

Learner Support Programme

Sixth Form
College Childcare
Scheme Guidance
2009/10

June 2009

Of interest to stakeholders involved in delivering
the Sixth Form College Childcare scheme

Contents

Introduction	03
Background and overview	04
Summary of policy changes for 2009/10	05
Eligibility criteria	06
Summary	06
Eligibility of learner	06
Eligibility of course/learning programme	08
Eligibility of childcare provision	08
Eligibility: double-funding	08
How to apply	09
Flowchart of application journey	09
Application forms	09
Back-dated claims	10
Application process	11
Validation of applications	11
Assessment of childcare hours	11
Notifications	11
Change of Circumstance forms	12
Summer Retainer form	12
Administration	13
Attendance monitoring	13
Payments	13
Recovery of overpayments	14
Roles and responsibilities	14
Complaints and appeals	15
Links with other support	16
Audit requirements	17
Background	17
Methodology	17
Controls review	17
Substantive testing	17
Evidence requirements	18
Feedback and reporting	18
Summary of common pitfalls	18
Sources of further information	19
Glossary	20
Annexes	
Annex 1: Example of payment plan	21
Annex 2: Learning Provider monthly attendance monitoring form	22
Annex 3: Childcare Provider remittance/monthly attendance monitoring form	23

Introduction

This document has been updated for the 2009/10 academic year (1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010). Do not use this document after August 2010. Please check the website to make sure that you are using the correct version.

This guidance is aimed at key stakeholders involved in the delivery of **Sixth Form College Childcare scheme (6FCC)** including Learning Providers, Childcare Providers, partners delivering information, advice and guidance (IAG) such as Connexions and nextstep, the Learner Support Service (LSS) that provides helpline, assessment and payment services for the scheme, and Learning and Skills Council (LSC) colleagues at an area, regional and national level.

This guidance sets out the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the delivery of 6FCC and how to get the best from it. It is not intended to offer definitive advice on every possible situation but it does offer a framework within which Providers can make sensible decisions based on 6FCC policy and their own experiences of dealing with learners.

There are also two telephone helplines to provide support to Learning Providers and stakeholders, and to learners. These are:

- Learner Support Service Provider helpline:
0845 600 7979
- Learner Support Service learner helpline:
0800 121 8989

The learner has an option to prevent the helpline from speaking to anyone else about their application form.

Ian Pursglove
Young People's Learner Support Director

June 2009

Background and overview

6FCC is a strand of the LSC's Learner Support programme which aims to remove finance as a barrier to participation in learning.

6FCC enables parents aged 20 or over to continue in or return to learning after the birth of a child by assisting with the costs of childcare and associated travel (up to £160 per week per child across England/£175 in London).

Summary of policy changes for 2009/10

The key policy changes for the 2009/10 academic year are:

- **Income assessment**, page 6
- **Eligibility of childcare provision and childcare review**, page 8
- **Removal of requirement for learner's signature**, page 11.

Eligibility criteria

Changes in eligibility criteria for 2009/10:

- income assessment
- eligibility of childcare provision and childcare review

Summary

The learner must:

- be aged 20 or over on the day that their course starts;
- have a household income below £50,502 for the previous tax year;
- be the main carer for a child under 15 years of age (or under 16 if the child is disabled);
- be studying a course that is funded by the LSC at a school sixth form or sixth form college;
- be using registered childcare (registered with Ofsted on the Early Years Register and/or the compulsory part of the Childcare Register);
- be living in England; and
- meet the residency conditions set out in the LSC Funding Guidance 2009/10 – *Learner Eligibility Guidance*.

Eligibility of learner

Age

The learner must be aged 20 or over on the date their learning starts. 6FCC is payable for the duration of the learning programme, for a maximum of three years.

Income assessment

In order to ensure that 6FCC is offered to those individuals who most need financial support, an income assessment will be undertaken for each applicant.

When determining the level of any childcare and travel assistance, details of the household income for the previous tax year (6 April 2008 to 5 April 2009) will be taken into account as follows:

- if the learner is single, only their own income details will be required; or
- if the learner is married or lives with someone as if they are married, details of their own income and any income of their spouse or partner will be required.

For 2009/10 the learner's earned income for the previous tax year will be assessed as well as their unearned income. This makes the scheme consistent with other government-funded support.

The following income assessment matrix shows the level of childcare that will be paid for learners undertaking a full-time course, taking their household income into account. Full-time courses are those involving 15 or more hours of guided learning.

Child's parental income	% of childcare support given per week per child	% of childcare support given per week per child (London boroughs*)
Below £30,502	100% up to a maximum of £160	100% up to a maximum of £175
£30,502 – £35,501	80% up to a maximum of £128	80% up to a maximum of £140
£35,502 – £40,501	60% up to a maximum of £96	60% up to a maximum of £105
£40,502 – £45,501	40% up to a maximum of £64	40% up to a maximum of £70
£45,502 – £50,501	20% up to a maximum of £32	20% up to a maximum of £35
£50,502 and above	Nil	Nil

* See 'London weighting', page 8, for a list of London boroughs

Learners attending part-time courses may qualify for pro-rata payments based on the number of guided learning hours studied, for example if the learner attends college for 10 hours per week, the maximum weekly amount payable for each child is £106.66 (10/15 of £160) or £116.66 (10/15 of £175 for London boroughs).

Evidence to be submitted for income assessment purposes can include Tax Credit Award Notice (TCAN), P60, or evidence of benefits received.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995

If at the time of applying the learner and/or their partner's income is lower than it was in the 2008–09 tax year, due to a disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), they may be able to have their income re-assessed.

The DDA defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term (that is, more than 12 months) adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal daily activities. Further information about the DDA can be found at equalityhumanrights.com

The DDA states that a person is disabled if they have a mental or physical impairment which has an adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, and the adverse effect is substantial and long-term (meaning it has lasted for 12 months, or is likely to last more than 12 months or for the rest of the person's life).

For a person to be unable to carry out 'normal day-to-day activities', at least one of the following areas must be substantially affected:

- mobility;
- the ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects;
- manual dexterity;
- speech, hearing or eyesight;
- physical co-ordination;
- memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand;
- continence; and
- understanding of the risk of physical danger.

There are some special provisions, for example:

- If the person's impairment has substantially affected their ability to carry out normal day-to-

day activities, but no longer does so, it will still be counted as having the effect if it is likely to do so again.

- If the person has a progressive condition and it will substantially affect their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities in the future, they will be regarded as having an impairment which has a substantial adverse effect from the moment their condition has some effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- Cancer, HIV infection and multiple sclerosis are covered effectively from the point of diagnosis.
- People who have had a disability in the past but are no longer disabled are covered by certain parts of the DDA.

If a learner needs further information they should contact the LSS on **0800 121 8989**. The learner will be expected to supply the LSS with medical proof of the disability in order to be re-assessed.

Learner's income has increased

Any increases in income that occur during the academic year are disregarded. However, learners must re-apply for 6FCC every academic year, meaning that any increase may affect future awards.

Main carer of the child

The learner must be responsible for the child for which they are claiming 6FCC.

If a learner loses custody of their child, even temporarily, the LSS must be advised immediately.

Residency

The learner should satisfy the residency requirements issued by the LSC for entry to an LSC-funded course as set out in the LSC Funding Guidance 2009/10 – *Learner Eligibility Guidance* (download from lsc.gov.uk/publications). It is the Learning Provider's responsibility to ensure that the learner is eligible to take part in LSC-funded learning.

Geography

The learner must live in England, but the childcare and/or learning can take place over the border in Wales or Scotland. In these cases the Childcare Provider must be registered on the appropriate register with the equivalent of Ofsted.

For Wales this is the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW).

For Scotland this is the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (SCRC).

London weighting

A London weighting applies to 6FCC. Learners who benefit will have their childcare, and any necessary related travel (between home and the Childcare Provider), paid up to the London-weighted maximum, which for 2009/10 academic year is £175 per child per week (compared to £160 outside London).

Eligibility for London weighting is determined by the learner's home address.

Learners living in the following London boroughs are eligible for the London weighting:

Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Camden, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Hackney and City of London, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Kingston-upon-Thames, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond-upon-Thames, Southwark, Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Wandsworth and Westminster.

Eligibility of course/learning programme

The course must be undertaken at a school sixth form or sixth form college and must be funded by the LSC.

The course can be full-time or part-time.

There are no requirements around course length, duration or level. 6FCC funding is available for a maximum of three years.

Eligibility of childcare provision

Ofsted registration

Only registered Childcare Providers may be used. From September 2008, as a result of changes to Ofsted's childcare registers, only Childcare Providers registered on the following childcare registers may be used:

- the Early Years Register (EYR) – compulsory for those caring for children from birth to five years old and includes care and learning; and/or
- the Childcare Register, compulsory part – for those caring for children aged five to seven.

Those Childcare Providers registered only on the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are not normally eligible to receive any funding through 6FCC.

Free nursery education places

If the learner has a child aged two, three or four who attends a childminder, playgroup or nursery, they may be entitled to receive a free nursery education place. The local authority will pay the fees directly to the Childcare Provider on the learner's behalf.

The child's allowance for a free nursery education place must be used first, and taken into account when completing the application form. For example, if the child has a free nursery education place at a nursery for 12.5 hours per week, but childcare is needed for 28 hours to enable the learner to attend the Learning Provider and complete their course, only 15.5 hours of childcare fees can be claimed from 6FCC.

If the child is allocated a free place after the course has started, please ensure that the LSC is advised as soon as possible by requesting a Change of Circumstance (CoC) form.

Free nursery education places are available only for two-year-olds in some areas. Please contact the Family Information Service on **0800 234 6346** or visit **childcarelink.gov.uk** for more information.

Childcare provided by relatives

Childcare provided by relatives is exempt from compulsory Ofsted registration and is therefore not eligible to receive funding through 6FCC.

Childcare review

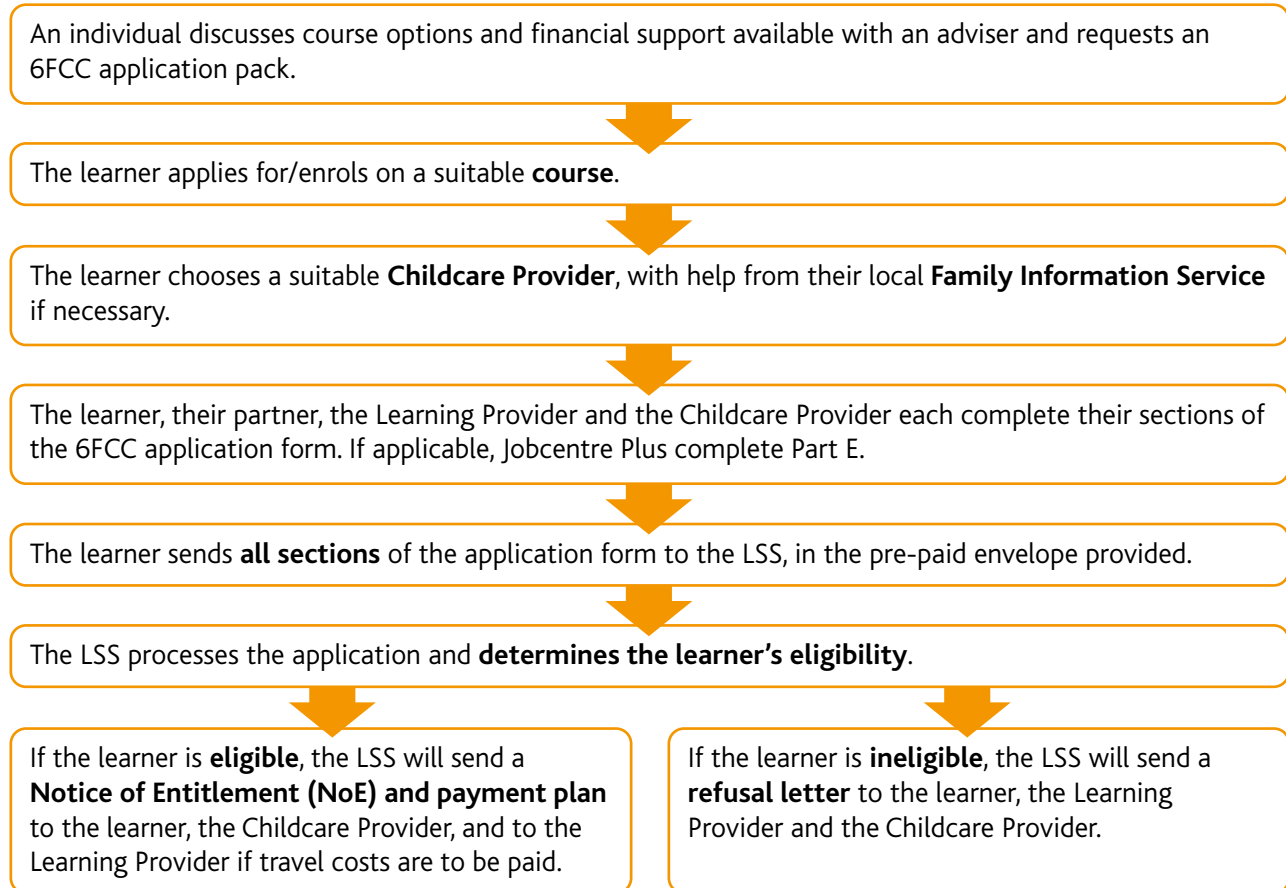
The LSC is undertaking a review of the types of childcare provision that should be eligible for 6FCC. Changes may be implemented for the 2010/11 academic year.

Eligibility: double-funding

The learner must not be in receipt of funding for childcare from another source such as the childcare element of Working Tax Credits, Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work and learning programmes funded by the European Social Fund (ESF).

How to apply

Flowchart of application journey



Application forms

Where learning starts on or after 1 September 2009, the 2009/10 application form should be used. The 2008/09 application form should be used for any learning that starts prior to 1 September 2009.

Application forms and pre-paid return envelopes are available to order in the following ways:

- by telephone from the LSS helplines:
Provider helpline: **0845 600 7979**
learner helpline: **0800 121 8989**
- by email from the LSS:
6FCC@lsclearnersupport.co.uk.

Guidance Notes are available to assist learners, Learning Providers and Childcare Providers with completion of the form. These are issued with the application form.

The application form must be fully completed by the learner, the Learning Provider and the Ofsted-registered Childcare Provider. A signature is also required from the Learning Provider and Childcare Provider.

A copy of the Childcare Provider's Ofsted registration certificate must be sent with the application form.

The original completed form (not a photocopy) should be sent to the LSS at the following address:

Sixth Form College Childcare Scheme
Freepost RSAX-ZUGK-SJZZ
Learner Support Service
Manchester M3 3JZ

Renewal applications

A new application form must be completed for each academic year, including where the course recorded on the original application spans more than one academic year. In these cases, the learner will be sent an application pack to prompt them to complete a new application form.

Back-dated claims

Successful 6FCC applications received before the end of the first term's learning will be eligible to receive back-dated payments to the start of the learning programme. 6FCC applications received outside the first term will be eligible to receive back-dated payments to the Monday of the week of receipt at the LSS.

Application process

Changes in the applications process 2009/10:

- Removal of requirement for learner's signature

Validation of applications

Applications for 6FCC are made in the name of the learner; payments for childcare are made to Childcare Providers on their behalf. The Childcare Provider and Learning Provider must also complete their part of the application form **before** it is submitted to the LSS.

Assessments and payments will only be made against application forms that have been fully completed by the learner, Learning Provider and Childcare Provider. A signature is required from the Learning Provider and Childcare Provider – not providing these might delay the application.

The requirement for the learner to sign the form has been removed. However, by completing and submitting the application form, the learner is agreeing to the statements and conditions detailed on the application form.

Where an incomplete application form is submitted, the LSS will write to the learner and/or the Learning Provider/Childcare Provider as appropriate to request the outstanding information.

No payments will be released until all required information is received. Applications are normally turned around within three weeks.

Learning Provider evidence checks

In order to confirm the existence of the child for whom childcare is being provided, Learning Providers must check either the child's birth certificate or notification of benefit relating to the child, and keep a photocopy. The Learning Provider attests to this when they sign the application form.

Childcare Provider registration checks

A copy of the Ofsted registration certificate relating to the Childcare Provider must be included with the application to ensure that all Childcare Providers

have current Ofsted registration conforming to the childcare eligibility criteria. Where Childcare Providers become de-registered, eligibility for 6FCC ceases.

Assessment of childcare hours

Assessment calculations will be made from the childcare start date to the end date of the childcare. We would not expect the childcare to start more than five days before the learning starts nor finish more than five days after the learning has ended.

6FCC will support childcare hours in reasonable excess of learning hours to support the learner with home study time. The 2009/10 application form requires the Learning Provider to enter the number of hours of home study that the learner is expected to complete.

Notifications

Notice of Entitlement and payment plan

Once a learner's application has been processed and accepted, the LSS issues an NoE and a payment plan (see Annex 1) to the learner and the Childcare Provider. This confirms the amount to be paid each week for childcare.

If applicable, a separate letter is sent to the learner and the Learning Provider to confirm the amount to be paid for travel. This does not include details of the amount payable for childcare.

Where there is more than one Childcare Provider, there will be more than one payment plan issued. The amounts on each plan combined must not exceed the weekly maximum.

Where there is more than one Learning Provider, the payment plan will take account of learning with all Providers when assessing reasonable childcare and travel. In this instance, travel payments will be calculated and paid to the Learning Provider providing the majority of the learning.

Refusal letters

In cases where an application is refused, the learner will receive a letter from the LSS setting out the reasons why.

Change of Circumstance forms

The LSS must be notified where the following circumstances change:

- childcare arrangements – for example, hours of childcare provided, fee rates, new or additional Childcare Provider;
- learning arrangements – for example, hours of learning, course, new or additional Learning Provider;
- travel costs between childcare and home – or learner wishes to claim these for the first time;
- Childcare Provider/Learning Provider bank details; and/or
- learner's personal details.

CoC forms are available to learners, Learning Providers and Childcare Providers on request from the LSS.

The original completed form (not a photocopy) should be sent to the LSS at the following address:

Sixth Form College Childcare Scheme
Freepost RSAX-ZUGK-SJZZ
Learner Support Service
Manchester M3 3JZ

The assessment of a CoC form will follow the same process as outlined in the preceding sections.

If there are any changes to circumstances, a revised payment plan will be issued to the Childcare Provider and the learner.

If the changes affect the amount to be paid for travel, this will be confirmed to the learner and the Learning Provider.

Summer Retainer form

Where learning lasts for more than one academic year, or where the learner is progressing on to a further course or university, a summer retainer can be paid to enable the childcare place to be kept open over the summer holiday period.

The Summer Retainer form is included in the application pack that is sent to returning learners.

Completed original forms (not a photocopy) should be sent to the LSS at the following address:

Sixth Form College Childcare Scheme
Freepost RSAX-ZUGK-SJZZ
Learner Support Service
Manchester M3 3JZ

The amount payable to keep a childcare place open over the summer holidays is under review – changes may be implemented for the summer of 2010.

Administration

Attendance monitoring

Learning Provider's attendance returns

A monthly attendance monitoring form (see Annex 2) will be sent to Learning Providers on the last Friday of every month in respect of that month's attendance. The Learning Provider must complete and return the monitoring form immediately to confirm that the learner is still in learning and to ensure that 6FCC support continues.

Learning Providers must immediately notify the LSS if the learner has stopped attending the course.

Childcare Provider's attendance returns

A Childcare Provider's attendance monitoring form (see Annex 3), including remittance advice, will be issued every month in respect of that month's attendance. The Childcare Provider must complete and return the monitoring form immediately to confirm that the child is still in attendance and to confirm that the learner has not given notice to the Childcare Provider. This will provide the basis for continued payment or notice where applicable.

Learning Providers must immediately notify the LSS if the learner has removed their child from childcare.

Childcare payments will continue to be made until the learner reaches the end of their course date, unless the Learning Provider or Childcare Provider monitoring form shows that the learner has ceased to attend the course or to use the childcare before the stated end date.

Where the Childcare Provider's monitoring form, or another communication, indicates that the child has stopped attending, the learner will receive notification that 6FCC funding has stopped.

Payments

Childcare payments

Childcare payments will be made to the Childcare Provider monthly in advance, in respect of the four and five-week periods that fall on the first Monday of every month. All payments made to Childcare Providers will be made by BACS.

Deposits can be paid to the Childcare Provider, if required, up to £250. The amount of deposit will be recovered from the first month's childcare payment. In the unlikely event that the first month's childcare payment is insufficient to support the deduction of the full deposit, the balance will be recovered from the second month's childcare payment.

The Childcare Provider cannot have the deposit offset against the final weeks of the payment plan.

A registration fee of up to £80 may be payable to a Childcare Provider if they request it. This is not recoverable against future childcare payments.

Travel payments

If the costs of childcare are less than the 6FCC weekly maximum, then the travel costs associated with childcare, i.e. between home and the Childcare Provider, may also be claimed, but the weekly maximum must not be exceeded. Travel costs can be claimed no matter how short or long the distance travelled.

Learning Providers are asked to confirm, by signing the application form, that the travel costs claimed by the learner are reasonable, based on their local knowledge. If the amount of travel being claimed seems excessive, the LSS will request additional proof from the Learning Provider.

Travel costs will not normally be paid where the childcare takes place on the same site as the learning.

Travel payments are made termly in advance. They are paid to the Learning Provider and not directly to the learner or to other third parties. The Learning Provider should reimburse the travel payment to the learner as appropriate. All travel payments to the Learning Provider will be made by BACS.

Learning Provider's travel payment remittance

A Learning Provider remittance will be issued every time a travel payment has been paid. The Learning Provider should sign and return this immediately to

confirm that the learner is attending and using part of their weekly 6FCC allowance for travel support.

Recovery of overpayments

Where 6FCC is paid in error following a learner ceasing learning, recovery action will be taken.

If the LSS becomes aware that 6FCC payments have been made inaccurately – for example, because of failure to disclose information on the part of the learner, a misrepresentation of data, or processing errors – they will take recovery action from the Childcare Provider. There is a responsibility on the learner, the Learning Provider and the Childcare Provider to notify the LSS of any potential overpayments.

Recovery action will be taken where overpayments childcare or travel monies are made because the Learning Provider, Childcare Provider or learner has failed to notify the LSS promptly of any changes.

Roles and responsibilities

The **Learning Provider** must:

- verify the learner's eligibility to receive support from 6FCC by checking the child's birth certificate or proof of child benefit – a copy of either should be retained for audit purposes;
- verify the age of the learner;
- ensure that the learner meets the residency conditions for entry to LSC-funded learning as set out in the LSC Funding Guidance 2009/10 – *Learner Eligibility Guidance*;
- complete and sign the Learning Provider section on the application form to confirm the Provider and course details;
- ensure that any costs claimed for travel between home and the Childcare Provider are reasonable, based on their local knowledge;
- ensure that the learner is not double-claiming for travel costs to their childcare if they are in receipt of any other travel support for learning such as a free travel pass, weekly bus pass etc;
- reimburse all due travel payments to the learner in a timely fashion that does not prohibit the learner from travelling to their Childcare Provider;
- complete and return monthly attendance monitoring forms to the LSS;

- notify the LSS immediately if the learner ceases to attend; and
- notify the LSS immediately if they discover that the learner's Childcare Provider has been de-registered by Ofsted.

If the Learning Provider has been allocated funding for discretionary 20+ Childcare Support or Hardship Funds, they **must not** use these to support or 'top up' learners who are eligible for 6FCC (see the LSC's *Discretionary Funding Guidance and Requirements 2009/10*).

The **Childcare Provider** must:

- complete their Ofsted registration details and sign the Childcare Provider section on the application form;
- complete and return monthly monitoring forms to the LSS to confirm that the child is still in receipt of childcare from them;
- notify the LSS immediately if the provision of childcare ceases;
- notify the LSS immediately if they become de-registered by Ofsted;
- confirm that they are not receiving funding for this childcare from any other source such as free nursery education places, the childcare element of Working Tax Credit, Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work; and
- ensure that they are charging the learner not more than the rate of fees charged to other parents.

The **Learner Support Service** must:

- assess the application for 6FCC and verify the validity of the Childcare Provider;
- issue a payment plan to the learner, the Childcare Provider and the Learning Provider to confirm the amounts to be paid each week for childcare and the amount to be paid for travel if applicable;
- make payments to the Childcare Provider direct in advance by BACS payment;
- pay the learner's travel costs to the Learning Provider who will reimburse the learner appropriately;
- pay an administration fee to the Learning Provider of £80 per learner per year for all successful starts on 6FCC; and

- provide a telephone helpline service to learners, Learning Providers, Childcare Providers and all other stakeholders.

Complaints and appeals

All complaints and appeals must be made in writing to the LSS.

If the complaint/appeal concerns operational processes or a complaint about customer service, it will be dealt with by the LSS in the first instance. In the event that you are dissatisfied with the way in which your appeal has been dealt with you may complain to the LSC's Learner Support Directorate.

If the complaint/appeal is about 6FCC policy, the LSS will refer it to the LSC's Learner Support Directorate for a decision. In the event that you are dissatisfied with the way in which your appeal has been dealt with you may refer to the LSC's Complaints Procedure.

For more information please see the LSC website at lsc.gov.uk/ComplaintsProcedure.htm.

Links with other support

- A new scheme, Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work, was launched in April 2009. To be eligible for this scheme:
 - you must be 20 years old or over;
 - you must be out of work;
 - you must be living with your spouse/partner, and they must be working 16 hours or more per week;
 - you must be the parent or main carer for the child(ren) for whom you are claiming childcare support; and
 - your household income for the tax year 2007–08 must have been £20,000 or less.
- More information on Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work is available to Learning Providers from **lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn** or from the LSS Provider helpline on **0845 600 7979**, and to individual learners from the LSS learner helpline on **0800 121 8989** or Careers Advice Service on **0800 100 900** or **careersadvice.direct.gov.uk/**.
- Learners receiving 6FCC may also be eligible for an Adult Learning Grant (ALG). More information on ALG is available to Learning Providers from **lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn** or from the LSS Provider helpline on **0845 600 7979**, and to individual learners from the LSS learner helpline on **0800 121 8989** or Careers Advice Service on **0800 100 900** or **careersadvice.direct.gov.uk/**.
- The learner must not be receiving support from other sources for the costs of childcare and travel that are being claimed through this scheme.
- Benefits such as Income Support are not affected by the receipt of 6FCC.
- The other parent must **not** be claiming Child Tax Credit for help with their childcare costs.

Audit requirements

Background

The following provides guidance to Childcare Providers and Learning Providers on the LSC audit arrangements for 6FCC.

Methodology

In recognition of the need to minimise the administrative burden on Learning Providers, it is proposed that LSC audits of 6FCC will typically be conducted as an integral part of the existing Provider Financial Assurance (PFA) audits of Learning Providers.

A short 6FCC audit programme has been developed which will be applied consistently at all Learning Providers and Childcare Providers that have learners/children attracting 6FCC funding. The audit programme involves an overview of the key controls over the administration of 6FCC and testing of a random sample of learners' payments across a selected period of time (usually a month).

Controls review

Through discussions with appropriate members of staff at Learning Providers and Childcare Providers, LSC auditors will identify and evaluate controls over the management and administration of 6FCC payments and complete a short questionnaire. This will help the auditors to establish what controls are in place and how effectively they are working. The controls review will cover:

- general management and administration arrangements for 6FCC including details of any off-site provision such as sub-contracting or childminding networks and the recording, input, storage and security of data relating to 6FCC payment submission and authorisation;
- controls for ensuring that only eligible learners are enrolled by the Learning Provider (see 'Eligibility of learner', page 6).
- controls for advising and reporting to the LSS of any factors that may influence 6FCC payments or corrective actions (see 'Roles and responsibilities', page 14, and 'Attendance monitoring', page 13).

Applicable to Childcare Providers

- Controls over the submission of completed monthly monitoring forms to the LSS confirming each child is still in receipt of childcare (see 'Roles and responsibilities', page 14, and 'Attendance monitoring', page 13).
- Childcare Providers should have documented policies and procedures for deposits, retainer fees and/or registration charges to ensure that these rates have been applied consistently throughout the enrolment process for all children (see the Childcare Provider section under 'Roles and responsibilities', page 14).

Applicable to Learning Providers

- Controls over the submission of completed monthly monitoring forms to the LSS confirming that each learner is still attending the learning programme (see the Learning Provider section under 'Roles and responsibilities', page 14, and 'Attendance monitoring', page 13).
- Controls over the reimbursement of learners' travel expenses to and from their Childcare Provider (where applicable) such as carrying out regular checks to ensure that each learner is not in receipt of any other travel support (for example, free travel pass, weekly bus pass) and to ensure that the travel expenses claimed by each learner are reasonable (see the Learning Provider section under 'Roles and responsibilities', page 14).

Substantive testing

A random sample of audit tests will be carried out and these will cover the same generic areas as the controls work detailed above. The substantive testing will involve reviewing supporting evidence.

The **Childcare Provider** must have evidence to confirm:

- the existence of child/children;
- attendance recording and submission to the LSS;
- consistency of deposit, retainer fees, registration and weekly fee charges per child;
- requests for adjustments/recoveries (where applicable); and
- accuracy and reliability of data.

The **Learning Provider** must have evidence to confirm:

- the existence of the learner;
- the eligibility of the learner;
- attendance recording and submission to the LSS;
- remittance evidence to demonstrate reimbursement of travel (where applicable);
- requests for adjustments/recoveries (where applicable); and
- accuracy and reliability of data.

Evidence requirements

The following are examples of the evidence that LSC auditors will expect to see during audits at Childcare Providers and Learning Providers. These are not intended to be exhaustive lists.

Applicable to Childcare Providers

- Original Ofsted registration certificate.
- Monthly attendance monitoring forms submitted to the LSS confirming that the child/children is still in receipt of childcare.
- Recent invoices and childcare rates to ensure that the parent is charged the same rate of fees as those charged to other parents.
- Signed declaration statements, where applicable, confirming that the learner is not receiving funding from any other source, for example, free nursery education places, the childcare element of Working Tax Credits, employed status work-based learning.

Applicable to Learning Providers

- Copies of child/children's birth certificate or proof of Child Benefit to verify the each learner's eligibility to receive 6FCC funding.
- Monthly attendance monitoring forms submitted to the LSS.
- Documented checks to ensure that the learner is not double-claiming for travel costs to their childcare if they are in receipt of any other travel support for learning, for example, free travel pass or weekly bus pass.

- Remittance notices or statements demonstrating that all due travel payments to the learner are reimbursed in a timely fashion that does not prohibit the learner from travelling to their Childcare Provider.

Feedback and reporting

LSC auditors aim to discuss audit findings with the auditee as the work progresses and usually hold a formal meeting at the end of the fieldwork. As well as detailing any findings, auditors will endeavour to support Providers by giving recommendations for improvement to processes controls where required.

Part of the rationale for the controls work is to enable auditors to gain an understanding of how effectively Learning Providers and Childcare Providers monitor and reimburse (where applicable) learners claiming 6FCC funding. Where errors are found, auditors will try to identify where controls have broken down or failed to operate as intended, so that meaningful and value-added recommendations can be made.

A formal audit report will be issued that covers all the audit work carried out, including 6FCC payments.

Summary of common pitfalls

A number of recurring issues have been identified at previous Learner Support audits, and are summarised below.

- Eligibility checks: Providers do not check that each learner meets the 6FCC eligibility requirements as set out in the Learning Provider's declaration on the application form prior to enrolling learners, and/or do not hold documentation to confirm that the eligibility checks have taken place.
- The attendance evidence which should be held by Learning Providers and Childcare Providers is either incomplete or missing.

Sources of further information

6FCC website for learners:

direct.gov.uk/sixthformcollegechildcare

6FCC website for stakeholders:

lsf.lsc.gov.uk/sixthformchildcarescheme

LSS Provider helpline: **0845 600 7979**

LSS learner helpline: **0800 121 8989**

LSS email: 6FCC@lsclearnersupport.co.uk

Ofsted website: **[ofsted.gov.uk](https://www.ofsted.gov.uk)**

Glossary

Academic year: for the purposes of administering 6FCC, the academic year is defined as 1 September through to 31 August. Academic years are written as 2009/10 and financial years as 2009–10.

Change of Circumstance (CoC) form: a smaller version of the application form which learners on 6FCC can use to tell the LSS about any changes to their learning or childcare arrangements.

Childcare Provider: a provider of childcare – for example, childminder, nursery, playgroup.

Childcare Register (compulsory part): the Ofsted register for Childcare Providers providing care for children aged over five but under eight.

Childcare Register (voluntary part): the Ofsted register for Childcare Providers who are not required to register on either the EYR or the compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

Early Years Register (EYR): the Ofsted register for Childcare Providers providing care for children aged up to five years.

European Social Fund (ESF): set up to improve employment opportunities in the European Union and so help to raise standards of living. It aims to help people fulfil their potential by giving them better skills and better job prospects.

Learner Support Directorate: the part of the LSC responsible for managing all Learner Support schemes, including 6FCC, Adult Learning Grant and Education Maintenance Allowance.

Learner Support Service (LSS): the body responsible for assessing applications, paying appropriate funds to interested parties and providing a telephone helpline service to learners and stakeholders.

Learning Provider: an organisation providing courses and/or training such as a school or college.

Notice of Entitlement (NoE): the letter issued to a learner informing them that they are eligible for support. It is issued with a payment plan.

Ofsted: the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. It inspects and regulates care for children and young people, and inspects education and training for learners of all ages.

Payment plan: this is issued to the learner and the Childcare Provider and confirms the amounts to be paid each week for childcare.

Stakeholder: any organisation or individual with an interest in Learner Support, including learners, Learning Providers, partners and government departments.

Summer Retainer form: a smaller version of the application form that learners on 6FCC who are following a course that spans two academic years can use to apply for payments to keep a childcare place open over the summer holiday break.

Annex 1: Example of payment plan

Personal

Sixth Form College Childcare Scheme

Payment Schedule Print Date: 5/21/09

Schedule of payments for:

Sixth Form College Childcare
Freepost RSAX-ZUGK-SJZZ
Learner Support Service
Manchester
M3 3JZ

Learners please call: 0800 121 8989
Providers please call: 0845 600 7979
Fax: 0161 834 7428

Parents name:
Course: Hairdressing NVQ2

Childcare Provider: Little Ducklings College Nursery

Child Name:

<u>Payment Due Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Payment Type</u>	<u>Status</u>
8, September, 2008	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
15, September, 2008	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
22, September, 2008	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
29, September, 2008	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
6, October, 2008	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
13, October, 2008	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
20, October, 2008	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
3, November, 2008	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
10, November, 2008	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
17, November, 2008	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
24, November, 2008	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
1, December, 2008	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
8, December, 2008	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
15, December, 2008	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
5, January, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
12, January, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
19, January, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
26, January, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
2, February, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
9, February, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
23, February, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
2, March, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
9, March, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
16, March, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
23, March, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
30, March, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
20, April, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
27, April, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
4, May, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
11, May, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
18, May, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PAID
1, June, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PLANNED
8, June, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PLANNED

Personal

Personal

Sixth Form College Childcare Scheme

Payment Schedule Print Date: 5/21/09

Schedule of payments for:

Sixth Form College Childcare
Freepost RSAX-ZUGK-SJZZ
Learner Support Service
Manchester
M3 3JZ

Learners please call: 0800 121 8989
Providers please call: 0845 600 7979
Fax: 0161 834 7428


Parents name:
Course: Hairdressing NVQ2

15, June, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PLANNED
22, June, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PLANNED
29, June, 2009	£ 89.00	Childcare	PLANNED
Grand Total:	£3,204.00		

Personal

Annex 2: Learning Provider monthly attendance monitoring form

Learner Attendance Monitoring 2009/2010
Sixth Form College Childcare



Personal

Student Support Services

Personal

You will recall that as a learning provider supporting young parents on the Sixth Form College Childcare scheme you agreed to confirm monthly attendance returns. This return is seeking confirmation that the following learners are still engaged in a programme of learning at the end of **September 2009** and are eligible for assistance with their childcare and associated travel costs. In this case please show "Y" or "N" if not in learning in **Column B**.

Where this is not the case please indicate so by entering the last date the learner attended in **Column C**. We will review the young parent's application and cease funding in due course.

Information in **Column A** advises if there is a knownquery about the learners assessment or entitlement or if the learner is already known to have withdrawn from study. An entry "Support Agreed" shows that an assessment has been made and payments have been or will be made.

This form should be completed by an appropriate officer within your establishment that has access to student attendance and performance records.

<u>Student's Full Name</u>	<u>Childcare Ref</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>	<u>Course Name</u>	Column A <u>Application Status</u>	Column B <u>Student is in Learning (Y/N)</u>	Column C <u>Date Learning Ceased</u>
.....

Please return the completed form within 2 weeks so that we can issue the next childcare and travel payment, as appropriate

Declaration to be signed by Learning Provider -
I confirm the above attendance monitoring information is correct

Signed: Name: Position in Organisation:

Date: Telephone Number:

Please return the completed form to : Sixth Form College Childcare, Freeport RSAX-ZUGK-SJZZ, Learner Support Service, Manchester, M3 3JZ . **or**
Alternatively you can fax the completed document to : 0161 834 7428. Telephone enquiries to Providers Line: 0845 600 7979.

[Learning Providers Stamp:]

26/09/2009

Annex 3: Childcare Provider remittance/monthly attendance monitoring form

CP0000001443

6FCC Childcare Team



Sixth Form College Childcare
Freepost RSAX-ZUGK-SJZZ
Learner Support Service
Manchester
M3 3JZ

Tel: 0845 600 7979

6FCC@capita.co.uk

Little Ducklings College Nursery
School Road
Purbrook
PO7 8ZZ

Sixth Form College Childcare (6FCC) Payments

Remittance for payment made by BACS on 20/05/2009 for Childcare costs.

Please find enclosed the details of the payments paid to you for students who are in receipt of funding whilst they continue their program of education.

Payments are made in advance on a monthly basis and cover the dates indicated on the following page(s). Should childcare cease, you must notify us immediately in order for us to cancel all future payments, and if appropriate, we will arrange payment for any notice period that may be due to you.

Student Name – Childs Name	Date of Birth	Amount	Payment for: (week beginning)
Total			

If any of the learners have left their studies, please show their details below		
Student Name – Childs Name	Date of Birth	Date you stopped providing childcare

BACS payments should reach your bank account within 3 to 5 days.

DECLARATION - to be signed by the childcare provider

I acknowledge receipt of the above payment and certify that I am still providing childcare for the learner(s) on the following page(s) Please return this remittance within three weeks, failure to do so may delay future payments

Signed _____ Date _____

Name _____ Contact Tel No _____
(please print)

Job Title _____

If you need any help or advice please ring the Learner Support helpline on 0845 600 7979

Yours sincerely
6FCC Childcare Team

On behalf of the Learning and Skills Council

