



Vicky Ford MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

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03 December 2020

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to thank you for all your hard work in continuing to provide essential childcare during this very difficult time. This has been no small ask, in continually changing and challenging circumstances. Your ongoing efforts have ensured that children are not missing out on the many benefits of early education and that parents have been able to continue working, or return to work, helping to keep the country running during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have been collecting local authority-level data on Early Years childcare provision since April and we have greatly valued your participation in our weekly survey. We have reviewed the need for this collection and, acting on feedback from the sector, have decided we can now move to a fortnightly collection to reduce some of the time and resource pressures on local authorities and providers. However, it remains crucial that the Department continues to have accurate data to ensure there are enough childcare places. My teams use this data as the basis of conversations with local authorities about the childcare market in their area. These conversations about local delivery issues help to shape the future of the childcare market.

One of the best ways in which you can help us to help you during the COVID-19 pandemic is by continuing to provide DfE and Ofsted with up-to-date information. I appreciate that this is an additional task to complete at a time when you are doing so much for the children in your care, but it means that the Department can develop policies, guidance and support tailored to the issues you are facing. We will continue to look for ways to reduce the amount of information we need to ask for and will only

continue with the survey whilst there is a clear need.

I encourage you to respond to the data collection request each fortnight. I know that you are very busy and under significant pressure at this time and I recognise this may limit the extent of the information you are able to return. I really appreciate everyone's efforts to do the best they can, with the resources available, in challenging circumstances.

Thank you again for all your hard work.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Vicky Ford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

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