Part of
Education and childcare during coronavirus

DfE
Department for Education

Guidance
Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

Updated 22 September 2021

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Main changes to previous guidance

We have updated this guidance as follows:

- updated the section on home information easier to find
- added information on:
  - the ventilation of face coverings
  - extra opportunities to catch up for children
  - process for local lockdowns (section 5)
  - the use of face coverings in secondary schools
  - maximising use of time and ventilation within settings (section 3)
  - the use of face coverings (section 3)
  - planning, such as plans and risk assessments (section 3)
  - attending more than one setting (section 3)
  - the use of face coverings in secondary schools (section 3)
  - pregnant women (section 3)
  - the use of face coverings in some admissions and settings (section 3)
  - use of outdoor provision (section 3)
  - informal childcare (section 5)
  - attendance monitoring and wellbeing (section 6)
  - employer health and safety duties (section 8)
  - EYFS disapplications arising on 25 September 2020 (section 7)
  - emergency hot and cold food (section 10)
  - the Job Retention Bonus scheme (section 10)
  - apprenticeships (section 10)
  - employer health and safety duties and equalities duties (section 8)
  - staffing are critically extremely vulnerable (section 8)
  - the use of face coverings (section 3)
  - collapsing bubbles (section 5)
- updated the section on managing coronavirus (COVID-19) cases (section 5)
- updated information on funding (section 10)

Since June, and as vaccinations have been rolled out to children, have been able to test more frequently, and have been able to use face coverings, we have left the guidance section to understand how they can best be supported to ensure that children and staff can participate in education and childcare, and that they are able to learning to work, play and flourish in families and in the community in the longer term.

We will keep this guidance under review as we continue to monitor the situation.

This guidance should be read alongside the following guidance:

Guidance on infection prevention and control

- Safe working in education, childcare and children's services (see settings, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE))

Guidance on funding:

- Financial support for education, early years and children's services
- Apply for a childcare provider grant
- Claim for additional costs arising from a local lockdown (Small Business Grant Fund)
- Use of free early education entitlements funding during coronavirus (COVID-19)

Other guidance:

- Supporting vulnerable children and young people during the coronavirus outbreak
- Guidance on the temporary early years foundation stage (EYFS) coronavirus (COVID-19) disapplication
- Ofsted's response to coronavirus (COVID-19)
- EYFS flexibility around coronavirus outbreak

1. Who this guidance is for

This guidance is for local authorities and all early years providers in England. This includes early years provision in:

- maintained schools
- non-maintained schools
- independent schools
- 16 to 19 academy sixth form register
- all providers registered on the Early Years Register

For Reception, schools should, in the most part, refer to the guidance for primary schools (PDF, 1.1MB), although some of the information in this guidance is relevant to Reception.

This guidance does not apply:

- nannies or au pairs, as they work in the child's or children's family home
- community groups and voluntary organisations providing childcare
- providers caring for children over the age of 8 and registered with Ofsted on the voluntary register, or providers caring for children over the age of 8 and not registered with Ofsted (see guidance on how to provide out of school clubs during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak)

2. Responsibilities of local authorities and early years providers

2.1 Early years providers' responsibilities

Since 1 June, early years settings have been able to welcome back children of all ages.

We understand that it may not be possible for all settings to open more widely from June, but we expect local authorities and early years providers and authorities to agree the provision that will be made available, where identified. Settings are expected to be flexible and work together where required.

We understand that in some areas, shared provision through early years hubs may be required to ensure provision is made available across a number of settings in local communities.

Settings are responsible for:

- safeguarding and promoting children's welfare, services and settings should work together actively look for signs of harm given the greater risk of harm that some children may face during extended periods of time away from their usual education setting
- supporting the learning and development of, and caring for, the children who are in their setting, including those who are vulnerable
- in the case of providers who are registered with Ofsted and childcare providers, early years providers should continue to encourage these children to attend where it is in their best interests and that of their family
- planning and implementing the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in a way that is fun and enjoyable, and that ensures children are ready for the next stage of their education, including ensuring children are able to learn and develop well

Settings are expected to:

- ensure that children, young people, services and settings should work together actively look for signs of harm given the greater risk of harm that some children may face during extended periods of time away from their usual education setting
- supporting the learning and development of, and caring for, the children who are in their setting, including those who are vulnerable
- in the case of providers who are registered with Ofsted and childcare providers, early years providers should continue to encourage these children to attend where it is in their best interests and that of their family
- planning and implementing the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in a way that is fun and enjoyable, and that ensures children are ready for the next stage of their education, including ensuring children are able to learn and develop well

Providers that cover for children under the age of 5 and over the age of 5 should continue to follow the EYFS framework for the children under 5 outlined in this guidance and the statutory school age framework and its measures outlined in the protective measures for out-of-school settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak for children over 5.

Providers that have mixed age groups (together with twos) as far as possible should continue to follow the EYFS framework and should refer to the EYFS 2021 Early years and childcare providers' guidance for more information.

In light of the removal of 'bubbles' from 23 July, early years settings and local authorities should work together to ensure children can safely attend early educational hours and disapplications (SEND) up to date and should look to bring back children who have been shielding back into early years provision, if it is safe to do so. They should ensure that they are in line with the protective measures for out-of-school settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak which includes advice on group sizes.

Providers that care for children both under the age of 5 and over the age of 5 should continue to follow the EYFS framework for the children under 5 outlined in this guidance and the statutory school age framework and its measures outlined in the protective measures for out-of-school settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak for children over 5.

Providers that have mixed age groups together will need to, as far as possible, ensure that children under 5 are cared for in accordance with the EYFS. The EYFS age groups are not to be used as a reason to keep children from different groups apart.

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2.2 Welcoming back all children to early years settings

We have asked settings to welcome back more children to early years provision. We understand that some children will not return to early years settings, especially if they are vulnerable or have family members who are shielding or are clinically extremely vulnerable or have levels of demand. Local authorities and early years settings should work together to ensure that they are able to meet local demand.

2.3 Local authorities responsibilities

Local authorities are responsible for:

- monitoring demand and capacity for childcare and should work with early years providers and local authorities to ensure that, if it is safe to do so, priority groups can attend a setting if required. This may include providing places in alternative settings if necessary or working with neighbouring local authorities to ensure that children can attend a setting in a safe way that children and families
- continuing to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area, including those who are vulnerable, during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak
- ensuring that early years settings have access to PPE

Local authorities are expected to:

- ensure that children, young people, services and settings should work together actively look for signs of harm given the greater risk of harm that some children may face during extended periods of time away from their usual education setting
- supporting the learning and development of, and caring for, the children who are in their setting, including those who are vulnerable
- in the case of providers who are registered with Ofsted and childcare providers, early years providers should continue to encourage these children to attend where it is in their best interests and that of their family
- planning and implementing the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in a way that is fun and enjoyable, and that ensures children are ready for the next stage of their education, including ensuring children are able to learn and develop well

Providers that care for children both under the age of 5 and over the age of 5 should continue to follow the EYFS framework for the children under 5 outlined in this guidance and the statutory school age framework and its measures outlined in the protective measures for out-of-school settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak for children over 5.

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2.4 Actions for local authorities to monitor and manage their local early years markets

Local authorities should:

- continue to work with early years providers to monitor and manage their local early years market
- develop an understanding of early years supply in their area, as well as the barriers individual providers are experiencing and where they might need support, including providers who are at risk of closure for financial reasons
- where needed, manage the wider market flexibly to ensure that there is sufficient provision available to meet the needs of children and families, including children and children of key workers, and that children can access the early years entitlement and other provision
- ensure that, where local early years providers are provider has closed, and the remaining provision is insufficient, local authorities should place-plan, operating through clusters and hubs to maintain educational provision, or provision for children with special educational needs
- only early years PVI providers should be considered for support, where they have free, or unprecedented costs in the early years budget

Further information about funding for early years providers during 2020 to 2021 can be found in the guidance on the use of free early education entitlements funding during coronavirus.

3. Infection prevention and system of controls

Keeping children and staff safe is our utmost priority. This section of the guidance sets out the public health advice that early years settings must follow to manage risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) and ensure children can attend and participate in education and childcare. It includes measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 symptoms while attending. This guidance has been developed with advice from Public Health England (PHE).

The public health advice in this guidance makes up a PHE endorsed 'system of controls' for early years settings. This system of controls is a set of measures that settings need to implement to manage risk. Implementation of these measures will be a mirror reflection of the measures they have put in place for their staff and children in their setting, and should be proportionate and risk assessed, taking into account the specific circumstances and risks in their setting.

The system of controls provides a set of principles that when followed will minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in early years settings. Early years providers should be familiar with these principles and should be able to demonstrate some of the measurements will differ based on their individual circumstances. Settings should be able to explain how they have put in place the 'hierarchy of controls' and how they have considered the risks to their setting and staff. This guidance does not create any new legal obligations.

There cannot be a one-to-one 'read across' between the system of controls described every scenario. Setting leaders will be best placed to understand the risks in their setting and to put in place measures that are proportionate and about how to operate following a risk assessment and in line with the measures needed to manage risks. The 'system of controls' provides a set of principles to guide them do this, which reference the latest advice from Public Health England.

3.1 Risk assessment

Settings must comply with health and safety law, which requires them to manage risks to their staff and others who may be affected by their activities.

Settings should thoroughly review their health and safety risk assessment and draw up a plan to manage the risks from coronavirus (COVID-19). Other arrangements in place to monitor that the controls are effective, working in a way that is proportionate to the risk, and to review and revise the risk assessment, as and when it is required, should be in place.

For more information on what is required of employers in relation to health and safety risk assessments, please see the HSE's guidance for managing risk in workplaces.

Settings have been closed or had reduced occupancy during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Settings should review their risk assessment in order to increase the rates of supervisor' disease. Advice on this can be found in the guidance on reopening buildings and workplaces.

Additional advice on safely reopening buildings can be found in the guidance on managing the risk of Legionella and other infections in reopening buildings.

Once the setting is in operation, it is important to ensure good ventilation and monitoring the ventilation system. Ventilation is important because it dilutes and kills the virus. Opening windows or using mechanical ventilation (MV) is a key control measure. Advice on this can be found in the guidance on ventilation, heating and air conditioning and Legionella and other infections in reopening buildings.

3.2 Supporting people who may be at increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19)

Some people with particular characteristics may be at comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19). Public Health England (PHE) has issued guidance on who is at increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), including age and sex, ethnicity, deprivation, disability, pregnancy, occupation and underlying health conditions. Settings should be aware of this guidance and should take into account the risks to their staff and children when they are planning their risk assessments. Settings should also be aware of their duties under the Equality Act 2010, and should take into account and assess the measures the setting is putting in place to ensure that children and staff are not disadvantaged or discriminated against by a disability, sex, pregnancy, race, religion or belief, or other protected characteristic, for example in areas of high transmission.

Some people who are clinically extremely vulnerable to the coronavirus (COVID-19) can attend the workplace.

Settings have a legal duty to protect their employees, and others, from harm and should continue to ensure health and safety risks and consider how to manage the risks from COVID-19 in the workplace. Settings should be aware of their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and should take into account and assess the measures the setting is putting in place to ensure that children and staff are not disadvantaged or discriminated against by a disability, sex, pregnancy, race, religion or belief, or other protected characteristic, for example in areas of high transmission.

All staff should follow the measures set out in the system of controls. Advice on this guidance to minimise the risks of transmission. This includes continuing to ensure that children and staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable are supported to attend, including implementing the additional measures as needed.

Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable

Shielding measures were paused from 1 August 2020, until the end of July. Future national re-introduction with the exception of areas where local lockdowns are in place. Clinically extremely vulnerable people in these areas were advised to stay at home as a precautionary measure. Since then, their setting has implemented the system of controls outlined in this guidance, and should be able to support the return to work of staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable, for example, working from home or in a separate area, or by ensuring clinically extremely vulnerable should follow the same guidance as the general population. Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable may be at increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) and should be mindful of frequently touched areas in their home or workspace.

Staff who are clinically vulnerable

Clinically vulnerable staff can return to settings. While in settings they should follow the system of controls and should be mindful of frequently touched areas in their home or workspace.

Staff who are living with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable

Pregnant women are in the 'clinically vulnerable' category. They are generally at increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) and should be mindful of the system of controls. Settings should continue to ensure that pregnant women are in line with the Management of health and safety at Work (TWHSR) Regulations 1999.

3.3 System of controls: protective measures

Having assessed their risk, settings should ensure they make sure that the system of controls below, and the measures in the system of controls, are in place. Settings should be able to demonstrate that they have put in place the measures and have a clear development needs of children in settings. This should include full educational provision for children who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Settings should:

- ensure that all staff understand the 'system of controls' and how they are implemented in their setting, and that all staff are made aware of the risks arising from the system of controls and are supported
- ensure that parents and carers are aware of the 'system of controls', how these relate to their setting and what to expect when their child attends

System of controls

This is the set of actions every early years settings must take. They are prepared into 'prevention' and 'response to a case'.

Prevention

Prevention contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have symptoms or who live in a household with someone in their household who does, do not attend settings.

(2) Use of face coverings.

(3) Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual.

(4) Ensure good respiratory hygiene promoted by the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.

(5) Enhanced cleaneliness (cleaning. Including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach.

(6) Minimise contact between groups where possible.

(7) Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Numbers 1 to 5 must be in place in all settings, all the time.

Number 6 must be properly considered, and settings must put in place measures to minimise contact and mixing.

Numbers 7 applies in all settings, circumstances.

Response to any infection

(8) Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.

(9) Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the setting community.

(10) Carry out outbreak management as advised by local health protection teams.

(11) Notify Ofsted.

Numbers 8 to 11 must be followed in every case where they are relevant.

System of controls: prevention

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have symptoms or who live in a household with someone who does not attend settings

Ensure children, staff and other adults do not come into settings if they have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or are in household or bubble with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or who is shielding and further draw down measures as needed. Ensure that children who are unwell do not attend settings.

If anyone in the setting becomes unwell with a new, persistent cough or a high temperature, or has a change to their usual cough or temperature, they should immediately:

- they must be sent home and advised to follow COVID-19 guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection, and to book a test to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19)
- they should isolate in a room if they have to be in the setting while waiting for test
- other members of their household (including any siblings) should not isolate unless the person with symptoms is their household bubble
- if a child is tested positive:
  - they should be tested, if possible, (e.g. to ease where they can be seated) and should be kept in a separate room
  - ideally, a parent/carer should be approached
  - if it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from others
  - if they are too ill to be collected, they should be cared for in a separate room. They should be taken to a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom should be thoroughly cleaned after use. Staff should avoid touching anything as much as possible
- PPE must be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if they are within 2 metres of the child and cannot maintain a distance of 2 metres or a physical barrier is not possible. Further information on PPE use can be found in the Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) guidance

As a casual practice, in an emergency situation call 999 if someone is seriously ill or injured or their life is in danger. In an emergency situation call 999 if symptoms include difficulty breathing or persistent pain in the chest or a persistent cough.

Staff who have recently left their home to care for children in settings will have been tested as part of the national programme and will be encouraged to book a test for self-isolate. However, they must self-isolate and arrange for a test if they develop coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms. Staff who live in a household with someone who has been tested for coronavirus (COVID-19) and who have been supposed to do so by NHS Test and Trace.

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Children who are unwell with other illnesses, or who have accidents while using an early years setting should be cared for in a separate room until they are cleaned. The area around the person with symptoms must be cleaned with disinfectant after they have left it. Staff should wash their hands after touching the infectious fluids. Further information on the Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings outside the home guidance.

PHE is clear that children who have temporarily underlying conditions, but not recommended as this is an unreliable method for identifying coronavirus (COVID-19).

2. Where recommended, use of face coverings

Face coverings are not required in settings, but the use of face coverings in early years education and childcare has become a common practice. Face coverings in education and childcare environments, provides additional mitigating protection. PHE and the DfE do not recommend that children in early years should not be put for children under three. In addition, those may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission and there may also be negative effects on communication and children's development.

When social distancing is difficult to maintain in communal areas

Face coverings may be considered in communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain, for example in corridors and communal areas, and where the decision is recommended the use of face coverings for adults on site, both staff and visitors.

When working with children

Based on current evidence and the measures that early years settings are already putting in place, the risk of transmission in early years settings is low. Face coverings may have a negative impact on interactions between staff and children in early years settings, and children's development, in the short term.

Exemptions

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings. This includes:

- current pupil or, seen or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or a disability
- those who communicate with someone who relies on lip reading, clear mouth movements, or clear lip patterns to understand
- people who are deaf

The same exemptions will apply in early years settings, and settings will need to be sensitive to the needs of individuals.

Other working with children

Based on current evidence and the measures that early years settings are already putting in place, the risk of transmission in early years settings is low. Face coverings may have a negative impact on interactions between staff and children in early years settings, and children's development, in the short term.

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The same exemptions will apply in early years settings, and settings will need to be sensitive to the needs of individuals.

Access to face coverings

It is reasonable to assume that staff who have access to face coverings should continue to use them in line with their employer's risk assessment, as set out in the guidance for face coverings in schools.

However, where supplies are limited, schools should prioritise their use for those who are unable to use their face coverings due to having forgotten it or having accidentally contaminated it, for example, by touching it with their face or have a medical condition or disability which prevents use.

Safe removal and disposal of face coverings

Employers should ensure staff are removing face coverings when staff or visitors who use face coverings arrive at the setting, and when face coverings are being worn, they should be worn in line with the manufacturer's instructions and guidance on safe use.

Safe wearing of face coverings requires cleaning of hands before and after putting on and taking off a face covering, and avoiding touching the front of the face covering or the face underneath it while it is being worn. If it is damaged or dirty, it should not be worn and the face covering should be replaced immediately.

Further information can be found in face coverings: when to wear one and how to make one.

2. Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new illness that can be spread in the air. This can be borne with soap and water or hand sanitiser.

It is important to clean your hands and clean them hands regularly, including:

- when they arrive at the setting
- after using the toilet
- when they change nappies
- before and after eating

Regular and thorough hand cleaning is needed for the foreseeable future.

Points to consider and implement:

- ensure the settings have hand washing or hand sanitiser 'stations' available so that all children and staff can clean their hands regularly
- ensure hand washing is embedded into routines and reminders - young children and those with complex needs should continue to be helped to clean their hands properly, for instance, by using a timer
- build these routines into planning, so children and young people understand why these with complex needs understand the need to follow them as far as possible

3. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach is important to continue to be followed - settings must ensure they have enough tissues and bins available in the setting and encourage children and young people to use them. This is a well-known way of minimising the spread of germs when someone coughs or sneezes, and children understand that this is now part of how the setting operates.

Some children and young people may need more support than others with respiratory hygiene as their peers. For example those with gastrointestinal or respiratory conditions, or who have a tracheostomy, may need to be reminded more frequently than others to follow the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.

Face coverings are required at all times on public transport (except for children under the age of 11). Further information is in the guidance: face coverings: when to wear one and how to make one.

4. Introduce enhanced cleaning, including daily cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents

Enhanced cleaning arrangements should be in place across the school or college premises to ensure a safe environment for children, young people and staff. Attention has to be removed soft toys, and any toys that are hard to clean, such as those with fabric or fur, should be removed. Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned more often than usual. Normal household cleaning products, including detergents and sanitiser powers, following government guidance on cleaning and handling equipment.

Actions to consider and implement:

- ensure that the site is cleaned and tidied everyday, and if above a cleaning schedule that ensures cleaning is generally enhanced and includes, for example, cleaning door handles and handrails
- frequently touched surfaces and objects should be cleaned more often than usual - clear procedures for maintaining cleaning processes for food preparation areas, toilets and other areas
- ensure that any toys that are difficult to clean, such as soft toys, are not used by children and staff and should not be encouraged to clean their hands thoroughly more often than usual

PHE has published research evidence for cleaning non-healthcare settings for the prevention of COVID-19 and guidance for cleaning non-healthcare settings outside the home, including schools and other educational settings.

5. Minimise contact between individuals where possible

Every year settings are used to managing infectious illnesses and when one setting is unwell, convenient groups can be rotated to normal groups. Returning to normal groups should be done in line with the guidance on managing cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in schools. Face coverings are required at all times on public transport (except for children under the age of 11). Further information is in the guidance: face coverings: when to wear one and how to make one. Minimising contact between groups can reduce the number of individuals and households that need to be asked to isolate if there is a case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the setting.

Adopting the 'system of contacts' set out here is a robust way will also ensure that if there is a case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the setting, it will reduce the risk of transmission.

Parents and carers should be encouraged to limit the number of settings they attend where, ideally they should be attending only one setting where possible.

There may be situations where it is necessary for children to attend more than one setting, for example, children attending a childminder before their nursery opens or after their nursery has closed.

Children, parents and carers should be encouraged to follow the system of contacts collaboratively, to address any risks identified and allowing them to jointly consider how best to do this. Settings should share with parents and carers more information on their system of contacts.

1. Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)

The majority of staff in every setting will not require PPE beyond what they would normally use in their work. PHE has published guidance on the number of cases, clusters.

- when an individual child/learner/student with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms is being cared for in the setting, while they are awaiting their collection
- where a child already has routine intimate care needs that involves the use of PPE, in which case the use of PPE is unchanged

Guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including advice on PPE, explains in which circumstances PPE should be worn in addition to the PPE that would be worn anyway for other purposes.

6. Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process

Settings must ensure they understand the NHS Test and Trace process. Settings must ensure that staff members and parents/carers understand the process and how it will be implemented.

Track & Trace if there are displaying symptoms. Staff and children must not attend the setting if they are displaying coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or have tested if they positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). Staff members will be asked including children under 5, but children under 11 will need to be helped by parents/carers to follow the test and trace process.

If a positive result is returned, they have to inform their immediately of the result of the test.

- if someone begins to self-isolate because they have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19) they must begin to self-isolate as soon as possible and if they test and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19) they can end self-isolation immediately. If the test is negative, they must continue to self-isolate for the rest of the 10 days from the day when they first had symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19) and the household can also end self-isolation.
- if someone tests positive, they must follow the instructions they receive from the NHS Test and Trace service and self-isolate for the period of time specified. Their household can end self-isolation after the period of self-isolation has ended.
- if someone tests positive, they must follow the instructions they receive from the NHS Test and Trace service and self-isolate for the period of time specified. Their household must self-isolate for 14 days from the day when the person with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms first developed symptoms. If the person with coronavirus (COVID-19) lives in a household with several people, the household may need to self-isolate for several weeks since the infection has spread. The at-risk/ 65 plus period starts from the day when the person with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms first developed symptoms. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

7. Managing confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the setting

Where a child/learner/student with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms has been in attendance prior notifying the test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). The local health protection team (HPT) will be in touch with the setting to advise on the next steps. Based on their advice, settings should enable those people who have been in close contact with the child/learner/student to self-isolate for the period of time specified by the local health protection team (HPT) and should inform their local HPT of any other cases in the setting.

Close contact - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within one metre including being coughed on, or in the same room/vehicle, or unprotected physical contact (skin to skin)

Close contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) includes:

- travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

The advice serving PHE in the local health protection team (HPT) will provide definitive advice on who must self-isolate. To support them in doing so we recommend that settings:

- children and staff in specific groups/cohorts (where applicable)
- children and staff in the whole setting, if several groups/cohorts are affected

This should be a proportionate recording process. Settings do not need to keep a HPT a record of every contact, in the way that is necessary for test and trace.

A template letter will be provided to settings on the advice of the advice serving PHE in the local health protection team (HPT) to inform the parents/carers and staff members that they are being asked to self-isolate. Advice of settings with coronavirus (COVID-19) cases essential to protect others.

The HPT local health protection team will be in touch with the setting where they become aware that someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) has been in attendance at the setting while infectious.

Household members of children and young people who have tested positive, therefore unless the child or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops coronavirus symptoms (COVID-19) or tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), other members of their household do not need to self-isolate. They should follow COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection. They should not go to school.

If someone who is self-isolating because they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) develops symptoms and goes to the test and trace service and the test returns a negative result, they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 14-day period. Their household can end self-isolation. Further information is in the COVID-19: safe schools guidance.

Settings should not request evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before allowing a child/learner/student to return to school after a period self-isolation.

In the vast majority of cases, settings and parents and carers will be in agreement that a child self-isolating should not attend the setting, given the guidance. PHE, the local health protection team (HPT) and Ofsted will be in touch with settings where there is a case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the setting to discuss the case and the actions taken in response to a positive case. You will be asked to provide a list of all children and staff who were in the setting while infectious and the dates such attendance.

The advice serving will work with settings to carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm any further actions they need to take in addition to those already agreed that they were infectious, and ensure they are aware of any further actions that are required as a result.

The advice serving on PHE local health protection team (if appropriate) will work with settings to jointly decide on the most appropriate method. Based on their advice, settings should send those people who have been in close contact with the child/learner/student to self-isolate for the period of time specified by the local health protection team (HPT) and should inform their local HPT of any other cases in the setting.

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- children and staff in the whole setting, if several groups/cohorts are affected

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In cases where, health protection teams may recommend that a larger number of people should self-isolate, for example, a whole class or year group, or the whole site or a group, it is important that the advice is based on a risk assessment addressing the risks they have identified and therefore reducing transmission. Such a decision should be made in consultation with the local health protection team and should not be considered except on the advice of health protection teams.

8. Notify Ofsted

Any confirmed cases of coronavirus (Covid-19) in the setting (either child or staff member) should be notified to Ofsted. Ofsted will not be in touch with the setting reported to Ofsted through the usual notification process.

3.4 Pick-ups and drop-offs at school, childminders and other early years settings

Childminders and other settings should consider how they can work with parents and carers to ensure that children and young people can be dropped off and collected safely and in ways that minimise the risk of transmission to coronavirus (COVID-19) and other infectious diseases.

It is necessary for childminders to pick up or drop off a child at school, walking to childminder. If this is not practicable, then a private vehicle for your household can be used instead. Further information is in the guidance for childminders.

Information on using private and public transport can be found in the guidance for parents and carers.

Settings, parents and carers should follow the system of contacts collaboratively, to identify and address any risks and allowing them to jointly consider appropriate ways to do this.

3.5 Visits to the setting from parents and carers, additional staff, external professionals and non-staff members

There will be occasions when visits to the setting are necessary, but settings should consider how they can limit the number of people who are in the setting and should keep a record of who visits the setting. Settings should keep a record of visitors and adhere to current NHS Test and Trace.

Parents

For some admissions, settings should consider providing virtual tours for prospective parents.

Parents and carers are keen to visit in person, settings should consider:

- ensuring the number of people in the setting at any one time and the number of staff and other visitors to the setting (see section 3.on face coverings)
- ensuring that parents and carers follow the system of contacts
- ensure that parents and carers are encouraged to limit the number of visits to the school/ play area during regular hours, and ensure strict social distancing is observed

Prior to a visit, settings should ensure that parents and carers are aware of:

- of the 'system of contacts'
- that this impacts them and their responsibilities during their visit
- the measures in place to ensure the safety of children, staff and other than those from their household

Parents setting children

Parents and carers PHE helps how parents and carers are able to enter a setting to help their children adapt to their new environment. Settings should ensure that parents and carers:

- wear face coverings, if required, in line with arrangements for staff and other visitors to the setting (see section 3.on face coverings)
- ensure that children are dropped off and collected on time
- avoid close contact with other children
- are aware of the number of people who are in this place to them, and their responsibilities during their visit, including the 'system of contacts'

Section 3 of the guidance includes details on the 'system of contacts'. It is important that parents and carers understand the 'system of contacts' and how it applies to them and their household.

Other visitors

Settings should consider how to manage other visitors to the site, such as contractors, and ensure safe guidance is followed and that they are aware of the 'system of contacts'. Settings should keep a record of who visits the setting and which follows the guidance on maintaining records of staff, customers and visitors to support NHS Test and Trace.

Services or settings that use external providers, which are not directly required for the education, childcare or children's social care provision of the setting, should be considered on a case by case basis. The risk assessment should be used to determine if such services should be provided.

The presence of any additional members of staff should be spaced as a weekly basis, rather than a daily basis, to limit contacts, where possible.

3.6 Supervised toothbrushing programmes

Tooth brushing supervised toothbrushing programmes may be established within settings using the dry brushing method.

Local authority leaders and public health teams in local authorities will need to lead this to ensure safe and consistent transmission and offers no additional benefit to the wider community.

For information on the impact on supervised toothbrushing programmes in schools, see the COVID-19: guidance for supervised toothbrushing programmes in schools and nurseries settings.

3.7 Process in the event of a suspected case

Anyone approaches a public authority case will be required to contact primary care practitioners, and the local health protection team (HPT) will be in touch with the contact. PHE will be involved in decisions of clinical and related investigations, and will be in touch with the local authority and the local health service. Other information on the guidance can be found in the COVID-19 contact framework, a guide for local decision makers.

3.8 Music, dance and drama

This guidance relates to organised group activity, not to spontaneous singing and playing outside of the school/college/setting. Settings are not encouraged to do, early years settings.

Music, dance and drama build confidence, help children/pupils/students, improve mental health and well-being and provide a creative outlet. Singing, however, is a contagious risk of infection in environments where organised singing and playing of musical instruments is taking place.

Organised singing and musical instruments pose a risk to transmission in line with this and other guidance, in particular guidance provided by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Department for Education (DfE) for performing arts. Further information on the guidance can be found in the DfE and DCMS guidance, a guide for social decision makers.

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The presence of any additional members of staff should be spaced on a weekly basis, rather than a daily basis, to limit contacts, where possible.

Organised performances

Schools may choose to organise their future performances in front of an audience, the settings should follow the guidance for performing arts in schools, colleges. For outdoor performances it planned, the settings should also give consideration to the guidance for outdoor sports and PE.

Music, dance and drama participants: teachers

Settings can continue to teach music, dance and drama in accordance with settings. This includes singing and playing musical instruments.

Teachers should consider how to minimise the number of contacts that attend where possible, and should consider how to minimise the number of contacts that attend where possible, and minimising risk of transmission. Teachers should consider distance from other staff and children. To minimise the numbers of temporary staff attending the setting, teachers should be asked to teach a class or year group, rather than organising with parents/carers, teach a class or year group in a particular year group or cohort.

Teachers in specialism a participants band, and operating across multiple groups or individuals. It is important that they do not attend a lesson if they are ill, and should follow the guidance for performing arts in schools, colleges. Teachers should be asked to teach a class or year group, rather than organising with parents/carers, teach a class or year group in a particular year group or cohort.

Music, dance and drama participants: students

- teaching music, dance and drama to students in a class or year group, rather than organising with parents/carers, teach a class or year group in a particular year group or cohort
- teachers in specialism a participants band, and operating across multiple groups or individuals
- students in a class or year group, rather than organising with parents/carers, teach a class or year group in a particular year group or cohort

Further information on the Music Education Hubs, including contact details for local hubs, can be found on the Music Education Hub website.

Organised music ensembles in the early years, including singing, and playing musical instruments

When planning music provision, settings should consider additional specific risk assessments, taking into account the guidance for performing arts in schools, colleges. Settings should consider how to minimise the number of contacts and breathing at the same place, there is some evidence that additional risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the setting, and minimising the number of individuals with contact.

With appropriate safety mitigation, however, singing and wind playing can still take place. Precautions to take:

- staying in groups and singing in groups should take place outdoors where possible
- if indoors, use a room with as much space as possible, for example larger rooms, such as a hall, and ensure there is a good amount of natural ventilation
- if playing instruments, social distance each child 2 metres apart
- if singing, social distance each child 2 metres apart, and it is important to ensure good ventilation, please refer to the use of ventilation in schools and ventilation during the coronavirus pandemic
- if using a wind instrument, ensure there is a clear line of sight across each room and exterior
- position wind players so that air flow from instrument does not blow into people's faces
- use microphones and amplification to ensure sufficient volume is achieved

By considering and implementing these cumulative risk mitigation measures, the overall risk will be reduced.

Handling equipment and instruments for organised sessions

Where settings offer instrument lessons, dance and drama, these activities should be considered in line with the guidance for performing arts in schools, colleges, including:

- increased handwashing before and after handling equipment, especially if being used by other people
- avoiding sharing instruments and equipment wherever possible
- ensuring instruments and equipment are cleaned in line with manufacturer's instructions, and ensuring that instruments and equipment are cleaned after every, following guidance on cleaning and handling equipment
- consider drilling the number of people using instruments and equipment to ensure that they are able to maintain social distancing and adhere to class bubble arrangements. Clean non-equipment, tools or other equipment on a regular basis, and ensure that instruments and equipment are cleaned after every use, following guidance on cleaning and handling equipment
- ensure that instruments and equipment are cleaned after every use, following guidance on cleaning and handling equipment

Individual lessons

Where settings offer individual lessons in music, dance and drama, these activities should be considered in line with the guidance for performing arts in schools, colleges, including:

- extending social distancing between child and participants: teacher/ pupil/student, teacher/ pupil/student, teacher/ pupil/student, teacher/ pupil/student, is appropriate, and ensure that the teacher/ pupil/student, teacher/ pupil/student should be performed only by one teacher/ pupil/student, teacher/ pupil/student
- ensure that instruments and equipment are cleaned after every use
- if instruments and equipment need to be shared, regularly disinfect them between users, and ensure that they are cleaned after every use, following guidance on cleaning and handling equipment

4 Further guidance

Further guidance for settings is available in guidance: childcare and children's social care for more information about preventing and controlling infection, has the guidance been updated? Yes, the guidance has been updated.

4. Children's attendance

4.1 Principles to apply to the wider opening of settings

All children who normally access childcare are strongly encouraged to attend after the wider opening of settings from Monday 1st June onwards.

We are continuing to make progress in understanding the disease and epidemiology of COVID-19 and in particular the factors that have contributed to delays relaxed to local crisis measures. Our current understanding now notes that:

- a considerable number of children will not be able to attend in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a confirmed case of COVID-19 or are living in a household where a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 is self-isolating
- shielding advice for all adults and children was paused on 1 August. This means that children who were previously shielding or who live with someone who was previously shielding can now attend their childcare setting regardless of why were shielding. The current shielding advice is available at guidance for people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from coronavirus (COVID-19)
- where rates of disease rise in local areas, children (or family members) from those areas may be at higher risk of being exposed to COVID-19 in their childcare setting, and local restrictions may therefore need to be applied by others
- specialists in paediatric medicine have reviewed the latest evidence on the risk of children being severely ill with coronavirus and have concluded that this risk is very low. The latest information from the British Paediatric Surveillance Unit (BPSU) for children and young people is clear. In the future, we expect fewer children and young people to be hospitalised than for other illnesses
- children in early years settings, including childminders, are unlikely to be the cause of a special health professional are likely to discuss their care with their parents and GPs and take account of their views when making decisions. Advice can be found in the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health's COVID-19 childhood illness guidance for children and young people

Children who have been shielding or have been advised to stay home for 12 weeks or longer, or who have been in hospital for a long period of time, may be anxious about returning to their childcare setting. Childcare providers should be sensitive to this and be ready to support children who are anxious about returning.

Settings should be mindful that many parents and carers may be shielding or clinically extremely vulnerable, or may have family members who are shielding and the right support in place to address this. This may include:

- children who have themselves been shielding or who might have been advised that this is no longer necessary
- children who live with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable
- those unnecessarily attending childcare who are at higher risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or who have certain underlying health conditions

Parents or carers of children with significant risk factors are concerned, we encourage them to discuss their child's circumstances with their GP or paediatrician before the child is asked to return to childcare.

Clear communications with parents and carers regarding the measures being taken to minimise the risk of COVID-19 will be essential to ensure they feel that they are able to send their children back to childcare.

Settings should consider how to ensure communications are accessible to all parents groups and carers, for example, translation of leaflets and an additional language) and parents and carers of vulnerable children, to encourage attendance of their children.

4.2 Action to take when a child's usual provider is closed

Local authorities should work with settings which are closed to identify alternative provision for children who need places. Parents and carers can also contact their local authority if they are unable to find a place. Local authorities should prioritise the provision of childcare places for children who are expected to attend the new setting or day one, including emergency-critical workers, children identified by their school as being in need of a place, children with EHC plans and children in the care of a local authority.

In the case of vulnerable children, the closed settings should notify the local authority children's social care team if any of their children are unable to attend. Local authorities should then work with providers and parents with the families of vulnerable children and local authorities (and social workers, where relevant) to support this.

Where a setting has closed, and a vulnerable child moves to a different early years setting:

- the closed provider should be wherever it reasonably can to provide the information about the child to the new provider, including the child's file
- the receiving setting should be able to access information which is sensitive and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum, the receiving setting should be able to access information about the child's EHC plan, the contact between the previous setting and the child's social worker, their personal education plan, and know who the child's social worker is (and the contact details of the child's social worker if not already in their setting)
- the transfer of records and information should be made between the two settings in a timely way, and where that is not possible, as soon as practicable after the child has started at the new setting. Local authorities, children's social care teams, virtual school heads, designated teachers, and senior educational welfare co-ordinators (SEWCOs) or named safeguarding leads should support this process, including providing advice and guidance.

Many providers could expect to have children who are known to their setting and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), this does not prevent the sharing of information with the new provider to prepare for the child's return. Guidance on information sharing for practitioners, Keeping children safe in education and safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers guidance.

4.3 Prioritising places when demand for places is too high

Since 23 July, normal group sizes have resumed so all children that are able can attend a setting. Prioritisation of places should only be used if this is necessary.

If there is a need to prioritise places (for example, where a nursery's catchment area is unable to operate at full capacity), settings should give priority to:

- vulnerable children and children of key workers
- Year 2, and 6 year olds, in particular those who are to transition to Reception in September 2020
- followed by younger age groups

5. Considerations for operating the setting

5.1 Settings experiencing staff shortages due to sickness or self-isolation

Childcare settings that are experiencing staff shortages should:

- work with their local authority to identify how appropriate provision can be made available for children who are expected to attend the childcare setting
- review recent guidance on the use of personal protective equipment (Personal Discourse and Barring Service (DBS) checked staff from other educational settings who are temporarily working in childcare settings, and volunteers, or visits to an educational setting, to ensure it is still fit for purpose for its setting. Registered childminders can already do this under the 50/50 registration flexibility in place
- consider whether alternative staffing arrangements are considered on a weekly basis, rather than a daily basis, in order to limit contacts.

5.2 Advice for settings where the premises from which they usually operate is closed such as community centre, village or church hall

Since 1 June, community premises such as village halls and churches have been able to open for providers or the early years register which usually use those premises. Providers should:

- they are acting in line with the Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, guidance
- they should also ensure they are managing risks related to other users of the premises

5.3 Operating breakfast and after school clubs and other providers of wraparound childcare

All providers of wraparound childcare, and other out-of-school settings, are encouraged to open from June 1st. Providers of wraparound childcare have safely resources in place:

Wraparound providers which are only registered on the Ofsted register, or are only registered on the early years register, should:

- continue to follow this guidance, and
- implement the protective measures set out for early years settings

Where wraparound providers are caring for children over the age of 5, they should:

- ensure that they are following the protective measures guidance for out-of-school settings, including the guidance on cleaning premises, including playing sites

Providers caring for children over the age of 5 should:

- ensure, as far as possible, that they are keeping children over the age of 5 in closed cohorts or groups with no mixing between groups

In cases where providers cater for both children under the age of 5 and over the age of 5, they should:

- they may choose to apply the protective measures guidance for those children under the age of 5, and the measures outlined in the protective measures guidance for out-of-school settings, including the guidance on cleaning premises, including playing sites

Where providers have mixed age groups together:

- they will need to, as far as possible, keep all children irrespective of age in separate groups, and should not mix children from different groups, and should with more staff members to meet relevant ratio requirements

5.4 Use of private and public outdoor spaces

Settings should maximise use of private outdoor space.

Settings can take groups of children or bubs to outdoor public places and not need to be informed in advance of this.

- it is for the purpose of education or childcare
- it is reasonable to do so in all circumstances
- they conduct a risk assessment if planning
- the risk assessment demonstrates that they can remain socially distant (2 metres from other people and groups) and
- good hygiene is maintained throughout
- through hand/sanitising hygiene before and after the trip

5.5 Informal childcare

In areas affected by local restrictions, community and informal groups must follow the advice relevant to the affected area.

Groups that are held in registered settings should follow the guidance for early years settings, childcare and children's social care services. Groups that are held in a church hall, community centre or other premises should follow the relevant guidance for the venue. Where led by a facilitator in an public place (playground, park, etc.) they should follow the guidance for organised outdoor sports in groups of 30.

Informal support groups not covered by these exemptions can still take place if they do not breach the restrictions on gathering in groups of more than 6 people. This is not limit on the number of groups that attend so long as people are organised in ways that are COVIDsafe (distanced and that these groups do not mix with other groups.

5.6 Helping a bouch with parents or carers whose child is at home

Since 23 July, normal group sizes have resumed so all children should be able to attend as normal, with the exception of those who are shielding or in local lockdowns.

We recognise that many settings have already shared resources for children who are at home and are shielding or living in areas of local lockdowns.

Childcare providers should be sensitive to these assumptions can still take place if they do not breach the restrictions on gathering in groups of more than 6 people. This is not limit on the number of groups that attend so long as people are organised in ways that are COVIDsafe (distanced and that these groups do not mix with other groups.

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5.9 Monitoring of early years and childcare provision during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

The Department for Education (DfE) launched a data collection process in June 2020 to gather information on the number of children and staff in attendance in early years and childcare settings during the outbreak. We have published summaries of attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

- continue to use the early years and childcare data collection and further collections to monitor the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak on early years and childcare provision in their area
- keep the frequency and and date of the data collection under review

All local authorities have been asked to continue to use the early years data collection, the frequency of collection and how to conduct the DfE with your local authority.

We understand that most local authorities are already collecting the data requested by DfE, so the frequency of collection (weekly from registered early years providers, and termly from childcare providers) should not place a burden on staffing resourcing further in providers.

Local authorities should provide more focused support where issues are identified through the data, such as providers with low attendance or those with staffing resources and provision. Settings should also consider support needs of providers in their area when planning their own support offer to providers. For example, children in need, or children who are vulnerable, may need extra support to access the free resource Thrive Education, which provides online support for children and families with mental health and learning difficulties.

Ofsted have also developed a coronavirus (COVID-19) staff survey tool for advice and tips for leaders and managers.

Where there is a concern that a child in need is suffering or likely to suffer harm, the local authority children's social care team should be informed (and in cases of danger) should follow their child protection policy and Part 1 of the Keeping children safe in education (2020) guidance. Local authorities consider any referrals to statutory services (and the police) as appropriate.

6.1 Reviewing and updating child protection policies

Settings should review their child protection policy and Staff Conduct Policy in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the wider opening of settings. This could take the form of a conversation (COVID-19) meeting and could include:

- how to identify and support children who are most at risk of abuse and neglect
- how to support children who have been victims of abuse and neglect
- any updated advice received from local safeguarding partners
- any updated advice received from local authorities, for example EHC plan risk assessment, vulnerable children and children in care
- working arrangements with children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head
- what staff and volunteers need to know about any changes to the role of a member or volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children
- the DfE's Keeping children safe in education (2020) guidance, in particular, Annexes A, B and C

All staff and volunteers should be made aware of the new policy and be kept up to date as it is revised.

6.2 Changes to the role of the safeguarding lead

Settings should review their arrangements designated to carry out safeguarding responsibilities. It is recognised that the safeguarding lead may need to be based one (if this is not practical, for example they may be working from home, or they are shielding, then they should be in a position to provide remote support, and have a deputy who can cover in case of their absence. Local staff and volunteers have access to a designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) and know who to see or give any advice that concern a child has to raise with.

Settings should also ensure that parents and carers may be shielding or clinically extremely vulnerable, or may have family members who are shielding and the right support in place to address this. This may include:

- children who have themselves been shielding or who might have been advised that this is no longer necessary
- children who live with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable
- those unnecessarily attending childcare who are at higher risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), including those Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or who have certain underlying health conditions

Parents or carers of children with significant risk factors are concerned, we encourage them to discuss their child's circumstances with their GP or paediatrician before the child is asked to return to childcare.

Clear communications with parents and carers regarding the measures being taken to minimise the risk of COVID-19 will be essential to ensure they feel that they are able to send their children back to childcare.

Settings should consider how to ensure communications are accessible to all parents groups and carers, for example, translation of leaflets and an additional language) and parents and carers of vulnerable children, to encourage attendance of their children.

6.2 Action to take when a child's usual provider is closed

Local authorities should work with settings which are closed to identify alternative provision for children who need places. Parents and carers can also contact their local authority if they are unable to find a place. Local authorities should prioritise the provision of childcare places for children who are expected to attend the new setting or day one, including emergency-critical workers, children identified by their school as being in need of a place, children with EHC plans and children in the care of a local authority.

In the case of vulnerable children, the closed settings should notify the local authority children's social care team if any of their children are unable to attend. Local authorities should then work with providers and parents with the families of vulnerable children and local authorities (and social workers, where relevant) to support this.

Where a setting has closed, and a vulnerable child moves to a different early years setting:

- the closed provider should be wherever it reasonably can to provide the information about the child to the new provider, including the child's file
- the receiving setting should be able to access information which is sensitive and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum, the receiving setting should be able to access information about the child's EHC plan, the contact between the previous setting and the child's social worker, their personal education plan, and know who the child's social worker is (and the contact details of the child's social worker if not already in their setting)
- the transfer of records and information should be made between the two settings in a timely way, and where that is not possible, as soon as practicable after the child has started at the new setting. Local authorities, children's social care teams, virtual school heads, designated teachers, and senior educational welfare co-ordinators (SEWCOs) or named safeguarding leads should support this process, including providing advice and guidance.

Many providers could expect to have children who are known to their setting and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), this does not prevent the sharing of information with the new provider to prepare for the child's return. Guidance on information sharing for practitioners, Keeping children safe in education and safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers guidance.

6.3 Prioritising places when demand for places is too high

Since 23 July, normal group sizes have resumed so all children that are able can attend a setting. Prioritisation of places should only be used if this is necessary.

If there is a need to prioritise places (for example, where a nursery's catchment area is unable to operate at full capacity), settings should give priority to:

- vulnerable children and children of key workers
- Year 2, and 6 year olds, in particular those who are to transition to Reception in September 2020
- followed by younger age groups

5. Considerations for operating the setting

5.1 Settings experiencing staff shortages due to sickness or self-isolation

Childcare settings that are experiencing staff shortages should:

- work with their local authority to identify how appropriate provision can be made available for children who are expected to attend the childcare setting
- review recent guidance on the use of personal protective equipment (Personal Discourse and Barring Service (DBS) checked staff from other educational settings who are temporarily working in childcare settings, and volunteers, or visits to an educational setting, to ensure it is still fit for purpose for its setting. Registered childminders can already do this under the 50/50 registration flexibility in place
- consider whether alternative staffing arrangements are considered on a weekly basis, rather than a daily basis, in order to limit contacts.

5.2 Advice for settings where the premises from which they usually operate is closed such as community centre, village or church hall

Since 1 June, community premises such as village halls and churches have been able to open for providers or the early years register which usually use those premises. Providers should:

- they are acting in line with the Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, guidance
- they should also ensure they are managing risks related to other users of the premises

5.3 Operating breakfast and after school clubs and other providers of wraparound childcare

All providers of wraparound childcare, and other out-of-school settings, are encouraged to open from June 1st. Providers of wraparound childcare have safely resources in place:

Wraparound providers which are only registered on the Ofsted register, or are only registered on the early years register, should:

- continue to follow this guidance, and
- implement the protective measures set out for early years settings

Where wraparound providers are caring for children over the age of 5, they should:

- ensure that they are following the protective measures guidance for out-of-school settings, including the guidance on cleaning premises, including playing sites

Providers caring for children over the age of 5 should:

- ensure, as far as possible, that they are keeping children over the age of 5 in closed cohorts or groups with no mixing between groups

In cases where providers cater for both children under the age of 5 and over the age of 5, they should:

- they may choose to apply the protective measures guidance for those children under the age of 5, and the measures outlined in the protective measures guidance for out-of-school settings, including the guidance on cleaning premises, including playing sites

Where providers have mixed age groups together:

- they will need to, as far as possible, keep all children irrespective of age in separate groups, and should not mix children from different groups, and should with more staff members to meet relevant ratio requirements

5.4 Use of private and public outdoor spaces

Settings should maximise use of private outdoor space.

Settings can take groups of children or bubs to outdoor public places and not need to be informed in advance of this.

- it is for the purpose of education or childcare
- it is reasonable to do so in all circumstances
- they conduct a risk assessment if planning
- the risk assessment demonstrates that they can remain socially distant (2 metres from other people and groups) and
- good hygiene is maintained throughout
- through hand/sanitising hygiene before and after the trip

5.5 Informal childcare

In areas affected by local restrictions, community and informal groups must follow the advice relevant to the affected area.

Groups that are held in registered settings should follow the guidance for early years settings, childcare and children's social care services. Groups that are held in a church hall, community centre or other premises should follow the relevant guidance for the venue. Where led by a facilitator in an public place (playground, park, etc.) they should follow the guidance for organised outdoor sports in groups of 30.

Informal support groups not covered by these exemptions can still take place if they do not breach the restrictions on gathering in groups of more than 6 people. This is not limit on the number of groups that attend so long as people are organised in ways that are COVIDsafe (distanced and that these groups do not mix with other groups.

5.6 Helping a bouch with parents or carers whose child is at home

Since 23 July, normal group sizes have resumed so all children should be able to attend as normal, with the exception of those who are shielding or in local lockdowns.

We recognise that many settings have already shared resources for children who are at home and are shielding or living in areas of local lockdowns.

Childcare providers should be sensitive to these assumptions can still take place if they do not breach the restrictions on gathering in groups of more than 6 people. This is not limit on the number of groups that attend so long as people are organised in ways that are COVIDsafe (distanced and that these groups do not mix with other groups.

5.7

7.4 Assessment of the EYFS profile for this academic year

The Secretary of State for Education announced that there will be no assessment of children against the EYFS profile in 2020. Ofsted will not inspect early years childcare in receipt of grant funding for the delivery of the 2-year-olds EYFS profile. Ofsted also means no moderation by local authorities.

7.5 Assessment of the EYFS profile for next academic year

This will go ahead in summer 2021.

7.6 Progress check for 2-year olds

Settings will not be required to undertake the progress check at age 2 during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

7.7 EYFS reforms

We have published the government response to the consultation on EYFS reforms.

The response confirms what changes will be made to the EYFS. Primary schools have been informed of our intention to implement the new EYFS from September in 2020. A period of statutory notice to all early years settings in the 2020-22 academic year. Please see the response document for more information.

7.8 Postponement of the statutory implementation of the Reception Baseline Assessment

In response to the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on schools, the statutory implementation of the Reception Baseline Assessment has been postponed. Schools will not be required to administer the Reception Baseline Assessment in an early years setting in the academic year 2020 to 2021. Schools will be able to administer the assessment and submit the assessing materials before the Reception Baseline Assessment window closes.

7.9 Does someone with a paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate still need to be on site?

The requirements for EYFS PFA training and paediatric first aid training and the EYFS coronavirus disapplications guidance has been published setting out what this means.

- the existing requirement remains in place where children aged 0 to 24 months are cared for, or are likely to be cared for in a setting registered against the EYFS and in order to be deemed suitable to care for children under 2 a person who has a current PFA certificate must be on the premises and available at all times children are on the premises. This requirement remains in place during the outbreak
- the existing requirements also remain unchanged for childminders because they are not required to register against the EYFS
- the requirement in childminding agency standards for 2 a.m. or one-to-one childcare applied (since 24 months) to a short endeavours duty to have someone with a PFA certificate on the premises. This duty has been suspended and has been enhanced and replaced with a requirement to make reasonable efforts. Always carry out a written risk assessment and ensure that someone with a current PFA certificate is on the premises. This applies to childminders who are registered with a childminding agency and who have completed a full PFA course within their first 3 months in order to be counted in staff to child ratios

7.10 Renewing paediatric first aid (PFA) certificates

If PFA certificate requalification training is prevented for reasons associated directly with coronavirus (COVID-19), we will be prepared to extend government advice, the validity of current certificates can be extended to 30 November 2020 for EYFS PFA and paediatric first aid training providers. We will be in touch with training providers in the coming weeks to provide further advice to enable them to offer solid 'Green' dates to requalify and demonstrate what steps have been taken to ensure that the quality of the training is maintained. The EYFS PFA and paediatric first aid training providers will be contacted directly and will be updated to reflect the recent announcement on EYFS PFA.

7.11 Emergency first aid

The Health and Safety Executive published guidance on first aid during coronavirus (COVID-19). This includes information on how to administer emergency assistance to the public. It states that employers should be prepared to respond to first aid incidents. Where it is necessary for first aid provision to be administered by someone who is not a qualified first aider, employers should consider risk assessment measures, information, including warning boards.

7.12 Varying staff to child ratios and qualifications

Paragraph 3.31 of the EYFS states:

'Exceptionally, and where the quality of care and safety and security of children is maintained, children may be left with fewer staff.'

We consider the extent of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak to be an exceptional circumstance and therefore, the flexibility set out in paragraph 3.31 of the EYFS can be applied. We do not consider this to be a change in policy however, remain responsible for ensuring the safety and security of children in their care.

Amendments made to regulations from 24 April allow further exceptions to the ratio requirements for children aged 2 and over, and to the staff qualifications requirements.

Settings should use reasonable endeavours to ensure that at least half the staff including managers hold level 3 and level 2 qualifications and level 1 qualification to meet staff to child ratio requirements, but this is not a legal requirement.

In some circumstances it may be necessary for settings to operate at lower reasonable endeavours should be used to ensure that at least one member of staff holds a level 3 and one member of staff holds a level 2 qualification. Settings should be supported by their local authority and should ensure that all staffs holds at least a level 1 and relevant level 3 qualification.

Providers should use reasonable endeavours to ensure that at least half of other staff hold at least a level 2 and relevant level 3 qualification.

Further details as well as EYFS early foundation stage coronavirus disapplications.

7.13 Advice on separate baby room requirements for children under the age of 2 years

The EYFS requirement to have a separate baby room is a safety issue for the protection of very young children and vulnerable babies. It is important that this safety issue is not compromised by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. However, remain responsible for ensuring the safety and security of children in their care.

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Providers should use reasonable endeavours to ensure that at least half of other staff hold at least a level 2 and relevant level 3 qualification.

Further details as well as EYFS early foundation stage coronavirus disapplications.

7.14 Taking on new staff (including volunteers) even if a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check has not been completed

The requirements set out in paragraph 3.11 of the EYFS remain in place.

Settings must obtain criminal records checks for new members of staff and volunteers who will be in regular contact with children. Where a DBS enhanced check has not been completed, the following measures should be in place: Ofsted expects providers to be supported by someone who has a DBS check. Under no circumstances can an unchecked member of staff be left alone with children.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the early years setting, the recruitment continues to be carefully managed and overseen.

7.15 Enhanced DBS checks for staff moving temporarily to another early years setting

Where members of the early years workforce are identified as already engaging in regulated activity and already have the appropriate DBS check:

- there is no requirement for a new DBS check to be undertaken if they are to temporarily move to another setting to support the care of children
- there is no requirement for the setting they are temporarily moving to undertake a Prohibition Order check, but it is recommended. This exercise can be satisfied by seeking assurance from the current employer rather than requiring new checks.

8. Ofsted

8.1 Notifications requirements for settings providing childcare

We have asked Ofsted to work with and with local authorities to find out what information they need from childcare providers in relation to notifications to Ofsted.

Ofsted still require further information about whether some providers are open or closed. Ofsted will be in touch with providers to request an email or text saying weeks to ask about your setting and plans for the future. Check that this information is up to date on Ofsted's system, and respond to Ofsted's request.

In the meantime, if your operating circumstances do change (that is, you close or open):

- let Ofsted know by sending an email to enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk with the subject line 'Notifications'
- in the body of the email, state your setting's unique reference number, the setting and the details of the change. The URN can be found the setting's registration, inspection and reporting documents.

In addition, any confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the setting should be reported to Ofsted, Public Health England and local authorities as a result, should be swiftly reported to Ofsted through the usual notification channels.

8.2 Ofsted inspections during the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak

The Secretary of State for Education announced the suspension of routine Ofsted inspections (Covid-19).

The safeguarding responsibilities of settings have not changed, and Ofsted's inspection and reporting framework for early years providers will be suspended. Ofsted will not inspect early years settings or carry out Ofsted's Early Years Register visits during the autumn term. Ofsted will continue to inform the sector and regulate providers in accordance with its statutory duties, and will be in touch with providers to let them know what to do next.

Please see Ofsted's collection of documents on the autumn term for further information about early years and the other Ofsted events.

8.3 Resuming routine Ofsted inspections

The Ofsted regulatory and inspection process. It is intended that routine inspections will restart from January 2021. By this time the EYFS is expected to have been in force for a full academic year and providers will have had time to reflect on their review.

Ofsted will continue to assess early years provision against the EYFS, which with the standards that underpin the inspection process remain unchanged. Ofsted will continue to take into account any and legal liability and safe. This will include the quality of the education provided.

The safeguarding responsibilities of settings have not changed, and childminders have not changed. Childminder agencies must continue to ensure that their childminders are suitable to care for children and that they are equipped to do so.

Please see Ofsted's collection of documents on the autumn term for further information about early years and the other Ofsted events.

8.4 Ofsted action on unregistered provision

The health, safety and wellbeing of children is their first responsibility, and government continues to expect childcare to take place only within registered provision.

Sure Ofsted's response to coronavirus (COVID-19) in Ofsted: coronavirus (COVID-19) update page for more information.

8.5 Ofsted inspections

Since 7 June, childminders have been able to look after children of all ages, in line with their current Ofsted registration, and within such limits on the number of children they can care for.

9.1 Early years entitlement funding for childminders

On 17 March 2020, the Chancellor of the Exchequer confirmed the support for childcare providers in the coronavirus (COVID-19) Government response: Nov 2, 2 and 4 March.

On 20 July, we announced that this would continue through the autumn. We will continue to distribute funds to childcare providers in the autumn term, consistent, until the end of the calendar year. This will give nurseries and childminders time to recover and to plan for the future, and will provide certainty and stability.

We have published guidance on the Use of the early education entitlement funding, setting out the conditions for the continuation of the entitlement funding for the autumn term, and how it will be distributed.

From the 2020 autumn term, we expect the demand for childcare to increase, as more parents return to work. We have made it clear that we expect the sufficiency of childcare and delivery of the early years entitlements for all children, including those who are vulnerable and children of key workers, to continue. We have also made it clear that we expect providers which have been able to close, or left with no eligible left to close, due to public health reasons, to be able to reopen. We have made it clear that we expect the 2020 autumn term, which begins in September, from the start of the autumn term.

9.2 Early years entitlement funding for local authorities during 2020 to 2021

On 20 July, we announced that we will continue to fund childcare, at the same rate and on the same basis as we did in the spring and summer terms, for the calendar year. We have published guidance on the Use of the early education entitlement funding, which provides further details on our approach.

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10. Funding

10.1 Funding for free childcare places

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10.3 Furloughing staff

See guidance on how the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) applies to childcare providers, including how to furlough staff, furlough staff in the early education, early years and childcare in social care. See section 10.8.

10.4 Temporary changes to parents and carers who have moved the eligibility for 30 hours childcare entitlement and Tax-Free Childcare when a child is not currently attending a setting

Temporary changes have been made to the 30 hours free childcare entitlement and tax-free childcare eligibility for parents and carers who, because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, temporarily stop work.

Specifically, parents who have temporarily stopped work will continue to receive their income threshold (19 hours per week at National Minimum/Living Wage) for the purpose of the 30 hours free childcare entitlement and tax-free childcare for a period equal to the number of weeks they have been in receipt of the income threshold until 31 October.

We have set the Government's Tax-Free Childcare and 30 hours free childcare eligibility for parents who have been furloughed since 23 March 2020 to ensure that critical workers who exceed the maximum income threshold (£100,000) will not be disqualified from the 30 hours free childcare entitlement and Tax-Free Childcare. Furloughed parents who were in receipt of the 30 hours free childcare entitlement and Tax-Free Childcare before being furloughed will continue to receive the 30 hours free childcare entitlement and Tax-Free Childcare. We have set the income threshold for Tax-Free Childcare eligibility at £2,500 per week (£130,000 per annum).

10.5 Applying for, or reconfirming, the 30 hours entitlement and/or Tax-Free Childcare when a child is not currently attending a setting

All eligible parents are encouraged to continue to apply for, and reconfirm, their 30 hours free childcare entitlement and Tax-Free Childcare. Please of you can, let Tax-Free Childcare know if your circumstances have changed COVID-19.

10.6 Flexibility for parents and carers who have moved the eligibility for 30 hours childcare

DfE has previously asked local authorities to use their discretion to take the eligibility dates for 30 hours free childcare entitlement and tax-free childcare of some children/ nurseries and/or eligibility and expected to take up 30 hours free childcare entitlement and tax-free childcare. We have made it clear that we expect reconfirmation is applied where a child's circumstances have changed and to take up their places in the summer term.

We have made it clear that, in the autumn term, we expect that those who became eligible for 30 hours during the summer term should have applied by the 31 October in order to be able to access their entitlement from September.

10.7 Business support for early years and childcare settings

The government announced a package of support for businesses during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, including measures to support small businesses and the childcare sector. We have provided further guidance on how the CJRS applies to the education and childcare sectors, including how to furlough staff, furlough staff in the early education, early years and childcare in social care.

In addition:

- the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that private early years and childcare settings will be eligible for a business rates holiday for one year from April 2020. Please see the guidance on business rates relief for small businesses and retail, hospitality and leisure properties.
- nurseries in receipt of small business rate relief or rural rate relief will benefit from a business rate holiday. Nurseries in receipt of small business rate relief or rural rate relief will continue to receive the relevant relief in addition to the holiday.
- childcare providers are eligible for a charitable status relief and also not be charged business rate in 2020 to 2021.
- some settings operate their nursery space which may now benefit from a business rate holiday. Where a setting operates from a school site, the school business rates may benefit from the holiday.
- the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme for those who are self-employed or members of a partnership. Eligible claims will be able to receive a taxable grant worth 80% of their trading profits paid in three instalments. The grant will be paid directly into the claimant's bank account and will be worth a total of £2,500.
- the Business Interruption Loans Scheme will be relaunched for 15 months, with the government to cover the interest payments for the first 12 months and not any fees. Lenders will be able to offer loans of up to £5 million and will be delivered. UK VAT registered businesses will not need make those payments to HMRC.
- the Secretary of State for Education has made the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Act 2020 which makes changes to certain UK companies, partnerships and organisations' governance and reporting requirements. These changes have effect from 1 March 2020 for 3 months for companies, limited liability partnerships and other bodies. Please see the guidance on the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Act 2020 and Business Bulletin: Coronavirus (Covid-19) Act 2020 and Insolvency Bulletin: coronavirus (Covid-19) Act 2020 for more information.
- some early years providers may be able to access the Government's Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme. Please see the guidance Apply for the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme.

10.8 Accessing the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)

Guidance on how to access the CJRS scheme can be found at Claim for wages through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. Please see the guidance on how the CJRS applies to childcare settings to receive early entitlement funding via local authorities.

The claim for wages through the CJRS platform, first published by HMRC on 20 March, states that:

- where employees receive public funding for staff costs, and that funding is sufficient to continue to pay employees, employers should not claim for the furlough hours under the coronavirus job retention scheme
- this also applies to non-statutory late entrepreneurs who receive public funding for staff costs
- employers should not furlough employees who are in receipt of public sector funding

We have provided further information on the CJRS, including on the education and childcare sector in financial support for education, early years and childcare providers.

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10.10 Furlough

- furlough staff in the early education, early years and childcare in social care
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- the employee is not involved in delivering provision that has already been funded (free entitlement funding)
- the employee is not required to deliver provision for a child
- the grant from the CJRS would not duplicate other public grants received, and would not lead to financial reserves being created

If it is difficult to distinguish whether staff are funded through free entitlement or private income for the purposes of meeting the first 3 conditions as listed above, then an early years provider can access the CJRS to cover up to the proportion of its salary bill which could be considered to have been paid for from that provider's private income.

In July 2020, the Job Retention Bonus was introduced to provide additional support to employers who keep on their furloughed employees in meaningful employment, after the CJRS ends on 31 October 2020. The Job Retention Bonus is a one-off payment of £1,000 to employers for each employee who was ever furloughed, has been continuously employed until 31 January 2021 and is still employed by the same employer as of 31 January 2021.

Employees must have been continuously employed, earn an average of more than £520 per month in November, December and January and have been furloughed and successfully claimed for under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme at any point to be eligible.

Further details can be found in the guidance on the Job Retention Bonus.

10.9 Charging parents and carers if they are unable to take up their child's place

The government is working hard to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak on all parts of our society, including individuals and businesses. Settings are expected to comply with the law and take a reasonable and proportionate approach to parents' and carers' fees, in light of these unprecedented circumstances, and to communicate any arrangements clearly with them.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) established a COVID-19 Taskforce to identify, monitor and respond to competition and consumer problems arising from coronavirus (COVID-19) and the measures taken to contain it.

The CMA guidance can be found in the CMA open letter to the early years sector.

People and businesses who have seen or experienced businesses behaving unfairly during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak can report it to the CMA by using their dedicated online form. Where there is evidence that businesses have breached competition or consumer protection law, the CMA will take enforcement action if warranted.

10.10 Charging for consumables

Settings may charge for consumables, such as nappies, in line with the Early Education and Childcare: Statutory guidance for local authorities. As per this guidance, they should consider the impact of charges on disadvantaged families.

10.11 Arrangements for providing meals

In the event a maintained nursery school has to close temporarily, they should continue to provide free school meals to children who would normally receive them.

In all other settings, where free school meals do not apply, settings may charge for meals in line with national entitlements guidance. Settings should consider the impact of charges on disadvantaged families.

10.12 Insurance of early years providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

Business interruption insurance

For childcare providers which have a policy that covers government-ordered closure and unspecified notifiable diseases, the government's social distancing measures may be sufficient to allow businesses to make a claim against their insurance, provided the other terms and conditions in their policy are met.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) rules require insurers to treat customers fairly, including:

- handling claims fairly and promptly
- providing reasonable guidance to help a policyholder make a claim
- not rejecting a claim unreasonably
- settling claims promptly once settlement terms are agreed

The government is working closely with the FCA to ensure that the rules are being upheld during this crisis and fully supports the regulator in its role. The Association of British Insurers (ABI) and its members have agreed a set of principles for handling business interruption claims to support and provide clarity to customers.

Customers who feel they have not been treated fairly should:

- first make a formal complaint to their insurer
- refer the matter to the Financial Ombudsman Service if they do not feel that their complaint has been dealt with satisfactorily

Businesses that have not purchased the appropriate level of cover should seek assistance through the government's wider support package if they are in financial difficulty. This includes measures such as business rates holidays, small business grants, and the CJRS.

Public liability insurance

Providers must carry the appropriate insurance (for example, public liability insurance) to cover all premises from which they provide childcare, including childminding. Some existing public liability policies may have been written or adjusted during the term of the policy (where permitted) to exclude coronavirus (COVID-19) risks, and some insurers may choose to exclude coronavirus (COVID-19) when offering public liability policy renewals. Nurseries should check the terms and conditions of their public liability insurance policies and consult with their insurance providers and brokers to determine their coverage for coronavirus (COVID-19). It is worth noting that different insurers may take a different view, therefore nurseries are encouraged to shop around to seek the most suitable cover at the best price.

For general advice on insurance matters (but not on specific policies) including those related to coronavirus (COVID-19), the ABI can be contacted by phone on 0207 600 3333 or email at info@abi.org.uk.

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Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support

The UK has left the EU

Check the new rules for January 2021

Services and information

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Business and self-employed
Childcare and parenting
Citizenship and living in the UK
Crime, justice and the law
Disabled people
Driving and transport
Education and learning
Employing people
Environment and countryside
Housing and local services
Money and tax
Passports, travel and living abroad
Visas and immigration
Working, jobs and pensions

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