COVID-19 - Risk assessment considerations

Version 1 - 13 May 2020

The following information has been designed to help you navigate the various documents and information that have been provided to support the return of children to early year's settings. This is not an 'answer sheet', but is instead some helpful guidance for you to consider when planning for your individual setting needs.

It is important to remember to involve staff and parents in your decision-making and to be fully confident in your offer before confirming places for children.

You should read this alongside the FAQ document we have produced for parents and settings. You can also use the risk assessment template we have issued.

Grouping of children, consider room sizes, ratios and access to facilities

- The government has issued no specific guidelines for the number of children that can access early year's provision from 1st June 2020. We know that it would be extremely difficult for children to socially distance from each other, so the advice for children and adults in settings will be different.

- We suggest that children are grouped into 'bubble groups', where they stay with the same children and staff all the time throughout the week. Staff should socially distance from each other during these times where they can, but socially distancing with the children will not always be possible.

- You will need to risk assess the size of your room(s) and how many children you think it is safe to have at any one time in the space(s). If the room is large, you may be able to have more than one 'bubble group' and staff.

- We recommend that you use staff ratios to guide how many children are in a 'bubble'. For example, if the children are over three you could have multiple 'bubble groups' of 8 - 16, 24 or 32 depending on your space, with the appropriate staff ratio with the children. We would suggest that if possible, you rota one extra staff member to be responsible for cleaning equipment after use, wiping surfaces, emptying bins and encouraging hand washing on a regular basis.

- Use of outdoor space should be encouraged, although it is recommended that outdoor equipment is not shared with other children unless it is thoroughly disinfected after use. If this is not possible, equipment should be put away.

- Scheduling children to attend at the same time with the same cohort across the week would be recommended. In order to do this, parents may have to be flexible with their funded hours in order that their child's 'bubble group' all attend together on the same days at the same times. In order to keep your staff and children safe there may have to be a loss of flexibility for a while so that you can keep staff and children safe.

Infection, prevention and control - children

- We know that the childcare sector has extremely high standards for infection control already. By ramping this up to be done more regularly you will be able to reduce the spread of infection.
- Children should be encouraged to wash their hands on entering the provision.
- Parents should be advised that under no circumstances should their child attend if they are exhibiting any of the Covid-19 symptoms.
- Staff should only use the PPE that they would normally expect to use in their everyday working practice. For example, when changing a nappy, clearing up bodily fluids, or assisting a sick child.
- Outdoor play should be encouraged in their small 'bubble groups'.

Infection, prevention and control - adults.

- Adults should try, where possible, to socially distance from other adults and stay 2 metres apart.
- PPE should only be worn as advised in children's section above.
- Staff should wash their hands thoroughly at regular intervals as advised by government experts.
- Children should be comforted physically where their well- being is at risk, but generally, staff should try to limit physical contact particularly with older children.

Infection, prevention and control - site

- Handwashing should be mandatory as soon as anyone enters the building, handwashing facilities should be readily available across the provision.
- Soft furnishings and toys should be removed from the provision and tables or chairs removed that are not necessary. Your cleaning rota should include more regular disinfecting of surfaces that children and young people are touching - e.g. such as toys, books, desks, chairs, doors, sinks, toilets, light switches, bannisters, more regularly than normal.
- Staff should regularly wipe equipment in use throughout the day with antibacterial spray or disinfectant. This includes outdoor equipment.
- Laptops, IPads, mousepads and workstations should be wiped clean with antibacterial spray or disinfectant on a regular basis. Door handles to staff toilets, taps and toilet flush handles should be disinfected regularly.
- The environment should be thoroughly disinfected at the beginning and end of the day. During the day, equipment should be wiped down regularly, as well as surfaces that are in regular use.
- Bins should be emptied regularly during the day to prevent the spread of infection.
- Where practical, limit adult entry into the building to staff only or emergency workers.

Lunch and snack times

- These should be done in the child's 'bubble group' and staggered to avoid children coming into contact with those not in their groups.
- It is recommended that staff prepare children's snacks and drinks individually to prevent lots of hands over the food and cross contamination.

Drop off and collection time

- Where practical, parents should not enter the building with their children.
- Children should have staggered drop off and pick up times, and staff should take children from the parent at the door and at collection time follow the same procedure.
- Face to face parent handovers should be limited. Consider how you can make more use of your parent/setting IT platforms, written handovers, or a phone call if necessary later in the day. There should be no delay in pick up or drop off which increases parent/staff contact time.
- Parents should be encouraged to take their child to their provision by foot, bike or car, and to avoid public transport where possible.

Signs and symptoms present in staff/child

- Please follow the government guidance: If a child is symptomatic and awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age of the child and with appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.
- If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom should be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.
- PPE should be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs).
- In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.
- If a member of staff has helped someone who was unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves (and in which case, a test is available) or the child subsequently tests positive (see 'What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in a setting?' below). They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell. Cleaning the affected area with normal household disinfectant after someone with symptoms has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. See the Public Health England guide - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings
- If a staff member develops symptoms during the day they should go home immediately and follow government advice should their symptoms persist.

Appendix 1 - General government coronavirus guidance documents

Guidance	Link
Guidance on maintaining educational provision	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision
Actions for education and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 01 June 2020	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/actions-for-education-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020
Information for parents and carers about re-opening schools and settings from 01 June 2020	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june
The Government's Rebuild Strategy Document	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/884171/FINAL_6.6637_CO_HMG_C19_Recovery_FINAL_110520_v2_WEB__1_.pdf
Guidance for early years and childcare providers	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-free-early-education-entitlements-funding-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak
Guidance on vulnerable children and young people	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people
Guidance for safeguarding in schools and other settings.	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers
Guidance for implementing social distancing in education and childcare settings	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings
Guidance for cleaning of settings	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings
Guidance for staying at home if your household has possible symptoms	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance
Guidance for shielding vulnerable groups from Covid-19	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19
Guidance on managing school premises, which are partially open, during the coronavirus outbreak	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-school-premises-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/managing-school-premises-which-are-partially-open-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak

Appendix 2 - Business support, information and advice

Guidance	Link
Government information regarding support available to business	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care
Guidance on how to calculate 80% of wages	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/work-out-80-of-your-employees-wages-to-claim-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme
Government Business Support FAQs	https://www.businesssupport.gov.uk/faqs/
Government guide to the nursery business rates discount available	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-rates-nursery-childcare-discount-2020-to-2021-coronavirus-response-local-authority-guidance
Government's Tax Helping to support businesses	https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tax-helpline-to-support-businesses-affected-by-coronavirus-covid-19
Government's advice regarding Statutory Sick Pay	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-back-statutory-sick-pay-paid-to-employees-due-to-coronavirus-covid-19
Government advice for employees	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-guidance-for-employees
Government Information for Charities	https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission
Business Hampshire Guide	https://businesshampshire.co.uk/support/covid-19-support/
Information for Voluntary and Community groups	www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/information/coronavirus
Business Support Campaign – 5 Steps to take today	https://industrialstrategy.frontify.com/d/55EzeVU6rhza/