

Email from Carolyn Terry to Essex early years and childcare and childcare providers

From: Free Entitlement Funding Queries <Free.EntitlementFundingQueries@essex.gov.uk>
Sent: 23 April 2020 18:40
Cc: Free Entitlement Funding Queries <Free.EntitlementFundingQueries@essex.gov.uk>
Subject: Urgent - Please Read - Covid-19 Update 23 April 2020

Dear All

I know that this has been a particularly stressful week for you all, and hope you are managing to navigate the guidance and systems in place to allow you to make a claim to the CJRS.

Not surprisingly, we have received a lot of queries from you on the revised guidance on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and have summarised our responses to these on the attached FAQ document. We are still working through some of the queries we have received, so please bear with us if we haven't responded to you directly yet

The DfE also issued, yesterday, updated guidance on early years and childcare closures for local authorities, early years settings and childminders to include information on the flexibility to use early years entitlement funding to secure childcare for children of critical workers and vulnerable children

The guidance can be found here:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures>

ECCs interpretation of this guidance is that will only be used if a child of a critical worker or a vulnerable child is unable to access a place at their usual childcare provider and needs to attend another setting, and in these circumstances the FEEE funding would follow the child. ECC will liaise with any settings that may be affected by this to agree the process that needs to be followed for the funding to be transferred, where this is necessary

Children Response Plan

We know a lot of you are working really hard to maintain contact with your children and their families during this Covid-19 lockdown period. Childcare settings and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for young children and, in conjunction with other agencies, play a vital role in safeguarding these children during the current COVID19 emergency. We are finalising a framework to support settings to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities during this closure period and will share this with you early next week. The framework is based on the [Essex Effective Support](#) windscreen of need and, at each level, it defines cohorts, sets minimum expectations for settings in terms of actions and then identifies key partners and

agencies with which settings can work with to access support and keep in touch with their families. Once we have shared this with you, we will be in touch to see what support you need from us to enable you to do this

Transition guidance and resources

ECC recognise that this Covid-19 outbreak will have an impact on transitions for all children and young people, including those with SEND, their families and all educational settings. By transitions, we mean children or young people who are:

- starting school for the first time
- moving from infant to junior or primary school to secondary school
- joining a new class or school
- leaving school for college or work-based learning
- leaving education altogether

I am sure that you will be in the process of planning transitions for the children in your setting, including how to manage this differently under the current circumstances and we wanted you to know that we are working with partners across Essex to put together guidance, advice and support to all educational settings and the parents/carers of their children and young people.

We will also be asking you to share your own, existing good practice with us.

Guidance and resources will be available shortly and will be available via the following:

- The Essex Families Information Service.
- Related Early Years and Childcare communications
- The Essex Local Offer
- The Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service
- The Essex Family Forum

I will let you know when this is available

Attendance for children during the Covid-19 period

The DfE are now asking local authorities to submit attendance data for early years children twice a week – Mondays and Thursdays so they can monitor the number of children of critical workers and vulnerable children accessing a place and the number of settings that are open and closed. Thank you to all of you that have submitted this data to us. If you are open, and we haven't asked you yet to submit any attendance data can you please contact us via the Free Entitlement Funding Queries mailbox (Free.EntitlementFundingQueries@essex.gov.uk) so we can ensure we capture your figures too

And finally, please find attached the [daily briefing from the DfE for the 22 April 2020](#) for information

Best wishes

Carolyn

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