



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



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Childcare and Early Years capital programme: small grants scheme guidance 2022 to 2025

Guidance for local authorities who manage applications for the grant from childcare providers.

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1. Administration

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

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

1.3 The Local Authority will be expected to:

- Keep a record of all the applications it receives, to include the name of provider, the amount and reason for the request, main language of delivery (Welsh, bi-lingual, English) , the number of children in that setting and the areas of delivery (if applicable) e.g.
 - Flying Start
 - Childcare Offer
 - Foundation Learning
- Record when the application was considered, who was present, and whether funding was approved or not;
- If funding is approved the amount should be recorded in a formal grant offer letter to the applicant which details the terms and conditions* attached to the offer and the applicant must sign up to those terms and conditions;

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- If funding is not awarded, the applicant must be advised in writing; and
- Details of when the funding is paid out must be recorded and what checks have been taken to ensure the work has taken place.

1.4 The information detailed above will need to be retained by the Local Authority should the Welsh Government request sight of the information for audit purposes. A brief summary of the small grants awarded during a quarter should be included in the quarterly claim form and progress report.

* See details at para 7 below regarding the grant terms and conditions.

2. Eligibility

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

- All settings registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) are eligible to apply. This includes childminders, private and voluntary sector providers, and maintained settings offering day care, wrap around care, holiday play schemes, out of school childcare clubs, etc. Applications can also be considered from childcare providers who are in the process of applying for registration; the Local Authority will need to be satisfied that provider is genuinely in the process of making that application to CIW.
- The childcare setting must be based in Wales; applications cannot be considered for childcare settings located in England even if there are Welsh children attending.

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- All applications should be made to the Local Authority of the area of the setting's address as registered with CIW; a provider cannot apply to more than one Local Authority even though they may be taking children from more than one Local Authority area. If a provider has more than one registered setting then they would need to make individual applications for each setting to the relevant Local Authority, they would not be able to transfer money between projects.

2.2 In making an application a provider must:

- Be able to articulate the benefit to the setting and children of the investment;
- Be registered with CIW or in the case of new providers, give a written undertaking that it will register with CIW at the earliest opportunity. If a setting is not registered within 6 months of grant having been drawn down then the Local Authority may take steps to recover the funds;
- Be prepared to commit to offer childcare for a minimum of 5 years from the date on which the final grant payment is made and acknowledge that if it stops providing childcare places or routinely accepts privately fee-paying children over those in receipt of Welsh Government funded childcare, then it may be required to repay all or part of the grant funding received. The amount repayable will vary depending on the circumstances;
- Acknowledge the investment it has received in any promotional material issued to parents.

3. Objectives and Priorities

3.1 Small grants should be prioritised to:

- Support the Local Authorities Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and associated action plan;
- Settings delivering Welsh Medium provision and/or with a particular emphasis on strengthening Welsh medium provision;
- Settings directly supporting the Welsh Government's co-location of services agenda, for example on school sites, at community and health hubs;
- Settings providing the childcare offer, Flying Start and/or Foundation Learning places in settings;
- Childcare that can be delivered during the full day, term time and the school holidays in order to maximise provision to families across the year.

4. What can be funded

4.1 We would expect the maximum amount available to any one setting in any given financial year to be as detailed below, however the Local Authority can use its judgement to offer over the maximum amount if there are exceptional circumstances.

Childminders: £10,000

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Childcare providers registered for 15 or fewer: £10,000

Childcare providers registered for 16 to 29 places: £15,000

Childcare providers registered for 30+ places: £20,000

5. Guidance for major capital funding applications

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

- General refurbishment, including painting, replacing carpets, etc;
- Improving the outdoor play facilities of a setting, such as replacing the outdoor play surface, shelters or providing a canopy to enable play and learning in all weather;
- Replacing / repairing fixtures and fittings such as toilets, kitchen facilities, windows, doors, etc;
- Replacing worn equipment / furniture / toys which could potentially pose a health and safety risk. So for example a rusted outdoor climbing frame, broken or badly worn furniture, which could cause splinters; or a well-used and tatty changing table, which can no longer be hygienically cleaned;
- IT equipment provided it can be clearly shown that it is to support the setting to provide a more digital offer to parents (i.e. allowing a setting to email reports) and children's development. This could include laptops, ipads, printers, etc;

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- The provision of bespoke equipment / furniture which will enable a provider to accommodate a child with additional learning needs;
- Toward the purchase of vehicle which would be used to transport children between the childcare and education settings. Leasing costs are not eligible for funding and neither are running costs such as insurance, petrol, servicing, etc.
- Equipment/adaptations to ensure that services can operate in a Covid-secure manner and to support the recovery of the sector, for example:
 - Additional handwashing facilities;
 - Improvements to internal areas, including additional windows/ ventilations, room partitioning and storage facilities;
 - Other adaptations to improve access and flow, for example additional entrances and/or reconfigure internal rooms/areas;
 - CO2 monitors (please see Appendix 1 below).

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

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

5.3 This list is not exhaustive; if there is any doubt as to whether or not an item

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is eligible please contact your capital account manager in the Welsh Government. Please also see a list of Frequently Asked Questions at Appendix 2.

6. Further notes for grant applications from childminders

6.1 As childminders work on domestic premises, they should clearly demonstrate the nature of what is being requested and why, and how this benefits the childminding setting and children in their care. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, a small grant contribution should not be provided for vehicles (but note FAQ no. 4 on page 7), general refurbishment, replacement or repairs of fittings within the domestic premises. However, each case should be assessed according to the need, circumstances and environment that the childminding is being delivered.

7. Terms and Conditions

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

7.2 The Local Authority should base the terms and conditions it uses for other early year's grants that it administers, it should however include the following

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additional clauses:

- The funding is being provided by the Welsh Government and this must be acknowledged in any literature and social media correspondence such as newsletters and the relevant Welsh Government branding should be used;
- In accepting this offer of funding the applicant agrees to provide Childcare places for a minimum of 5 years from the date the grant funding is paid.
- If the applicant decides not to accept children being funded via a Welsh Government funded programme, then they will be liable to repay all or part of the funding paid. This will not apply if the applicant can clearly demonstrate that they would welcome children under these programmes but there is no capacity;
- The funding must be spent solely on those items deemed eligible for funding, if there is evidence that any part of the funding has been used for ineligible items then the applicant will be required to repay that amount;
- A provider may apply for funding for the same setting more than once in any financial year, provided that the total amount awarded to an individual setting does not exceed more than the amount in para 4.1.

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

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Appendix 1: CO2 monitors

- Local authorities are advised to invite childcare providers to claim for CO2 monitors which can be done as part of the small grant application process or a separate ad-hoc process
- Under the Welsh Government Childcare capital programme, it is not a compulsory requirement for childcare providers to have a CO2 monitor installed
- The following links can be provided to childcare providers. The onus is on the provider to interpret these guidance documents and to undertake any other research and/or seek their own advice to determine whether a CO2 monitor will in fact be suitable for their setting/environment and if so, how many they will need. See [How to use' guide for carbon dioxide monitors as an aid to managing ventilation in education settings \(GOV.WLAES\)](#) and [Health and Safety Executive guidance on ventilation and air conditioning during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#)
- Providers will have to submit invoices/receipts for monitors purchased, to a maximum of £150 per monitor (including VAT) to the Local Authority.

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Appendix 2: frequently asked questions

1. Can the provider of more than one setting apply for a grant for each of their settings?

Yes. A business can apply for a grant for each setting, provided each of their settings is registered by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in their own right. Each application would need to be made on the basis of one application per setting, and to the relevant Local Authority, where the setting is based.

2. Can the grant be used to help with set up costs?

The scheme is not intended to help childcare providers to purchase items as part of their initial set up costs. However, in discussion with Welsh Government there maybe some flexibility around this.

3. Where an application is received from childminders who are working together, as they are registered separately with CIW, can they apply for £10,000 each?

No. The limits in our small grant guidance is **per setting**. Therefore, where childminders are working together in a single domestic premises, they would only be able to apply for up to a maximum of £10,000 per financial year. If they also work in another domestic setting, each setting would be able to apply for a grant where they meet the criteria.

4. Are childminders eligible for a contribution towards the purchase of a

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vehicle?

In exceptional circumstance the Local Authority may consider the appropriateness of funding a proportion of the costs of a vehicle. In doing so they would need to consider:

- the reason the childminder(s) needs a vehicle and how it would benefit them and children in their care.
- will it be used to transport children to/from other foundation learning or childcare provision
- will the vehicle be for personal use too? If so what is the proportion between private and business use; what contribution would be reasonable in these circumstances?

Vehicle leasing and running costs are not eligible under this grant.

5. Can we fund requests for individual car seats?

Yes, provided that the provider can demonstrate this is purely for use for childcare purposes

6. Can we fund the replacement of items such as windows and gates?

Yes. Costs for replacing and/or repairing fixtures and fittings such as toilets, kitchen facilities, windows, doors are eligible under the grant. However applications of this nature from childminders should be considered on a case by case basis and should only be funded in exceptional circumstances.

7. Can funding be used to replace flooring?

Yes. If applicants have given sufficient justification, for example that the current flooring (internally or externally) poses a health and safety risk or is unsuitable or that the new flooring will enable the children to explore a greater range of activities.

We would expect the provider to demonstrate they have looked into and risk assessed different types of flooring to ensure the one requested is durable / suitable for purpose.

8. Can the grant be used to purchase items such as toys, books, clothing (for example wellingtons/tabards/smocks)?

No. These would be deemed as consumables therefore are not eligible under the small grant scheme.

9. We predict an underspend in our small grant. Can we transfer some of our allocation to cover shortfalls in larger capital projects or to appoint a staff member to assist with capital grants?

No. Funding allocated under the small grant scheme must only be utilised as per guidance. Therefore it cannot be transferred to other capital projects or used to fund posts.

10. Can the grant be used to fund the tiling of a conservatory roof?

No, this would be part of the homeowner's responsibility.

11. Can solar panels be purchased through this grant?

Yes, if the childminder/provider has investigated costs and can demonstrate potential fuel savings.

12. Can gardening equipment be purchases through this grant?

Yes, solely for use by the children.

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