

Dear early years and childcare providers

Please find below important updates for you, your staff and families. As mentioned last week, we will provide further updates between Christmas and New Year as and when they are available.

Updates for the sector

[Tier 4: Stay at Home](#) updated 19 December

First Published: What you can and cannot do in areas with a very rapidly rising level of infections, where tighter restrictions are in place from 20 December.

[COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable](#) 20 December

Change made: Added new shielding advice for the clinically extremely vulnerable in Tier 4. 'You are strongly advised to work from home because the risk of exposure to the virus in your area may be significantly higher. If you cannot work from home, then you should not attend work'. If the child's doctors 'have confirmed the child is still considered clinically extremely vulnerable, the child should follow shielding advice and should not attend school, because the risk of exposure to the virus in your area may currently be very high...Children and young people in the household who are not clinically extremely vulnerable should continue to attend school. Children and young people whose parents or carers are clinically extremely vulnerable should also continue to go to school'.

[Additional government resources to support your business during coronavirus disruptions](#) 18 December

Change made: Business support helpline Christmas opening times added.

[Apply for the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme](#) 18 December

Page summary: The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) provides financial support to smaller businesses affected by coronavirus (COVID-19).

Change made: Application deadline extended to 31 March 2021.

[Apply for a coronavirus Bounce Back Loan](#) 18 December

Page summary: The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) provides financial support to smaller businesses affected by coronavirus (COVID-19).

Change made: Application deadline extended to 31 March 2021.

[Use of free early education entitlements funding during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#) 17 December

Updated: This guidance has been updated to set out the government's plans for funding local authorities and childcare providers in the 2021 spring term – this is in section

1. The previously published guidance on early years funding is still valid until 31 December – this is in section
2. Section 2 has been updated to clarify that it refers to the period before the start of the 2021 spring term, and certain paragraphs have been removed to avoid duplication with other, more up to date guidance.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): financial support for education, early years and children's social care](#) 17 December

Updated: Early years section of the sector-specific guidance updated to reflect the interaction between the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and 2021 spring term funding.

[Schools and childcare settings: return in January 2021](#) 17 December

First Published: What schools and childcare providers need to do at the start of the spring term, including information on the return of schools with secondary-age pupils and asymptomatic testing for coronavirus (COVID-19).

Early years

Parents and carers can continue to access early years settings as normal from January 2021.

Out-of-school activities and wraparound childcare

Out-of-school settings and wraparound childcare can continue to operate for face-to-face provision between 4 and 11 January 2021 for children who are:

- home educated
- in early years settings
- in primary school
- in the secondary school-age cohorts eligible for full-time on-site provision - vulnerable children, children of critical workers and those in year 11 and 13

Secondary pupils who are receiving remote education during the first week of term in January 2021 should not attend:

- out-of-school settings (such as extracurricular clubs or supplementary schools)
- wraparound childcare (before and after-school clubs)

Providers of out-of-school activities that continue to operate for face-to-face provision during this period should ensure that they make parents aware that their setting should only be accessed if their child is in one of the eligible groups outlined.

[Survey of childcare and early years providers and coronavirus \(COVID-19\): wave 2](#) 17 December

First Published: Wave 2 of research with childcare providers in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19). Topics covered in the survey include:

- Operating models
- Expectations for January
- Attendance
- Workforce
- Finances
- Financial sustainability

In total, 4,149 providers participated in the study; 518 SBPs, 1,601 GBPs and 2,030 CMs.

A new question was added to wave 2 to ask temporarily closed providers when they expect to open their provision again.

There is some really useful insights, I do not think anything we are not aware of but would affirm what we are hearing from all providers.

[Check if you can claim for your employees' wages through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) 17 December

Change made: Updated to remove reference to January review and reflect that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has been extended to 30 April 2021. Minor update to mirror holiday pay guidance on other pages.

All other relevant pages, check if you employers can use CJRS, and other relevant pages have been updated to reflect the scheme has been extended to 30 April 2021.

[Government publishes list of approved COVID-19 test providers](#) 17 December

First published: The list of private providers of COVID-19 testing will help employers and individuals set up their own COVID-19 testing programmes.

Updates for Families

[Making a Christmas bubble with friends and family](#) updated 19 December

Meeting friends and family over the Christmas period – forming a Christmas Bubble.

[Guidance for the Christmas period](#) 19 December 2020

[Guidance for contacts of people with confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection who do not live with the person](#) 18 December

Change made: Amended 'what is meant by a contact' section.

[Guidance if you are visiting your local coastline this winter](#) 21 December

Change made: Updated tiers listed to include tier 4

[Advice for clinically extremely vulnerable in new Tier 4 areas](#) 21 December

Press Release: This group is advised to stay at home at all times, unless for exercise or medical appointments, and not to attend work, even if they are unable to work from home.