

Stretched Offers Frequently Asked Questions

Contents

What is a “Stretched Offer”?.....	1
Why might a provider and parent/carer choose a Stretched Offer?.....	1
How many weeks can the stretching extend to?.....	2
Can I claim the full year’s hours all at once in the Provider Portal?.....	2
How do I record a Stretched Offer over a whole year on the Provider Portal?.....	2
How does “banking” hours work under a Stretched Offer?.....	2
Can I “bank” hours if I’m only stretching over a single term?.....	2
How do I record a Stretched Offer on the PAF?.....	2
What must be agreed in a Stretched Offer agreement?.....	3
What if the child is also attending another setting (and sharing a Stretched Offer)?..	3
What happens if the child leaves before the end of the funding year?.....	3

What is a “Stretched Offer”?

- A Stretched Offer means that a child’s funded Early Education hours are spread over more than the usual term weeks (14 for Autumn, 11 for Spring, 13 for Summer, 38 for the whole year).
- This means fewer hours per week but over more weeks, including holiday weeks.
- You must have a Stretched Offer Agreement in place with the parent/carer.

Why might a provider and parent/carer choose a Stretched Offer?

- It gives flexibility for children to access their full entitlement over more weeks. It helps with attendance during holiday weeks, or for families whose needs vary across the year. It ensures the total funded hours (570 for 15-hour or 1,140 for 30-hour) are fully used across the year.
- A Stretched Offer can help if the child’s attendance is irregular (e.g. due to family circumstances – shift workers, variable weekly hours, etc.). The total hours can be stretched over the actual weeks of attendance, so that the total claim is accurate. However, the hours per week entered in the Provider Portal may not exactly match the child’s actual attendance each week. The Stretched Offer Calculator helps determine what your claim should look like – available here: [Stretched Offer – Suffolk Learning](#)

How many weeks can the stretching extend to?

- Typically, there are 38 funded weeks. Under a Stretched Offer, you can spread the hours over up to 52 weeks (i.e. include holiday weeks) by reducing weekly hours accordingly.

Can I claim the full year's hours all at once in the Provider Portal?

- No – the Provider Portal will not allow you to claim for an entire year during a task – you can only claim term by term.

How do I record a Stretched Offer over a whole year on the Provider Portal?

- If you are offering a full year Stretched Offer, you must start with the **total number of hours claimed for the year, rather than the hours per week.**
- You must then plan out how many hours to claim each term, so the total is covered across the year.
- This might involve you claiming for more hours in one term than the child actually attends – this is known as “banking” hours. (See below, ‘How does “banking” hours work under a Stretched Offer?’)
- You must clearly define your process on the Stretched Offer agreement; in case you are audited in one of the terms for which you are claiming extra. (You can use your completed Stretched Offer Calculator as your Stretched Offer Agreement.)
- Across 38 funded weeks of the year, there are 570 hours available for Universal and 570 hours available for extended, adding up to a total of 1140.
- Full guidance on Stretched Offers and how to calculate them is available on Suffolk Learning: [PAF-Stretched Offer-Ethnicity codes – Suffolk Learning](#)

How does “banking” hours work under a Stretched Offer?

- If stretching across the full year, providers may claim more hours in one term than the child attends (banking those extra hours) to make up the shortfall in other terms. The total claimed must align with the overall entitlement (whether 570 or 1,140 hours).
- You cannot bank hours if you are only stretching within a single term.

Can I “bank” hours if I’m only stretching over a single term?

- No, you cannot bank hours if you are only stretching over one term. A yearly Stretched Offer shows the intention to claim fewer hours for more weeks over *multiple* terms and should highlight when the banked hours will be used.
- Without this agreement in place, Suffolk County Council cannot allow providers to claim for more hours than are being used in a term, as there would be nothing to show parental agreement and how/when the funding for these extra hours will be used.

How do I record a Stretched Offer on the PAF?

- You must indicate in Section 2b of the PAF that there is a Stretched Offer agreement.
- The Stretched Offer agreement must be attached to the PAF, and the parent/carer must tick to confirm they understand the implications (e.g. possible loss of hours if the child leaves).

What must be agreed in a Stretched Offer agreement?

- At minimum, the written agreement should include that:
 - a) the provider may claim additional hours in a term so the child can access funded hours in holiday weeks;
 - b) if the child leaves part way through the funding year, any unclaimed hours already claimed stay with the provider;
 - c) the child cannot access those additional hours from another provider in the same year; and
 - d) the parent/carer has signed and dated the agreement.

What if the child is also attending another setting (and sharing a Stretched Offer)?

- You must coordinate with the other setting, so both understand how many hours are being claimed by each, and that termly claims do not overlap.

What happens if the child leaves before the end of the funding year?

- Any additional hours already claimed but not yet accessed remain with the original provider. The child cannot access those “banked” or “stretched” hours elsewhere in the same year.