Children and Families, Early Years Division

Weekly News Bulletin: 21 April 2021



## **National survey of children, The Big Ask launches today**

The new Children’s Commissioner for England, Dame Rachel de Souza, has today launched [The Big Ask](http://thebigask.uk/) – the largest ever **consultation with children aged 4 to 17** in England. It aims to find out children’s concerns and aspirations about the future, so that we can put children at the heart of our country’s recovery from the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

All schools are encouraged to support their pupils to [complete this survey](https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigask/). A range of [teaching resources](https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigask/resources/) have also been produced, including lesson plans and activity packs, to help teachers incorporate this into their lessons.

Parents, care leavers and those working with children are also invited [to complete the adult survey](https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigask/adults/) to share their views about the future for children and young people today, and what they think is holding young people back.

The results from this survey will help the Children’s Commissioner identify the barriers preventing children from reaching their potential, put forward solutions and set ambitious goals for the country to achieve

**Face covering guidance to remain until 17 May at earliest**

On **6 April** the government [announced](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/face-coverings-in-schools-and-colleges-to-remain-in-place) that guidance around the use of face coverings in education settings will continue after the Easter break in England. This means that staff and adult visitors, as well as pupils in Year 7 and above should use face coverings in the ‘recommended circumstances’ set out in the [Face coverings in education guidance](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/976213/Face_coverings_in_education_April_2021.pdf).

The government is not recommending universal use of face coverings in early years and childcare settings in England because the system of controls provides additional mitigating measures. However adults in settings should use a face covering where social distancing is not possible with another adult - the DfE has advised that this relates to ‘communal areas, but not classrooms’. Children under 11 years are not required to wear a face covering. More information can be found in the [guidance for early years settings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures).

The latest guidance on face coverings is expected to be in place until **at least 17 May** in line with step 3 of the easing of lockdown restrictions, depending on a review of the data and evidence at the time. By then, those in the first nine priority groups in the vaccination programme are expected to have received their first dose of the vaccine.

Meanwhile other precautionary measures in early years and childcare settings should continue, including regular Covid-19 testing, social distancing where possible and increased hygiene and ventilation.

The government recommends that early years and childcare practitioners in England, as well as families and households should continue with [twice-weekly rapid testing](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/twice-weekly-rapid-testing-to-be-available-to-everyone-in-england) throughout the Easter holidays and into the summer term. Tests should be taken before returning to settings in summer term (the night before, morning of or first day back) to find and isolate any positive cases and help prevent potential outbreaks. All results should be [reported online](https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result) as positive, negative or void.

## **Updated guidance on providing school meals during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak**

We have updated our guidance on [providing school meals during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools?utm_source=19%20April%202021%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19#covid-local-support-grant) to provide information on the COVID Local Support Grant being run by local authorities in England.

This grant will cover the period from Saturday 17 April 2021 to Sunday 20 June 2021 and is further to the £229 million COVID Winter Grant Scheme, in place between November 2020 and Friday 16 April 2021.

## **Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccinations for eligible staff in education and childcare settings**

Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccines are the best way to protect people from the virus and will save thousands of lives. We welcome the support of education and childcare settings in encouraging vaccine take up and enabling staff who are eligible for a vaccination to attend booked vaccine appointments where possible.

The vaccines have been through the same regulatory approval process as any medicines to ensure they meet strict safety standards and offer high levels of protection. They were tested on thousands of people of different ages, ethnic backgrounds and with different health conditions before being approved. The vaccine cannot give you coronavirus (COVID-19) and will reduce your chance of becoming seriously ill. Some people may experience side effects from the vaccine – if you do, most of these are mild and short-term, lasting no longer than a week (but usually much less).

The Department of Health and Social Care has published a [blog covering frequently asked questions about coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccines answered by Professor Jonathan Van-Tam](https://healthmedia.blog.gov.uk/2021/03/12/covid19vaccines-faqs/). We encourage you to read the blog for further information and to answer any questions you or your staff may have about the vaccination.

[**Twice-weekly rapid testing to be available to everyone in England**](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/twice-weekly-rapid-testing-to-be-available-to-everyone-in-england)

On 5 April, the Prime Minister announced that **from 9 April all people in England will be able to access twice weekly rapid tests for coronavirus**. There is no change to the current arrangements for staff in nurseries, who should continue to collect their home testing kits from nursery and continue to report their results online.

Twice weekly testing should continue throughout term time and the holidays. Childminders should continue to access home test kits [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff). Settings may wish to encourage the families of the children attending their provision to order tests through the various available routes. More information can be found [here](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/regular-rapid-coronavirus-tests-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms/)

[**Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus Covid-19 outbreak**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/actions-for-early-years-and-childcare-providers-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak)

What childcare services early years settings, childminders and local authorities need to provide during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

**Main changes to previous guidance**

On **13 April 2021**, we updated the following sections:

* [face coverings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/actions-for-early-years-and-childcare-providers-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak#face-coverings) - visual communication, visors and exemptions

We also updated the following sections to reflect step 2 of the [roadmap out of lockdown](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021):

* [parent and child groups](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/actions-for-early-years-and-childcare-providers-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak#parent-and-child-groups) - singing
* [clinically extremely vulnerable staff](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/actions-for-early-years-and-childcare-providers-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak#CEV)
* [clinically extremely vulnerable children](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/actions-for-early-years-and-childcare-providers-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak#CEVchildren)
* [educational trips](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/actions-for-early-years-and-childcare-providers-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak#trips)

This guidance is provided to support early years settings to manage provision during coronavirus (COVID-19). Early years registered nurseries, pre-schools, childminders, maintained nursery schools, nursery classes in schools, and other pre-reception provision on school sites should remain open to allow all children to attend full time or their usual hours.

The [system of controls](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/actions-for-early-years-and-childcare-providers-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak#system-of-controls) in this guidance create an environment for children and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. Settings will need to continue to implement these controls to the fullest extent possible.

[**Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak**](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak)

Attendance in education settings since Monday 23 March and early years settings since Thursday 16 April.

**Updated**: 8 April 2021

## **All schools, colleges and nurseries coronavirus (COVID-19) LFD test kit log: change of retention period**

All schools, colleges and nurseries keeping a coronavirus (COVID-19) LFD test kit log should not keep the data in the log for longer than 12 months from the date on which it is collected. Please note that the Department of Health and Social Care may request data from the test kit log at any time within the12 month period.

Further information can be found in the terms and conditions for coronavirus (COVID-19) testing located on the [primary schools document sharing platform](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1X4fLxy6_ppmpmKrv3hT2M6cduAN_GS54?utm_source=19%20April%202021%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19) and the [schools and colleges document sharing platform](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jYv0MjFyIIbzgPn_1S10OuRgfrj_b5_P?utm_source=19%20April%202021%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19)



## **Ofsted inspections to resume for registered early years providers**

Ofsted will resume on-site inspections of registered early years providers under the education inspections framework from **Tuesday 4 May**. To support this return, they have updated the

[early years inspection handbook for Ofsted registered provision](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspection-handbook-eif?utm_source=20%20April%202021%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19)

## [**Early years inspection handbook**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspection-handbook-eif?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=aa070e18-a1ea-42ba-8948-56b072aa065b&utm_content=daily)

**Page summary:**  
Ofsted guidance on inspecting registered early years and childcare providers under the education inspection framework.

**Change made**:  
Edits throughout: please see ‘Summary of changes’ for more information.

**Time updated**:  
3:30pm, 19 April 2021

## [**Reported coronavirus (COVID-19) notifications by registered early years and childcare settings**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reported-coronavirus-covid-19-cases-by-registered-early-years-and-childcare-settings?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=400ac890-e0cb-420a-b339-d7e838287662&utm_content=daily)

**Page summary**:  
This data is published fortnightly. It gives the number of registered early years and childcare providers reporting one or more confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) by week.

**Change made**:  
Added data for weeks beginning 22 March and 29 March 2021.

**Time updated**:  
9:30am, 19 April 2021

## [**Childcare services exempt from registering with Ofsted: form**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exemption-notification-form-for-childcare-providers-that-operate-for-14-days-or-less-in-a-12-month-period?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=6559ce92-3b65-49f7-ad98-e462095fd5bf&utm_content=daily)

**Page summary:**  
Form for childcare services that do not have to register with Ofsted because they only provide care for up to 14 days a year.

**Change made:**  
Updated and condensed the form for clarity.

**Time updated:**  
2:13pm, 19 April 2021

**Early Years Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2020 - 2021**

It is the statutory duty of all English local authorities to secure sufficient childcare for local parents who need it, and to measure this sufficiency by conducting an annual CSA report.

This years annual report focuses on the impact of COVID-19 on the early years and childcare sector.

Please find a copy of the latest assessment here: [Childcare Sufficiency Assessment](https://www.slough.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/childcare-sufficiency-assessment)



**Early Years Service Training Portfolio**

Please note the attached portfolio has been updated – Summer term training dates and links to book have been added.

**Early Years and Prevention Service: Training and Continuous Professional Development: Calendar 2020 -2021**

Slough Early Years Service is committed to supporting the sector with training and continuous professional development opportunities. We are constantly reviewing our offer and have recently made some changes to the next annual calendar to take into considerations the impact of COVID-19.

All of the training that has been scheduled has been based on feedback from the sector but if you are looking for something specific that we haven’t organised please contact us and we will be happy to discuss your requirements, please contact [earlyyears@slough.gov.uk](mailto:earlyyears@slough.gov.uk) or call 01753 476581.

**Please see below upcoming training/briefings for April & May 2021.**

**NDNA – Leadership and Management Training – 5 part webinar**

**Starting on the 30th April 2021.**

This childcare course will cover the fundamentals of people management. Attendees will gain a professional awareness of their responsibilities and increase their confidence in their role.

Key topics:

• Developing self-confidence

• The transition from team member to team leader.

• The expectations of the role

• Learning to communicate and lead with impact

**Appropriate for deputies and new managers**

**Participants are required to attend all five sessions**

Friday 30th April 2021 10:00am – 11:15am

Friday 7th May 2021 10:00am – 11:15am

Friday 14th May 2021 10:00am – 11:15am

Friday 21st May 2021 10:00am – 11:15am

Friday 28th May 2021 10:00am – 11:15am

**Cost:** Full price for this training is **£106.77 per person**

To book: <https://thelink.slough.gov.uk/events/early-years-leadership-and-management-training-ndna>

**EYFS Reforms Briefing**

**FREE Online information session**

This is an information session to become aware of the changes to the EYFS in preparation for the national roll out from September 1st 2021 of the new legal document and underpinning framework. We will be facilitating discussion groups about changes to provision and practice within this new framework and educational programmes, assessment processes and ELGs and considering the seven key features of effective practice within the revised Development Matters document

**Appropriate for EY leads, managers, senior practitioners and childminders**

Please choose one date

**Tuesday 4th May 2021 1:00pm-2:30pm**

To book: <https://thelink.slough.gov.uk/events/early-years-eyfs-reforms-briefing>

**Tuesday 4th May 2021 6:30pm-8pm**

To book: <https://thelink.slough.gov.uk/events/early-years-eyfs-reforms-briefing-0>

**Thursday 6th May 2021 4:00pm-5:30pm**

To book: <https://thelink.slough.gov.uk/events/early-years-eyfs-reforms-briefing-1>

**Monday 17th May 2021 6:30pm-8pm**

To book: <https://thelink.slough.gov.uk/events/early-years-eyfs-reforms-briefing-2>

**Early Years Emotional & Mental Wellbeing Training**

**FREE Online**

To help staff to feel more confident in:

- recognising that a child, parent/carer or colleague may be experiencing mental wellbeing difficulties;

- their ability to support children, parents/carers or colleagues who may be experiencing mental   
 wellbeing difficulties;

- knowing where to access further support for children, parents/carers or colleagues who may be   
 experiencing mental wellbeing difficulties.

**Target audience: Managers Deputy, Managers, select senior staff, Mental health lead**

**Practitioners are required to attend all 3 sessions**

Wednesday 12th May 2021 4:30pm - 5:45pm (part 1)

Wednesday 19th May 2021 4:30pm - 5:45pm (part 2)

Wednesday 26th May 2021 4:30pm - 5:45pm (part 3)

To book: <https://thelink.slough.gov.uk/events/>



**Updates for Parents**

## **Travelling to school and college safely**

It is likely that the roads and public transport system will be busier than when students returned in March, given other businesses have reopened.

As part of your ongoing communications with your pupils and their parents, you may wish to share the following messages on how pupils can travel to and from school safely:

* if you live a short distance from your school or college, walk, cycle or scoot to and from school wherever it is possible and safe to do so
* avoid sharing a car with anyone outside of your household or support bubble
* if you are using public transport to get to school or college, plan ahead and allow more time for your journey
* when you are travelling by public or dedicated school transport, don’t forget to:
* wear a face covering (unless you are exempt – including if you are aged 11 and under). It is important you wear them for the entirety of your journey, including inside a bus or train station
* social distance where possible
* wash or sanitise your hands regularly
* be considerate to fellow passengers and staff.

Further information can be found in our [guidance on transport to school and other places of education](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-to-school-and-other-places-of-education-autumn-term-2020?utm_source=19%20April%202021%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19). The Department for Transport has also created [resources](https://extranet.dft.gov.uk/safer-transport-campaign/schools/) that can be downloaded and used by education settings to promote safe travel to school



## [**Inspecting schools: guidance for parents**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspections-a-guide-for-parents?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=daad1283-218d-4b2a-865b-c59e19e04883&utm_content=daily)

**Page summary**:  
A leaflet for parents and carers of children whose school is due for inspection.

**Change made**:  
Updated details of how we will inspect schools that were judged to be outstanding at their last inspection and added a short section about inspection and the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Time updated**:  
3:30pm, 19 April 2021

