



E: ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot

Thursday 20 July 2020

NOTE FOR ALL CHILDCARE PROVIDERS

To all registered childcare providers,

Today the First Minister announced that Scotland would remain in Phase 3 of the [routemap](#). Full details of the changes announced by the First Minister today can be found [here](#).

What does today's announcement mean for the Childcare sector?

Registered Childcare services have been able to reopen from 15 July as part of Phase 3 of Scotland's recovery from the coronavirus crisis, today we have published updated guidance for all childcare services which will take effect from 10 August.

The updated guidance documents can be found here:

- [Guidance](#) for early learning and childcare services
- [Guidance](#) for childminding services
- [Guidance](#) for out of school care services
- [Guidance](#) for fully outdoor childcare services

What's changed?

On Thursday 16 July the First Minister and Deputy First Minister confirmed their intention to ease the current restrictions requiring consistent smalls groups and avoiding attending more than one setting (known as blended childcare). This reflects progress made in suppressing coronavirus in Scotland since the previous guidance was produced. We have published four revised guidance documents today which confirm the detail of those changes across all childcare services.

The changing restrictions do not mean a 'return to normal'. This guidance continues to stress that minimising overall contacts is important for the suppression of the virus and efficacy of test and protect. The guidance sets out a package of age-appropriate public health measures that minimises the risks for staff, children, families and communities, based on public health advice.

The revised guidance continues to have child, family and staff wellbeing at its heart, and to put in place proportionate measures that allow everyone to benefit from returning to childcare. All of the guidance and changes to restrictions on childcare services is based on scientific and expert advice provided by the Advisory Sub Group on Education and Children's Issues. We have today published that advice and you can find that [here](#).

Childcare providers must continue to follow current guidance until 10 August. This can be accessed through the links to the new guidance above.

Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard

Quality is at the heart of the delivery of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) entitlement.

To ensure that funded ELC entitlement is delivered in high quality settings, the sector has been working towards the introduction of Funding Follows the Child. This was to have been introduced alongside the statutory roll out of 1140 hours of funded ELC entitlement in August 2020.

Funding Follows the Child is ‘provider neutral’ and is underpinned by a National Standard that to be a funded provider – regardless of whether they are in the public, private or third sector, or childminders – settings will have to meet.

The criteria of the National Standard focuses on what children and their families should expect from their ELC experience, irrespective of where they access their funded entitlement.

However, the impact of COVID-19 on all our lives has led to a delay of the statutory roll out of 1140 hours from August 2020. In light of this it is recognised that it is no longer feasible to set a national requirement for all funded ELC providers to meet all aspects of the National Standard from August 2020.

To understand what aspects of the framework are deliverable at a national level the Scottish Government has worked with partners including COSLA, local authorities and provider representative bodies to review the Funding Follows the Child principles and National Standard criteria.

Following this exercise the Scottish Government has today published [interim guidance](#) on the requirements for ELC settings and local authorities regarding the delivery of Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard from August 2020.

The guidance has been designed to support local authorities and providers to work in partnership to enable the delivery of as much of the National Standard criteria as possible, but to highlight where flexibility may be required.

A new timetable for the full implementation of Funding Follows the Child and the underpinning National Standard for all ELC providers will be agreed alongside the new timetable for 1140 implementation.

If you have any enquiries regarding the interim guidance then please send those to: ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot.

Schools guidance

The First Minister today announced that schools will be able to return on a full-time basis from 11 August. New guidance was published today to support the return of schools and that guidance can be found [here](#).

Communication with parents

Understandably, parents and carers may have a lot of questions and will also want to know that it is safe for their child to go back to their childcare setting, and that the changes to guidance have children's safety and wellbeing at the heart. It is important for parents to feel reassured that childcare settings are safe for children, but equally that they are high quality and nurturing environments.

I am sure that you will be preparing your own information for parents, about what this means for your setting. In the meantime, [Parent Club is launching a new campaign](#) to support parents and carers with the return to school and ELC. This includes information about the new guidelines as well as advice and support about settling in, managing mental health, and more. It also has information about the 1140 hours expansion and the entitlement to funded ELC. This is regularly updated with new information.

Further support and information

In order to support the reopening of childcare services we will be sharing best practice examples and we are organising online interactive webinars on the guidance.

Remember to keep an eye on Twitter where we will keep you updated on the latest changes; answer your questions; share ideas and best practice; and celebrate the fantastic efforts of the childcare sector to support Scotland's children and families. Follow us @ELCScotGov for early learning and childcare and @OSCScoGov for out of school care.

We will continue to keep you updated with important information and updates through the Care Inspectorate and through the childcare sector representative bodies.

Thank you again for everything you do for Scotland's children and families, particularly in these challenging times.

Alison Cumming
Interim Director, Early Learning and Childcare