**NCC Connect to Work**

**Annex 3 – Childcare and Replacement Caring Costs**

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1. **Childcare Costs**

1.1 Where childcare is a barrier to employment resulting from Connect to Work, the Accountable Body must ensure that Participants are provided with appropriate support to secure up-front funding for childcare, in line with the requirements of the Equality Act. This support may be available through the Jobcentre Plus for Participants who are receiving benefits via the Flexible Support Fund, or through the Delivery Partner, as childcare costs are considered Allowable Costs under Connect to Work.

1.2. Participants should also be informed of ongoing childcare support options, including the ability to claim back up to 85% of childcare costs if they are receiving Universal Credit, with a monthly cap of £1,014.63 for one child and £1,739.37 for two or more children.

1.3 Other childcare and replacement care funding options, such as the Tax-Free Childcare scheme, should be clearly communicated to Participants by the Accountable Bodies. Under this scheme, parents can claim up to £2,000 per child per year, or £4,000 for disabled children.

1.4 Participants should also be made aware of the following additional childcare support schemes:

• Free Childcare for Two-Year-Olds: Eligible families can access 15 hours of free childcare per week for children aged two.

• 30 Hours Free Childcare: Working parents of children aged 3-4 are entitled to 30 hours of free childcare per week during term time.

• Wraparound Care: Participants with school -age children can access wraparound care, providing childcare before and after school, from 8am to 6pm. This is designed to support working parents by offering extended care options outside school hours.

1.5 Childcare should only be funded if it is provided by:

• Carers registered with OFSTED (the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills);

• A carer accredited under the Childcare Approval Scheme, run on school premises out of school hours or as an out of hours club by a local authority; or

• Schools or establishments exempted from registration under the Children Act 1989 or operated on Crown property.

1.6 The Accountable Body will be required to ensure that Participants are informed of the availability of funding for childcare costs.

1.7 The parent or guardian can make alternative arrangements. Costs should not be paid unless the childcare provider is in one of the above categorie.

1.8 DWP currently sets its costs for childcare up to the [tax credit limits that are current at the time i.e., October 202](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rates-and-allowances-tax-credits-child-benefit-and-guardians-allowance/tax-credits-child-benefit-and-guardians-allowance)4. Accountable Bodies should consider the following limits:

• Help with childcare costs can be paid up to, but not including, the first Tuesday in the September following the child’s fifteenth birthday. Parents requiring childcare for five days a week can claim up to a maximum of £175 per week for one child and £300 per week for two or more children.

• If the Participant is attending employment or an Approved Activity of less than five days a week, they can claim up to the maximum daily rates of £35 per day for one child and £60 per day for two or more children.

• The child/children must satisfy the age requirement and be a dependent of and reside with the Participant.

Accountable Bodies must not recommend childcare facilities to Participants. This is to ensure that DWP and/or the Accountable Body does not take on liability for the safety of children. It is the parents’ responsibility to decide with whom they entrust the care of their child/children.

• Accountable Bodies may choose to arrange for a crèche facility to be on their premises. However, they must ensure it is the parents’ choice whether their child uses the facility. Accountable Bodies should also ensure that any crèche facilities adhere to current legislation.

1.9. This cost is to be recorded for each relevant month in the Participant Cost section of the Actual and Forecasts Tab in the Grant Cost Register. The Participant Cost supporting information box is where the detail should be recorded.

1.10 On-going childcare support as detailed above is current as of October 2024.

**2. Replacement Care Costs**

2.1. Where replacement care is a barrier to employment resulting from Connect to Work, the Accountable Body must ensure that Participants are provided with appropriate support to secure up-front funding for replacement care, in line with the requirements of the Equality Act. This support may be available via the Flexible Support Fund through Jobcentre Plus for Participants who are receiving benefits, or through the Delivery Partner, as replacement care costs are considered Allowable Costs under the programme. This should be made available for Participants who are:

• of working age; and

• spend a significant proportion of their lives providing support to relatives, partners or friends who are ill, frail, disabled or have a mental health or substance misuse problem.

2.2 Those in receipt of relevant benefits (e.g. Carers Allowance) should note that normal benefit rules apply.

2.3 Participants who fall within this group must be participating in an Approved Activity and/or incur one-off replacement care costs when attending an interview with an Accountable Body or employer which has been pre-arranged/agreed by the Accountable Body. Other alternatives, such as moving the time/date, should be considered before replacement care costs are paid.

2.4 The Accountable Body will be required to ensure that Participants are informed of the access to funding for replacement caring costs.

2.5. Replacement care costs should not be paid if the replacement care is provided by family members.

2.6 Replacement care must be provided by Accountable Body registered providers, an Accountable Body preferred provider, or a recognised care organisation within the local area.

2.7 Accountable Bodies must not recommend replacement care providers or organisations. The carer, or the person being cared for, must do this, as it is their responsibility to decide who should provide the care.

2.8 This cost is to be recorded for each relevant month in the Participant Cost section of the Actual and Forecasts Tab in the Grant Cost Register. The Participant Cost supporting information box is where the detail should be recorded.