

## FAQs 19 May 2020

Can we provide more specific advice and guidance for childminders as working from home, especially if member of family is front line key worker or is shielded?

*The DfE has issued generic guidance that each sector type should consider as each individual circumstances will vary from person to person, home to home and setting to setting. Each situation should be risk assessed to allow for all relevant factors to be considered. The following guidance may help to consider the circumstances and make a decision*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

*If you are a member of Pacey or any of the other national organisations you may also wish to contact them to seek further advice*

Information issued by the Government says childminders roles can't be carried out at home (when we do in fact work from home) so can work from Wednesday. Then the prime minister said childminders can re-open from 1 June.

*This has now been clarified, and the DfE issued a change of guidance on 12 May that childminders were allowed to open to all children from a single household from Wednesday 13 May 2020, so long as they are not already providing childcare for the children of any critical workers or vulnerable children. Childminders, alongside other childcare providers, will be able to open in full from 1 June 2020 subject to the government's 5 key tests being met. It is accepted that childminders generally work from their home*

Some local authorities have told childminders they can re-open from 1 June, can you clarify?

*This was the initial guidance; however, the DfE have now said that childminders are allowed to open for children from one household, so long as they aren't already looking after the children of critical workers or vulnerable children from Wednesday 13 May 2020. Childminders should also be planning to re-open to all children, where possible, from 1 June 2020*

If children that usually attend have a stay at home parent, can I delay them returning on the basis that it is not a necessary risk to send them back yet?

*After the 1 June 2020 (subject to the government's 5 key tests being met) it will be the choice of the parent (s) on whether they wish their child to attend a childcare setting. Any childcare provider will be able to make the decision on whether they feel able to re-open fully or partially based on any risk assessments undertaken, but parents may decide to access an alternative if their usual provider is not open or not able to offer them the attendance pattern they have requested*

My immediate family have health issues (not severe so not on the list) so this is all a concern for me too when allowing more people back into my home.

*Each childcare provider and childminder will need to consider all of the specific circumstances for their own setting and undertake a risk assessment to help them to decide whether or not to open from 1 June 2020*

We have now been told to open but my preschool is in a community hall which is closed as Gov guidelines say they can only open for food banks and blood donors

*ECC have asked the DfE to confirm whether the guidance will be updated to allow for community halls or public spaces to be opened to allow for childcare providers based in these premises to re-open on 1 June 2020. This query has been raised several times now and we have asked for an urgent response to this. We will confirm the outcome of this query as soon as we get a response*

I am being pressured immensely by a parent, they are stating that the government document clearly says that all childminders should return to work on 1 June and that if I do not do so I will be in breach of contract, this parent is not classed as a key/essential worker and both parents are currently working from home.

*As private businesses, it will be for each childcare setting or childminder to consider whether or not they wish to re-open on 1 June 2020. The guidance states that the DfE are asking nurseries and other early years providers, including childminders, to begin welcoming back all children. There will be a risk that if a setting decides not to open, that any parents looking for childcare may decide to move their child elsewhere. If you decide that you are unable to open or full open from 1 June 2020, you should check whether you have any contractual obligations to your parents around a notice period*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/actions-for-education-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>

From 1 June, what happens if the parents want me to have their child for the full 30 hours, whereas she would normally have a place in preschool 9am to 12 too? Will this be possible and what happens with the funding paid to the pre-school? Will it be transferred to me? Also, if I was to be in receipt of the full 30 hours would I be allowed to stretch it for them.

*It will be for parents to make the decision on which setting they want their child to attend. The setting chosen will need to see if they have any FEEE funding they are not utilising ie for a child not attending, that can be used to cover the additional hours the child will be attending. If this is not possible, they should contact ECC who will liaise with you to see if you are able to transfer the funding*

*Yes, the 30 hours can be offered as a stretched offer*

With the staggered return do we have to offer children all their hours? Are funded children to be a priority? Or should it be parents that are actually working? If we're not offering all the funded hours what happens to the allocated funding?

*The DfE has suggested that if a setting is only able to offer a phased re-opening that there should be consideration to offer places to 3 and 4 year olds in the first instance. However, the best approach may be first to ask your parents whether they will be wanting their children to return and if so, what hours they would be looking for. Once you know this, you may be able to more effectively plan to meet the needs of parents who do want to access childcare from 1 June 2020*

*All guidance issued by the DfE to date states that the FEEE funding for the Summer 2020 term should continue to be paid, even if a setting is closed or partially open. On that basis, if you are*

*unable to offer all of the funded hours ECC have interpreted this to mean that the FEEE funding would remain with you. However, ECC has asked the DfE to confirm that this will continue to be the case for the rest of the Summer 2020 term, even if a childcare settings decide they are unable to re-open or fully open from 1 June 2020. Please see further information on the specific FEEE Funding FAQ 19 May 2020 document*

If we are not able to open as we have staff who are classed as vulnerable, will this affect our funding?

*Each childcare provider and childminder will need to consider all of the specific circumstances for their own setting, including staffs' health, and undertake a risk assessment to help them to decide whether or not to open from 1 June 2020*

*All guidance issued by the DfE to date says that the FEEE funding for the Summer 2020 term should continue to be paid even if a setting is closed. ECC has raised this issue with the DfE and asked them to confirm that this will continue to be the case for the rest of the Summer 2020 term if childcare settings decide they are unable to re-open from 1 June 2020. We will confirm once a response is received to this query. Please see further information on the specific FEEE Funding FAQ 19 May 2020 document*

Staff are classed as vulnerable or have young children that are not in the year groups that are meant to be going back on 1st June. Therefore, we will not have enough staff to open, or possibly no staff to work. If we do not open will we lose the funding?

*All guidance issued by the DfE to date states that the FEEE funding for the Summer 2020 term should continue to be paid, even if a setting is closed. ECC has asked the DfE to confirm that this will continue to be the case for the rest of the Summer 2020 term, even if a childcare settings decide they are unable to re-open from 1 June 2020. We will provide final clarification once a response is received from the DfE to this query. As a reminder, childcare staff are classed as Key Workers, therefore members of staff who have children out of the year groups should still be able to access a school place.*

As a childminder if after completing a risk assessment I do not feel it is safe to open and remain closed from 1 June, will FEEE funding have to be returned?

*All guidance issued by the DfE to date says that the FEEE funding for the Summer 2020 term should continue to be paid even if a setting is closed. If after completing a risk assessment, you feel that it is not safe for you to open ECCs interpretation of the DfE's current guidance is that the FEEE funding will continue to be paid even if a childminder remains closed. The DfE has been asked to provide clarification of this point*

Can you clarify that we need to open for all children or just for half or smaller groups of children?

*The DfE guidance says*

*In childcare settings, providers will be asked to welcome back all children below statutory school age from the week commencing 1 June 2020. Demand for childcare is likely to be lower than usual at first, and existing space requirements and staff to child ratios for these age groups should allow for small group working. Where the physical layout of a setting does not allow small groups of children to be kept at a safe distance apart, we expect practitioners to exercise judgement in ensuring the highest standards of safety are maintained. In some*

*cases, it may be necessary for providers to introduce a temporary cap on numbers to ensure that safety is prioritised*

*Therefore, providers will need to consider how many of their parents wish to send their children back and complete a risk assessment for their own setting as to how many children attend on each day as part of a phased approach if it is necessary. Providers will be different dependent upon their specific circumstances such as size of premises, availability of staff and numbers of children returning*

If I do the following, will it affect my funding?

- Shortening our session from an 8am start to 9am
- Keeping to small groups.
- Premises is one room at a village hall, could just have the children starting school to begin with and then assess and invite 3 year olds and eventually if possible all children
- Depending on the attendance of the older children I could split sessions so that some of the other children can attend.
- With staffing and being able to keep social distancing as much as possible I feel that 14 children is a maximum

*The DfE guidance says that provider should take into account the existing space available and plan for small groups of children. It also says that it may be necessary to implement a temporary cap on the numbers of children attending, and that if a setting is only able to offer a phased re-opening that there should be consideration to offer places to 3 and 4 year olds in the first instance. Therefore the suggestions you have made are in line with the examples given by the DfE*

*We would suggest that you speak to your parents to see if a change to the usual start time will meet their needs*

If I don't have enough staff available to work due to staff having to shield, am I able to remain closed as at 1<sup>st</sup> June?

*Yes, if after undertaking a risk assessment and reviewing your staff availability the outcome is that you are unable to meet all of the requirements you are able to take the decision to remain closed for the time being. If you are unable to open, and parents will still need to find alternative childcare, please ask them to email the Early Years mailbox ([Early.Years@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Early.Years@essex.gov.uk)) and we will help them to find alternative childcare*

The updated guidance in section 'Information on implementing protective measures' it states that Early years settings should: "Education, childcare and children's social care settings and providers should use their local supply chains to obtain PPE." I would be grateful for any guidance as to how to obtain the correct PPE in case it is needed.

*ECC are currently looking to identify how we can provide a list of local suppliers that can be contacted to source small numbers of PPE to provide cover if a child became symptomatic whilst in the setting until they can be collected. We will share this as soon as we can*

We are in a village hall, what if the parish council refuse to allow us to open from the 1<sup>st</sup> June?

*If the Parish Council is refusing to allow you to open due to the current guidance on public buildings remaining closed, we are currently trying to get a response from the DfE on whether the guidance will be updated to allow for childcare providers to open from public spaces, such as village halls and we will update on this point as soon as possible.*

*If the PCs decision is for other reasons, ECC would be happy to provide a letter in support of any requests to be able to open, but we do not have any authority to overturn the decision*

Childminders - As we are supposed to stop cohorts of children mixing if we have early years in the day should we not do the wrap around care? And what does this mean if our own children are attending school. Should we limit our hours to between school runs so there is no cross over?

*The DfE guidance says settings should minimise contact and mixing and should, as much as possible, alter the environment of settings (such as room layout) and routines to ensure contact is minimised*

*When planning for re-opening, steps should be taken to keep children in small, consistent groups, and you should undertake risk assessments for any different scenarios or other children attending to understand how. Based on the outcomes of these risk assessment, you may decide to limit either the number of children attending or different attendance patterns to minimise the chances of any crossover*

What measures would we need to implement in terms of staff PPE and is this compulsory?

*The DfE guidance says the majority of staff in education, childcare and children's social care settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work, even if they are not always able to maintain distance of 2 metres from others.*

*PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases or if a child becomes symptomatic whilst in the setting prior to being collected. Therefore, childcare providers should hold a small emergency stock of PPE to cover these eventualities. ECC are exploring how to enable childcare providers to access small quantities of PPE to cover this need*

*Staff should follow their normal practice when changing nappies and caring for babies more generally, provided the child is not showing symptoms of coronavirus. This includes continuing to use the PPE that they would normally wear in these situations, for example aprons and gloves. If a child shows symptoms, they should not attend a childcare setting and should be at home*

In the event parents refuse to send their child/children in, can they refuse to attend pre-school?

*Yes, parents can refuse to send their children as it is not compulsory for children to attend an early years and childcare setting*

In the event a staff member or child is infected with COVID 19 or symptoms occur what procedures do we carryout i.e. does the individual concerned self isolate and if so for how long?

*If an individual displays symptoms of COVID-19, however mild, they should self isolate and stay at home for at least 7 days from when their symptoms started.*

*All staff who are attending a childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus, and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario.*

*Where the child or staff member tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.*

*Where the child or staff member tests positive, the rest of their group within their childcare setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider class or group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.*

Am I allowed to check children's temperature before they enter the pre-school and if it is high, can I refuse entry?

*Taking children's temperatures before attending is not recommended as it is not a reliable method to identify those with Covid-19 symptoms. However, if this is something you decide to implement as part of your risk assessment this policy should be shared with parents*

In the example of non-funded children not attending due to parents concerns, the pre-school is losing money, will we be compensated in any way or are there any claims we can make?

*We have previously shared all of the financial support packages available from the Government. Further advice on an individual basis is available from the Early Years and Childcare Business Consultancy team. Please email the Free Entitlement Funding Mailbox ([Free.EntitlementFundingQueries@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Free.EntitlementFundingQueries@essex.gov.uk))*

Do we need to make any amendments with our Insurance in the event of a claim against us for covid19?

*You will need to check this with your insurance company*

If numbers are capped, how do we decide on which children to take as the age groups vary from 2-4?

*This is for each setting to identify for themselves dependent upon the families who wish to attend and how many children you are safely able to have attend*

When will you be able to 100% confirm if we will be opening on the 1st June, as PACEY state the confirmation will be on the 28th May which leaves very little time to prepare?

*The DfE has asked all schools and early years and childcare providers to prepare to re-open from 1 June 2020 and this is the date that should be worked towards for re-opening. The DfE has said that this re-opening date will be confirmed on the 28 May 2020 to ensure that the government's 5 key tests have been met. If they haven't been met, the government may possibly decide to postpone this date*

We also need to inform parents of the opening date and the above point raised effects the timescales we can give, please clarify?

*The government's re-opening target date of 1 June 2020 should be worked towards*

Second settings - do we have the right to refuse a child who is attending two settings? Can the child only attend the one whom have claimed the highest hours of funding?

*Each setting should risk assess this scenario, and if necessary, could set its own attendance policy during the Covid-19 pandemic. This should be communicated to parents as early as possible. Settings should be aware that parents could decide to take their child to the other setting*

If we are unable to open to all children on 1 June and need to adopt a phased return, how soon are we expected to then open to all children? Would September be acceptable?

*Each setting will need to out together their own plan on how they propose to increase the numbers of children attending, if they are unable to fully open from 1 June 2020.*

Do we need to honour the 15-30 hours funding hours that we have already claimed for?

*Where possible, settings should plan to offer parents their preferred attendance and funded hours. However, the DfE do recognise that this might not be possible initially. Settings should work with their parents to provide as much as is practically possible. The DfE guidance understand their preferences and plan to offer as much as is practically possible. At this point, the DfE guidance continues to state that the FEEE funding for the Summer 2020 term should continue to be paid and on that basis, ECC would not be seeking to claim any unused FEEE funding back from settings*

Due to the need to group children together and with dedicated staff we may only be able to offer 1 or 2 days attendance each week - is this ok? Will the hours previously claimed for and now not being used be clawed back?

*It will be for each setting to risk assess the options and identify their preferred operating model. This should be communicated to parents as soon as possible so they can decide if this provides them with the attendance pattern they need. See funding FAQ 19 May 2020 document for more detailed responses to funding.*

Do I have to open for between 1 and 3 children? The children aren't vulnerable, all parents are stay at home parents. If I do not open, could I review in 3 weeks for example to see if the parents still felt the same?

*Yes, you could decide to open at a date after 1 June 2020, if that was the best option for your setting and parents.*

We have stayed open to provide care for key workers; how do we create bubbles of the same children and staff when the key worker children all come in on different sessions?

*We are in the process of putting together some points to consider to help with this query, and how the team can provide practical support on this. We will share this guidance as soon as we can.*

Please can you clarify whether we need to let parents / carers know if other parents / carers are in direct contact with Covid-19 patients or within swabbing roles? Not naming individuals obviously but do they have a right to know? I'm assuming not as they wear protective equipment etc. and in line with protecting personal information etc.

*As part of your communication with parents you could raise an awareness that children attending are or could be from frontline Key Worker families, and assurances on how you have risk assessed minimising contact between parents dropping off and collecting their children*

Can you clarify whether childminders can take minded children out of their setting building from 1 June 2020 for walks around their neighbourhood / to run round in fields / walk in the woods? There is a lot of confusion on forums

*These activities should be risk assessed, and if they can be undertaken whilst maintaining all appropriate social distancing rules and parents give consent there is no reason why they shouldn't go ahead*