

Early Years and Childcare COVID-19 Blog 29th May 2020



Welcome and Introduction Alex Gamby

You will be aware I know that this week has brought with it announcements from the Prime Minister about some small easings of the lockdown regime and I am sure welcome opportunities to meet in groups of six, outdoors, with effect from Monday 1 June, although social distancing 'strictly remains'.

Additionally, the Prime Minister announced that the Government's five tests for easing the lockdown in England have been met, enabling all children to be welcomed back to early years and childcare settings and a phased return of some children to school, also from Monday 1 June. The welfare of children and staff has been at the heart of all decision making and Ministers have said they want to thank all those involved, including local authorities, in preparing for this milestone.

You should be aware that we are in the process of contacting all providers directly to talk with you about your support needs going forward. Those of you with whom we have already had a conversation have said you have very much appreciated that. If you have not been called yet, hang on in there as there are a lot of you! In the meantime, please do proactively keep an eye on what information and support is available via KELSI on <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/early-years> and also <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/news-and-events/news> and on The Education People site <https://www.theeducationpeople.org/our-expertise/early-years-childcare/>

Also, the Early Years and Childcare Service's various teams continue to be available in the usual way, so you are able to contact us in the usual way via the email addresses at the end of this blog. We want to be able to support you in any and every way that we can do through and beyond the unique circumstances in which we all find ourselves.

Prioritisation of Children

Where the request for places from parents exceeds the number of places you are able to offer (in the context of social distancing), government guidance states: *'If necessary, settings should prioritise vulnerable children and children of critical workers, then 3 and 4 year olds, in particular those who will be transitioning to reception in September, followed by younger age groups'*.

In making what could potentially be difficult decisions, you may wish to consider the following order of priority:

- The children of Critical Workers and those who are vulnerable (for whatever reason)
- The three and four-year-old children of working parents, with children due to start school in September first so as to support their transition
- The three and four-year-old children of non-working parents, again with children due to start school in September first so as to support their transition
- Two-year-old children of working parents
- Two-year-old children of non-working parents (very often Free for Two [FF2] eligible children); however based on your own knowledge of families you may consider that a child with confirmed eligibility for a FF2 place is actually vulnerable and hence needs higher prioritisation for a place.

Personal Protective Equipment

We are well aware that many providers have been preparing for 1 June and beyond that next term, and that the sourcing of appropriate PPE is seen as a priority.

Within guidance produced by KCC, it explained that schools and early years and childcare providers are responsible for sourcing and purchasing their own PPE and there is no access to the emergency supply which has been stockpiled in the event that it is needed by the NHS or Care Sector. These are the supplies held by the Local Resilience Forum (LRF), and we therefore explained that should you have difficulty procuring PPE, you should contact your Area Education Officer/Childcare Sufficiency Officer/Childminding Adviser rather than the LRF.

Whilst Kent County Supplies (KCS) has provided the assurance that they will, for the most part, be able to fulfil most orders for PPE, it has noted a considerable increase in the number being received and the quantities being requested. You are, of course, able to order from other providers, but we would urge you to gain assurances that the PPE you are ordering meets the minimum requirements set out in the relevant guidance.

As has always been the case, you should refer to the PPE requirements issued by Government and not place unnecessary pressure on the system by ordering above what is reasonable. However, working with colleagues both from KCS and KCC Commissioning, we believe we now have a robust system in place to ensure orders for PPE can be fulfilled in good time.

KSC already trades with over 1,000 early years and childcare settings, however:

- If you already have an account with KCS then please use www.kcs.co.uk
- If you do not have an account but would like one to be set up, please also use www.kcs.co.uk

- If you do not have an account and want to pay by card please use <https://kcsconnect.co.uk> where you can submit an order which the KCS Team will review and contact you to confirm stock and take payment.

PPE Supplier Fraud Alert

We have received an alert from Data and Intelligence Services warning of potential fraud emails regarding the procurement of PPE. As availability of appropriate PPE remains uncertain, the suspected fraudster impresses urgency by limiting the period of the deal, offers incentives of delivery within 10 days and a potential price review in order to remain competitive. An introductory email, including a brochure, price list and displaying several recognised endorsements is also provided to secure orders.

Fraudsters are illegally obtaining public funds by taking advantage of existing and emerging needs, as we respond to the COVID-19 crisis. Please ensure you remain vigilant and carry out all necessary checks to confirm the legitimacy of new suppliers.

If you would like to report any instances of potential fraud emails, please send to intel@nafn.gov.uk and the details will be forwarded to the relevant team.

Government guidance for this week

[Support for bereaved families](#) Information to help bereaved families, friends or next of kin make important decisions (Updated 28/05/20 to include a PDF version)

[Video and webinars of what help is available to businesses](#) Watch videos and register for the free webinars to learn more about the support available to help you deal with the economic impacts of coronavirus (Updated 28/05/20)

[Guidance for people who test positive for coronavirus](#) Guidance for contacts of a person with a positive test result for coronavirus (COVID-19) who do not live with that person (First published 28/05/20)

[Test and trace in the workplace](#) Guidance on the NHS test and trace service for employers, businesses and workers. The government is saying to facilitate the NHS test and trace service, employers should encourage workers to heed any notifications to self-isolate and provide support to these individuals when in isolation (First published 27/05/20)

[Test and trace and how it works](#) An overview of the NHS test and trace service, including what happens if you test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or have had close contact with someone who has tested positive (First published 27/05/20)

[Financial support for education, early years and children's social care](#) Includes the changes to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) and staff who are self-isolating (Updated 27/05/20)

[Coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance](#) Includes new information on the recommended approaches that local authorities, educational settings and parents should follow for the return of children and young people with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, or those with complex needs but who do not have an EHC plan, to educational settings from 1 June 2020 (Updated 26/05/20)

[Coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources/english-resources#english-early-years](#) The publication has been updated with more links to support home learning including the foundation stage (Updated 26/05/20)

[Preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-June](#) The planning guide for early years and childcare settings (Published 24/05/20)

The following links have been sent previously but we have included in this week's Blog for ease of access:

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#) Guidance includes overview of effective infection protection and how to implement protective measures prior to wider opening from 1 June (Updated 12/05/20)

[Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care](#) This guidance explains the strategy for infection prevention and control, including the specific circumstances PPE should be used, and thus work safely during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak (Published 14/05/20)

[Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus outbreak](#) Guidance for all early years providers in England registered with Ofsted and childminders registered with childminder agencies for children of all ages including nurseries and wraparound childcare, before and after school clubs and holiday clubs. The guidance does not cover nannies or au pairs. It includes information on re-opening for early years settings, funding including Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and temporary changes to 30 hours free early education entitlements, Ofsted, data collection, early years foundation stage and a section on childminders (Updated 15/05/20)

[Early Years Foundation Stage: coronavirus disapplications](#) This guidance outlines the temporary changes that came into force on 24th April 2020 and will last throughout the COVID-19 outbreak or until the government stipulates otherwise. The long end date of the legislative changes is shown in regulations as 25th September

2020, but these will be reviewed on a monthly basis and disapplications and modifications may be lifted earlier, for instance if government advice on self-isolation and social distancing is amended (Updated 24/04/20)

[Planning guide for early years and childcare settings](#) The government announced a roadmap towards recovery from the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and plans for welcoming all children back to early years settings and a [phased return of some children to school](#) from 1 June at the earliest. This planning guide is intended to provide information and support for all early years providers in England as they prepare to open for all children (Published 24/05/20)

[Legionnaires' Disease](#) The guidance gives practical advice on the legal requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 concerning the risk from exposure to legionella and guidance on compliance with the relevant parts of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

[Managing school premises during the coronavirus outbreak](#) Schools and other educational settings continue to be responsible for a range of health and safety measures and statutory compliance (Updated 18/05/20)

Early Years and Childcare Service Equality and Inclusion Team Support

As you welcome back your children and families, please be assured that you can access our support as usual; we can work with you to ensure you are meeting the needs of all your children, including our Pre-LIFT support and any additional inclusion advice you may need moving forward. This will be carried out via telephone, as we are currently not making visits to settings to minimise risk.

You can contact us in the following ways:

- By completing our [Equality and Inclusion Special Educational Needs and Disability Support Request \(DOCX, 42.8 KB\)](#) form and emailing to EYInclusion@theeducationpeople.org
- By using this link to our electronic request for support form:
https://kentccself.achieveservice.com/service/Equality_and_Inclusion_Request_for_Support_form_Process
- **Alternatively, you can email the team direct at:**
EYInclusion@theeducationpeople.org

If you are a childminder needing similar support please complete the [Childminder Request for Support Form](#) and return it to childminding@theeducationpeople.org. Childminding Advisers will also provide support by telephone.

System Leadership Supplement for Early Years Collaborations

The criteria to apply for this year's System Leadership Supplement has recently been sent out to all Early Years Collaboration Leaders. If you are a Collaboration Leader and have not yet received the email, please contact eycollaborations@theeducationpeople.org and we will send it to you so that you can submit your application before the deadline of 26 June 2020.

Frequently Asked Questions

The Early Years and Childcare Service has published a Frequently Asked Questions document which is regularly updated on Kelsi and can be accessed by the link below:

https://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/106491/EYC-Providers-FAQs.pdf

Good practice examples of how settings have supported vulnerable or key worker children

This week we have an example of good practice from a setting in the north of the county sharing their video experience:

Like many other settings, our setting has been closed since 23rd March. The children miss seeing their friends and teachers; the staff miss seeing the children and their colleagues. We put together a 'film' to remember our setting in Lockdown - to help us all to connect and to bring a smile to each face who watched it (and often tears for the parents and staff!). Parents submitted photos of their children or videos of them saying hello, telling their friends they loved and missed them, singing or jumping out from behind trees! Staff joined in with this, and all clips were put together to music, with pages from the wonderful Charlie Mackesy book, 'The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse,' slotted in among the clips as reminders that we are all in this together and we are doing our best. The children have loved watching the video and seeing their friends and teachers. It is a special keepsake of our time

in Lockdown that families can cherish and a reminder that we are all here to support each other.

The setting received some very positive parental feedback:

“Thank you for the wonderful video you sent out this week of the little children and teachers. How utterly delightful at this time.”

“Firstly, thank you for the absolutely wonderful video you made. I cried buckets! And J loved it. When T came on J got very sad and said how much he loves and misses her!”

“We loved the film, thank you so much. I was in floods of tears from the moment S came on screen! S’ favourite bit was seeing A 😊”

We also have examples of good practice this week from childminders:

The childminders across the county have been keeping in touch with their absent children in a variety of ways. One has read children their favourite book in the setting to them all together via Zoom, another has sent craft materials for the children to use all together over Zoom, others have been lending families books or sending boxes of activities and resources which they know would interest the children and further their learning.

For the children in childminder settings, one childminder has made cardboard butterfly wings with her children that are about to go off to school in September to support them in understanding about social distancing.

Contact Us

Threads of Success	www.ThreadsofSuccess.co.uk ThreadsofSuccess@theeducationpeople.org
Threads of Success Recruitment Hub	https://www.threadsofsuccessrecruitment.com/home
Sufficiency and Sustainability	Sufficiencyandsustainability@theeducationpeople.org
Education for Sustainable Development	ESD@theeducationpeople.org
Improvement and Standards	EYCIImprovementServices@theeducationpeople.org
Equality and Inclusion	EYInclusion@theeducationpeople.org
Collaborations	EYCollaborations@theeducationpeople.org
Childminding	childminding@theeducationpeople.org
Emporium Plus	Emporiumplus@theeducationpeople.org
Workforce Development	Earlyyearsworkforce.ask@theeducationpeople.org
Kent Children and Families Information Service	Kentcfis@theeducationpeople.org
Management Information	eyfe@kent.gov.uk
Free for 2 (FF2) Team	Eyfreefor2@kent.gov.uk
KELSI	http://www.kelsi.org.uk
Schools e-bulletin	http://www.kelsi.org.uk/working_in_education/news.aspx