidance on stretched offers and how to calculate them is available on Suffolk Learning: [PAF-Stretched Offer-Ethnicity codes – Suffolk Learning](#)

Two Year Old Funding (Disadvantaged/Non-Economic Entitlement)

What do I do with a Golden Ticket?

- If a parent comes to you with a Golden Ticket, and you have seen it within the redeemable dates on the ticket, you can use the Provider Portal to run an 'assisted application' for Two Year Old Funding. You will need to enter the Golden Ticket reference number and the date on which you saw the ticket. Full guidance on this process is available on Suffolk Learning: [Two Year Old Funding Checker Guidance – Suffolk Learning](#)

What is a Two Year Old Funding reference number?

- This is the number produced by the Two Year Old Funding checker that you will need to claim Two Year Old Funding for a child. A valid code always begins with 'TYF935' and has 18 digits. If a parent brings you one of these codes from the Citizen's Provider Portal checker, or you generate one yourself through an assisted application, you will then need to use the "Link eligible child to Headcount Task" option in the Provider Portal. Full guidance on this process is available on Suffolk Learning: [Two Year Old Funding Checker Guidance – Suffolk Learning](#)

I've run a check, but now the Provider Portal is saying the child's start date is after the child actually started.

- The checker will automatically set the child's start date as the day you run the check. For this reason, it is very important that you run your Two Year Old Funding checks as soon as you are brought appropriate evidence (e.g. a Golden Ticket or Disability Living Allowance letter) or as soon as you want to confirm a child's economic eligibility. Remember, you should not offer a funded place until eligibility has been confirmed.
- You cannot backdate a code's start date, so it is important that you get them done in advance so you can set the start date accurately.
- If you can't check a code in advance, you can still claim for an entire term even if the check is completed after the start of term (e.g. if you see a Golden Ticket at the start of term, but do not complete an application until headcount week).

I've added a new 2-year-old to my task, but they have a blue 'N', and I can't add their funded hours.

- This means you've added the child incorrectly, directly to your task, not through the Two Year Old Funding checker.
- You must complete an application to get the 'TYF' number for all your children, then use the "link eligible child to headcount task" option to add the child to your task.
- Make sure that you delete the record that you added, or you will have duplication issues on your next task.
- Full guidance on this process is available on Suffolk Learning: [Two Year Old Funding Checker Guidance – Suffolk Learning](#)

- Alternatively, if the child is eligible for the 'working parent entitlement' for 2-year-olds then you need to make sure you have run a check on their 11-digit number code from Childcare Choices. Full guidance on this process is available on Suffolk Learning: [Expanded/Extended Hours Checker Guidance – Suffolk Learning](#)

Why do I have to run a check when I've already seen a Golden Ticket?

- You must have a 'TYF' number to be able to claim hours in the Provider Portal. Because those numbers are generated automatically by the Provider Portal, we are not able to issue Golden Tickets to parents with a 'TYF' number on them.
- Because of this, you still need to put the Golden Ticket information into the Provider Portal.
- You are not running a check when you use the **"all other applications"** button, you are just uploading evidence of eligibility to use to be approved.
- Once it is approved, you can use the 'TYF' number the Provider Portal gives you in the usual way.
- Full guidance on this process is available on Suffolk Learning: [Two Year Old Funding Checker Guidance – Suffolk Learning](#)

Why have you rejected my Golden Ticket information?

- All Golden Tickets have redeemable dates printed on them. If you upload a Golden Ticket outside of its redeemable window, you must include the date you saw the ticket in your application so we can check that you saw it within the redeemable dates.
- If you do not include a date, your application will be rejected, and you will be asked to submit again with all the information.

Expanded/Extended Hours Funding

Why can't I add expanded/extended hours to a child in my headcount task?

- You need to verify the child's eligibility using the Provider Portal's expanded/extended hours checker before you can claim that funding for them. There is detailed guidance on using the checker available on Suffolk Learning: [Expanded/Extended Hours Checker Guidance – Suffolk Learning](#)

Why can't I add expanded/extended hours for a child? I've done the check.

- If a code's start date is *after* the start of term, the Provider Portal will not allow you to input expanded/extended hours. This is because expanded/extended hours cannot be taken up until the term after the parent gets their code from HMRC.
- If a parent would like to start claiming expanded/extended hours with you, they will need to have received their code on or before, 31 August, 31 December or 31 March.
- If the start date is after the start of term and this is because of an HMRC technical issue or error, then please advise the parent to discuss the problem with HMRC. SCC are unable to amend code start dates.

- Another reason the code might not be working is the grace period. New expanded/extended hours claims **cannot** start within a grace period. Parents cannot make use of the grace period unless they have claimed expanded/extended hours funding at your setting in the previous term.

The Provider Portal expanded/extended hours checker says that a child's code is 'not found'. Does this mean that they are ineligible?

- Not necessarily, it is likely that you may have entered the 11-digit number code or National Insurance (NI) number incorrectly. If there are 2 parents, you may have used the wrong parents NI number to check the code. If you are sure that you have entered the information you were given correctly, please double check it with the parent/carer.

Payments and Reports

What is this payment for?

- We have a limited number of payment description options we can use on the remittance advice which is sent out prior to a payment.
- Please see the below explanations for what these descriptions refer to:
 - **EEF / EYPP / DEPRIVATION** – payments with this remittance advice will be your Early Education Funding. This will be an advance payment if received at the start of term, or a balance payment if received mid-term. EYPP and deprivation funding are not paid separately, and your balance payment at half term will include both payments.
 - **SEN INCLUSION** – this will be your payments for any inclusion funding you applied for. This is generally applied for and paid after half term.
 - **SEN HIGH NEEDS** – this will be your payments for any high needs funding that you applied for. High needs funding is claimed for at the start of term and will be paid later in the term after moderation.
 - **SEN DAF** – this will be your payments for any DAF claims submitted by your Provider Portal user.
 - **ADD. SPECIAL GRANT** – is used for any other payment which does not fit into one of the options listed above.

When will I get paid?

- With the Provider Portal, all payments are processed at once, rather than in batches. All providers will be paid at once, within 30 working days of the task deadline. There is payments schedule published on Suffolk Learning: [2, 3 & 4 Year old funding – Suffolk Learning](#)

Do I request an advance payment through the Provider Portal?

- Currently, the Provider Portal does not have the ability to request advances. We will continue to automatically pay settings a percentage of their funding from the previous term, and childminders that would like an advance payment can continue to request one through the form on Suffolk Learning. When the form is available,

you will be made aware via Broadcast emails. If you are a setting and are expecting a reduced number of children, please also complete the advance request form and notify us by email.

I received an overpayment and have now paid it back. Will I get a new report?

- If you have been invoiced for an overpayment this term and would like another copy of your statement, please send us an email at provider.portal@suffolk.gov.uk and we will regenerate your statement for you.

Why can't I access older reports in the Provider Portal?

- The Provider Portal is only able to hold a year's worth of reports in the system. For this reason, we advise that you download every report you get and save it locally, so you do not lose access to them. If you do need to access an old report that you haven't saved, please email provider.portal@suffolk.gov.uk and we will be able to provide it for you.

Early Years Census

Do maintained schools still need to add Early Years children to the School Census?

- Yes, maintained and academy school nursery classes should continue to add your EY children to the school census as you have done before. You still need to submit your EY information through the census, but you won't be paid from this information. Instead, you'll be paid by the Early Years and Childcare Service based on your Provider Portal headcount submission.
- If applicable: please remember to register your children on SIMS as 'dual registered' if you know they are also attending a PVI provider.
- For community nursery provisions (also known as governor led schools), you must complete the Early Years Census each year in the spring term.