



E: [ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot](mailto:ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot)

3 May 2022

To all registered childcare providers,

### **Early Learning and Childcare Directorate – update to COVID-19 guidance to reflect new ‘Stay at Home’ message from 1 May 2022**

I hope that you are well and have settled back in following the recent Spring break and bank holiday weekend.

I am writing to inform you that the COVID-19 guidance for childcare settings has been updated to reflect the population-wide ‘Stay at Home’ message, which applies from 1 May. This is in recognition of the fact that we are now in a different phase of the pandemic, and replaces the self-isolation guidance for people who have symptoms or have tested positive for COVID-19.

This provider notice sets out:

- details of the **new ‘Stay at Home’ guidance**;
- the changes that have been made to the **COVID-19 guidance for early learning and childcare settings** to reflect the ‘Stay at Home’ guidance and other policy updates since the last iteration of the guidance was published;
- changes to the **Self-isolation Support Grant**;
- arrangements for dealing with any **surplus stocks of LFD tests**; and
- an invitation to participate in a poll on the **speech and language needs of children** in view of the impacts of the pandemic.

### **‘Stay at Home’ guidance**

Details of the new ‘Stay at Home’ guidance can be found in the news release [New ‘stay at home’ guidance published - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#) or in the guidance document here: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): staying safe and protecting others - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#).

In summary, from 1 May:

- children and young people with mild respiratory symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to attend their education setting (including early learning and childcare);
- children and young people who are unwell **and** have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people, where they can. They can go back to school, college or childcare, and resume normal activities when they no longer have a high temperature and they feel well enough to attend; and

- adults who have symptoms of COVID-19 **and** who have a fever or are too unwell to carry out normal activities will be asked to 'stay at home' whilst they are unwell or have a fever. They will no longer be advised to take a PCR test.

## **COVID-19 guidance for early learning and childcare services**

The COVID guidance for early learning and childcare services has been updated to reflect the 'Stay at Home' advice above. This can be found here: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Early Learning and Childcare Services](#).

In addition, the following technical updates have been made to the guidance to reflect wider developments since the last iteration of the guidance was published:

- Testing (page 6): the text has been amended to reflect the fact that the ELC testing programme and the requirement for staff to test twice weekly has ended.
- Face coverings (pages 11 & 12): the legal requirement to wear face coverings ended on 18 April. However, we have highlighted that they remain strongly recommended for those over 12 years when in indoor communal areas or on public transport, in line with wider workplace safety guidance. Face coverings are not recommended when working directly with children but staff members should continue to be supported to wear a face covering if they would like to wear one.
- Self-isolation (page 18): we have clarified that there is no longer a requirement to self-isolate for 10 days if you test positive for COVID-19 or are a close contact.
- Self-isolation Support Grant (page 21): we have clarified the date that the support grant scheme will end, and we have included some details on the new *online tool* is available from 1 May.

In addition to this, the Highest Risk List will cease on 31 May, as set out in the [SG News Release](#) of 28 April. We will be incorporating these changes in a further guidance update at the end of May.

### **The Self-Isolation Support Grant**

Self-Isolation Support Grant eligibility will remain in place until 30 June 2022. Following that, there will be a 28 day application window and the scheme will end on the 28 July.

An [online tool](#) is available: (1) to help people identify if they are eligible for the grant, and if so, (2) to enable them to book a PCR test so that they can provide evidence of COVID-19 infection to support their application.

Eligibility criteria can be found at the link above. As isolation guidance evolves, the Scottish Government will continue to consider where targeted isolation support, including financial support, is required to support communities experiencing enduring transmission and COVID-19 related health inequalities.

## Surplus Test Kits

Following the ending of the asymptomatic testing programme for childcare staff, settings may be left with surplus stocks of LFD test kits. To ensure any surplus stocks are used effectively, settings may choose to explore the following options:

- retaining a small stock of test kits for use in the event of testing requirements being reintroduced; and/or
- distributing test kits to staff in the setting who may have a future need for testing (e.g. accessing healthcare settings to visit relatives).

Any opened or damaged cartons should be disposed of following standard general waste procedures.

If you wish to return kits, and these are unopened, in good condition and have been stored under the correct conditions in accordance with the standard operating procedure and instructions for use, please contact the NHS National Services Scotland National Contact Centre on 0800 008 6587.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all ELC staff for their participation in the testing programme and for assisting the testing programme teams in their distribution efforts.

## Early Years Scotland poll – supporting children’s communication needs

We know that children’s speech and language development has been affected by the pandemic. In partnership with the Royal College of Speech and Language, colleagues at Early Years Scotland (EYS) have developed an anonymous poll to capture your thoughts on the communication needs of the children in your setting, which they have asked us to share with you. A free *Spotlight on Children’s Communication Needs* virtual session will be offered to the sector on 28 June as part of this partnership, follow EYS to access a booking link when it opens.

[Please follow this link to complete the poll](#), which will close on Monday 6 June.

Please get in touch with us if we can provide any further information on any of the issues included in this notice: [ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot](mailto:ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot).

Thank you again for everything that you continue to do to support children, families and your teams.

Best wishes,



**ELEANOR PASSMORE**

Deputy Director, Early Learning & Childcare