**Pulse survey for Department for Education on COVID issues affecting the childcare and early years** **sector**

Hello,

We are inviting your setting to take part in a survey that the Department for Education (DfE) is running to understand the impact of COVID on your early years setting, focusing on workforce and child absences. This would involve filling in a very short weekly survey for the first part of 2022. This is the second week of the survey.

Since March 2020, the childcare and early years sector has faced unprecedented circumstances brought about by the Coronavirus pandemic. DfE knows that there is concern about workforce absence as part of the latest wave of the pandemic, but has limited regular, up-to-date data about this. This survey will be crucial to obtaining an accurate picture of the issues that the childcare and early years sector are facing on a regular basis.

We are inviting you to take part and obtained your contact details either from the Ofsted register or from the Schools Census. This data collection will be conducted entirely by the DfE.

We understand that, particularly in the current climate, your time is precious, but it is really important that we can gather evidence on this issue and hope that you will be able to take part. This data will be essential to inform DfE’s response to the latest wave of the pandemic and in assessing policy options and development.

DfE also understands that there is concern in the early years sector about longer term recruitment and retention issues. We have commissioned qualitative interviews on the theme of early years workforce and a survey on early years workforce issues and financial health compared to before the pandemic. We expect these pieces of research to be published in Spring 2022, and their findings will inform future policy development in this area.

Ofsted collects data on COVID notifications so this survey does not collect this information. Instead, this focuses on workforce absence due to COVID and child attendance over this latest wave of the pandemic.

**How do I take part?**

To complete the survey [click here.](https://dferesearch.fra1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5aKCJPbFVj7Fi18)

Please complete this by **23.59 on Wednesday 19th January.**

If you took part last week, please note that the above is a new link. Once you have completed the survey, you will not be able to complete it again. If you have more than 1 setting, please input information about the setting you chose last time. If this is the first time you are completing the survey and you are responsible for more than one setting, please choose one setting to consistently use.

**What does taking part involve?**

Taking part involves completing a short 5-minute online survey, at a time that suits you. In order to track how the effects on the sector are developing, the questionnaire will be sent out **weekly** during January and February, at which point DfE will review the need for the collection.

It is intended that the survey will be sent out on the Monday, with responses due back by 23:59 on the Wednesday of each week.

If you are a school with a nursery class you are likely to fill in the daily Educational Setting Status Form. However, that form does not collect data on early years provision and so DfE has limited data on workforce and absence issues for school nurseries. When filling out this pulse survey, please only consider nursery provision, not reception.

Settings with children that received funded entitlements will be participating in the Schools and Early Years census w/c 17th January. We are not able to get this workforce absence data from that data collection and so would welcome your continued support with this pulse survey as well.

While childminders are welcome to complete the survey, we are not targeting them specifically to avoid adding to their workload during this period. In case you wish to take part, we have included a CM option in the questionnaire.

Participation is voluntary. You can choose to take part on some weeks but not others. However, it is really important for us to get an accurate picture over time so we would appreciate you completing the form each week if possible.

If you would not like to be contacted again, please [unsubscribe here]

**What will I be asked about?**

We have included a copy of the questions that we will ask you below. This is so you can see the questions before you complete the survey using the link above. **Please complete the survey using the link only.** We do not intend to change these questions weekly.

As you can see, we will ask you for your URN and/or postcode on each survey.

**How will my data be used?**

The data collected are used for research purposes only. Your name and contact details will be stored securely and managed by analysts in DfE. Findings will be shared at an aggregate level with colleagues within the DfE and other Government Departments. This means that no individual provider will be identifiable in any published data. Setting-level data may also be shared in confidence with local authorities, for internal use only. If you do not wish your setting-level data to be shared, please contact [EY.analysisandresearch@education.gov.uk](mailto:EY.analysisandresearch@education.gov.uk). DfE will publish the aggregate data on the Explore Educational Settings website.

**What if I have already been contacted about this?**

You may have already been contacted by NatCen on behalf of DfE to sign up to take part in this research if you agreed to take part in further research following your participation in the 2021 Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers. We are now expanding participation in this survey to more providers to ensure we get an accurate picture of the current situation and to maximise response rates.

If you have already replied to this other request, please note that this is the same data collection request and so please do complete the survey if you wish to. If you would not like to take part, please [unsubscribe here]

You may also have been sent this invitation email via Early Years Alliance, National Day Nurseries Association, PACEY or via your Local Authority. This is because we are working with them to promote the survey, ensuring we hear from as many settings as possible. Please only fill the survey in once.

**Any questions?**

For further information, please contact DfE directly by emailing [**EY.analysisandresearch@education.gov.uk**](mailto:EY.analysisandresearch@education.gov.uk)**.**

Yours sincerely,

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Description automatically generated

**Dr Laura Hunnikin**

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