

**Scottish Government Early Learning and Childcare COVID-19 Update**  
**No. 5 – 4 August 2020**

As you'll be aware, we are replacing our monthly Programme Updates with regular COVID-19 newsletters for the duration of the pandemic response. We'll send these to you as often as we have news to share.

I'm very sorry to share the news with you that Jeff Maguire, who we were delighted to welcome back to Team ELC last year, passed away last month. Jeff worked for many years on ELC and school education policy within Scottish Government, and had a real passion for improving children's experiences and outcomes. Jeff was a very much loved member of Team ELC and we very much miss his warmth, wit, friendship and infectious smile.

Take care

Alison Cumming

[alison.cumming@gov.scot](mailto:alison.cumming@gov.scot)

Interim Director, Early Learning and Childcare

**1. Key information, guidance and contact points**

Throughout this update, we have provided links to the latest guidance and information. As you will appreciate, the situation continues to change so please continue to check the Scottish Government's website regularly for the latest guidance and information – see <https://www.gov.scot/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance/>

If you have any questions or issues you would like to raise with the team, please use the contact details below and we will respond as soon as we can. Please email:

- [ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot](mailto:ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot) for enquiries about support for providers and parents.
- [outofschoolcare@gov.scot](mailto:outofschoolcare@gov.scot) for enquiries about critical childcare and keyworker testing provision;
- [ELCDeliverySupport@gov.scot](mailto:ELCDeliverySupport@gov.scot) if you work in a local authority team looking for advice or support about early learning and childcare, or contact your link person in the delivery team;
- [ELCProgrammeOffice@gov.scot](mailto:ELCProgrammeOffice@gov.scot) for any other queries.

To keep up to date with all the most relevant information and guidance, follow us on Twitter @ELCScotGov and @OSCScotGov or join the Knowledge Hub.

Local authorities can register on the Knowledge Hub at <https://www.khub.net> and request to join [Early Learning and Childcare \(ELC\) Expansion Scotland: Local Authorities](#).

## **2. Phase 3 – Easing of lockdown in Scotland**

Our priority is the safety of every individual in Scotland. The virus still exists and it is important that we continue to follow the guidance around physical distancing (where possible), increased hygiene measures and that you self-isolate if you or members of your household have any symptoms of coronavirus. More information can be found at [NHS Inform](#).

On 30 July, the First Minister announced that Scotland would remain in Phase 3 of the [routemap](#). Full details of the changes announced by the First Minister can be found [here](#).

### **What does this announcement mean for the Childcare sector?**

All registered childcare services have been able to reopen from 15 July as part of Phase 3 of Scotland's recovery from the coronavirus crisis, today we have published updated guidance for all childcare services which will take effect from 10 August.

The updated guidance documents can be found here –

- [Guidance](#) for early learning and childcare services
- [Guidance](#) for childminding services
- [Guidance](#) for out of school care services
- [Guidance](#) for fully outdoor childcare services

### **What's changed?**

On Thursday 16 July the First Minister and Deputy First Minister confirmed their intention to ease the current measures requiring children in ELC to be cared for in consistent small groups and to remove the restriction on children attending more than one childcare setting (known as blended childcare). This reflects progress made in suppressing the Covid-19 virus in Scotland since the previous guidance was produced. We have now published four revised guidance documents which confirm the detail of those changes across all childcare services.

The changing restrictions do not mean a 'return to normal'. This guidance continues to stress that minimising overall contacts is important for the suppression of the virus and efficacy of test and protect. The guidance sets out a package of age-appropriate public health measures that minimises the risks for staff, children, families and communities, based on public health advice.

The revised guidance continues to have child, family and staff wellbeing at its heart, and to put in place proportionate measures that allow everyone to benefit from returning to childcare. All of the guidance and changes to restrictions on childcare services is based on scientific and expert advice provided by the Advisory Sub Group on Education and Children's Issues. We have today published that advice and you can find that [here](#).

Childcare providers must continue to follow current guidance (published on 15 June) until 10 August. This can be accessed through the links to the new guidance above.

### **Schools guidance**

The First Minister today announced that schools will be able to return on a full-time basis from 11 August. New guidance was published today to support the return of schools and that guidance can be found [here](#).

## **Critical childcare**

Ministers have agreed that as the schools return from 11 August, and new guidance reduces some restrictions on childcare services from 10 August, the need for critical childcare is reduced. The Deputy First Minister wrote to Local Authorities on 22 July to confirm that they can set an end date for critical childcare provision in the week commencing 3 August. We anticipate there will be period of time where local authorities will transition to accommodate the start of school.

## **3. Transitional Support Fund for Childcare Providers**

The Transitional Support Fund will help childcare providers in the private, voluntary and not-for-profit sectors, including out-of-school care providers, meet the extra costs incurred to comply with public health guidance in response to COVID-19. The Fund will provide one-off grants to eligible settings. Grant amounts vary according to the number of Care Inspectorate registered places in your setting

To be eligible for the Fund you need to be registered with the Care Inspectorate as:

- a 'day care of children' service; and
- a 'Private' or 'Voluntary or Not For Profit' service.

This includes private and voluntary settings delivering out of school care; childcare settings in independent schools; and outdoor childcare settings. You will also need to confirm that your setting has already reopened or confirm that your setting will have reopened by Monday 7 September.

Grants are intended to help settings to meet the extra costs incurred in order to operate in line with the public health guidance for the sector. For example, the grants could help with extra costs for:

- Increased cleaning;
- Investment in additional equipment and developing outdoor space, to enable more outdoor learning; and
- Adaptations to support the physical distancing of adults in settings (e.g. changes to entrance and exit areas, additional signage, etc)

The Fund will be administered by local authorities. There will be a standard application form and we are working to make the application process as straightforward as possible. In particular we are looking to minimise the burden on providers who will be applying for multiple settings across different local authorities.

The Fund will open for applications by the end of August 2020. The last date for submitting a grant application will be Friday 9 October.

Further information on the Transitional Support Fund is available at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-support-to-childcare-sector/pages/transitional-support-fund-for-childcare-providers/>.

**Contact info: Euan Carmichael's Service Models Team at [ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot](mailto:ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot).**

## **Childminding Workforce Support Fund (CWSF)**

The Childminding Workforce Support Fund (CWSF) was launched on 16 July. The Fund is joint-funded by the SCMA and Scottish Government and offers grants up to a maximum of £350 to help support childminders who have suffered financially throughout the pandemic. The fund, which is

administered by SCMA, prioritises those childminders ineligible for other forms of financial support, however, dependent on capacity consideration will also be given to applicants whose funding from other support measures was less than anticipated, and who required financial assistance for re-opening/re-building their business.

The demand for the CWSF has been considerable and given the volume the SCMA decided to pause applications to the Fund on 17 July. The Scottish Government are currently working with SCMA to agree further funding support to childminders, taking account of the demand for the CWSF and the range of additional pressures which childminders may face as a result of the public health guidance. More information about that support will be published in the coming weeks.

**Contact info: Euan Carmichael's Service Models Team at [ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot](mailto:ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot).**

### **Other Financial and Business Support for childcare providers**

A range of financial and business support measures have been made available by the UK and Scottish Governments since March. Information about the different schemes that may be available to private and third sector providers and childminders is available on the Scottish Government's website and updated regularly at:

[Information for private and third sector childcare providers about business support](#)  
[Information for Childminders about business and financial support](#)

#### *Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme*

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which is a UK Government Scheme, will operate until October. From August there will be changes to the level of reimbursement through HMRC for furloughing costs for the Scheme, with employers contributing starting to contribute to these costs. The level of this employer contribution will increase over the period from August to October. Further information is available at our [information page for private and third sector childcare providers about business support](#).

#### *Self-employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)*

The UK Government announced on 29 May that the scheme is being extended. **Those who are eligible will be able to claim for a second and final grant from 17 August 2020.** If you're eligible, the second and final grant will be a taxable grant worth 70% of your average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment covering a further 3 months' worth of profits, and capped at £6,570 in total. You do not need to have claimed the first grant to receive the second grant.

Please continue to share your questions with Euan Carmichael's Service Models Team through the [ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot](mailto:ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot) mailbox. We are working through them as quickly as we can.

#### **4. ELC Statutory Duty and the Expansion**

On 8 July the Scottish Government and COSLA wrote to all Local Authorities with an update on the ELC statutory duty and the ELC Expansion. You can find a copy of that letter [here](#).

#### **Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard**

Quality is at the heart of the delivery of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) entitlement. To ensure that funded ELC entitlement is delivered in high quality settings, the sector has been working towards the introduction of Funding Follows the Child. This was to have been introduced alongside the statutory roll out of 1140 hours of funded ELC entitlement in August 2020.

Funding Follows the Child is 'provider neutral' and is underpinned by a National Standard that to be a funded provider – regardless of whether they are in the public, private or third sector, or childminders – settings will have to meet. The criteria of the National Standard focuses on what children and their families should expect from their ELC experience, irrespective of where they access their funded entitlement.

In light of the delay to the statutory roll out of 1140 hours, it is no longer feasible to set a national requirement for all funded ELC providers to meet all aspects of the National Standard from August 2020.

To understand what aspects of the framework are deliverable at a national level the Scottish Government has worked with partners including COSLA, local authorities and provider representative bodies to review the Funding Follows the Child principles and National Standard criteria.

Following this exercise the Scottish Government published [interim guidance](#) on the requirements for ELC settings and local authorities regarding the delivery of Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard on 30 July. The guidance has been designed to support local authorities and providers to work in partnership to enable the delivery of as much of the National Standard criteria as possible, and to highlight where flexibility may be required.

A new timetable for the full implementation of Funding Follows the Child and the underpinning National Standard will be agreed alongside the new timetable for 1140 implementation.

**Contact info: Euan Carmichael's Service Models Team at [ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot](mailto:ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot).**

## **5. Information for parents and carers**

[Parent Club](#) launched a new campaign on 31 July to support parents and carers with the return to school and ELC. This will include new TV, radio and digital ads and new content hub on the website ([www.parentclub.scot/startback](http://www.parentclub.scot/startback)) which includes information about the new guidelines, a wide range of Q&As as well as advice and support for managing mental health, and information about funded ELC and changes to the 1140 commitment. The campaign will be further supported by a PR programme which includes the creation of videos from experts addressing key topics including: health & safety, well-being and providing advice and tips for addressing learning challenges and settling back in as well as influencer engagement.

Key links for sharing social media :

- <https://www.facebook.com/ParentClubScotland> - Parent Club Scotland Facebook page
- <https://www.instagram.com/parentclubscotland> - Parent Club Instagram page
- <https://twitter.com/parentclubscot/status/1288852207560011776> - Parent Club tweet about the new campaign

A partnerships toolkit has been co-created with a range of key partners including local authorities and representative bodies, to ensure other organisations keen to support parents and carers right now have the right messaging and helpful assets (social, newsletter copy, text message copy etc)

to provide clear and consistent reassurance. If you have not received this and would like to, please get in touch.

The National Parent Forum of Scotland have also produced a [guide for parents and carers](#) about the return to school and ELC.

Please **contact Katherine Tierney's Uptake, Eligibility and Engagement team through the [ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot](mailto:ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot) mailbox** with further suggestions for the Parent Club FAQ or other parental communication.

## **6. Educational Continuity Directions**

The background and function of the series of 'Education Continuity Directions' was covered in last month's update.

Educational Continuity Direction No. 4 came in to effect on 23 July. With all registered childcare able to open from 15 July (and provision made for this under the previous Direction No. 3), there are 2 main changes under this Direction (No. 4):

- The 'disregard' in relation to the provision of up to 600 hours of funded ELC has been removed as we have agreed with local government that local authorities will be in a position to provide the statutory entitlement of 600 hours from August.
- The provision of critical childcare will no longer be required from week commencing 3 August and local authorities will set end dates locally. A letter was sent to all local authorities from the Deputy First Minister on Wednesday 22 May to provide more detail on this.

A link to the Direction and guidance note can be found here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-act-2020-educational-continuity-direction/>.

While the Direction only covers local authority managed provision, all ELC and OOSC settings, including childminders must continue to comply with the measures in the Coronavirus Act 2020 ('The UK Act') as set out in the letter from Alison Cumming of 21 May:

*The UK Act immediately requires everyone who operates an 'educational establishment' - which includes all ELC and out of school care providers, including childminders - to have regard to the advice of the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland.*

## **7. COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues**

The Scottish Government COVID-19 Advisory Group was established in recognition of the need for additional scientific analysis of the impact of COVID-19 in Scotland, based on regularly updated advice and modelling from the UK SAGE, and other emerging scientific evidence. The [COVID-19 Advisory Group](#) has operated effectively and will retain its existing remit.

The sub-group has a focussed remit, covering all issues affecting early learning centres and schools, and linked children's services issues, but not higher and further education settings.

The sub-group has given detailed consideration to issues associated with the safe operation of early learning and childcare settings. As noted above, that advice informed the updates to the

suite of guidance documents for the childcare sector and was published on 30 July. It can be found [here](#).

Full details of the sub-group can be found [here](#).

## **8. COVID-19 Education Recovery Group / Critical Childcare and ELC Subgroup**

The Deputy First Minister convened the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group (CERG) on 24 April 2020. This group is intended to be a collaborative endeavour, bringing together key stakeholders in school education and early learning and childcare, to support national and local government in the journey to re-opening education and childcare settings when it is safe to do so.

On 21 May the CERG published [The Strategic Framework for reopening schools, early learning and childcare provision](#), which sets out a framework to be used at local level in conjunction with Local Phasing Delivery Plans for the reopening of schools and early learning and childcare. Details of the group's remit, membership and minutes of meetings are published on the Group's [webpage](#).

A Critical Childcare and ELC subgroup, chaired by Simon Mair (SG) and Laura Mason (ADES), has been established to take forward two of the ten work streams reporting to the CERG. These are; Critical Childcare and Early Learning and Childcare. The group membership includes COSLA, SOLACE, ADES, Education Scotland, Care Inspectorate, Early Years Scotland, EIS and AHDS. For further information on the subgroup, please contact [ELCDeliverySupport@gov.scot](mailto:ELCDeliverySupport@gov.scot)

The subgroup is supported by a Working Group on ELC and Childcare Sector Recovery, chaired by Ellen Leaver (SG), which brings together provider representatives from across the childcare sector, including Care and Learning Alliance (CALA), Early Years Scotland (EYS), National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA), Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN) as well as Care Inspectorate, COSLA and Scottish Government. The Working Group is now meeting fortnightly and is providing advice and input into: (1) development of guidance documents for the sector; (2) financial sustainability for the sector; (3) workforce; and (4) partnership working.

For further information on the Sector Recovery Working Group, please contact [ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot](mailto:ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot).

### **Critical childcare surveys**

We have set up two weekly surveys to monitor the delivery of critical childcare during the Covid-19 outbreak – one which local authorities respond to and one which private and voluntary settings and childminders complete. Both surveys collect data on open settings, staff working at these settings, and the number of children receiving childcare. This information is analysed and used to support reporting and decision-making.

**Contact info: Kate Smith and the Emergency Childcare team: [outofschoolcare@gov.scot](mailto:outofschoolcare@gov.scot)**

## **9. Workforce Support**

One of the sub-groups of the Education Recovery Group is looking specifically at the Workforce Support needs of the entire education workforce, including early learning and childcare and all-ages childcare, as we move towards recovery and reopening of settings. The aims of this Group are:

- To develop a directory of support for those working within the different areas of the education and childcare workforce, setting out the support resources they can access in terms both of wellbeing and professional learning needs at this unparalleled time, based on survey data collected from across the workforce in June.
- To create opportunities for practitioners to come together virtually for professional dialogue and peer support.

The ELC Directorate is working with national partners to ensure that the directory of support reflects the full range of professional learning and wellbeing support which is available across the sector.

To support the wellbeing of the childcare workforce during these challenging times, the ELC Directorate worked with Early Years Scotland to develop a new **#TeamELC Wellbeing Hub** which launched on 7 July. The Hub hosts a wealth of information and practical advice on managing wellbeing and features a function which allows practitioners to be connected with others in the sector and a series of free online wellbeing events will run throughout July. We would encourage everyone to take some time to visit the site and look after themselves and each other at this difficult time. <https://teamelcwellbeinghub.org/>

Scottish Government and Care Inspectorate are hosting a series of online support sessions on the suite of reopening guidance. The first of these sessions was held on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> of July, covering the safe reopening of ELC settings including nurseries, playgroups, family centres etc. For those who didn't get the chance to attend, a recording of the session is available on the K-Hub, by following this link: [Reopening childcare settings: the guidance explained – webinar – 10 July 20](#)

Further sessions on Childminding and Out Of School Care will follow in the coming weeks.

We would also welcome good practice examples from local partners showcasing measures that have been put in place to support the wellbeing and professional learning of staff during these challenging times.

**If you have any questions on this work please contact Scott Sutherland at:**

[Scott.Sutherland@gov.scot](mailto:Scott.Sutherland@gov.scot)

### **Guidance issued for those assessing ELC students**

Guidance has been issued for those who are assessing students currently undertaking ELC related qualifications. That guidance, covering SVQs and HNCs, has been posted on the SSSC website and links to both documents are provided below:

<https://news.sssc.uk.com/news/hnc-covid-19-guidance>

<https://news.sssc.uk.com/news/guidance-svq-assessment>

**If you have any questions on this, please contact Scott Sutherland at**

[Scott.Sutherland@gov.scot](mailto:Scott.Sutherland@gov.scot)

### **10. COVID-19 Risk Assessment Guidance for Employers**

New guidance has been produced by the Scottish Government's Chief Medical Officer Directorate, aimed at employers across all industries, to support staff and line managers to understand and carry out effective risk assessments in light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The guidance can



be accessed here - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-individual-risk-assessment-for-the-workplace/>

## **11. Extension of Covid-19 Testing to Under-5s**

The First Minister announced on 21 July that, with effect from 22 July, children aged under 5 would be eligible to be tested for COVID-19. This change was introduced in the context of the reopening of childcare settings, together with the easing of social distancing restrictions on children under 12 years old which will mean that our youngest children are able to mix more. As this happens, it will be vital for parents and for childcare providers to know if any symptoms young children present with are caused by COVID-19 or not, particularly as we approach the autumn and winter months. We want to avoid households having to isolate for prolonged periods unnecessarily if young children in families are displaying Covid-19-like symptoms which are not in fact due to Covid-19, as these symptoms are common in this age group.

To minimise discomfort and distress to young children from the testing process, it will be parents and carers who book and complete tests accessed through Test and Protect for any children under the age of 11. As with all those who receive a positive test, if a child tests positive, they will need to isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms, and household members will be asked to isolate for 14 days.

**If you have any questions on these issues, please contact Kathryn Chisholm at [Kathryn.Chisholm@gov.scot](mailto:Kathryn.Chisholm@gov.scot)**

## **11. Analysis and Evidence**

Your continued participation in the daily monitoring surveys on the provision of childcare in both PVI and LA settings is much appreciated. These surveys are weekly on a Wednesday, and should be completed by **all childcare providers currently operating**. The survey will continue when schools return in August but will be adapted to reflect the changes in circumstances under which childcare is now being delivered and the change in purpose of this data collection. The data collected has been published as part of a dashboard on current childcare provision, available on the [Scottish Government website](#).

The SEEMiS Early Years project is continuing to progress, with a provisional roll out date to local authorities of April 2021. Further consultation on the suitability of this date has still to be carried out before a date is finalised.

AUGUST 2020			
6 August	Childcare Sector Recovery Group	The ELC and Childcare Sector Recovery Working Group is looking closely at the financial sustainability and other aspects of the sector throughout the pandemic response. This is fundamental to the ability of the sector to reopen. The Scottish Government has asked the sector representative bodies, to work with their members to understand the impacts of the safe reopening guidance in terms of capacity and income generation; and the impacts of local funded ELC delivery plans as they are developed. The Group is providing input to the overall COVID-19 Education Recovery Group (which advises the Scottish Government and local government) on any further measures that may be required to support sustainability.	
10 August	New guidance applies	The date from which the new guidance published 30 July will apply from.	
11 August	Reopening of ELC term time settings	The likely date for the reopening of ELC term time settings reopening in line with schools reopening.	
13 August	Childcare Sector Recovery Group	The ELC and Childcare Sector Recovery Working Group is looking closely at the financial sustainability and other aspects of the sector throughout the pandemic response. This is fundamental to the ability of the sector to reopen. The Scottish Government has asked the sector representative bodies, to work with their members to understand the impacts of the safe reopening guidance in terms of capacity and income generation; and the impacts of local funded ELC delivery plans as they are developed. The Group is providing input to the overall COVID-19 Education Recovery Group (which advises the Scottish Government and local government) on any further measures that may be required to support sustainability.	
APRIL 2021			

24 April	SCMA Annual Conference	Unfortunately due to COVID-19 the SCMA Conference scheduled for this year has been postponed until April 2021. The theme for the conference will be “Making a Difference,” with a particular focus on wellbeing and full details can be found in the link attached.	<a href="https://www.childminding.org/news/scma-annual-conference-2020-important-update">https://www.childminding.org/news/scma-annual-conference-2020-important-update</a>
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## Annex B – Publications

Date Published	Document Link
20/03/2020	<a href="#">Guidance on critical childcare and learning provision for key workers</a>
24/03/2020	<a href="#">Implementing social distancing in education and childcare settings</a>
24/03/2020	<a href="#">School and ELC closures - guidance for key workers</a>
30/03/2020	<a href="#">Childcare providers: closure information</a>
30/03/2020	<a href="#">Information for private and third sector childcare providers about business support</a>
30/03/2020	<a href="#">Information for Childminders about business and financial support</a>
30/03/2020	<a href="#">Childcare closures and emergency provision</a>
31/03/2020	<a href="#">Joint statement issued by Ms Todd and Cllr McCabe on the 1140 hours revocation</a>
31/03/2020	<a href="#">Social distancing in education and childcare settings guidance</a>
15/05/2020	<a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19): physical distancing in education and childcare settings</a>
21/05/2020	<a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19): strategic framework for reopening schools, early learning and childcare provision</a>
26/05/2020	<a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19): schools, early learning and childcare settings - scientific evidence</a>
01/06/2020	<a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19): fully outdoor childcare providers guidance</a>
01/06/2020	<a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19): childminder services guidance</a>
15/06/2020	<a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19) Phase 3: guidance on reopening early learning and childcare services</a>
24/06/2020	<a href="#">Further route map detail announced</a>
03/07/2020	<a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19) Phase 3: guidance on reopening school aged childcare services</a>
30/07/2020	<a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on reopening early learning and childcare services</a>
30/07/2020	<a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19): childminding services guidance</a>
30/07/2020	<a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on reopening school age childcare services</a>
30/07/2020	<a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19): fully outdoor childcare providers guidance</a>
30/07/2020	<a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19): Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues – advisory note on physical distancing in early learning and childcare settings (ELC)</a>
30/07/2020	<a href="#">Funding follows the child and the national standard for early learning and childcare providers: interim guidance</a>