

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

From: Free Entitlement Funding Queries

Sent: 26 March 2021 18:33

Subject: Urgent - Please Read - Covid-19 Update 26 March 2021

Dear All

As this week and term comes to a close, we would like to acknowledge and reflect on the anniversary of the first time early years and childcare settings and childminders had to close their doors to the majority of children due to the first national lockdown period due to COVID19.

We would also like to take this opportunity to once again recognise and thank you and your staff for all your hard work and commitment in response to the COVID19 pandemic.

The anniversary of the first national lockdown was designated a National Day of Reflection with the Government, NHS staff, care organisations and charities supporting [charity Marie Curie's plan](#) to mark the day and remember those who have died in the pandemic.

When the doors were closed on that date one year ago (23rd March 2020), we did not know for how long, or what challenges the coming weeks or months would bring. We did not know that the period of uncertainty would continue and that there would be further lockdowns and further restrictions to follow.

What we did know, is that as an early year's sector you would pull together and support your children and families. We again acknowledge the quality of the support you have all provided throughout this time, from the face to face support for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children to keeping in touch with families in their homes.

It is important we also recognise that in providing this unprecedented response, you and your staff have had to manage their own concerns and anxieties about exposure to the virus whilst doing their job, and colleagues who have been required to shield may have felt more isolated whilst working from home.

This week and reflecting on the last year may be difficult for some people for a variety of reasons, and our thoughts are with all of our early years sector community who have lost friends, loved ones or colleagues during this time.

Thank you for everything you continue to do. We look forward to the next term and new opportunities for us to work together.

Hopefully, as the vaccination programme rolls out and we continue to make progress against the virus, we can soon be reunited with family and friends and maybe even see each other in person once more.

Also included in this email is information on: -

- DfE Guidance which has been updated: -
 - Making a childcare bubble with another household
 - Asymptomatic testing
 - PVI settings
 - Schools
 - Specific Asymptomatic testing guidance for Childminders
 - Asymptomatic testing FAQ from the DfE
 - Updates for Out of school providers
 - A reminder on the Essex Business Management information session
 - A reminder about the ongoing DfE Attendance Survey

[Making a childcare bubble with another household](#) - Updated to clarify rules on eligibility for bubbles and advice on self-isolation.

[Asymptomatic testing: primary and maintained nursery school staff](#) - Updated the guidance to include information on who should be offered testing, how the testing works, testing pupils and what staff with symptoms or a positive test result need to do.

[Early years and childcare: coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) - Added guidance on 'Asymptomatic testing: early years staff in different settings' to the collection.

Asymptomatic testing update for childminders There will be more options available to childminders to enable them to participate in the asymptomatic testing programme. This testing offer is also extended to anyone who works in an occupation related to a school, early years childcare provider, or college and their household, childcare and support bubbles. More information can be found [here](#).

All childminders will now be able to access asymptomatic twice-weekly testing by either:

- **Attending a test site** to get tested where they will be able to see how to take the test or pick up tests to do at home.
- **Collecting tests** to do at home, <https://find-covid-19-rapid-test-sites.maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk/>
- **Order a test kit online** - More information can be found on www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests

General Asymptomatic testing update In addition, the households, childcare and support bubbles of early years children are also able to access twice-weekly asymptomatic testing. More information can be found [here](#).

The asymptomatic testing programme does not replace the current testing policy for those with symptoms. Anyone with symptoms (even if they recently had a negative LFD test result), should still self-isolate immediately according to [government guidelines](#). Those with symptoms should follow [guidance for households](#) with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection and book a PCR test.

The PVI sector should expect to receive a further delivery of test kit supplies between 24th and 26th March. These supplies should last another 3-4 weeks. If a setting has received too many test kits they will be able to keep them as stock to use as and when required.

Please also see the attached FAQ from the DfE

[Guidance for providers of after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings](#)

[Guidance for parents of children attending out-of-school settings during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak.](#)

These updates provide advice on: -

- group sizes for outdoor activities from Monday 29 March and an update on when educational visits can resume.
- An updated the section on asymptomatic testing to reflect that all wraparound care providers can now access asymptomatic testing.

Essex Business Management information session- the next Business Management Update session is on Thursday 22nd April 10.30 – 12 is a free on-line information session accessed through Microsoft Teams.

Run by the Early Years and Childcare Business Management Consultants, the session will provide updates and information on business, finance and funding issues relevant for the sector. The session is topical, so will cover emerging issues. There will be an opportunity for questions and answers if there is anything specific you would like to know more about.

This session is suitable for anyone who owns, governs or manage an early years or childcare setting including Childminders and management committees.

To book your place, please follow this link

<https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/workforce-development-1/eb055006/>

DfE Attendance data - just a reminder that we are still required to collect attendance data each week for the DfE.

The current link is <https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/workforce-development-1/685146bb> . If you are closed for the easter Holidays there is no need to complete the survey. However please look out for the new link which will be issued for submissions starting 12th April for the summer term.

We hope that you are all able to get some time off over the Easter break.

Best wishes.

Carolyn

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