

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

From: Free Entitlement Funding Queries

Sent: 07 May 2020 10:08

Subject: Urgent - Please Read - Covid-19 Update 7 May 2020

Dear All

Please find below some reminders or updates that you may find helpful: -

Headcount – a reminder that the Essex Funding Portal is currently open for the Summer 2020 term headcount, and closes on Wednesday 13 May 2020

Attendance for children during the Covid-19 period – a reminder that we need to provide the DfE with 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 continued to provide us with this data. From Thursday 7 May 2020, we will be moving to an online collection process, which can be found at <https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/workforce-development-1/d6b867cb> You can use the same link for each Monday and Thursday collections, but we will continue to send you reminders to provide this information.

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 attendance figures too

Children Response Plan – guidance for early years settings – a lot of you will have by now received an email or call from your local Early Years Education Partners (previously known as Early Years Foundation Stage Advisors) to go through the attached Covid-19 safeguarding contact sheet to check the level of contact or welfare checks you are undertaking with your children, and identify any additional support you may need to do this. So many of you have shared excellent practice and really creative ways of keeping in touch with your families, and we thank you for this.

However some of you are not, and so I wanted to remind any of you not currently doing this that all early years settings should have in place a child protection policy which sets out interim safeguarding arrangements during the Covid-19 closure period and ongoing contact arrangements with your children and their families. More detailed guidance is provided in the attached Children Covid-19 Response Plan.

Temporary measures ensure critical workers will still be eligible for childcare offers if their income has changed due to coronavirus

The government has announced that any working parent usually eligible for 30 hours childcare or Tax-Free Childcare will remain eligible if they fall below the minimum income requirement due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Subject to Parliamentary approval, parents who are critical workers will also remain eligible for these entitlements if their income has increased over the maximum threshold during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. This temporary flexibility will ensure critical workers can continue to access the childcare they need to enable them to work. These arrangements will be reviewed over the summer. This announcement can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/eligibility-for-government-childcare-offers-protected>

Parents re-confirmation of their eligibility for 30 hours free childcare and Tax-Free Childcare.

The 30 hours deadline for the summer term has been extended to the 31st August to give working parents additional time to protect their place.

The temporary changes are in line with wider Government measures to make sure working parents remain eligible for 30 hours free childcare and Tax-Free Childcare even if they fall below the minimum working wage threshold due to coronavirus, equal to 16 hours per week at the national minimum wage.

It will be possible to extend the validity dates on the 30 hours codes received by parents who are critical workers during the summer term, ensuring those who are eligible can access the childcare offer despite having missed their reconfirmation date or the application deadline of 31 March 2020.

[Guidance](#) for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus outbreak will be updated in due course to reflect these temporary changes.

Top-up to local business grant funds scheme

A discretionary fund has been set up to accommodate certain small businesses previously outside the scope of the business grant funds scheme.

This additional fund is aimed at small businesses with ongoing fixed property-related costs. The allocation of funding will be at the discretion of local district and borough councils. ECC will be liaising with our local councils to encourage them to include eligible early years and childcare providers.

Businesses must be small, under 50 employees, and they must also be able to demonstrate that they have seen a significant drop of income due to Coronavirus restriction measures.

There will be three levels of grant payments. The maximum will be £25,000. There will also be grants of £10,000. Local authorities will have discretion to make payments of any amount under £10,000. It will be for local councils to adapt this approach to local circumstances.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/top-up-to-local-business-grant-funds-scheme>

Further guidance for local councils will be set out shortly.

Micro Business Loans a reminder that a new Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs), for small/medium size businesses with a turnover up to £200k opened on 4 May 2020.

The full guidance can be found at the following link - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-coronavirus-bounce-back-loan>

Business Coronavirus Support Finder

You may find it helpful to find out what Government financial support you may be able to access by using the following gov.uk questionnaire. It is quick and simple to use, and provides all of the latest information. The questionnaire can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>

We will be in touch early next week in response to any announcements from the Government's expected on Sunday

And finally, I hope you are all able to enjoy the bank holiday weekend.

Best wishes

Carolyn

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