**Early Years Providers – Coronavirus (Covid-19)**

**Frequently asked questions – Issue no 1 – 18 March 2020**

Please see below some frequently asked questions which we hope will aide you in the management of your provision during the coming months in relation to the Coronavirus.

Please note this situation is changing all the time and we will continue to update this information. If you have any questions that we can help with, please email childrens.information@cumbria.gov.uk or contact your local Childcare Team Adviser.

**Where can I find National guidelines for educational settings?**

**NHS online:**

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Search: COVID-19: G**uidance for education settings** or click on the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19#tools-for-use-in-childcare-and-educational-settings>

Below is a link to all of the Government guidance documents which have been published:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>

**Where can I find local advice?**

<https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/coronavirus/education.asp>

**What is happening about Ofsted Inspections?**

**OFSTED Facebook page**

<https://www.facebook.com/ChildcareRegistration/>

**OFSTED inspections statement**

17 March 2020 - Ofsted is to temporarily suspend routine inspections of schools, colleges, early years settings, children’s social care providers and local authorities to reduce the burden on staff who are providing vital services to the nation in response to coronavirus.

**Ofsted FAQ – 18 March 2020**

**Do I need to notify Ofsted if a child/adult from the setting have been diagnosed with COVID-19?**

Yes – please use this link: [https://www.gov.uk/guid…/report-a-serious-childcare-incident](https://www.gov.uk/guid%E2%80%A6/report-a-serious-childcare-incident)

**If I need to close my setting because of COVID-19 do I need to inform Ofsted?**

Yes – please email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk putting ‘Setting closure’ in the subject line of the email.

**Do I need to close my setting if a child/adult from the setting recently visited a high–risk area?**

**Do I need to close my setting if a child/adult from the setting is being tested for COVID-19?**

**Do I need to close my setting if a child/adult from the setting are diagnosed with COVID-19?**

Please follow the current advice from PHE for answers to these three questions:

[https://www.gov.uk/…/guidance-to-educational-settings-about…](https://www.gov.uk/%E2%80%A6/guidance-to-educational-settings-about%E2%80%A6)

**Will I still receive Free Entitlement Funding in the Summer Term?**

* Summer Term 2020, the first payment of 70% will be paid into provider accounts on Tuesday 7th April 2020
* In the event of a provider having to temporarily close during the Summer 2020 term as a result of Coronavirus there will be no clawback of funding from the provider in respect of the Spring or Summer term 2020.
* In the event of children being temporarily absent from a provision as a result of Coronavirus there will be no clawback of funding from the provider in respect of the Spring or Summer term 2020.

* Exceptionally for the Summer 2020 term, any provider who is able to offer temporary funded provision for any children where their normal provider has had to temporarily close due to Coronavirus will be funded for the period that the children are temporarily attending the setting. This funding will be subject to review at the end of the initial two-week period, and every two weeks after that point.

* If your setting has to close due to Coronavirus, you must immediately inform Ofsted and the Council by emailing Joan.bradley@cumbria.gov.uk

or Deborah.percival@cumbria.gov.uk or Ailsa.witchell@cumbria.gov.uk

You must state the closure date, the anticipated re-open date, the reason for closing and of any extension of closure if necessary.

**The number of children attending my setting is reducing, what should I do?**

Consider if you need to continue to be open all of the hours you are normally open, for example reduce to session’s times from full day to part time. You would need to consult with your parents about what they need and also the financial impact on your provision if you close or remain open.

**If a member of my staff is pregnant, what is the advice?**

Source: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

## How to avoid catching and spreading coronavirus (social distancing)

Everyone should do what they can to stop coronavirus spreading.

It is particularly important for people who:

* are 70 or over
* have a long-term condition
* are pregnant
* have a weakened immune system

### Do

* wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
* always wash your hands when you get home or into work
* use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
* cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
* put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
* avoid close contact with people who have symptoms of coronavirus
* only travel on public transport if you need to
* work from home, if you can
* avoid social activities, such as going to pubs, restaurants, theatres and cinemas
* avoid events with large groups of people
* use phone, [online services](https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/gps/gp-online-services/), or apps to contact your GP surgery or other NHS services

**Can I make exceptions to the ratios if a staff member has to be sent home or is self-isolating?**

We are seeking clarification from Ofsted on this matter but safety and security of children is essential.

P23 of the “**Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage” states:**

**Staff:child ratios – all providers (including childminders)**

3.28. Staffing arrangements must meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. Providers must ensure that children are adequately supervised and decide how to deploy staff to ensure children’s needs are met. Providers must inform parents and/or carers about staff deployment, and, when relevant and practical, aim to involve them in these decisions. Children must usually be within sight and hearing of staff and always within sight or hearing.

3.30. The ratio and qualification requirements below apply to the total number of staff available to work directly with children. Exceptionally, and where the quality of care and safety and security of children is maintained, changes to the ratios may be made. For group settings providing overnight care, the relevant ratios continue to apply and at least one member of staff must be awake at all times.

**Are nurseries closing for two weeks at Easter, in line with schools?**

We are not aware that any Full Day Care providers are planning to close at this time as the National advice is that schools and Early Years providers remain open as far is reasonably practical.

**What are other nurseries doing regarding meetings and visitors?**

Some providers are issuing letters advising:

* Where possible staff will contribute to external meetings via phone, staff will not be attending external meeting or hosting meetings
* Access to the nursery is limited to staff, children and parents/carers and essential visitors

The guidance for schools applies to early years providers:

* Where Social Workers are visiting schools for planned meetings which are essential in supporting safeguarding needs, schools should allow colleagues to enter as planned.

Remember to apply the guidelines about handwashing rigorously – for example, ensuring visitors wash their hands on arrival in the setting

**What is happening about Cumbria County Council Early Years training?**

We have decided to suspend all training until after the Easter break. We will update you then as to what training will be running after the 13th April.

**What financial support is available?**

Source:<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses>

**Support for businesses who are paying sick pay to employees**

The government have pledged to bring forward legislation to allow small and medium sized businesses and employers to reclaim Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) paid for sickness absence due to COVID-19. The eligibility for this scheme will be as follows:

* The refund will cover up to 2 weeks SSP per eligible employee who has been off work because of COVID-19
* Employers with less than 250 employees as of 28 Feb 2020 will be eligible.
* Employers will be able to reclaim expenditure for any employee who has claimed SSP (according to the new eligibility criteria) as a result of COVID-19
* Employers should maintain records of staff absences and payments of SSP, but employees will not need to provide a GP fit note
* The government will work with employers over the coming months to set up the repayment mechanism for employers as soon as possible

Statutory sick pay is paid at £94.25 a week for a maximum period of 28 weeks (please note you will only be able to claim a refund for up to 2 weeks for COVID-19 related absence) This has been agreed to be paid from the first day of absence under emergency legislation (usual sick pay is paid from the 4th day of absence)

**Support for businesses through the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme**

A new temporary Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, delivered by the British Business Bank, will launch to support businesses to access bank lending and overdrafts. The government will provide lenders with a guarantee of 80% on each loan (subject to a per-lender cap on claims) to give lenders further confidence in continuing to provide finance to SMEs. The government will not charge businesses or banks for this guarantee, and the Scheme will support loans of up to £5 million in value. The Chancellor explained no interest would be due on these loans for the first 6 months. This will be up and running by the start of next week.

## Support for businesses who pay little or no business rates

The government will provide additional funding for local authorities to support small businesses that already pay little or no business rates because of Small Business Rate Relief (SBBR). This money will be used to provide a one-off grant of £10,000 to business currently eligible for SBRR or Rural Rate Relief, to help meet their ongoing business costs.

If your business is eligible for SBRR or Rural Business Rate Relief, you will be contacted by your local authority – you do not need to apply.

Funding for the scheme will be provided to local authorities by government in early April. The Government webpages [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) will be updated soon.

**Mortgage Breaks**

The Government has agreed with all banks that those who require can access 3 month ‘mortgage holidays’.

**Support for businesses paying tax**

All businesses and self-employed people in financial distress, and with outstanding tax liabilities, may be eligible to receive support with their tax affairs through HMRC’s Time To Pay service. These arrangements are agreed on a case-by-case basis and are tailored to individual circumstances and liabilities.

If you are concerned about being able to pay your tax due to COVID-19, call HMRC’s dedicated helpline on 0800 0159 559

## Insurance

Businesses should check with their insurance provider if they are covered. Many businesses are unlikely to be covered as most business interruption insurance policies are dependent on damage to property, which will exclude pandemics. Some businesses may have purchased a specific add on relating to notifiable diseases, but some of these will still specify damage to the building. Some businesses may have purchased supply chain or denial of access cover which may meet their needs in this case.

These are the schemes currently laid out to help businesses, however as it’s an ever evolving picture we will keep you updated of any changes.

**Can I charge parents for non-attendance?**

This is a provider decision, however in the first instance you should check your policies.

You should also check your insurance policies to check if you are covered for loss of income.

**How quickly could the staff register as Childminders and look after smaller groups of children in people’s homes. Could 2 staff go into one home and take children from other homes there?**

* Ofsted target to for registration is 12 weeks, however this is taking much longer at present.
* Childminder do not look after children in other people’s homes(e.g. Parents home ) this would be a home childcarer
* Two childminders can work from the same house (one of the CM homes)

**Other useful web sites:**

Early Years Matters: <https://www.eymatters.co.uk/coronavirus-and-early-years/>

**Coronavirus COVID-19 Information
We have created an area on the EY Matters website especially to provide information, new, updates and as time moves forward, your stories and experiences if you would like to share.**

* Latest news
* DfE Coronavirus Helpline
* What is coronavirus? What is COVID-19
* What are the symptoms?
* Prevention
* How long does the virus stay on surfaces?
* How to wash your hands
* Action Amanda’s Wash Your Hands Song (to share with children)
* What to do if you have symptoms
* Tips for staying at home
* Explaining and talking to children about coronavirus
* Employee and Employer information from ACAS
* Are you covered by Insurance?
* Myth Busters
* Useful links