

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

**From:** Free Entitlement Funding Queries <[FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk](mailto:FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk)>

**Sent:** 22 July 2020 17:25

**Cc:** Free Entitlement Funding Queries <[FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk](mailto:FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk)>

**Subject:** Urgent - Please Read - Covid-19 Update 22 July 2020

Dear All

Please find the following information included in this email: -

- End of summer term letter to early years and childcare child-care providers from Clare Kershaw, Director for Education
- Updated guidance on the use of free Early Education Entitlement funding
- Early Years and Childcare Safeguarding briefing from Jo Barclay, School Safeguarding Manager

**End of summer term letter to early years and childcare child-care providers from Clare Kershaw, Director for Education** – please see attached letter

**Updated guidance on the use of free Early Education Entitlement funding** You may have already seen that the DfE has issued the updated the Use of free early education entitlements funding during coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance. Changes since the last update include: -

- updates to set out the government’s plans for funding local authorities and providers in the 2020 autumn term. [Read section 1](#)
- the previously published guidance on early years funding is still valid until the beginning of the autumn term. [Read section 2](#)
- [section 2](#), which is the original guidance, has been updated to clarify that it refers to the period from the beginning of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak until the start of the autumn term. Further, the following paragraphs have been removed from section 2 to avoid duplication with other, more up to date guidance:
  - paragraph on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) – the latest information regarding the CJRS is available in the [financial support for education, early years and children’s social care guidance](#)
  - paragraph on the temporary change to eligibility criteria for the 2-year-old entitlement to include no recourse to public funds (NRPF) families in receipt of support under Section 17 of the Children Act (1989), as this change has now become permanent

The full document can be found at the following link: -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-free-early-education-entitlements-funding-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/use-of-free-early-education-entitlements-funding-during-coronavirus-covid-19#section-one>

The guidance for the Autumn 2020 term says

*From the start of the autumn term 2020, local authorities should continue to fund providers which are open at broadly the levels they would have expected to see in the 2020 autumn term had there been no coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. They should also continue to fund providers which have been advised to close, or left with no option but to close, due to public health reasons. Local authorities should not fund providers which are closed, without public health reason, from the start of the autumn term.*

*The intention is to fund on the basis of 'as if autumn term 2020 were happening normally'. In order to do this, local authorities might, for example, use the numbers of children in places in the previous autumn to inform funding levels this autumn. This means that if a local authority is aware of particular changes in catchment demographics that would have impacted local demand (for example, a big increase in family housing in an area), they should take that into account. Local authorities should be transparent in the approach they take.*

As a result of this update guidance, I can confirm the following

- ECC will seek to ensure that childcare settings will be funded during the Autumn 2020 term to the same levels of the Autumn 2019 term.
- To do this, ECC will compare the Autumn 2019 term interim headcount data with the Autumn 2020 term interim data to identify any setting where the number of children and / or hours claimed is less than the Autumn 2019 term interim headcount
- For any settings impacted by this, ECC will make an additional payment to the setting that increases the number of children and / or hours to the same level as the Autumn 2019 term interim headcount payment
- ECC will also undertake the same process set out above at the actual headcount for the Autumn 2020 term, and for any settings identified will make an additional payment to the setting that increases the number of children and / or hours to the same level as the Autumn 2019 term interim headcount payment

**Please note**, the purpose of this exercise is to ensure that all settings are broadly funded at the same levels as the Autumn 2019 term. Therefore; -

- should the data at the actual headcount show any setting that has benefitted from any additional payment at the interim headcount stage, subsequently be showing with a higher number of children and / or hours as a result, ECC will make adjustments to the actual headcount payment to reflect this. Should this be the case for any setting, ECC will inform the setting of this prior to any payments being made.
- Any settings that the number of children and / or hours are the same or more than the Autumn 2019 term will not receive any additional payments

**Settings that were not open and / or not in receipt of FEEE funding during the Autumn 2019 term** ECC will contact any settings that were either not open and / or not in receipt of FEEE funding in the Autumn 2019 term, to discuss whether any support is needed. If this relates to your setting please email the Free Entitlement Funding Queries mailbox ([FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk](mailto:FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk)) to let us know

**Settings that remain closed from September 2020** The updated DfE guidance states: -  
*Local authorities should not fund providers which are closed, without public health reason, from the start of the autumn term*

Therefore, ECC will not be funding any setting which is not opening from September 2020, unless that setting is able to clearly set out the Covid-19 public health reasons that is preventing it from opening.

If a setting is unable to open, and: -

- believe this is due to Covid-19 public health reasons please email the Free Entitlement Funding Queries mailbox ([FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk](mailto:FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk)) to request a form to complete that will clearly set out why this is the case. Any reasons provided will need to be validated, and will be considered to allow ECC to make an informed decision on whether the FEEE funding should continue to be paid for the Autumn 2020 term
- unable to provide Covid-19 public health reasons and have already made a claim on the Autumn 2020 term interim headcount claim, you will need to remove the claim from the Funding portal before close of interim task or when actual headcount task opens. Please note any provider in this situation who knowingly claims funding for the autumn term will be deemed to be submitting a false claim and committing an offence

During the Summer 2020 term, in exceptional cases ECC have double funded children that have needed to attend a new setting due to their original setting being closed due to Covid-19. From the Autumn 2020 term, ECC will be reverting to the usual process and expecting that settings should only be claiming for the weeks a child attends and funding should follow the child, and parents may need to pay private fees to a new setting if they move their child during the term

**Planning for 2021 spring term** At this point the DfE is expecting the FEEE funding to revert to the usual processes and eligibility from January 2021, but have said that this will be kept under review and will confirm any necessary changes to the guidance and this approach during the Autumn 2020 term

**Early Years and Childcare Safeguarding briefing from Jo Barclay, School Safeguarding Manager** – please see attached early years safeguarding briefing for your information.

Best wishes

Carolyn

**Carolyn Terry**

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