

# Early Years and Childcare COVID-19 Blog 26 June 2020



## Welcome and Introduction Alex Gamby (Head of Early Years and Childcare, The Education People)

Welcome to what is the tenth edition of the Early Years and Childcare COVID-19 Blog. I hope that you have been able to enjoy at least a little of the beautiful weather this week and stay cool enough - typically, of course, it is about to change just in time for the weekend!

This week the number of group settings open has remained constant at 524, with a further small increase in the number of childminders from 590 to 593. The number of children being cared for across all open settings however has increased significantly from 13,333 at the end of last week to just under 15,000 which is a continuing good news story. I would like to reiterate what I said in the blog last week, that some of you who have been unable to re-open have shared with us your frustration about your inability to do so and that we continue to be available to support you to re-open in any way that we can be.

### Department for Education Data Collection

We are aware that the thus far twice weekly data collection for the Department for Education (DfE) is likely to have felt somewhat onerous and tedious. We are grateful for your cooperation in this over many weeks. The good news of course is that the DfE has now reduced this to once a week; however, it has added some more questions. A very small number of you have indicated to us that you may no longer wish to respond. I would say that the collection of this information is feeding into government discussions and decision making about moving forward in the nation's COVID-19 journey so would appeal to you to continue with this.

### The Education People's Early Years and Childcare COVID-19 Survey

On 19 June we emailed directly to all providers the following message:

*'Dear Colleague*

*We understand that some families may be hesitant to return their children to settings since the gradual easing of the COVID-19 lockdown period due to fears of the disease and appreciate that this can have an effect on the sustainability of some settings who are trying to return to normal as far as social distancing allows. In an attempt to put some context around this for families, we felt that by providing information in a communication to them about actual numbers of confirmed and*

*suspected cases in Kent of COVID-19 on children, and of adults, this may encourage some families to feel that the risk to theirs and their child's health is minimal. We have not been aware of many settings in Kent with confirmed cases but we would want to provide as accurate a picture as we possibly could, therefore we are asking you to complete this short survey which should take no longer than two minutes to complete so that we can share the findings with families in the hope that they are suitably reassured about the position in Kent's settings.*

To complete our survey please click on the following link:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=xiE78Bg-Dkmya3mcWSP0W9-aUgPn5LxChrAy5XWwowRUMDJDWEFFTFBPR0Y4T0Y4NUFWRVNUSUMzSC4u>

Notwithstanding the previous item about data collection, we would be very grateful if you could find less than five minutes to complete this very short survey. Thank you.

### **Disability Access Fund: A message from KCC Management Information**

Management Information is sorry but they cannot accept Disability Access Fund (DAF) applications that are sent by post at this time. Can you please return by email your completed DAF application along with a copy of the child's Disability Living Allowance (DLA) letter of confirmation. The DAF form has recently been revised and is attached along with this Blog and will be available on Kelsi in due course. As the provider you will need to keep a copy of the form and DLA confirmation letter as proof of eligibility. In order to claim the funding, we are asking that all providers must email both documents to: [eyfe@kent.gov.uk](mailto:eyfe@kent.gov.uk) Thank you.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Supplies**

Some of you have been telling us that Kent County Supplies (KCS) has been unable to fulfil your PPE orders. We have raised this with KCS on your behalf.

Thank you very much, as ever, for all that you continue to do to support Kent's young children and families on the road to recovery. I am on annual leave next week, in which context this section of the blog will be brought to you by Sandi Mortimer, Early Years and Childcare Partnership and Integration Manager.

Please continue to stay safe and well.

Yours, Alex Gamby

## Government guidance for this week

[Keeping children safe online](#) Updated 25/06/2020 with more apps to keep children safe online. These are aimed at older children.

[Online education resources for home learning](#) Updated 24/06/2020 with further resources and additional tips to help parents and carers with home education.

[Action for early years and childcare providers](#) Updated 23/6/2020: Updated to reflect that early years providers are now able to open for all children and to provide additional information on protective measures.

[Coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-step-by-step-guide-for-employer](#) Updated 22/06/2020 with more information about flexible furlough and overpayments.

### **Updated message on Summer Provision from the Local Government Association (LGA)**

*The Government's ambition is that all providers running holiday clubs and activities for children over the summer holiday will be able to open, if the science allows. The time anticipated for holiday clubs to open is no earlier than 4 July, as part of Step 3 of the Government's recovery strategy. Guidance will be provided to the sector soon on how to implement the protective measures necessary to open safely, and to parents on how to minimise the spread of the virus if they choose to attend.*

*The Government's overriding priority remains keeping the public safe. Any steps as part of a phased lifting of restrictions will therefore be measured and guided by the science.*

*We have set out that schools can now welcome back some of their pupils on a phased basis, and that registered early years providers can now welcome back all of their early years children. Schools and early years providers should ensure that all their children are treated fairly and equitably. Apart from those children who are eligible to return to attend early years and school, it remains the case that parents should keep their children at home where possible to limit the chance of the virus spreading.*

*It is for this reason that, with the exception of childminders who may continue to look after children in their care, providers that offer indoor breakfast and after school clubs for children over five and who are registered with Ofsted (either on the compulsory or voluntary part of the General childcare register), may only open for children in the eligible year groups or those in priority groups; and provided they are on the same premises as a school.*

*In doing so, they should be following the same protective measures as schools and early years providers (depending on the age of the children attending); and, as far as possible, ensuring they are only caring for children from one school or early years provider, and keeping children in the same small consistent groups that they would otherwise be in throughout the day.*

*Where registered wraparound childcare providers do not operate on the same premises as the school or early years setting that children attend during the day, they may only offer provision outside, provided they can do so safely in line with the Government's "Staying alert and safe (social distancing)" guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>), which allows up to six people from different households to meet outdoors. In doing so, providers should ensure they can keep children a minimum of 2 metres apart and in groups of no more than 6, including staff members.*

*We are currently hoping to amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions)(England) Regulations 2020, as part of Step 3 of the Government's recovery strategy (anticipated no earlier than 4 July), to enable registered wraparound childcare providers, who do not operate on the same premises as the school or early years setting that children attend, to open for indoor provision. We would also anticipate adjustments to the current measures for unregulated providers/out-of-school settings – which are currently required to keep their premises closed – to be part of Step 3 of the recovery strategy, based on further detailed scientific advice provided closer to the time.*

*Subject to the parliamentary process, providers who do not operate on the same premises as the school or early years setting that children attend during the day, would be expected to ensure as far as possible they follow the protective measures set out in government guidance; which would also include ensuring that, as far as possible, they are only caring for children from one school or early years provider, and that they are working closely with the school or early years providers that their children attend, to ensure as far as possible they are keeping children in the same small consistent groups that they are in throughout the day; and otherwise appropriately socially distanced.*

## **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.

## **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 this 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 an example of good practice from a setting in the west of the county:

It was vital to the success of term 6 that parents prepared the young learners for the changes and adaptations to practice and procedures. Firstly, communication was consistent throughout lockdown using our class app. Parents were updated on any Government updates. It was completely anticipated that we would be expected to open on the 1<sup>st</sup> June so a Coronavirus policy and disclaimer were prepared and sent out. It was also very important that parents spoke to their children in a way that they understood as best they could about social distancing and extra hygiene practice. Strategies were given via the class app and all parents' questions were answered.

There is a fair amount of signage as a gentle reminder to remind the children that we are to be extra careful. They are met at the door by the manager, there is a chalk line that is the 'say goodbye' line and the children walk in on their own straight to their bubble. At home time, they are individually called to exit; this seems to have turned into a little walk of fame as everyone waves and says goodbye to each individual child. Children bring lunch in disposable bags, bags with extra clothes etc are brought in at the beginning of the week and only taken home at the end of the week to be cleaned.

The outdoors is used for child led free flow play for each bubble.

We have discovered that the young children have become much more resilient, communication and language is improving and friendships are developing more so than before. The young learners' attention and concentration skills are also vastly improving. We have not even had issues with the youngest understanding the importance of staying in their bubble.

There are many of the new strategies we have in place that will be remaining when lockdown is lifted.

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>