



Frequently Asked Questions: Childminding Services

To make it easier to find answers we have created topic headings throughout this document. Remember you can use the search function to find key words or topics. The topics are:

- [General Guidance Links and Signposting](#)
- [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#)
- [Environment](#)
- [Infection Control \(IPC\) and Health](#)
- [Testing](#)
- [Food/Baking/Lunch/Snacks](#)
- [Visitors](#)
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[General Guidance links and signposting](#)

Make sure you follow Health Protection Scotland's guidance for any issues in relation to coronavirus, Covid-19. This is available on [Public Health Scotland's website](#).

You can find information on our website [here](#). It is important that you check these websites daily to stay up to date.

We have captured some of the most frequently asked questions below. We are updating this regularly as more information becomes available.

The response to the coronavirus Covid-19 outbreak is complex and fast moving. It is important that you continue to check information on the relevant websites that we have linked to below.

Personal Protective Equipment

Updated guidance is available on the Public Health Scotland site [here](#).

Please note there is also PPE guidance in the Scottish Government [guidance](#).

What is the advice around face coverings?

Face coverings must be worn by childminders wherever they cannot maintain a one metre distance from other adults, and children over 12 years old (for example, during drop of and pick up, when collecting children from school and when accessing other communal areas where other adults are).

Face coverings should be worn by parents and other visitors to the setting, including parents at drop-off and pick-up, and childminders and assistants who collect children from school.

Face coverings are not recommended for children under the age of five, particularly babies and toddlers. Full guidance can be found [here](#). A helpful poster on caring for your face covering can be found [here](#).

Will childminders or assistants be wearing PPE?

No, childminders do not require to use additional PPE due to Covid-19. The use of PPE should continue to be based on a clear assessment of risk and need for the individual child or young person. This might include where the care of a child already involves the use of PPE, for example wearing gloves and an apron for nappy changing, toileting accidents or cleaning up after a child has been sick or cut themselves (bodily fluids). Childminders and assistants working together must follow the FACTS guidance.

Following any risk assessment (individual or organisational) where the need for PPE has been identified using the [HSE Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) at Work](#) guide, appropriate PPE should be readily available, and you should know how to put on and take off PPE (as required by Health and Safety Regulations), and suitable waste facilities provided.

In the case of a suspected outbreak PPE must be worn. The most recent guidance states that if a childminder is caring for a child with suspected Covid-19 then they must also wear eye protection in addition to the PPE requirements already set out in the guidance. 'If the child or young person who has become unwell with symptoms of Covid-19 needs direct personal care, gloves and aprons, fluid-resistant surgical mask and eye protection (goggles or a visor) should be worn by staff.'

Full information can be found [here](#).

Environment

What are the best products to clean toys, surfaces and equipment effectively and how often should they be cleaned?

You should refer to the following documents for guidance in relation to cleaning.

[Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings \(Day Care and Childminding Settings\)](#) and [Core Covid-19 Information and Guidance for General \(Non-Healthcare\) Settings](#).

Toys and equipment that children access should be cleaned daily or, if groups of children change during the day, on a sessional basis. At least twice daily cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched objects and hard surfaces. Water and playdough should be replaced daily or, if groups of children change during the day, on a sessional basis. If soft furnishings (such as throws and bedding) have been used by a child who shows symptoms of Covid-19, they should be removed and laundered immediately. Full guidance can be found [here](#).

Infection Control and Health

Do I need a CO² monitor?

No, childminding settings are not required to have a CO² monitor. You should follow the ventilation guidance. Spending time outside, opening windows whilst you are indoors and keeping as much fresh air moving through your home helps to reduce the risk of Covid-19.

The children in my service play with sand, play dough and water. Can they still do this?

Resources such as sand, water and playdough can be used with regular cleaning of the equipment used after each group attends. Water and playdough should be replaced daily or, if groups of children change during the day, on a sessional basis. This will help prevent cross-contamination. Remember to also clean shared outdoor equipment.

Sand need not be changed on a daily basis and standard cleaning and changing protocols should suffice if good hand hygiene is carried out prior to and following use of the sandpit. Standard cleaning and changing protocols should be implemented in the event of any visual contamination of the sandpit or its contents. Sand should be removed and replaced in the event of an outbreak.

Can we ask parents to complete paper records?

Wherever possible, records should be completed online – an email can be used as a record of signature. When completing paper records, risk assessments should determine the process for this considering practice that will minimise the risk of transmission. For instance, asking parents to use their own pen, effective hand washing or use of hand gel.

Should we take children's temperatures on arrival?

No, temperature checks for children on arrival are not required. The presence of a temperature is only one of the common symptoms of Covid-19. Information from Health Protection Scotland states that some of the symptoms of the virus are a fever, a new persistent cough and a change or loss of smell and taste. It is important that all symptoms are considered. Information on fever in children can be found [here](#).

Lots of children have coughs and colds. How will I know if they should be excluded because they could have the virus?

Information from Health Protection Scotland states that some of the symptoms of the virus are a fever, a new persistent cough and a change or loss of smell and taste. When children display these symptoms, the advice is to stay at home. It is essential that people do not attend a setting if symptomatic. Everyone who develops symptoms of Covid-19 must self-isolate straight away, stay at home and arrange a test. Parents should book a test as per [Test and Protect](#). You can access information from [NHS Inform](#) about when to stay at home and how long for.

Information on fever in children can be found [here](#).

Can children be given Calpol (paracetamol)?

Yes, the advice states that children can be given Calpol once it has been confirmed that their symptoms are not Covid-19.

Use of Calpol:

- No child who is unwell with any suspected infectious disease should attend a childcare service but parents should be free to give a child medicine to treat a non-infectious ailment such as sunburn and toothache and have them attend nursery as long as infectious causes are not suspected.
- If a child has symptoms of Covid-19 or if they have a known contact with a case they should be kept from the service and tested, or otherwise given a diagnosis by a clinician. This is in line with current guidance for Covid-19 and other common infectious diseases of the young.
- Public health recommends that children be kept at home for 48 hours after their symptoms have disappeared to determine if the child has another infectious disease other than Covid-19.
- All children with fever should be tested for Covid-19. If a child has received a negative PCR test result, then it is unlikely that they have Covid-19. As long as they are not suspected to be suffering from another infectious disease e.g., with respiratory symptoms or with diarrhea and vomiting, then they can attend the service.
- Children with symptoms should **not** be tested with an LFD which are for asymptomatic use only.

[I have children attending my service who have underlying health conditions, how do I ensure they are protected?](#)

We understand the concern that providers have about the children attending their services, particularly young babies and those with underlying health conditions. Parents and carers may wish to have a discussion with their child's healthcare team if they are unsure or have queries about returning to settings because of their health condition. Updated guidance can be found [here](#).

[What do I do if a minded child tests positive for Covid-19?](#)

Fully vaccinated adult contacts (NB: definition of "fully vaccinated adult" is now 3 doses of an MHRA approved vaccine) AND all contacts who are aged under 18 years and 4 months:

- take 7 daily LFD tests and report results instead of isolating – no requirement for a PCR test to be released from self-isolation
- children aged under 5 who are close contacts do not need to self-isolate or take daily LFD tests, but are recommended to take a test
- if you're a close contact who can end self-isolation, you can help protect others by following [our guidance on how to stay safe and help prevent the spread](#)

Unvaccinated/partially vaccinated adult contacts (NB: this includes adults with only 0-2 doses):

- must take a PCR test and isolate for 10 days

Parents should be reminded to tell contact tracers that their child attends a childminding service. More information can be found on the NHS website here: [test-and-protect](#).

[Do I have to close if a member of my household is required to self-isolate due to testing positive for Covid-19?](#)

Yes, childminders should not operate a childminding business from their home while they have a positive case isolating in it. This applies regardless of the vaccination status of the childminder or household member. Guidance can be found [here](#).

[What if I become symptomatic or test positive?](#)

You should isolate and book a PCR test. If you test positive, regardless of vaccination status, you must isolate for 10 days. However, isolation can finish early if you test negative on two consecutive LFD tests. These tests must be taken at least 24 hours apart, with the first test no earlier than day 6. You may leave isolation if you have no fever after your second negative test on day 7.

What if a child attending my service tests positive for Covid-19, can I tell the other parents?

If you are informed that a child who attends your service has tested positive for Covid-19, you should direct all other parents to the information letter relating to the group affected. However, personal details of the positive case should not be shared. Information letter templates can be found [here](#).

Testing

Can children under five years old be tested for Covid-19?

Yes, children who are displaying Covid-19 symptoms are eligible for testing through all routes. If parents choose not to have their child tested, they should follow the self-isolation guidance which can be found [here](#).

Food / baking / lunch / snacks

Can children take part in group baking activities?

Yes, children can participate in group baking activities. Equipment used by children should be cleaned thoroughly after use. Enhanced hygiene procedures should be strictly followed.

Can children who come to my setting bring a packed lunch?

Yes, there is no specific Covid-19 guidance relating to bringing packed lunches. For general information on best practice for storage and serving of foods see [Setting the Table](#) and [Food Matters](#).

Guidance from [Food Standards Scotland](#): Cook Safe, should continue to be followed.

Visitors

Should we be asking visitors to disclose if they have had any cold, flu, or coughs?

Yes, it would be reasonable to ask visitors if they have any Covid-19 symptoms. These questions would inform your risk assessment.

Are parents permitted to enter my home?

Where virtual arrangements for parental engagement (such as virtual tours) are already in place and working well, these should continue to be used. Visits by parents/carers can be permitted when necessary to support the needs of individual children. Visits should be kept to a minimum. Physical distancing and rules on face coverings should be followed.

Can I invite parents to attend a celebration?

Yes, parents/carers may attend celebrations, however these should be outdoor events such as birthdays, Halloween, Christmas, etc. All activity must be consistent with relevant Scottish Government guidance on health, physical distancing, and hygiene.

A child is settling into my service, what arrangements can be put in place?

New children may be enrolled into the childminding setting. It is important to maintain physical distancing between adults. You may wish to provide a virtual tour of your home to parents prior to the child attending. When face-to-face communication is required, ensure that face coverings are worn and physical distancing guidance between adults is adhered to. It is important that relationships are developed and the settling in period is the foundation of that trusting relationship between you and the family. You should consider how best to introduce a new child into the setting with limited physical contact between adults wherever possible. More on children's transitions can be found [here](#).

Travel / Trips

If a child has not travelled but their household members have recently returned from a destination out with the exempt countries, can I/we care for them?

The guidance on travel is fast changing and we advise that you check the most up to date travel guidance which can be found [here](#).

Can I plan to go on trips with the children?

Yes, there is currently no restriction on travel. Your risk assessment will indicate to you if it is safe to go on a trip. Remember to research and plan ahead. You may need a contingency plan if you reach your destination, and it is too busy to be Covid-19 safe. The Scottish Government Covid-19 guidance you are to follow in your service still applies to your practice and procedures when on a trip. Full guidance is available [here](#).

Can I meet up with another childminder and their minded children?

While there are no longer any restrictions on household visits in the context of our private lives, it remains important to limit these during the provision of registered childcare services. This reflects the importance of keeping these important services to children and families open and operating safely. For the time being, any such visits should take place with the permission of parents/carers of children and should take place outdoors rather than indoors. The following mitigations should still be applied:

- physical distancing between adults.
- number of visitors kept to a minimum.
- childminders making use of universal testing offer.
- delay if adults are identified as close contacts.

Blended Placements

Blended placements

The guidance has up to date advice about blended placements including travel, collections and drop offs. Guidance can be found [here](#).

Consideration should be given to how children are supported to ensure good hygiene practices (washing hands, not sharing resources, etc.) when moving between settings, and how their interactions with other groups of children are managed, based on an appropriate risk assessment.

Where a child attends more than one setting, consideration should be given to sharing of relevant information across settings, to assist with Test & Protect processes. Any information should be managed in way which is consistent with the requirements of GDPR and service privacy policies. This may mean services communicating when a child has been advised to be tested to avoid children being subjected to more testing than is necessary.

Inspection

I have had a Covid-19 inspection, will I be inspected again this year?

No, you should only receive one inspection per inspection year (April 2021- March 2022). However, services can be re-inspected to offer support where concerns have been identified. At the start of the pandemic, we paused our usual inspection programme. In September 2020, we resumed inspections of ELC settings using Key Question 5. We have now returned to inspections using our quality themes and Covid-19 infection prevention and control procedures will still be considered under the theme of Care and Support.

Operational Guidance

What kind of risk assessment is needed in relation to Covid-19?

To help with setting-level risk assessments, HSE has [an example Covid-19 risk assessment](#) which provides a general framework for all business sectors. [Guidance on how to undertake individual level risk assessment](#) for any assistants or a childminder themselves is available in guidance produced by the Scottish Government.

Registrations / Variations

If I have a Covid-19 condition stated within my registration certificate after the 6 months period is up, will I need to apply for a new variation to have it removed?

Yes. The Care Inspectorate developed intermediate guidance to support settings during the pandemic. Some settings may have a time limited condition to support

children and families at this time. The Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 requires providers to apply for a variation to remove or vary a condition of registration. There is no cost to the applicant.

Notifications and surveys

If I need to close or re-open my service due to Covid-19, what notification do I submit?

You should complete a “Changes to Service Delivery due to Coronavirus (Covid-19)” notification via E-forms. This is needed when you close and re-open.

For all other information about notifications please visit our [web page here](#).

Do I need to submit an “Outbreak - end of confirmed case(s)” notification for every positive case?

No, you only need to inform us once about an end of outbreak. You should submit this when people who have been confirmed as having Covid-19 have shown no symptoms for 14 days.

Staffing

My assistant lives in another household, can they still come and work with me?

Childminders can return to their normal operating model in line with the Care Inspectorate guidance on adult to child ratios for childminding services. Individual physical distancing applies to adults from different households in the setting, including between a childminder and their assistant, if they are not from the childminder’s own household, parents or carers, and any other adults who may attend the setting.

Is there advice for pregnant employees?

Yes, there guidance available [here](#).

Recruitment and Training

How do we process a disclosure during the pandemic?

Disclosure Scotland advise that if providers have had no response from them about PVGs within 14 days, you should highlight the case details immediately to their operations management via DSoperations@disclosurescotland.gov.scot and they will take action as a priority. The Care Inspectorate and the SSSC will review these temporary measures on an ongoing basis and tell providers when they change.

What are the Care Inspectorate expectations around the recruitment of staff (assistants), if our staff are off sick or at home self-isolating?

The position on short notice recruitment to maintain levels of care and support is as follows:

- Childminders can deploy assistants while awaiting the outcome of recruitment checks (Disclosures / PVG). Childminders must carry out a risk assessment and staff whose checks are pending should be mentored and supervised at all times.
- Childminders will need to submit a variation to have any new assistants named on their certificates. Please speak with your inspector to make them aware if you need to use new assistants before the variation is granted.
- You should still carry out a full application and interview process and seek references.

When our position on pre-employment checks needs to change again, we will give you advance notice so you can prepare.

We ask that you plan contingencies for how to staff your service as normal in the event assistants are unwell. Child to adult ratios feature in our registration and inspection of early learning and childcare (ELC) settings. We expect the staffing numbers, and skills and experience of staff to reflect the needs of people who use services.

[My first aid certificate is due to expire, what should I do?](#)

The Care Inspectorate appreciates that during the pandemic some training has not been available. Where training is not available due to the pandemic then we would not expect childminders to update their first aid certificate.

We do however expect individuals to keep abreast of matters and keep themselves skilled and knowledgeable in the administration of first aid safely within their setting. When we undertake scrutiny of services, we will consider more than the date of a certificate. The skills, knowledge, and ability of individuals to fulfil the role is the most important factor during a time when formal learning opportunities are not always available.

We would expect that as we move through the pandemic, training for the sector will resume and childminders will be able to update their first aid certificates.