

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

From: Free Entitlement Funding Queries <Free.EntitlementFundingQueries@essex.gov.uk>
Sent: 27 April 2020 19:26
Cc: Free Entitlement Funding Queries <Free.EntitlementFundingQueries@essex.gov.uk>
Subject: Urgent - Please Read - Covid-19 Update 27 April 2020

Dear All

I hope you managed to enjoy the weekend, ahead of starting this fifth week in lockdown.

Please find listed below some key updates for your information: -

Children Response Plan – guidance for early years settings

As I shared with you last week, 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. During this period, settings retain their statutory duties to safeguard children and must adapt their existing processes to the current situation to ensure they continue to operate effectively. As well as supporting safeguarding, regular contact with children and families will enable settings to provide important support, address any relatively minor concerns before they escalate and to maintain relationships with their children. This will be of immense value as part of re-opening arrangements as settings will be able to identify any additional interventions required to support children when they return.

All early years settings should have in place a [child protection policy](#) which sets out interim safeguarding arrangements. Settings will decide the means and frequency of contact with children and families and identify staff to undertake this. All staff should understand the importance and purpose of this contact as part of their role to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children. More detailed guidance is provided in the attached Children Covid-19 Response Plan. The purpose of this document is to provide a framework to support settings in fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities during the closure period. The framework is based on the [Essex Effective Support](#) windscreen of need and there is a version for schools / educational settings and also [one for early years providers](#).

To support you with this work, you will be contacted, either by phone or email, by your local Early Years Education Partners (previously known as Early Years Foundation Stage Advisors) and they will use the attached Covid-19 safeguarding contact sheet for PVI's document to go through to help you understand the level of contact or welfare checks you should be undertaking with your children, and identify any additional support you may need to do this.

I also just want to flag to you some additional support with this work. A team of social workers to support settings with undertaking risk assessments has been identified and they will be making contact with schools and settings over the closure period. This is intended to be a supportive measure to build capacity and expertise around assessing risk and to support Designated Leads and Deputy Designated Leads who may be managing cases with high levels of risk involved. This team of social workers will be phoning schools and settings to discuss children with a social worker ('vulnerable' children). However, settings may also wish to discuss risk assessments for other vulnerable children (those below the threshold for an intervention from Social Care).

The team of social workers is also happy to support with this and can be contacted via Lynne Hooper at: lynne.hooper@essex.gov.uk.

The Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service (ECFWS) is also available to support settings with vulnerable children. They will continue to contact settings over this period to discuss vulnerable children (those with and without social workers) and will form part of the safeguarding arrangements for them. You should all have either a named healthy family delivery team, or named health visitor and family support worker that you can contact for support

Letter from Gavin Williamson about the Attendance of Vulnerable Children

The Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, has sent a letter to all education providers sharing his gratitude for your support in caring for our most vulnerable children and young people. This letter places special emphasis on your continued efforts to ensure as many of these children and young people are supported to attend an education setting where it is in their best interests to do so. Please find the letter attached to this email.

Temporary disapplications and modifications of certain elements of the EYFS statutory framework during COVID-19.

From 24 April 2020, the Government has temporarily disapplied and modified certain elements of the EYFS statutory framework for early years providers who remain open to vulnerable children and children of critical workers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The intention of this is to allow providers greater flexibility to respond to changes in workforce availability and potential fluctuations in demand, while still providing care that is high quality and safe.

The temporary changes include:

- providers are not required to meet existing learning and development requirements, but instead should use reasonable endeavours to meet them during the COVID-19 period
- providers are not required to undertake the EYFS profile assessment in 2019/20 academic year, and accordingly local authorities are not required to collect or moderate data on this
- providers are not required to undertake the 2 year progress check during the coronavirus (COVID-19) period
- exceptions are allowed to the qualifications that staff hold in order to be counted in ratio requirements
- requirements around paediatric first aid (where children aged 2-5 years old are on-site). For those caring for children aged 2-5, providers must use their 'best endeavours' to

ensure one person with a full PFA certificate is on-site at all times when children are present. If after using best endeavours they are still unable to secure a member of staff with PFA to be on site then they must carry out a written risk assessment and ensure that someone with a current First Aid at Work or emergency PFA certification is on site at all times children are on premises.

- There is no longer the requirement for new entrants to hold PFA certification to count in ratios during this period.

The term 'best endeavours' applies to the paediatric first aid requirements. This is a higher level requirement than 'reasonable endeavours'. The guidance providers further information on this.

The rest of the EYFS remains in place. Please be aware that the requirement to have someone with full PFA certification on-site remains in place where children aged 0-24 months are on-site, due to the higher safety factors for babies and children in this youngest age bracket.

The details of these changes can be found on the usual [EYFS statutory framework](#) webpage. The Government will notify providers when these temporary changes will be lifted via usual government communications.

The following guidance was also updated on the 24 April 2020 to reflect the changes to the EYFS framework

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

Letter to Landlords to support rent holiday period requests

A number of you have told us that you are finding it difficult to agree any rent deferral periods during this Covid-19 period. If it is helpful, we would be happy to provide you with a letter from ECC in support of your request for a rent deferral period that you could share with your landlords, in support of any request you need to make. You can request a letter by emailing the Free Entitlement Funding Queries mailbox (Free.EntitlementFundingQueries@essex.gov.uk)

The Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service resource websites

Please see below a list of Facebook pages for each district you can share with your families providing information, advice and guidance to parents

District Facebook pages

North Essex

[Colchester](#)
[Tendering](#)

Mid Essex

[Chelmsford](#)
[Braintree](#)
[Maldon](#)

South Essex

[Basildon](#)

[Brentwood](#)

[Castle Point](#)

[Rochford](#)

West Essex

[Uttlesford](#)

[Epping](#)

[Harlow](#)

And finally, we are planning on sending you a Comms focusing specifically on the Headcount Process for the Summer 2020 term ahead of the portal opening next week, and are aiming to send this to you Wednesday of this week so please look out for that

Best wishes

Carolyn

Carolyn Terry

EYCC Sufficiency and Sustainability Manager

Strategy, Planning and Performance

Education Directorate

Essex County Council

<https://eycp.essex.gov.uk/>

Please note my normal working days are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday

T: 033 3013 6481

Mob: 078 2586 0004

E:: carolyn.terry@essex.gov.uk

