

Dear early years and childcare providers

As previously advised, by yesterday (Wednesday 13 January) we were hoping to share with you our approach to both the headcount and Early Year Census collection due to commence next week. The promised DfE Early Years Census 2021 additional guidance has only just been received, which we need to look at urgently before advising our final approach to how we will fund you for the spring term.

KCC will comply fully with this guidance which we are expecting will clarify the circumstances whereby we can pay based on expected attendance rather than actual attendance. We anticipate it will also set out when we do and do not fund closed providers, details of which will be used in conjunction with an updated version of our 'Barrier and Solutions' approach which operated during the autumn term.

We appreciate the huge anxiety and frustration this has caused you. You will have seen from the letter shared with you yesterday, that both Kent's Leader of Council and Cabinet Member for Education have been lobbying Government on this issue along with the need for wider support.

We are very sorry that we have not been able to bring you the clarity you so need within our originally stated timescales; however we had fully expected the DfE to have provided the guidance also within those timescales. We will share information absolutely as soon as we are able.

David Adams
Interim Director Education Kent County Council
Childcare

Alex Gamby
Head of Early Years &
Childcare

Here are the most recent updates for you, your staff and your families. Please also see below information from KCC regarding vaccines for early years workers and link to our FAQs on Kelsi.

Updates for the Sector

[Ofsted: coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rolling update](#) 11 January

Change made: Included details on monitoring visits, remote learning and our work with social care and registered early years provision. **First aid certificates: the Department for Education had previously extended the expiration date for paediatric first aid certificates. However, you now need to have an up-to-date certificate.**

[Ofsted: coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rolling update](#) updated 12 January

Change made: Updated the 'Current activity' section with details of our planned activity until the February half term. **Ofsted will pause assurance inspections to early years settings until after the February half term. However, they will continue with their vital regulatory work in early years.**

[Find examples to help you calculate your employees' wages](#) 13 January

Change made: Two new examples about how to calculate your employees' wages if they are paid a fixed annual amount have been added to the page (at 3.14 and 3.15).

[Calculate how much you can claim using the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) 13 January

Change made: A new section has been added about claiming Employment Allowance.

[Check if you can claim for your employees' wages through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) 13 January

Change made: Information added on how to request that HMRC do not publish claim information.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Staff Testing in Primary Schools – Department for Education Update 13 January

On 15 December, the Secretary of State for Education announced [plans to introduce asymptomatic testing in schools and colleges](#), starting with secondary and further education colleges and rolling-out to primary schools in January.

We can confirm that primary schools and maintained nursery schools should expect to receive a delivery of home testing kits between the 18 and 22 January for testing of staff. Further support and guidance on how to use the tests will follow shortly. If you have not received a delivery by close on 22 January, or have missing or damaged items, please complete this [contact form](#). You will need the URN for your school or college to complete this form. You do not need to start any testing before the week commencing 25 January.

Primary schools with attached early years settings will receive sufficient test kits to test both their primary and early years staff. Maintained nursery schools will also receive testing kits to offer to their staff. Private early years providers will continue to be [prioritised for coronavirus \(COVID-19\) testing](#) through the NHS testing programme.

Updates for Families

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): advice on accessing green spaces safely](#) 13 January

Change made: Updated guidance following the 4 January announcement of a national lockdown.

[National lockdown: Stay at Home](#) 13 January

Change made: Updated in line with latest government guidance.

Vaccination Priority for Early Years and School Staff

Here is an excerpt from a letter sent out yesterday to all Headteachers by David Adams, Interim Director of Education:

We are currently lobbying government to prioritise access to the COVID-19 vaccine by staff in early years provision and schools. Government's current policy is these services will be the last to close and the first to open. Therefore, KCC's Cabinet Member for Education and Skills has written to Gavin Williamson urging that the staff in these settings are prioritised for vaccination.

FAQs

We updated our [FAQs](#) on 11 January and will of course be updating again as soon as possible in light of recent guidance from the DfE.