

Scottish Government Early Learning and Childcare Covid-19 Update

No. 4 – 8 July 2020

As you'll be aware, we are replacing our monthly Programme Updates with regular Covid-19 newsletters for the duration of the pandemic response. We'll send these to you as often as we have news to share, and will look to build the sharing of good practice into future editions.

We have a further staffing change to share with you – Clare Furze has now started her maternity leave and I'm very pleased to welcome Ellen Leaver to Team ELC. Ellen will be covering the role of Head of the Parents, Providers and Workforce Unit until Clare's return.

I'd like to reiterate the Scottish Government's thanks and appreciation for all that you are doing to support Scotland's children and families at this most challenging of times. I hope that you find this update helpful, and would welcome your feedback on how we can best ensure you get the information you need on a regular basis.

Take care

Alison Cumming

alison.cumming@gov.scot

Interim Director, Early Learning and Childcare

1. Key information, guidance and contact points

Throughout this update, we have provided links to the latest guidance and information. As you will appreciate, the situation continues to change so please continue to check the Scottish Government's website regularly for the latest guidance and information – see <https://www.gov.scot/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance/>

If you have any questions or issues you would like to raise with the team, please use the contact details below and we will respond as soon as we can. Please email:

- ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot for enquiries about **support for providers and parents**;
- outofschoolcare@gov.scot for enquiries about **critical childcare** and keyworker testing provision;
- ELCDeliverySupport@gov.scot if you work in a **local authority team** looking for advice or support about early learning and childcare, or contact your link person in the delivery team;
- ELCProgrammeOffice@gov.scot for any other queries.

To keep up to date with all the most relevant information and guidance, follow us on Twitter @ELCScotGov or join the Knowledge Hub.

Local authorities can register on the Knowledge Hub at <https://www.khub.net> and request to join [Early Learning and Childcare \(ELC\) Expansion Scotland: Local Authorities](#).

If you would like to join the wider Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland - Discussion Forum and Documents Group, please email an expression of interest to ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot

2. Phase 2 – Easing of lockdown in Scotland

On Thursday 18 June the First Minister announced that Scotland would move from Phase 1 into Phase 2 of the [routemap](#). The Scottish Government published new guidance explaining the rules in place for [Phase 2](#).

Our priority is the safety of every individual in Scotland. The virus still exists and it is important that we continue to follow the guidance around physical distancing (where possible), increased hygiene measures and that we self-isolate if you or members of your household have any symptoms of coronavirus. More information can be found at [NHS Inform](#).

On Wednesday 24 June the First Minister made a statement to the Scottish Parliament setting out some updates to [Scotland's routemap through and out of the crisis](#). **The First Minister announced that subject to scientific and public health advice and the criteria for entering Phase 3 of the routemap being met, all childcare providers will be able to reopen from 15 July 2020, if they wish to do so.**

On Tuesday 23 June in a statement to the Scottish Parliament the Deputy First Minister gave an update about education recovery and the reopening of schools and childcare services. You can read that statement [here](#). The statement again makes clear that the scientific assumptions underpinning education recovery will be reviewed as part of the statutory three-weekly review process. This will include reviewing the approach to physical distancing in schools and equivalent measures in early learning and childcare.

What does this mean for the childcare sector?

Critical childcare

Providers should continue to provide critical childcare during the summer holidays to key worker families and vulnerable families.

Critical childcare position – private and third sector providers

During Phase 1 and 2 there may be an increase in the number of key worker families looking for critical childcare provision due to other changes in their household circumstances. As was the case during the initial period of lockdown, settings (other than childminders and fully outdoor provision) should only open or reopen if required to provide critical childcare for keyworkers and vulnerable children, preferably as part of a coordinated local authority plan.

However, you can chose to open out with partnership with your local authority, but only to provide critical childcare until the wider reopening of childcare is permitted. This decision is to be made by the childcare provider alone. An indicative date of 15 July has been announced for the reopening of remaining childcare services, subject to the criteria for moving into phase 3.

Any provider wishing to open must be aware of current key workers definitions but can apply their own decisions on key worker status, using their judgement and awareness of local issues to ensure that those most in need of critical childcare are prioritised and taking account of the public health guidance that where children can be looked after at home they should be.

Providers opening out with partnership with their local authority should agree fee arrangements separately with parents. Critical childcare provision provided free by local authorities does not automatically transfer over to private providers if a family chooses to change setting, providers should discuss arrangements with the local authority. Critical childcare privately procured by parents has no relation to ELC funded hours entitlement.

Out of School Care providers registered with the Care Inspectorate can only provide critical childcare for keyworkers or vulnerable children either in partnership with their local authority or privately through direct arrangements with families. An indicative date of 15 July has been provided for wider re-opening and will be subject to published guidance.

All childcare providers

The First Minister's announcement on 23 June gives all childcare providers an indicative date for reopening and time to plan for their reopening, get staffing and other arrangements in place and to present a clearer picture to parents of how and when services will reopen. This date will be confirmed subject to the evidence and the criteria for moving to Phase 3 being met.

We acknowledge that the announcement does not answer all the questions you will undoubtedly have. We know that not all services will choose to reopen immediately on 15 July. In particular, term-time settings are expected to open in line with agreed term dates. Critical childcare will continue to be provided over the summer holiday period in line with the Strategic Framework

We issued guidance on Monday 15 June 2020 to support the reopening of wider ELC services. We understand that you are working hard on preparations to implement the ELC recovery guidance and at this time, there are no changes to this guidance. We await the updated scientific advice and will share this with you through revisions, if required, to the suite of guidance on ELC recovery, Childminding, Fully Outdoor Settings and the upcoming Out of School Care guidance by 30 July 2020 in line with the publication of refreshed reopening of schools guidance.

Out of School Care Services

Out of school care services can also reopen from Wednesday 15 July 2020 if they wish to do so and Scotland has entered Phase 3 of the routemap. Guidance, developed in close consultation with sector representative bodies, issued on Friday 3 July for Out of School Care services and you can find that guidance here.

Childminders

Childminders were able to reopen from Wednesday 3 June 2020 if they wished to do so. Childminders were issued with guidance on Monday 1 June 2020 and should continue to follow this guidance when operating. Childminding guidance is currently under review and a refreshed guidance document for childminding services operating during phase 3 will issue by 10 July.

Fully outdoor childcare providers

Fully outdoor childcare providers were able to reopen from Wednesday 3 June 2020 if they wished to do so. Fully outdoor childcare providers were issued with guidance on Monday 1 June 2020 and should continue to follow this guidance when operating. We will review the guidance and will update this in line with scientific and public health advice.

3. ELC Statutory Duty and the Expansion

Today the Scottish Government and COSLA have written to all Local Authorities with an update on the ELC statutory duty and the ELC Expansion. You can find a copy of that letter here.

Statutory Entitlement to ELC funded hours

In March, we took the difficult decision to delay implementing the duty to provide 1140 hours of ELC to all eligible children to ensure that local authorities and the childcare sector's focus was on

ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children, families and staff during the pandemic. We remain absolutely committed to the benefits of the expansion, and the return to universal 1140 provision for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds as soon as is possible and when Scotland is through and out of the COVID-19 crisis.

The statutory entitlement to ELC from 11 August 2020 will remain 600 hours. However, we know work on the ELC expansion is already well advanced, and that many providers and local authorities will be able to deliver more than the minimum requirement of 600 hours funded ELC to families. Local authorities and providers will work together to confirm local plans ahead of reopening.

As we continue to recover from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic local authorities' and indeed the whole childcare community focus should be on delivering a model for funded ELC during the recovery period which reflects the principles of the [Strategic Framework for Reopening Schools, Early Learning and Childcare](#).

Quality of care and improving outcomes for children must remain central to delivery of the funded entitlement, with child development and wellbeing at the heart of our approach.

Future of the ELC Expansion

We are determined to deliver the ELC expansion as quickly as possible, and across the country many children will continue to receive expanded hours. A revised date for the reintroduction of the 1140 hours duty will be agreed in partnership with local authorities and we have committed to doing an initial assessment of readiness of the ELC expansion in December 2020.

To support local authorities in their planning, at least six months' notice of the reintroduction will be given. Recognising the significant impact of the coronavirus and recovery, it will not be feasible or reasonable to reinstate a universal 1140 duty in the academic year 2020/21 (before August 2021), or while the coronavirus public health measures, which significantly impact on ELC capacity, remain in place, if that is longer.

We remain committed to the National Standard principles, in particular the need to ensure high quality funded ELC experiences for children; the principle of provider neutrality; the need for effective partnership working; and the importance of Fair Work.

Information for parents on 1140

Parents will be keen to find out what this means locally, and local authorities will be putting out their own communication as early as possible. In the context of the work on the immediate response to the Covid-19 pandemic, it may take time to work through how local plans will be affected and communicate with parents and carers.

Parent Club (www.parentclub.scot/ELC) has been updated in the meantime to explain the suspension of the legislation and that local authorities will be in touch with parents when they can. Parent Club also includes Frequently Asked Questions which we will continue to update. <https://www.parentclub.scot/articles/early-learning-and-childcare-in-scotland-is-changing>
Please contact Katherine Tierney's Uptake, Eligibility and Engagement team through the ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot mailbox with further suggestions for the FAQ or other parental communication.

4. Educational Continuity Directions

Since 21 May and the publication of the [strategic framework for reopening schools, early learning and childcare provision](#), Scottish Ministers have issued a series of 'Educational Continuity Directions' to provide the legal underpinning for the re-focus of local authority 'education' (including ELC and out of school care) on the provision of critical childcare.

The Direction also ensures that failures by local authorities to comply with certain statutory duties or time limits specified in the Direction are disregarded, to the extent that these can be attributed to the Direction being in place. That means that any failures which cannot be attributed to a Direction would continue to be treated as a failure to comply with that duty or time limit.

Any disregard of a failure to comply with a duty therefore only applies in so far as it is due to the restrictions imposed by the Continuity Direction, for example, the continued physical closure of the setting for the majority of children. It is therefore the continued expectation that authorities deliver against these duties, to the extent they are not prevented from doing this because of the Direction.

This 'disregard' function of the Direction includes the duty for local authorities to provide 600 hours of funded ELC. But only to the extent that the failure can be attributed to the Direction being in place (i.e. due to the current pandemic response).

Educational Continuity Direction No. 3 was issued on 2 July and covers the period until 22 July. It provides the legal underpinning for local authority-run ELC and Out of School Care Services being allowed (but not required) to open beyond critical childcare in phase 3. A link to the Direction and guidance note can be found here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-act-2020-educational-continuity-direction/>.

While the Direction only covers local authority managed provision, all ELC and OOSC settings, including childminders must continue to comply with the measures in the Coronavirus Act 2020 ('The UK Act') as set out in the letter from Alison Cumming of 21 May:

The UK Act immediately requires everyone who operates an 'educational establishment' - which includes all ELC and out of school care providers, including childminders - to have regard to the advice of the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland.

5. COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues

The Scottish Government COVID-19 Advisory Group was established in recognition of the need for additional scientific analysis of the impact of COVID-19 in Scotland, based on regularly updated advice and modelling from the UK SAGE, and other emerging scientific evidence. The [COVID-19 Advisory Group](#) has operated effectively and will retain its existing remit.

A need has now been identified to increase capacity and capability to provide rapid, regular and more granular scientific advice on education and children's issues to support the iterative development of guidance as we move through the four phases set out in the [routemap](#).

The sub-group will begin with a focussed remit, covering all issues affecting early learning centres and schools, and linked children's services issues, but not higher and further education settings.

The sub-group will give detailed consideration of how public health advice can be applied to operational implementation.

Full details of the sub-group on Education and Children's Issues can be found [here](#).

6. COVID-19 Education Recovery Group / Critical Childcare and ELC Subgroup

The Deputy First Minister convened the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group (CERG) on 24 April 2020. This group is intended to be a collaborative endeavour, bringing together key stakeholders in school education and early learning and childcare, to support national and local government in the journey to re-opening education and childcare settings when it is safe to do so.

On 21 May the CERG published [The Strategic Framework for reopening schools, early learning and childcare provision](#), which sets out a framework to be used at local level in conjunction with Local Phasing Delivery Plans for the reopening of schools and early learning and childcare. Details of the group's remit, membership and minutes of meetings are published on the Group's [webpage](#).

A Critical Childcare and ELC subgroup, chaired by Simon Mair (SG) and Laura Mason (ADES), has been established to take forward two of the ten work streams reporting to the CERG. These are; Critical Childcare and Early Learning and Childcare. The group membership includes COSLA, SOLACE, ADES, Education Scotland, Care Inspectorate, Early Years Scotland, EIS and AHDS. For further information on the subgroup, please contact ELCDeliverySupport@gov.scot

The subgroup is supported by a Working Group on ELC and Childcare Sector Recovery, chaired by Ellen Leaver (SG), which brings together provider representatives from across the childcare sector, including Care and Learning Alliance (CALA), Early Years Scotland (EYS), National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA), Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN) as well as Care Inspectorate, COSLA and Scottish Government. The Working Group is currently meeting weekly and is providing advice and input into: (1) development of guidance documents for the sector; (2) financial sustainability for the sector; (3) workforce; and (4) partnership working.

For further information on the Sector Recovery Working Group, please contact ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot.

Critical childcare surveys

We have set up two weekly surveys to monitor the delivery of critical childcare during the Covid-19 outbreak – one which local authorities respond to and one which private and voluntary settings and childminders complete. Both surveys collect data on open settings, staff working at these settings, and the number of children receiving childcare. This information is analysed and used to support reporting and decision-making.

Contact info: Kate Smith and the Emergency Childcare team: outofschoolcare@gov.scot

7. Access to Childcare Fund

The £3 million Access to Childcare Fund will open for applications on Monday 6 July. The fund will provide grants to establish models of delivery of out of school care (in the widest sense), in order to make services more accessible and affordable for low income families. In this funding round, a total of £1.5 million pounds will be allocated between successful applicants. A further funding round will be available within financial year 2021-22. Partnership approaches are encouraged.

Children in Scotland are administering this fund and more information will be available on their website. For more information please contact accesstochildcarefund@childreninscotland.org.uk from Monday 6th July. Children in Scotland will aim to reply to all queries by the next working day.

Contact info: *Eilidh Henry* eilidh.henry@gov.scot

8. Outdoor Play and Learning

On 2 July the First Minister announced that the requirements for physical distancing have been removed for children under the age of 11 when they are playing outdoors. This means that children are able to meet and play with friends outdoors without the need to keep 2 metres apart. Groups of children should be no larger than 8 and should come from a maximum of 3 households. We hope that this change will allow child to play normally with their friends whilst they are at home, improving their sense of wellbeing.

Physical distancing has not been relaxed for this age group when playing indoors. It has also not yet been relaxed for children between the ages of 12 and 17.

The [guidance for fully outdoor childcare settings](#) remains unchanged due to the continued need for adults to remain physically distant from one another, and for groups of children to not exceed a total of 8.

We have recently published [guidance about outdoor play](#) in emergency childcare provision during the Covid-19 restrictions. Jason Leitch, National Clinical Director also recorded a couple of video messages for us – one providing advice about [outdoor play](#) and another about [social distancing](#) in childcare settings.

We have funded Living Classrooms (CIC) to deliver a **Virtual Nature School** programme for the ELC sector. The programme is designed to help practitioners support children who cannot attend their setting during covid-19. All practitioners who attend the course receive training on the pedagogy and practice of outdoor play. This is then put into practice with practitioners delivering nature based play sessions, via an online platform, to a group of children and families from their setting who are not currently able to attend. The VNS can support up to 2,000 practitioners and 20,000 families over 2 cohorts between 1 June and 18 September 2020. More information is available at www.virtualnatureschool.scot

If you need any further information get in touch with us at outdoorELC@gov.scot

9. Survey of childcare providers on their initial assessment of the reopening guidance

Over the period 19-24 June we ran a survey to help us to better understand the nature of the potential impacts of the reopening guidance across private and third sector childcare providers in Scotland. In particular, the survey asked for initial assessments as to what the guidance will mean for delivery models, delivery costs, and capacity within settings.

The survey in collaboration with the Scottish Early Years member organisations: CALA, EYS, NDNA, SCMA, and SOSCN.

There were around 650 responses to the survey, which included around 220 responses from childminders. We are very grateful for everyone who took the time to respond.

The analysis of the responses is helping to inform the work, including through the Working Group on ELC and Childcare Sector Recovery, on any further measures that may be required to support sustainability.

If you have any require further information on the survey then please contact:
ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot.

10. Support for childcare providers

As set out in the [Strategic Framework for reopening schools, early learning and childcare provision](#), other forms of transitional business support are likely to be required by private and third sector providers throughout recovery (many of whom will have furloughed staff during the closure period). We appreciate that the public health requirements of the reopening guidance will place financial pressures on settings due to increased operating costs and reduced capacity. We are drawing on the results of the recent survey of providers on their initial assessments of the impacts on their settings of the reopening guidance (published on 15 June) to inform our understanding of what additional support may be required. We will set out more information as soon as possible.

A range of financial and business support measures have been made available by the UK and Scottish Governments since March. Information about the different schemes that may be available to private and third sector providers and childminders is available on the Scottish Government's website and updated regularly at:

[Information for private and third sector childcare providers about business support](#)
[Information for Childminders about business and financial support](#)

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

There are changes to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which will operate until October, from 1 July:

- From 1 July, employers will be able to bring back to work employees that have previously been furloughed for any amount of time and any shift pattern, while still being able to claim support for their normal hours not worked. From 1 July when claiming a grant for furloughed hours employers will need to report and claim for a minimum period of a week.
- Changes to the level of reimbursement through HMRC for furloughing costs for the Scheme, with employers contributing to these costs from August, as follows:
 - Until end of July 80% of eligible furloughed employees' usual monthly wage costs, up to £2,500 a month, plus the associated Employer National Insurance contributions and pension contributions (up to the level of the minimum automatic enrolment employer pension contribution) on that subsidised furlough pay.
 - In August 80% of wages up to a cap of £2,500, whilst employers will pay the associated employer National Insurance and pension contributions
 - In September, 70% of wages up to a cap of £2,187.50. Employers will pay the associated employer National Insurance and pension contributions and 10% of wages to make up the 80% total up to a cap of £2,500.
 - In October 60% of wages up to a cap of £1,875. Employers will pay the associated employer National Insurance and pension contributions and 20% of wages to make up the 80% total up to a cap of £2,500.

We are aware that there continues to be uncertainty and concern amongst providers in Scotland as to what level of overall support they are entitled to through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme if they are also receiving payments for the funded ELC. The links above provide more detail, but the key information for providers in Scotland is:

- There is no change to Scotland's position on ELC payments, and payments for funded ELC hours will continue for the duration of closures. The Scottish Government sees these payments as a vital part of safeguarding our childcare sector for the pandemic recovery, and achieving our 1140 ambition for Scotland's children together.
- You can receive support through both: (1) continued payments for statutory (funded) ELC hours; and (2) the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.
- Support cannot be claimed through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for staff costs that already covered by other forms of public funding (the payments for statutory ELC hours).
- You can access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to cover up to the proportion of your pay bill which could be considered to have been paid from private income.

Self-employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)

The UK Government announced on 29 May that the scheme is being extended. Those who are eligible will be able to claim for a second and final grant in August 2020. If you're eligible, the second and final grant will be a taxable grant worth 70% of your average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment covering a further 3 months' worth of profits, and capped at £6,570 in total. You do not need to have claimed the first grant to receive the second grant.

If you're eligible and want to claim the first SEISS grant, but haven't done so yet, then **you must make your claim on or before 13 July 2020**.

Please continue to share your questions with Euan Carmichael's Service Models Team through the ELCPartnershipForum@gov.scot mailbox. We are working through them as quickly as we can.

11. Workforce Support

One of the sub-groups of the Education Recovery Group is looking specifically at the Workforce Support needs of the entire education workforce, including early learning and childcare and all-ages childcare, as we move towards recovery and reopening of settings. The aims of this Group are:

- To develop a directory of support for those working within the different areas of the education and childcare workforce, setting out the support resources they can access in terms both of wellbeing and professional learning needs at this unparalleled time, based on survey data collected from across the workforce in June.
- To create opportunities for practitioners to come together virtually for professional dialogue and peer support.

The ELC Directorate is working with national partners to ensure that the directory of support reflects the full range of professional learning and wellbeing support which is available across the sector.

On Tuesday 7 July will see the launch of the **#TeamELC Wellbeing Hub**. Early Years Scotland and Scottish Government have developed a website which hosts a wealth of information and practical advice on managing wellbeing. The site features a function which allows practitioners to

be connected with others in the sector and a series of free online wellbeing events will be held throughout July. We will send a communication with further details to everyone on the SSSC register and to all settings, including childminders when the site launches. We'd encourage everyone to take some time to visit the site and look after themselves and each other at this difficult time.

Scottish Government and Care Inspectorate are hosting a series of online support sessions on the suite of reopening guidance. The first of these sessions will be held on Friday 10th of July between 14:00 – 15:00 and will specifically cover the safe reopening of ELC settings including nurseries, playgroups, family centres etc. Further sessions on Childminding and Out Of School Care will follow and we'll send a further communication on those shortly.

A communication, with further detail, has been sent to all settings and childminders. We'd encourage you to sign up for this session and you can do so via this link:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1144069744502011664>

We would also welcome good practice examples from local partners showcasing measures that have been put in place to support the wellbeing and professional learning of staff during these challenging times.

If you have any questions on this work please contact Scott Sutherland at:

Scott.Sutherland@gov.scot

Guidance issued for those assessing ELC students

Guidance has been issued for those who are assessing students currently undertaking ELC related qualifications. That guidance, covering SVQs and HNCs, has been posted on the SSSC website and links to both documents are provided below:

<https://news.sssc.uk.com/news/hnc-covid-19-guidance>

<https://news.sssc.uk.com/news/guidance-svq-assessment>

If you have any questions on this, please contact Scott Sutherland at Scott.Sutherland@gov.scot

12. Support for parents

Parent Club Scotland (www.parentclub.scot) has created an extensive digital hub to provide advice for parents and carers around coronavirus. This includes critical childcare for keyworkers and vulnerable children and the ELC expansion, as well as information on a range of topics including mental health and wellbeing, home learning, keeping active, eating well, child safety and tips for working from home.

Parent Club is updated regularly based on new public health advice so we recommend linking to this for any parent communication around coronavirus.

New pages have been added to Parent Club around changes to Coronavirus restrictions and what this means for school and ELC. There is an [FAQ](#) that has been updated to include questions about informal childcare and nannies, as these are frequently asked at the moment. **These pages are regularly updated so please let us know if there is additional information that you think would be beneficial.** Please contact Katherine.Tierney@gov.scot with suggestions.

The Parent Club coronavirus hub can be found here: www.parentclub.scot/coronavirus and on social media: @ParentClubScotland on Facebook and @parentclubscot on Twitter.

Parentline Scotland also has a helpline for parents and carers who would like advice and support.
Tel: 08000 28 22 33.

13. Analysis and Evidence

Thanks very much to those of you who participated in the survey to gather views on your initial assessment of the reopening of ELC settings guidance. Your responses are much appreciated and are being fed into future plans for supporting the sector.

Your continued participation in the daily monitoring surveys on the provision of childcare in both PVI and LA settings is much appreciated. These surveys have now moved to weekly, and we would appreciate if you could continue to complete them on a Wednesday. The data collected has been published as part of a dashboard on the current childcare provision, available on the [Scottish Government website](#).

The SEEMiS Early Years project is continuing to progress, with a provisional roll out date to local authorities of April 2021. Further consultation on the suitability of this date has still to be carried out before the date is finalised. A video has been prepared by SEEMiS and uploaded onto the Knowledge Hub site specific to these developments to give you a flavour of the new system and an update on the developments. Other content to help local authorities prepare ahead of roll out has also been added.

14. PPE Procurement Framework

The Scottish Government has extended a PPE procurement framework to private, voluntary and independent early learning and childcare services which will provide a new route to procure PPE supplies from third-party supplier Lyreco. The products offered on the framework include face masks, aprons, gloves, visors, hand sanitiser, goggles and safety glasses.

The Care inspectorate has sent individual emails to all settings with instructions on how to register. Further information can be found [here](#).

JULY 2020			
6 July	Launch of the Access to Childcare Fund	The Access to Childcare Fund is ran by Children in Scotland and funded by Scottish Government. The fund will provide grants to establish models of out of school care (in the widest sense) to make services more accessible and affordable for low income families, allowing parents to reduce childcare costs, work more flexibly and increase their incomes. The £3 million fund will be delivered over two years with a total of £1.5 million pounds allocated between successful applicants in this funding round.	https://childreninscotland.org.uk/access-to-childcare-fund/
8 July	Critical childcare sub group	The aim of the Critical Childcare and Early Learning Childcare sub group is to ensure partnership working takes place across the education and ELC sectors whilst we are responding to the C-19 pandemic; provide advice and solutions to the C-19 Education Recovery Group; and oversee workstreams 9 and 10.	
9 July	Childcare Sector Recovery Group	The ELC and Childcare Sector Recovery Working Group is looking closely at the financial sustainability and other aspects of the sector throughout the pandemic response. This is fundamental to the ability of the sector to reopen. The Scottish Government has asked the sector representative bodies, to work with their members to understand the impacts of the safe reopening guidance in terms of capacity and income generation; and the impacts of local funded ELC delivery plans as they are developed. The Group is providing input to the overall COVID-19 Education Recovery Group (which advises the Scottish Government and local government) on any further measures that may be required to support sustainability.	
10 July	Refreshed guidance for childminders	We will issue refreshed childminding guidance which will take effect from 15 July in line with the reopening of ELC services.	

10 July	Online support sessions for ELC workforce	This will be the first in a series of online support sessions around the guidance for reopening ELC settings. Scottish Government and Care Inspectorate will host the sessions, which will provide an opportunity to discuss the reopening guidance.	https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1144069744502011664
15 July	Reopening of ELC services	Indicative date for all childcare providers to reopen from if they wish to do so, subject to scientific & public health advice.	https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-guidance-on-reopening-early-learning-and-childcare-services/
16 July	Childcare Sector Recovery Group	The ELC and Childcare Sector Recovery Working Group is looking closely at the financial sustainability and other aspects of the sector throughout the pandemic response. This is fundamental to the ability of the sector to reopen. The Scottish Government has asked the sector representative bodies, to work with their members to understand the impacts of the safe reopening guidance in terms of capacity and income generation; and the impacts of local funded ELC delivery plans as they are developed. The Group is providing input to the overall COVID-19 Education Recovery Group (which advises the Scottish Government and local government) on any further measures that may be required to support sustainability.	
23 July	Childcare Sector Recovery Group	The ELC and Childcare Sector Recovery Working Group is looking closely at the financial sustainability and other aspects of the sector throughout the pandemic response. This is fundamental to the ability of the sector to reopen. The Scottish Government has asked the sector representative bodies, to work with their members to understand the impacts of the safe reopening guidance in terms of capacity and income generation; and the impacts of local funded ELC delivery plans as they are developed. The Group is providing input to the overall COVID-19 Education Recovery Group (which advises the Scottish Government and local government) on any further measures that may be required to support sustainability.	

27 July	Virtual Nature School Cohort 2 begins	The Scottish Government has funded the Virtual Nature School from Living Classrooms to support practitioners in the delivery of nature based home learning to children unable to attend their setting during COVID-19. ELC Practitioners are given training and virtual materials to enable home learning for children and families over a new digital platform.	www.virtualnatureschool.scot
30 July	Childcare Sector Recovery Group	The ELC and Childcare Sector Recovery Working Group is looking closely at the financial sustainability and other aspects of the sector throughout the pandemic response. This is fundamental to the ability of the sector to reopen. The Scottish Government has asked the sector representative bodies, to work with their members to understand the impacts of the safe reopening guidance in terms of capacity and income generation; and the impacts of local funded ELC delivery plans as they are developed. The Group is providing input to the overall COVID-19 Education Recovery Group (which advises the Scottish Government and local government) on any further measures that may be required to support sustainability.	
AUGUST 2020			
6 August	Childcare Sector Recovery Group	The ELC and Childcare Sector Recovery Working Group is looking closely at the financial sustainability and other aspects of the sector throughout the pandemic response. This is fundamental to the ability of the sector to reopen. The Scottish Government has asked the sector representative bodies, to work with their members to understand the impacts of the safe reopening guidance in terms of capacity and income generation; and the impacts of local funded ELC delivery plans as they are developed. The Group is providing input to the overall COVID-19 Education Recovery Group (which advises the Scottish Government and local government) on any further measures that may be required to support sustainability.	
11 August	Reopening of ELC term time settings	The likely date for the reopening of ELC term time settings reopening in line with schools reopening.	

13 August	Childcare Sector Recovery Group	<p>The ELC and Childcare Sector Recovery Working Group is looking closely at the financial sustainability and other aspects of the sector throughout the pandemic response. This is fundamental to the ability of the sector to reopen. The Scottish Government has asked the sector representative bodies, to work with their members to understand the impacts of the safe reopening guidance in terms of capacity and income generation; and the impacts of local funded ELC delivery plans as they are developed. The Group is providing input to the overall COVID-19 Education Recovery Group (which advises the Scottish Government and local government) on any further measures that may be required to support sustainability.</p>	
APRIL 2021			
24 April	SCMA Annual Conference	<p>Unfortunately due to COVID-19 the SCMA Conference scheduled for this year has been postponed until April 2021. The theme for the conference will be “Making a Difference,” with a particular focus on wellbeing and full details can be found in the link attached.</p>	<p>https://www.childminding.org/news/scma-annual-conference-2020-important-update</p>

Annex B – Publications

Date Published	Document Link
20/03/2020	Guidance on critical childcare and learning provision for key workers
24/03/2020	Implementing social distancing in education and childcare settings
24/03/2020	School and ELC closures - guidance for key workers
30/03/2020	Childcare providers: closure information
30/03/2020	Information for private and third sector childcare providers about business support
30/03/2020	Information for Childminders about business and financial support
30/03/2020	Childcare closures and emergency provision
31/03/2020	Joint statement issued by Ms Todd and Cllr McCabe on the 1140 hours revocation
31/03/2020	Social distancing in education and childcare settings guidance
15/05/2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19): physical distancing in education and childcare settings
21/05/2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19): strategic framework for reopening schools, early learning and childcare provision
26/05/2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19): schools, early learning and childcare settings - scientific evidence
01/06/2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19): fully outdoor childcare providers guidance
01/06/2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19): childminder services guidance
15/06/2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) Phase 3: guidance on reopening early learning and childcare services
24/06/2020	Further route map detail announced
03/07/2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) Phase 3: guidance on reopening school aged childcare services