

GETTING READY FOR 1 JUNE – Services for Young Children (SfYC) Webinars

Answers to questions raised

This guidance is subject to change as further guidance is received from the Cabinet Office and the Department for Education (DfE).

On 28 May 2020 the Prime Minister announced that the Government’s five tests for easing the lockdown in England have been met, enabling all children to be welcomed back to early years settings and a phased return of children in priority year groups to school, from Monday 1 June.

The welfare of children and staff has been at the heart of all decision making and Ministers want to thank all those involved in preparing for this milestone.

A reminder also of the following materials available to support settings as they prepare to open for all children:

- the DfE Early Years planning guide is available [here](#);
- and a Foundation Years video podcast is available [here](#).

We advise you to sign up for updates on specific topics via Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/email-signup?link=/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

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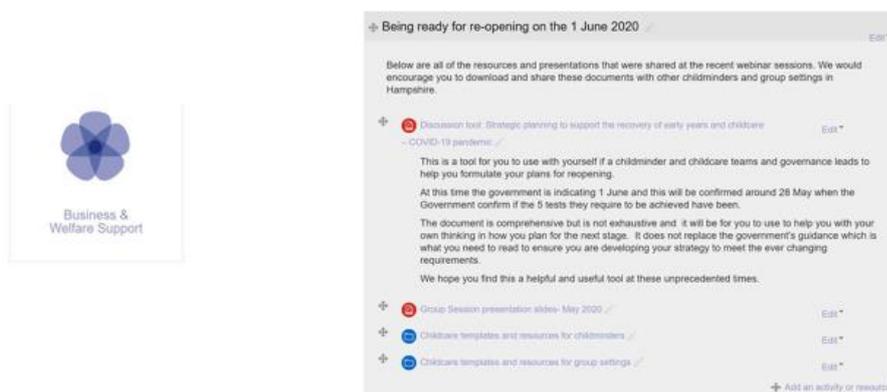
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1. Introduction

To support childminders and group settings to consider their reopening plans we ran a series of webinars in the afternoon and evenings of the week of 18 May. These were co-delivered with Freya Derrick from Hopscotch Nurseries and Jackie Restell from Orange Tree Childminding, both of whom had been operating during the “lock down” period and putting plans in place to reopen on 1 June. These sessions were well attended by the sector.

If you missed these sessions, then there is an opportunity for you to review the presentation together with the various resources that the settings have made available. These can be found, through the Business and Welfare Support section of the SfYC Moodle: <https://sfyctraining.hants.gov.uk>

SFYC MOODLE <https://sfyctraining.hants.gov.uk/>



During the webinars a number of questions were raised. These, together with answers, are set out below, grouped into key themes. Any specific queries relating to your setting can be submitted via email to childcare@hants.gov.uk.

2. Reopening on 1 June

Q: Do all settings have to open on 1 June?

A: The Government encourages all settings to review reopening with their parents who may be requiring childcare places once the restrictions begin to be lifted. Providers should plan their reopening, by undertaking a full risk assessment, to support known demand from parents and should work with the local authority to support the demand in their locality. Providers need to consider staffing arrangements and plan to open as soon as possible from 1 June..

Our expectation is that settings will reopen unless one or more of the following situations arises, whereby you must contact us via childcare@hants.gov.uk to discuss as soon as possible:

- Landlord not allowing building to open
- Insufficient staff due to COVID-19 related sickness or shielding
- Temporary closure due to staff isolating or due to a COVID outbreak in the setting

Q: Are we only able to have back children under school age?

A: From 1 June childminders will be able to look after children of **all ages**, in line with their agreed age ranges and numbers as outlined in their OFSTED registration.

Childminders, as with other settings, need to review the actual number of children they can safely provide care for whilst maintaining social distancing principles as outlined in Government guidance and adhering to the EYFS. Details of the EYFS, including ratios can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

The Government has outlined that if there is a need to limit childcare places then they should be allocated a priority basis of: critical worker and vulnerable children, 3 and 4 year olds and then younger children.

3. Risk Assessments & Shared Care

Q: How can I ensure that parents and staff understand the arrangements about infection control we are putting in place?

A: The Government has provided a draft letter which settings can use to communicate what is being put in place.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-early-years-and-childcare-settings#AnnexA>

Other parts of this guidance may also be useful in ensuring staff and parents understand what is being put in place and should be adopted in your policy i.e. Section 2 “Prepare to implement practical measures to reduce risk”, Section 5 “Communicate with staff” and Section 6 “Communicate with parents and carers”.

Q: Should I be accepting children who also attend other settings or children after school?

A: In the DfE’s guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june> Section 7) it is stated:

“To minimise contact between groups of children and staff, children should attend just one setting wherever possible and parents and carers should be encouraged to minimise as far as possible the number of education and childcare settings their child attends. Childminding settings should consider how they can work with parents and carers to agree how best to manage any necessary journeys, for example pick-ups and drop-offs at schools, to reduce the need for a provider to travel with groups of children.”

Ada Simpson from the DfE at the National Children’s Bureau vodcast published on 24 May outlined:

If possible, we are asking parents and carers for their child to attend one setting at this time. We do understand that some children do need to attend two settings and that it may be important for their parent’s working arrangements or for the child’s health and wellbeing needs. In some cases, this may need to continue, but should be avoided where it can be. This will be for parents and settings to consider how they can make this work.

Hampshire County Council, in view of this latest guidance, asks that parents, childcare providers and, where appropriate, schools work together to review and evaluate risk and put in place agreed arrangements of shared care arrangements that can work within the new infection control arrangements to minimise COVID-19 transmission.

Link to Vodcast by NCB:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kIFSY5pBJFo&utm_source=Foundation+Years&utm_campaign=ae206d07b6-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_03_21_05_01_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8f9a6de061-ae206d07b6-321603797&mc_cid=ae206d07b6&mc_eid=4c4c988124

Q: Should we be temperature checking children?

A: Extract from Government guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-early-years-and-childcare-settings#Section2>

Settings do not need to take children’s temperatures every morning or throughout the day. Public Health England’s guidance is that routine testing of an individual’s temperature is not a reliable method for identifying coronavirus. There is no need for anything other than normal personal hygiene and washing of clothes following a day in a childcare setting.

Q: How do I manage arrivals and departures when dealing with parents whilst minimising risk of infection?

A: Review your policies, and ensure they are in line with the Government guidance to ensure that social distancing and infection control can be maintained.

Extract from DfE Guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-early-years-and-childcare-settings#Section2>

[early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-early-years-and-childcare-settings#Section2](#)

Reduce contact between parents and carers when dropping off and picking up their children, for example by limiting drop off and pick up to one parent or carer per family and staggering timings. Do not allow parents or carers into the setting unless this is essential and arrange for children to be collected at the door if this is possible.

As some young children will not have been attending a setting for a number of weeks and may be feeling anxious, work with parents and carers to consider how best to manage dropping off their children while maintaining physical distancing.

Avoid the need for parents and carers to wait, but where they have to, consider whether physical distancing markings could be used.

Consider how you can use technology to communicate with parents and carers digitally, for example when providing handover information at the end of the day.

Q: Am I allowed to arrange short reintroduction visits for children returning to the setting? Does this also apply to new children joining the setting?

A: The guidance outlines that you are required to consider small groups of children that remain consistent in terms of children and staff throughout each day and week. Keeping the groups small reduces the risk of transmission and the impact if an outbreak occurs.

Undertake your risk assessments to minimise transmission to help inform your revised policies and procedures in how children join your setting. Remember communication to parents is key to ensure they are kept informed of any new arrangements.

4. Staffing

Q: What should I do about staff returning to work, any reinduction training and return from furlough?

A: It is important that you keep in touch with any staff who are currently not working and consider how staff will return to work and how they will be familiarised with any new policy and procedures. Take advice from ACAS or your HR Advisors/Legal team, if you are unsure how to deal with specific matters should staff be reluctant to return to work. Those who have furloughed staff should review the guidance from HMRC regarding returning staff and matters relating to any training in these periods.

<https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>

5. Small Group Sizes – “Bubbles”

Q: Is there any advice for the size of bubbles and how many bubbles should you set up in a single space to maintain social distancing?

A: The guidance clarifies the maximum size of small groups in relation to EYFS ratios. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-early-years-and-childcare-settings#Section2>

Settings should consider how they can keep the groups consistent in terms of children and staff throughout each day and week. As a part of the risk assessment settings should plan the activities they provide to reduce contact between individual “bubbles”. All staff will need to understand and be engaged with any revised policies and procedures regarding this.

Keeping the groups small reduces the risk of transmission and the impact if an outbreak occurs.

Q: How do you set up social distancing for children or keep the bubbles apart when you have an open plan environment?

A: You will need to review your premises to establish how you might create smaller areas for “bubbles” by using your furniture or resources differently to outline any specific spaces.

Q: Should I look to spread out part-time children across the week? Or should they attend the setting together to help with their social development?

A: The guidance outlines that you are required to consider small groups of children that remain consistent in terms of children and staff throughout each day and week. Keeping the groups small reduces the risk of transmission and the impact if an outbreak occurs.

6. Cleaning & PPE

Q: How frequently should I clean toys and equipment children use during the day?

A: You should review your regular cleaning routines and ensure they are in line with required cleaning practices and your risk assessment in meeting revised infection control procedures. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-early-years-and-childcare-settings#Section2>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

Q: How do I source PPE and what do I do if I my usual supply chain is unavailable?

A: Current DfE guidance for safe working in childcare settings does not require additional PPE to be worn. [Implementing Protective Measures in Education and Childcare Settings](#)

If needed, childcare providers should obtain PPE from existing suppliers. In the event of difficulty, please contact childcare@hants.gov.uk.

7. Food & Resources

Q: Are children allowed to bring packed lunches?

A: Your risk assessment will need to be undertaken to inform whether any changes are needed to your policy and process in supporting any food such as packed lunches from home. You will then need to liaise with parents regarding any arrangements so that they are clear about what measures need to be put in place to maintain good infection control and limit the risk of Coronavirus transmission in the setting.

Consider how you will be adapting your policies and procedures to minimise the risk of infection transmission when essential items are being brought from home to the setting. You should consider how essential items that are brought in from home are managed, in line with your infection control measures.

Q: Do we need to change our usual self-serve arrangements for snacks and drinks during the day?

A: Consider in your risk assessment and updated policies how the daily routine for each of your “bubbles”/small groups will need adapting so that snacks and drinks can be made available but the mixing of groups and children and adults is minimised.

Q: Should I use water and sand play?

A: Section 10 of the guidance (link below) states that malleable resources, such as play dough, should not be shared between groups and public health advice is that, as sand pits cannot be thoroughly cleaned between uses, they should not be used at this time. Consider how resources can be used safely and in which circumstances and which items it might be more practical to remove during this time.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-early-years-and-childcare-settings>

Q: Should I stop putting out particular toys such as Lego, wooden toys and building blocks or books etc?

A: Extract from DfE guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-early-years-and-childcare-settings>

In order to facilitate cleaning, remove unnecessary items from learning environments where there is space to store them elsewhere. Public health advice is to remove all soft toys, and any toys that are hard to clean, such as those with intricate parts. Where practicable, remove soft furnishings, for example pillows, bean bags and rugs.

When cleaning items you should refer to the Government guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

8. Infections at a setting

Q: What happens if you have an infection within your bubble or setting

A: The Government's guidance contains the relevant information about what you should do if you have a confirmed case in your setting.

Extract from Government guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings> (Updated 12 May. This guidance is due to be updated before 1 June 2020.)

When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. All staff and students who are attending an education or childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus, and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario.

Where the child, young person or staff member tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.

Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider class or group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.

As part of the national test and trace programme, if other cases are detected within the cohort or in the wider setting, Public Health England's local health protection teams will conduct a rapid investigation and will advise schools and other settings of the most appropriate action to take. In some cases, a larger number of other children/young people

may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole class, site or year group. Where settings are observing guidance on infection prevention and control, which will reduce risk of transmission, closure of the whole setting will not generally be necessary.

As COVID-19 is a notifiable disease you should report to Public Health England (PHE). <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/notifiable-diseases-and-causative-organisms-how-to-report#list-of-notifiable-diseases>

You must also contact SfYC on childcare@hants.gov.uk clearly heading COVID-19 outbreak so that we can support you in any arrangements that have been instructed by PHE.

Q: I am concerned that children aged 5 and over can get tested if showing symptoms but not the early years younger age group. How can this work for managing a potential outbreak at my setting?

A: From 1 June, tests will be available to all ages if they are attending childcare.

Extract from Government guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-early-years-and-childcare-settings#AnnexA> (Published 24 May)

Once early years and childcare providers open to more children, all children who are attending a childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus, and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario. The aim is to enable children to get back to childcare, and their parents or carers not to need to self-isolate any longer than is necessary, if the test proves to be negative. A positive test will ensure rapid action to protect other children and staff in their setting.

We ask all parents and carers to ensure they organise a test for their child, in the event that they develop coronavirus symptoms, and notify us immediately of a positive test. Further guidance is available about [getting tested](#).

9. Additional Business Queries

Q: What is the response to parents who ask to use any unused funding hours from April and May in the future?

A: The Government instructed settings to close on 20 March and allowed the settings to retain the funding over this period to ensure that provision was available for when lockdown measures reduced. Therefore, it is considered the early years education hours claimed have been used and are not available for use at other times in this summer period unless the child has remaining hours available.

Q: Do you have any advice on how to set things up to get new business for the autumn?

A: Make sure your information in the public arena is up to date possible. Ensure parents are kept informed of what is happening at the setting so that there is great confidence in what you are providing so that there is opportunity for word of mouth or personal recommendation to friends and family. There are some other alternatives such as:

- Update your website with key information in preparation for September
- Make sure photos are updated and show how your settings is meeting the new requirements - this will provide parents greater confidence to know what it is like. – make sure this includes photos are on your website or other social media platforms.
- Where possible, create a virtual tour of the space, including outdoor areas
- Ensure your business Facebook page and other social media are up to date
- Include parent testimonials and children's words/pictures of why they like the setting
- Highlight staff skills, qualifications and experiences i.e. supporting children with specific SEN needs
- Make your setting available virtually if parents need help in filling in forms etc.
- Ensure you service record is up to date on the Family Information and Services Hub directory – contact localoffer@hants.gov.uk if you need help with this. This is a free service and is a self service website for parents seeking childcare providers.
- Consider doing an activity for parents and promote it widely through social media to draw attention to your setting.
- Consider all routes that are social media and keep your parents spreading the word in their networks.

Q. Should I be doing home visits?

A. Current advice is that social distancing is required to be maintained as much as possible to minimise the spread of the virus. Your risk assessments should guide you on whether there are reasons to undertake home visits which are likely to be very minimal at this time but might include safeguarding or other urgent situations. You should consider what measures you will need to put in place to support your staff and the families in the home visited.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/homes>