

## 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:** 23 September 2020 19:35

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

**Subject:** Urgent - Please Read - Covid-19 Update 23 September 2020

Dear All

I am sure you will have seen or read the updates from the Prime Minister's announcements yesterday; and that (at this point) these did not include **any** changes to how early years and childcare settings should be operating and that settings should continue to remain open and following their risk assessments to offer childcare to their children.

Please see the link below to the guidance that was updated on 22 September 2020. This contains clarifications on a number of points including:

- In section 3
  - The use and disposal of face coverings
  - Supervised toothbrushing programmes
  - the safety measures required during visits from parents, external professionals and non-staff members,
  - music groups
  - pick-ups and drop-offs
  - and children attending dual settings
- there is amended wording on:
  - employer health and safety and equalities duties (section 3)
  - staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable (section 3)
  - children who are shielding or self-isolating (section 4)
  - safeguarding (section 6)
- with an additional paragraph on managing coronavirus (COVID-19) cases (section 8)

The guidance also includes confirmation that the EYFS disapplications end on 25 September, although there will be a 2 month transitional period for requirements relating to staff qualifications and Paediatric First Aid changes.

[Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

Also included in this email is information on:

- Process for reporting positive cases of Covid-19 in your setting
- Additional testing capacity for Education Staff
- Check if you can claim back Statutory Sick Pay paid to employees due to coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Link to NHS Covid-19 symptoms
- Updated FAQs
- Portal and Headcount update
- Contact to request settings join an Equality Register

**Process for reporting positive cases of Covid-19 in your setting** - This process has now changed. Instead of calling your local health protection team, you should now **call the DfE's helpline** and you will then be directed to the dedicated NHS advice team for early years settings, including childminders, schools and colleges with confirmed cases.

The new service can be reached by calling DfE's existing helpline on **0800 046 8687** and selecting the option for reporting a positive case. The line will be open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm, and 10am to 4pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

You will be put through to a team of advisors who will inform you of what action is needed based on the latest public health advice, and work through a risk assessment to identify close contacts.

The advisor will escalate your case to Public Health England's local health protection teams if it is more complex, for example outbreaks where there is more than one confirmed case.

**This option should only be selected if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 within a setting.**

You must also **notify Ofsted** through the usual notification channels of any confirmed case of coronavirus (either staff member or child) and if your setting is advised to close as a result.

We also ask that you continue to **inform the Local Authority** by emailing [early.years@essex.gov.uk](mailto:early.years@essex.gov.uk)

**Further guidance** can be found in the fact sheet "What to do if a child is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)" <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures>

Please also note that we are expecting to be able to issue contact details to local helplines alongside the DfE helpline shortly.

**Additional testing capacity for Education Staff** - We have been working extremely hard with Public Health colleagues to secure additional testing capacity, which is prioritised for education staff as critical workers, including the early years workforce. We can now share the details of these new arrangements with you. Full details below, and **a summary document attached for ease of reference.**

Please note this additional capacity has been created, following negotiations, specifically **for Early Years, School and FE staff and their families**, not for the wider general public. It is important that capacity is prioritised to enable education settings to remain open safely. We would ask you to use your judgement about any further prioritisation that may be needed to ensure that the options we have secured are put to best use in the interests of education settings staying open. The new services are available from today.

### **For staff in West Essex and North East Essex (Harlow, Epping Forest, Uttlesford, Tendring and Colchester)**

- Always try the national testing process first by using the [employer portal](#) or booking as an [individual online](#) or ringing 119
- **Staff members can now order a postal test kit from Commisceo Primary Care Solutions by phoning 01702 742172**
  - They will be asked to provide personal details including their NHS number. This is needed to link up the processing of results with the national NHS test and trace process. NHS Number can be found on any letter or document received from the NHS, including prescriptions, test results, and hospital referral or appointment letters. If the individual cannot find their NHS Number at home, they can ask their GP practice.
  - A test will then be sent by courier to the individual's home address.
  - They must take the test on the day they receive it and send it first class post to Addenbrookes Hospital laboratory in Cambridge – the address will be provided.
  - It is important that tests are processed within 48 hours.

### **For staff in Mid and South Essex (Chelmsford, Maldon, Braintree, Basildon, Brentwood, Castlepoint and Rochford)**

- Always try the national testing process first by using the [employer portal](#) or booking as an [individual online](#) or phoning 119
- **Staff members can book a test for themselves or a symptomatic household member only at a drive-through centre in Mid or South Essex online.**
  - Using this link <https://covid.shiftpartner.com> staff will be taken through to the NHS Mid and South Essex priority worker portal for NHS staff, and as a result of our negotiations, now Mid and South Essex education staff and their household.
  - Staff will need to register their personal details, including NHS number. NHS Number can be found on any letter or document received from the NHS, including prescriptions, test results, and hospital referral or appointment letters. If the individual cannot find their NHS Number at home, they can ask their GP practice.
  - Following the test, results should be emailed within 48 hours

**Check if you can claim back Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) paid to employees due to coronavirus (COVID-19)** – please see the attached briefing note for the criteria to be able to claim back SSP

**Updated FAQs** – please see the attached updated FAQs document

**Portal and headcount update** – I would like to apologise again for the technical issues we have experienced with the portal; but hope that you have all now been able to submit your actual headcount returns. The portal closes this evening so if anyone is still having trouble please let us know by emailing the early years data mailbox ([Earlyyearsdata@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Earlyyearsdata@essex.gov.uk) )

**Contact to request settings join an Equality Register** - we have had reports from settings that they have received an email from a company requesting them to pay a joining fee to be included on an “Equality Register”. This company is not connected in any way to ECC and we advise settings not to click on the link in the email or to pay this fee.

The requirement in Essex remains that settings have an Equality Named Coordinator (ENCO) to help meet the duties of the Equality Act and the SEND Code of Practice. Information and guidance on this role is on the EYCC provider pages <https://eycp.essex.gov.uk/the-early-years-foundation-stage/how-can-i-promote-equality-and-inclusion-in-my-provision/>.

Best wishes

Carolyn

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