Suffolk Provider Portal Frequently Asked Questions

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.

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 of time, please contact the Suffolk Family Information Service by emailing provider.portal@suffolk.gov.uk

Why is the Portal asking me to change my password?

The Portal requires passwords to be changed every 45 days for data protection reasons. If you are only logging in once per term to complete a Headcount task, for example, then it is very likely that that Portal will be asking you to change your password. This is built into the Portal and cannot be changed.

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. 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?

Only the registered user to the Provider Portal should have their log on information. This cannot be shared. If you would like to be the sole registered user for the Provider Portal you must complete the registered user pro-forma found on Suffolk CPD Online.

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 SCC that 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.

Where is my task?

The first task for any term will be sent out during headcount week, not at the very beginning of term. If it is after headcount week and you still do not have a task, please contact the Suffolk Family Information Service.

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.

Suffolk Provider Portal Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to add Golden Ticket numbers or 2-year-old funding references to the Portal?

No. You do not need to do anything with these codes, just keep them for your reference.

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 be treating any tasks not submitted 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 Portal guidance for pictures of this.

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

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.

When you add children to your additional headcount task after half term, you will need to make sure that you reduce the number of weeks claimed to the number of weeks that the child has been with you. Because headcount is in the second week of term, the maximum number of weeks that you can claim for additional children is the length of the term minus 2 – e.g 12 weeks for Autumn.

Is Parent/Carer information mandatory, and can it be retracted from the Provider Portal if the parent 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 it is encouraged to obtain information from any parent you believe may qualify, to ensure your setting does not miss out on funding. If a parent 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.

Why are some of my children highlighted in red?

Children highlighted in red on a headcount task have some information missing from their record, and you will be unable to submit your task until this has been dealt with. You will most likely be seeing red on children who were 2 last term and have now turned 3. The Provider Portal will highlight these children in red to prompt you to add parent/carer information if you have it.

A child on my task has an S, N, P, EH, 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 the child is missing some information on our system. You **will** still have been paid for this child if you claimed hours for them, and the N does **not** affect your claim in any way. It will disappear from your Portal by the end of a term, but if you are concerned about it you can email us, and we will remove it.

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 that additional money.

A child with an EH can claim extended hours funding. The EH will not appear until you have used the Provider Portal's 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 extended hours checker guidance for more information on this.

A child with an X to the right of their Provider Portal 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.

I have had a child leave halfway through term. Do I need to input an end date to the Additional task?

We are no longer asking users to add end dates for children. Please do not write anything into this column. All children who do not claim hours with you during a term will be removed from your record before the start of the next term.

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. However, if a parent decides to reduce their hours with you after headcount, we will not invoice you for the leftover hours.

Do I request an advance payment through the Provider Portal?

Currently, the Provider Portal does not have the ability to process advances. We will continue to automatically pay settings a percentage of their funding from last term, and childminders that would like an advance payment can continue to request one through the form on Suffolk CPD Online. If you are a setting and are expecting a reduced number of children, please notify us by email and we will adjust your advance payment accordingly.

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 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. Special attention should be paid to which setting in a shared offer is taking the universal funding and which is taking the extended funding.

A parent signs 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 settings will receive an email from us with the details, including the child's name and the hours being claimed. With the parent/carers consent we would suggest you contact the other childcare provision to discuss this further. Ultimately it is an agreement between the childcare provider (s) and the parent/carer. We cannot make any assumptions about which claim is correct. Neither setting will be paid for the child until the issue has been resolved, either by resubmitting the correct hours on the additional task, or through emailing provider.portal@suffolk.gov.uk.

Suffolk Provider Portal Frequently Asked Questions

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 passing.

How can I tell which children I received EYPP for?

When the additional task is sent out after you have been paid, all children that you received EYPP for will be marked with a green 'P'.

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

You need to verify the child's eligibility using the Provider Portal's extended hours checker before you can claim that funding for them. There is detailed guidance on using the checker available on CPD Online.

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

If a code's start date is *after* the start of term, then the Portal will not allow you to input extended hours because extended hours cannot be taken up until the term after the parent gets their code from HMRC – so if a parent would like to start claiming extended hours with you in Autumn, they will need to have received their code by August 31st, or by the corresponding dates for the other terms. If the start date is after the start of term because of a mistake or technical issues, e.g. the parent struggling to confirm or reconfirm with HMRC, then please email provider.portal@suffolk.gov.uk with the details.

Another reason the code might not be working is the grace period. New extended hours claims **cannot** be started in a grace period. Parents cannot make use of the grace period unless they have previously claimed extended hours funding at your setting. For example, in the Autumn term a new child has a code which expired in August but has a grace period until the end of December. Because the code expired before the start of term, a new extended hours claim cannot be made despite the grace period. This also applies to children who have previously been at your setting, but only claiming universal hours.

Additionally, we have noticed that a lot of providers have checked codes without using the 'find a child' search box correctly. You need to make sure that you have selected the child in order to apply the code to their record and allow you to claim for them.

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

Not necessarily. Most likely it means that you have entered the 11 number code or National Insurance number incorrectly, or you have used the father's NI number when the code was checked against the mother's, as an example. If you are sure that you have entered the information you were given correctly, check it with the parent/carer.

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

Yes, you will receive a new statement to reflect any changes.

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

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.

Suffolk Provider Portal Frequently Asked Questions

Because the Portal only allows you to claim per term, not per year, you might find yourself needing to add an incorrect weekly figure to the Portal, to make sure that the total figure is correct. This could take the form of 'banking' hours, where you claim for more hours than the child is attending in one term, to cover the hours they'll be claiming the next term.

For example, a child is attending for 12 hours a week. You can stretch this over Autumn and Spring terms without issue, but because of the long Summer holiday, you might find yourself running out of hours – there are 195 hours available in Summer term, but if a child is attending for 20 weeks at 12 hours, that adds up to 240, leaving you 55 hours out of pocket. However, if you claim for those extra hours in earlier terms by increasing your 'hours claimed for term' figure, even if the weekly figure is then incorrect, you will still be funded for those 55 hours and be able to offer them to the child.

Stretching over a year does require extra pre-planning and thought, and you will need to make sure that your process is clearly defined on the PAF in case you are audited in one of the terms that you're claiming extra for. If you need any more help with working out a particular stretched offer, please email provider.portal@suffolk.gov.uk.

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

Yes, please continue to add your EY children to the census as you have done before. The only thing that has changed is your funding process – you still need to submit your EY children through the census, but you won't be paid from that information. Instead you'll be paid by the Early Years department based on your Provider Portal submission.

Please remember to register your children on SIMS as 'dual registered' if you know they are also attending a PVI provider.