

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

From: Free Entitlement Funding Queries <FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk>

Sent: 02 June 2020 12:42

Cc: Free Entitlement Funding Queries <FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk>

Subject: Urgent - Please Read - Covid-19 Update 2 June 2020

Dear All

As you know, this week marks the move into Phase 2 of the Government's roadmap to recovery, with early years settings starting the re-opening process to offer childcare to the children whose parents want them to attend and primary schools opening for some year groups from yesterday. According to the attendance data we are gathering in to submit to the DfE, 24% of Essex early years and childcare settings were open yesterday. Of this 24%: –

- 44% were group based childcare providers
- 55% were childminders
- 1% were out of school providers

and we know more of you have plans to open in the coming weeks.

Please note that the Free Entitlement Funding Queries mailbox has been renamed and from now on you will see this referenced as FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk, and this will continue to be monitored in the same way as we have been doing

You will find updates on the following in this message: -

- Early Years settings operating from public buildings
- Summer 2020 FEEE funding updates
- Updated FAQ document to include information on changes to the Furlough scheme and Social Distancing Policy query
- Transition Guidance
- West Essex CCG advice on Covid-19 testing in under 5s
- Links to updated DfE guidance

Early Years settings operating from public buildings UPDATE – the DfE has now provided clarification that public buildings can open to just childcare settings on the Early Years register. The Early Years guidance has been updated to reflect this, but please see the extract below for reference ahead of the updated guidance being issued.

6.4 What should happen if the premises where the provider usually operates is closed, such as the community centre or church hall?

We expect providers and local authorities to work together to ensure sufficient childcare for children for wider opening from 1 June. From 1 June, community centres or places of worship will be allowed to open only for providers on the early years register which usually use those premises. Providers should ensure they are acting in line with the protective measures and safe working guidance as well as the planning guide for early years and childcare settings. They should also ensure they are managing risks related to other users of the premises.

We will share this update with the district and borough council colleagues today, and please let us know if you would like us to confirm this to any other public building owners ahead of the updated guidance being issued. Please send any request to FEEEQuries@essex.gov.uk

Summer 2020 FEEE funding updates

Actual Headcount Payments - This term has seen an exceptional number of overclaims that have needed to be resolved. However, these are now finalised in time for the scheduled IDACI payment run to be made. Once this is run, the payment process can be started, and payments will be made. The team are continuing to do all they can to try and make payments as soon as possible, but payments will be made by the contracted timeframe of 24 June 2020 (which is within 6 weeks of headcount submission deadline date).

Amendment Headcount update- For any child starting with your setting from 1 June 2020, that has **not had** FEEE funding claimed elsewhere in Essex for the Summer 2020 Term, please email the Early Years Data mailbox (Earlyyearsdata@essex.gov.uk) to request a late headcount amendment task to be opened to allow you to submit a new child. Once this is accepted it will generate a late payment at the end of the Summer 2020 term.

Please note that if **the child has already been funded** in Essex for the Summer 2020 term the late headcount amendment task will not be opened, and you will be referred to the process below

Please check whether funding can be transferred to your setting before agreeing to take a new child on.

For any other amendments, such as children changing where they are accessing either all or part of their FEEE funding for the Summer 2020 term, please follow the guidance below that was issued with the Funding questions on 19 May 2020 (see the attached updated version)

ECC want to do everything they can to enable, where possible, childcare settings to keep their FEEE funding for the remainder of the Summer 2020 term and will work to the following principles: -

- Where possible FEEE funding will remain with the provider that has claimed the FEEE funding via the Headcount (subject to there not being any changes of guidance from the DfE)

- ECC will take steps to ensure that the FEEE funding that has already been paid to settings is used in the first instance to cover children's funded hours, including new children attending and / or additional hours being accessed. This means:-
 - Where a child transfers to a new setting, in the first instance the new setting needs to identify if they are in receipt of any FEEE funding that is not being utilised whether this could be used to cover the hours of the child transferring in
 - If the new setting does not have any FEEE funding not being utilised that can cover the funded hours for the new child, they should have a conversation with the original childcare to see if it is possible to transfer the funding to the new childcare provider. Please note where there are local arrangements in place to transfer the funding between providers this needs to be agreed between the two settings. If the two settings are unable to agree a local arrangement, the new provider should contact ECC to ask for support in trying to resolve by emailing the FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk mailbox
 - If it is not possible to transfer the FEEE funding as this would cause the original setting financial hardship, ECC will seek to provide additional funding to cover these hours on a case by case basis, but these situations need to be a last resort. Please note as this will lead to an overclaim, additional funding will only be considered to support with parents/carers **working** hours, or children that are eligible for FEEE2 or have SEND.
 - Should a child start to attend the setting later in the term, whose funding has been utilised with another child, ECC will seek to provide additional funding to cover these hours
 - In these instances, please email the FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk mailbox to ask for support to resolve this

We are receiving unprecedented levels of emails at the moment, and to help us respond to your queries as quickly as possible, it will be really helpful if you can only email the relevant mailbox and not send emails to multiple mailboxes or recipients. If you are not sure which mailbox to use, please email FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk and we will forward on as necessary. Thank you for your support in this.

Updated FAQ document to include information on changes to the Furlough scheme and Social Distancing Policy query – please see attached document

Transition Guidance - We have previously advised you that we were working on some guidance around transitions for early years settings, which is now attached. We recognise that the COVID-19 outbreak will have a significant impact on transitions for all children, including returning to a setting after the recent shutdown period for some children and that educational settings will already be in the process of planning transitions, including how to manage them differently this year. This guidance aims to raise initial questions and ideas with all educational settings to support the most timely and effective approaches possible within the current limitations; ECC will also be sharing advice with parents and carers.

West Essex CCG advice on Covid-19 testing in under 5s - please find attached an advice sheet on COvid-19 testing for under 5s

Please find below links to recent updated DfE guidance for your information:

[Critical workers who can access schools or educational settings](#)

[Actions for educational and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#)

[Actions for educational and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020](#)

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

