

# Early Years and Childcare COVID-19 Blog 19 June 2020



## Welcome and Introduction Alex Gamby

Hello again everyone

For the past two weeks I have been able to tell you that, since the beginning of June, increasing numbers of settings of all kinds have been re-opening. I am pleased to be able to share that this week has brought with it further increases and we now have a total of 524 group settings open (from 488 this time last week) and 590 childminders (from 581). The number of children being cared for across all open settings has increased from 11,591 to 13,333 which is more good news. A number of you who have been unable to re-open have shared with us your frustration about your inability to do so. Some of the reasons for this are outside of anyone's control, but if there is anything you think we can do to support you, please do let us know.

Thank you for all that you are doing as we become accustomed to new ways of working in early years and childcare provisions, in line with government guidance – some of you have shared with us that you think parental confidence in this is growing and certainly the increase in the number of children returning to settings would support this, which is encouraging.

We are very aware of the particular challenges faced by out of school childcare providers and by holiday play schemes particularly. The Local Government Association (LGA) is regularly pressing the Department for Education for information, answers to questions and any next steps. In doing so, the LGA sometimes seeks the views of local authorities and we always take these opportunities to strongly represent issues and needs. In the meantime, of course, we continue to be here for any support we can offer you.

As ever, whatever kind of provider you are and whatever situation you are in, thank you very much for your continued support for Kent's children and families.

With my very best to you all

*Alex Gamby*

Head of Early Years and Childcare  
The Education People

## Government guidance for this week

[Changes to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) Find out how the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will change from 1 July. (First published 12/6/2020)

[COVID-19 rolling update](#) Updated the section on inspection reports from recent inspections, which were paused from publishing. Some providers with unpublished reports had asked for them to be published, and Ofsted has now done this. Ofsted will also begin to publish any remaining reports from next week and will contact affected providers beforehand to confirm this. (Updated 15/6/2020)

[NHS test and trace: workplace guidance](#) Updated the guidance for employers about multiple coronavirus outbreaks in the workplace. (Updated 15/6/2020)

[Help and support if your business is affected by coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) 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 with the YouTube video for 'Running your business through the coronavirus pandemic'. (Updated 15/6/2020)

This video gives an overview of the support available to help businesses deal with the economic impact of coronavirus including:

- deferral of VAT and Income Tax payments
- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme
- Statutory sick pay rebate scheme
- HMRC Time to Pay Scheme

[Early years and childcare: coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) What early years providers need to do during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. (First published 17/6/2020)

[What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#) Information for parents and carers about the opening of early years providers, schools and colleges, safety in schools, attendance, transport, school meals and exams. (First published 18/6/2020)

### **Main changes to previous guidance:**

- added a new section on flexibility for primary schools to welcome back additional children this term
- amended definition of vulnerable children and young people
- added further information on safety in schools and the national NHS Test and Trace programme
- updated content 30 hours free childcare and/or tax-free childcare
- updated content on transport which includes information on using face masks on transport
- revised section on school meals, adding more information on the reopening of school kitchens as well as meals in colleges
- updated content on exams in 2021.

## **Updating Ofsted with Openings and Closures**

You need to notify Ofsted if your operating circumstances change (i.e. you open or close). Please let Ofsted know by sending an email to [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk) with 'Change in operating hours' in the subject field. In the body of the email, please confirm the Unique Reference Number for your setting and the details of the change. You can find your URN on your registration certificate, your inspection report(s), and on the Ofsted website.

## **Revised Guidance for Shielding Children and Young People**

The Royal College of Paediatric Child Health has published a revised set of guidance on which groups of children should be shielded – based on the latest clinical evidence. The group is now smaller than previously advised. This may well have an impact on the ongoing risk assessments to support children returning to school.

The guidance can be accessed here:

<https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/covid-19-shielding-guidance-children-young-people>

## **Child Safeguarding**

Right now, vulnerable children and adults may be particularly isolated, meaning that the family, community and professional networks they usually rely on may be unavailable or hard to access. At the same time, living under the current arrangements may increase the pressures that can contribute to abuse and neglect, or allow it to go unseen. Neighbours, volunteers and professionals can play a vital role in keeping adults and children safe.

The Home Office, in collaboration with a number of other government departments, has produced information and guidance for those who are operating in communities and may not be trained to recognise the signs of abuse or neglect. The guidance covers signs to spot and what to do if there is a concern.

A full list of the assets available is in the following link (including web-friendly versions) for stakeholders to download artwork to print their own leaflets and posters: <https://homeoffice.brandworkz.com/BMS/albums/?album=2092&lightboxAccessID=9AD9C142-A301-458E-8BE489B20777137A>

# Kent County Council

## On-Line Children's Centres

Please find below a link to a daily timetable of live and pre-recorded activities for families with children under eight for you to signpost your families to:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/young-people/online-childrens-centres>

## Frequently Asked Questions

The Early Years and Childcare Service has published a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document which was recently updated on Kelsi and can be accessed by the link below. We are aware that this FAQs document is getting very long, so with effect from next week we will be putting new questions for each week in a separate document, whilst of course retaining and continuing to make accessible all questions.

[https://www.kelsi.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/106491/EYC-Providers-FAQs.pdf](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 examples of good practice from childminders across the county:

A childminder has been using a closed Facebook group to set children challenges and getting them to record themselves doing the challenge and post in the group so their friends could see them.

A childminder organised a Zoom birthday party for a child not currently attending her setting so that they could all celebrate together.

We also have some positive feedback from a setting in the north of the county:

*"It's been a real positive in returning. Children came in with a smile, we had one with tears but they didn't last long. A few made the comment "ooo preschool looks different" and then carried on as if we hadn't been away. We allowed the children to take the lead in the first few days but soon realised they craved the preschool routine: "when's snacks, I need my wellies for the digging area, when's story time" etc. With a slighted amended routine in place the children have flourished. Their engagement and involvement have been phenomenal and both children and practitioners are thoroughly enjoying being back. We had two children that just sat and cuddled each other for about 5 minutes where they had just missed each*

*other. We knew then we had made the right decision to reopen. Yes it's HARD WORK, but it's such a pleasure to see the children relishing being back!*

*Parents have been extremely grateful for us reopening and often commenting on the positive conversations that are taking place in the evening. They appreciate the images being sent via emails of their child's creative work and know they will receive a craft folder at the end of term."*

Please tell more us about the excellent work you are doing so that we can share your stories in this section.

## Contact Us

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