

Dear early years and childcare providers

Please see below this week's important updates for you, your staff and families.

With regard to our arrangements for Government updates as we near Christmas, we will send a further update on Tuesday 22 December and, if anything further comes in, again on Wednesday 23 December. Our offices are closed on 24 December. Between 29 December and 31 December we will email any important updates as they arise. Our normal weekly Thursday blog will resume on 7 January.

Government Updates for the Sector

[Business as usual for NHS Test and Trace over Christmas](#) 11 December

First Published: The NHS Test and Trace service will be open every day over Christmas and the New Year, providing and processing tests for those who need them and tracing contacts of positive cases.

[Test and Trace Support Payment scheme: claiming financial support](#) 11 December

Updated: added information on how contacts identified through the COVID-19 app can now apply for the Test and Trace Support Payment. Updated the eligibility for the discretionary scheme to reference local authorities' ability to include additional eligibility criteria in their area. Added links to other financial and work-related COVID-19 support.

[NHS Test and Trace: how it works](#) 14 December

Updated: to reflect that the 14 day isolation period is now 10 days. This information has also been updated in other related documents ie action for early years, what parents and carers need to know, and childcare bubbles.

[Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#) 14 December 2020

Updated: information on quality assurance visits, 30 hour entitlements and days of self-isolation.

Grace period dates can be checked with a parent's childcare provider and are based upon an individual's reconfirmation dates. Parents falling out of eligibility and due to reconfirm between 31 October and 31 December 2020 may be entitled to a grace period lasting until 31 March 2021. Further information on grace periods for the 30 hours free entitlement can be found in the [statutory guidance](#).

If, after the grace period, a parent has not reconfirmed their eligibility for 30 hours, they remain eligible for the 15 hours universal entitlement for three and four-year olds. There is also support available for parents with childcare costs outside of the free early education entitlements for lower income families. For example, eligible families can get help with up to 85% of their childcare costs through Universal Credit, subject to a monthly limit of £646 for one child or £1108 for two or more children.

[Ofsted: coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rolling update](#) 16 December

Change made: Updated sections on first aid certificates and early years foundation stage (EYFS) requirements for childcare providers and added information about taking records off site.

First aid certificates

The deadline extension for providers to requalify for paediatric first aid (PFA) training has now passed. The DfE previously extended the expiration date of PFA certificates to 25 November, for providers whose certificate expired on or after 16 March 2020.

Taking records off site

Permission to take records off site can be granted by our regulatory team at Ofsted. If you are the provider, or nominated individual of a setting, you should contact enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk to explain why this is necessary and what you will do to mitigate any risks. Our regulatory team may contact you for more information before making a decision.

Please note, permission to take records offsite is not new information, but this is an important reminder if you are intending to take records home to assist with Test and Trace over the holidays.

Government Updates for Families

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[Test and Trace Support Payment scheme: claiming financial support](#) 11 December

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[NHS Test and Trace: how it works](#) 14 December

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[Making a Christmas bubble with friends and family](#) 16 December 2020

Change made: This document has been updated in line with latest government guidance.

If you choose to form a bubble:

- you should stop unnecessary social contact outside your immediate household as soon as possible and for at least five days before you meet other households in your bubble
- you should keep your bubble as small as possible.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION - THE CHILDREN'S FRONT DOOR SERVICE, XMAS AVAILABILITY

Please note the dates below and share with all relevant staff/Partners:

23.12.20: KCC concessionary day: Most KCC children's services will be closed including district Children's Social Work and Early Help Teams. The Front Door Service will remain operational with a skeleton staff presence but will only be able to respond to emergencies on this day. The Out of Hours service will operate as usual from 5 pm.

24-28 December INCLUSIVE: All KCC children's Services will be closed until 29 December. The Out of Hours Service will be covering this time period as usual but only have the capacity to respond to urgent situations that cannot wait until the next working day. If you do need to make an urgent referral during this time - please call the Out of Hours number on : **03000 419191**.

Please note that any requests for support/ referrals submitted through the children's portal and emails sent to Frontdoor@kent.gov.uk during this time period will not be picked up until 29 December so please only use these methods if your referral or query is NOT urgent.

Offices are also closed on 1 January and will reopen for business as usual on 4 January 2021. The above therefore applies during this time also.