

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

From: Free Entitlement Funding Queries <FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk>
Sent: 16 June 2021 14:25
Cc: Free Entitlement Funding Queries <FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk>
Subject: Urgent - Please Read - Covid-19 Update 16 June 2021

Dear All

I hope you are all well.

Following the latest announcement on Monday, you will be aware that the next step of the roadmap and associated easing of restrictions has been delayed until Monday 19 July 2021. The DfE is continuing to update guidance as required, and there are links to the latest updates at the bottom of this email.

Also included in this email is information on: -

- Reminder about claiming Food Vouchers for children in receipt of EYPP and **extension to eligibility criteria** – deadline to apply 20 June 2021
- The Balanced System
- Reporting positive Covid results
- Completing School Deferral Forms
- Reminder – Childcare Sufficiency Data – Portal Updates now due
- Reminder for the upcoming Early Years Safeguarding Forum on Tuesday 6 July 2021
- Updated guidance from the DfE including information on holding sports day / leaving events for children due to start school

Food vouchers for children in receipt of Early Years Pupil Premium Funding – extension to eligibility criteria - you should have already received an email informing you that you are able to apply for a **£25 food voucher** for every **pre-school child** that attends your setting **who is in receipt of EYPP (Early Years Pupil Premium) funding**. A big thank you to all of you that have already applied for a voucher for the children attending your setting, and so far, just over 50% of the allocated budget has been allocated.

As we said in the original email on this, we would look to extend the cohort of children that you can apply for a voucher. Children in receipt of EYPP should still be a key priority for accessing a food voucher, but you can now also apply for any children whose families you know are suffering significant financial hardship

The deadline to apply for vouchers and allocate to families is **Sunday 20th June, but please be aware that once the budget allocation has been reached, the system will reject any further applications after this point.**

If you wish to confirm which children at your setting attracted EYPP this term, please **log into the Provider Portal**, select Headcount: Payment History and view your Summer 2021 Actual Headcount report.

Essex County Council has commissioned a company called Wonde to issue these vouchers and if you registered with the Wonde system to access the Winter Warmth vouchers, you will already have an account set up.

To access the £25 food vouchers, childcare providers with children in receipt of **EYPP funding or a family suffering significant financial hardship** need to submit the number of eligible children you have registered at your setting.

You will then be allocated a number of vouchers and validation codes that can be downloaded and passed directly to parents.

Please go to: visit <https://www.evouchers.com/> and click login in the top right hand corner to log in using your email address

We recognise that this is an additional administrative task for you all and we are very appreciative of your support and commitment to your children and their families, we also apologise again for the tight timeline.

Please find help articles here: <https://help.evouchers.com/hc/en-gb> and if you require any further support, please contact support@evouchers.com.

The Balanced System - Essex County Council, Southend Borough Council and the NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups across Essex and Southend have commissioned an ambitious project for children's therapies including speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy.

Key outcomes of this work will be a common framework for the delivery of all children's therapy services, removing the barriers to access and the post code lottery that currently exists across Essex.

Better Communication CIC, is supporting this work and the framework that underpins the work is **The Balanced System**[®]. This work aims to create a single system wide delivery plan for children's therapies across Essex and Southend.

How can you contribute your views and suggestions?

The Essex Therapies project web page is now live and contains all the information, surveys and webinar dates for the project – the page contains information for parents, early years settings, schools and professionals. The link below has also been included in the EYFS Newsletter but I have included it in this email for your convenience. The site will be running for the duration of the project and will be central point for all engagement and information sharing. It is imperative as key recipients of these services that we hear from you and that your views are included to ensure the success of this important project, for our children and young people.

In the link below you will find dates for the engagement sessions that are running until early July, if you are unable to attend one of these sessions, **please complete the survey to let us know your thoughts on the way the that services are currently delivered.**

The web page can be accessed here: -

www.thebalancedsystem.org/commissioners/essex-project/essex-settings/

Positive COVID result – please do remember to email Early.Years@essex.gov.uk if you have a positive case of COVID. We will need to know if you have closed and the date you anticipate re-opening or details of who needs to self-isolate if only affects bubble/room.

School Deferrals - just a gentle reminder if you have not done so already to complete the online deferral form if you have a child who is deferring their school place in September. The form can be accessed by clicking on the following link <https://forms.office.com/r/04Ez1yaZxu>

Reminder – Childcare Sufficiency Data – Portal Updates now due

As you will be aware, Essex County Council has a statutory duty under the Childcare Act 2006 to ensure that there is sufficient and accessible high quality Early Years and Childcare provision (including wrap around care) and we ask childcare providers to submit regular updates on availability and take up of places. This information gives us an accurate overview of demand and sufficiency, which then informs our planning and development. It also supports us to help parents find the most suitable childcare options within their local area that will enable them to work or study.

Many providers submit information through the Early Years Provider Portal (self-update) and if you have an account you would have already received an email asking you to update your information for the summer 2021 term by **9th July**. The information you supply will help us to understand the changing needs of the market, provide supporting evidence when seeking S106 financial contributions from developers towards expansion opportunities of current provision, and also enable us to signpost families to the services they need.

Should you need help with completing this task, which is a contractual requirement and linked to your funding, you can gain support from:

- Accessing the step by step user guide for the portal at <https://eycp.essex.gov.uk/funding/data-collection/>
- Alternatively you are welcome to book onto our **Drop in** Session to ask questions and see examples of how to update the portal. **This is due to be held on Thursday 1st July at 10am. Should you wish to attend, please book your space here:**
<https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/workforce-development-1/f9cd0a2f>

Reminder for the upcoming Early Years Safeguarding Forum - A quick reminder that the next termly Safeguarding Forum from the ECC Education Safeguarding Team led by Jo Barclay, Head of Education Safeguarding and Wellbeing, is on Tuesday 6 July 2021. As for previous terms, the Safeguarding Forum will be online with a choice of attending either the morning or evening session:

- 9:30 – 11am for the day session
- 6 – 7:30pm for the evening session.

These forums are for the Lead Practitioner for safeguarding, and we are offering one place per setting at each session. To book your place, please visit the [Education Essex online booking system](#). We hope you will be able to join us.

Please see our Safeguarding Briefings for more safeguarding updates which can be found at the following link [Early years safeguarding forums and briefings \(essex.gov.uk\)](#)

Updated DfE Guidance

- **Sports Day and Events with Parents/ Spectators in Attendance** - we have received some queries regarding inviting parents to attend sports days or events for children leaving settings to start school. The DfE have now confirmed their advice regarding sports days.

DfE advice states: Sports days can go ahead. In line with the rest of the system of controls early years children should remain in their consistent groups as is usual for your setting. Sports equipment should be regularly cleaned throughout the event.

Our suggested guidance: You are able to invite parents onsite to spectate events however the restrictions **do** apply to these events. Please ensure you adhere to your risk assessments to avoid the risk of Covid19 outbreaks.

You must keep spectators to groups of up to 30 outside and groups of no more than 6 or two households inside. You can have multiple groups with sufficient distance in between and no mixing between groups. This will require careful management of the arrival and leaving as it's imperative the groups do not mix at all. You may want to consider holding events at different times, doing seating and requiring parents to remain in their

seats and staggering start and end times. You will need to specify this in your risk assessment. This guidance should also help with planning any leaving sessions you would like to offer.

- [Ofsted: coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rolling update](#) - Updated 3rd June 2021 the guidance on paediatric first aid certificates.
- [Protective measures for holiday or after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings for children during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#) – Updated 14th June to reflect latest changes
- [Guidance for parents and carers of children attending out-of-school settings during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#) Updated 14th June section on educational visits

Best wishes.

Carolyn

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