



We champion the wider family who care for children

RICh (Recognition of Informal Childcare) Rewards Scheme Q & A

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Why should grandparents get a reward for caring for their grandchildren? Isn't that what they should do anyway?

Grandparents are playing a growing role in family life and because of our ageing population they are also likely to be playing that role for longer. 1 in 3 working mums rely on grandparents for childcare, a contribution which has been valued at £3.9 billion. Yet this contribution is often unrecognised and undervalued. We believe this should change.

We have called for it to be possible for grandparents to be paid for childcare through tax credits and childcare vouchers. In surveys this is supported by the majority of parents and grandparents and also by 6 out of 10 of the wider public. But we recognise that there may be a commercial solution to this social problem so, with Nesta's help, we are developing the Rewards Scheme.

Who is paying for this?

Nesta is funding the development of the scheme but, if it succeeds, it would be a commercial model funded through advertising, transactions and a small membership fee.

Will it only be open to grandparents? What about other family members or friends?

At the moment the scheme has been devised to be for grandparents only so that we can have a clearly defined target audience. But it is possible that this may change as we test this out with both users and partners in the scheme.

What about other types of carers?

Once established, it would be possible for this scheme to be adapted for those who care for older relatives or partners for example, but we are not proposing to do so at this stage as part of the core development of the scheme.

How much time would the grandparent have to spend caring for their grandchildren?

We don't have a time limit on it. It's about recognising and valuing the contribution grandparents make to caring for their grandchildren, however big or small that may be.

Will grandparents want this?

When we polled grandparents 7 out of 10 said they thought grandparents should be paid for childcare through the tax credit system or childcare vouchers. While this scheme doesn't provide a payment, it would mean that grandparents were financially rewarded with discounts and special offers. So far, the consultation we have done with grandparents has shown that they are overwhelmingly positive about the idea but we will be finding out more about what they think, and what they want and don't want, as we develop the scheme.

What do parents think about it?

We know from our work that parents often say they would like to be able to pay grandparents but cannot afford to do so. Grandparents say they wouldn't take payment from their children anyway. This scheme offers a solution to this as grandparents would be financially better off and parents would not be out of pocket.

Is there an age limit?

No. The reward would be available to any grandparent providing care for their grandchildren.

What kind of rewards would they get?

We are developing a commercial model of the scheme which would give them discounts in high street chains. But we are also considering a local authority/community model which would offer discounts on goods and services in their local area.

If it were offered by a local authority who would pay the administration costs?

Our lead model for the scheme is a nationally run model with costs covered centrally so they would not be passed on to the local authority. However if the national scheme does not develop in this way then any costs from locally run schemes would have to be met at the local level.

How will they find out about the scheme?

This is all to be developed but we expect them to find out about the scheme from websites, advertising, media promotions, through schools, word of mouth.

How will they apply?

We expect there to be an online and a postal application process.

Will grandparents have to pay?

At the moment we are including a small membership fee to cover basic administration costs but this is one of the features we want to develop and test out with grandparents in the months ahead.

How will you know if a grandparent is providing childcare?

At the moment the scheme is self-nominating. We are building into it the possibility of a counter-signatory or a randomised check to counter any risk of fraudulent applications, but if we decide this is necessary we have to ensure this is proportionate.

Will parents be able to apply on the grandparents' behalf?

Parents have an important role to play to help to promote the scheme to grandparents but we think the application should come from the grandparents themselves as they reward would be issued to them.

When will the scheme be up and running?

We have been funded for 18 months to develop it but the scheme may take longer than that to get off the ground. We will keep our website updated with developments.