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Friday 17 July 2020

NOTE FOR ALL CHILDCARE PROVIDERS

To all registered childcare providers,

This notice is being provided today to set out the announcements made this week for all childcare services and what they mean for providers.

Yesterday the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, and the Deputy First Minister, John Swinney, took part in the daily press briefing in Edinburgh. Both the First Minister and Deputy First Minister thanked parents, children and the childcare sector for everything they've done during the pandemic.

The Deputy First Minister provided two important updates. The first explained that based on scientific and public health advice we believe that, if the virus continues to be suppressed, we will be in a position to issue revised guidance on 30 July which eases the requirement for 'bubbles' in childcare settings and will allow us to also ease the current restrictions on blended placements. The second was to announce funding of £11.2 million for private and third sector childcare providers to help with the costs of reopening.

What does this mean for childcare right now?

From 15 July all childcare services were able to reopen if they wished to do so. We issued guidance for [fully outdoor childcare services](#) on 1 June, [early learning and childcare services](#) on 15 June and for [school aged childcare services](#) on 3 July. This current guidance should be applied to all settings who have reopened from 15 July, including those providing critical childcare. [Childminding services](#) should use the refreshed guidance we issued on 10 July

We have received further scientific and public health advice which tells us that, if the virus continues to be suppressed, we will be able to remove the requirement for children to remain in small consistent groups of up to 8 and that we will be able to ease current restrictions on blended placements.

Transitional Fund

As announced yesterday by the Deputy First Minister we will make funding of £11.2 million available, through a Transitional Support Fund, for childcare providers to support them to adapt their settings safely to reopen.

Purpose of the fund

We are aware that Scotland's childcare sector has been working extremely hard to ensure their settings have put in place the measures that can give staff and parents

confidence ahead of their safe reopening. Taking these steps has resulted in extra costs for childcare providers, at a time when their income has also reduced. The Transitional Support Fund will help childcare providers in the private and third sectors, including out-of-school care providers, meet the extra costs incurred to comply with public health guidance in response to coronavirus (COVID-19).

What do we expect settings to use the funding for?

The grants are expected to help with costs for:

- Increased cleaning;
- Investment in additional equipment and developing outdoor space, to enable more outdoor learning; and
- Adaptations to support the physical distancing of adults in settings (e.g. changes to entrance and exit areas, additional signage, etc)

Coverage/eligibility

Grants will be available to all private and third sector childcare providers, not just those delivering funded early learning and childcare. This includes out of school care providers. Grant amounts will vary according to the size of the childcare setting and will be based on Care Inspectorate registered capacity. Providers with multiple settings will be able to claim for each of their eligible settings.

Application process

More information as to how providers can access the Transitional Support Fund, and the level of grants that will be available, will be set out by **31 July**.

Next steps

We will continue to keep you updated through the Care Inspectorate.

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 early learning and childcare sector to support Scotland's children and families. Follow us @ELCScotGov.

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