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| Q: What is the local authority role in supporting sufficiency of childcare during this time? |
| A: The LA has a sufficiency duty and will work with local providers and neighbouring LAs to monitor demand from critical workers and for vulnerable children to support and broker places across the LA.We are very proud of the sterling work that settings are doing to work with their colleagues and parents to slow the spread of the virus by encouraging families to stay at home and working together to provide safe care. The recent Emergency Bill allows the secretary of state powers to force settings to open, close and re-open. National guidance is being worked through to detail how this continuity power will be used in practice. We have not yet reached a stage where this is needed in Solihull. |
| Q: What information do we need to communicate to the LA? |
| A: We have asked all settings to keep us informed of their current position. Let us know if you are closed so that we can communicate this to parents and others settings via Social Solihull Family Information Service [FIS] <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/familyinfo> 🖰 familyinfo@solihull.gov.uk Settings have received funding for children’s early education entitlement [Early Education Funding] and this will continue into the summer. We expect the places that are funded, but where children are safely cared for at home, be available to children where their settings have closed because of staff illness or very low numbers [1 / 2 children remaining]. The government is working on a national data collection system for early years to enable Covid 19 [C19] sufficiency information to guide their C19 plan for sufficiency of childcare for critical services such as NHS staff. This is especially important during holiday times [such as Easter] when fewer settings may be available. <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/familyinfo> <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/Schools-learning/Coronavirus-Schools> Please let us know if providers open in your area that may be unregistered or those who are not operating as per the government ‘partial closure’ guidance.Whilst training and setting visits are suspended at this time, we will try our best to support you both through our children’s services Headlines publication and through e mail and telephone support.  |
| Q:What is a critical worker?  |
| A: The list is on <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision> and parents have been asked to use the flow chart [below] to check whether their role is key to the local and national infrastructure, and where children cannot be cared for in their home. <http://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/news/letter-to-early-years-and-childcare-providers-in-england/> - parents letter |
| Q:Who is considered vulnerable? |
| A: The guidance is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people> –it includes children with Education Health and Care Plans and those children who have a social worker. |
| Q: How can I help a child move to a new setting if mine has to close? |
| A: Social Solihull website is regularly updated by FIS. You can check which settings are open in the required locality. We ask you to support families to find alternative places. Where a child is more vulnerable, and needs a higher level of support, we ask for settings and parents to support the move to a new provider and share information that supports the child and families on-going well-being. Where social workers, or a wider range of professionals such as health care professionals, are involved, the setting should communicate with those needed to support on-going care. We ask key people to transfer with the child to their new setting where possible.  |
| Q: Can I charge parents who pay for child care in my setting? |
| A: The government has urged childcare providers to be sensitive during these times. This question is part of the guidance in <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures>  |
| Q: Can I have additional funding for school age children that come to me or emergency transport for children whose parents need support to get children to the setting? |
| A: The DfE have said that they are trying to find solutions to these situations |
| Q: Does the EYFS still apply? For example ratios and the need for every early years provision to have an on-site Paediatric first aid trained practitioner where there are early years children |
| A: The EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements continue to apply in full with flexibility as outlined in the statutory guidance and the documents at [www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc](http://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc) and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures> The DfE are working to consider further flexibility. Any changes require legislation change. |
| Q:What is happening to the updated Early Learning Goals |
| A: The changes to the learning and development requirements are being considered against the impact of C19. |
| Q: Safety and personal protection equipment [PPE]- how do settings stay safe? |
| A: Guidance on hygiene, social distancing in education settings, and health and safety are outlined below. Settings are often working with very young children where social distancing is difficult. The DfE have raised the need for early years settings and personal protection to be considered with other education provision where the need to closely care for children is essential. Handwashing guidance is here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19> Social distancing <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings> Cleaning guidance- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings> A video from <https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10159461541216980&id=645846979> applies to all those involved in a child’s education. Settings remain safe as they have lower numbers of children attending. The above guidance outlines additional actions we can all take to reduce the risk of infection. |
| Q: Ofsted- I’m due an inspection, will Ofsted visit my setting? |
| A: Ofsted produce a rolling guidance [ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofsted-coronavirus-covid-19-rolling-update> ] They have suspended all routine inspections and report publications but continue to visit where there are settings where safeguarding was not effective. |
| Q: Should I tell Ofsted that I am closing? |
| A: Early years and childcare Ofsted <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofsted-coronavirus-covid-19-rolling-update> At this time, you do not need to let Ofsted know if you are closed due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), whether that’s because you are not caring for the children of critical workers or vulnerable children, or because you are ill. |
| Q: What business support is available to education and care settings? |
| There have been a variety of business announcements to support childcare. * Early Education Funding continues to enable some sustainability and for funded children to find places.
* Business rates for settings that are not LA run
* Small business grants [MHCGL are working to identify eligible businesses]
* Job retention scheme support For furloughed workers- clarity is being sought for workers who are keeping childcare open on a rota basis.
* The Business Interruption Loan Scheme will now be interest free for 12 months.
* VAT payments due with VAT returns between now and end June 2020 deferred.
* Working tax credit has been increased by £1000 a year.
* Income for self-employed- 80% taxable grant claim [a system is being developed and expected to be available from June onwards] <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme>
* HMG are having discussions with insurance companies to guide a way forward.

More guidance is expected, specifically for the childcare sector. Links to Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership <https://www.gbslepgrowthhub.co.uk/business-advice/coronavirus> 0800 032 3488  |
| Q: How can we get vital supplies such as milk and food? |
| A: This issue has been raised and food suppliers are being asked to consider practitioners, in their role as key workers, for priority access to supplies. We ask those who are not currently working to support settings who still continue to care for children and consider supporting with the supply of essential resources such as hand wash. |
| Q: How can we support parents and children at home? |
| A: We suggest you signpost to the Tiny Happy People and Hungry Little Minds websites. Those families with access to outdoor space should be encouraged to explore the outdoor environment at home [balcony’s, garden, yard] |
| Q: I am not currently working in a setting but have relevant qualifications and a full paediatric first aid certificate- how can I help? |
| A: Your local setting or school may need you to volunteer to support them to keep the business open for early years children and to remain safe. Contact the Solihull Education Improvement Team where we will keep your details, and contact you when settings ask for help. If you are able to offer help to a Solihull school or setting please contact seisenquiries@solihull.gov.uk stating your name, a contact e mail and phone number, dates and days you could be available and your location [so that we can match you with a school or setting that is near to you if this is possible] please tell us if you are paediatric first aid trained and the expiry date of your full 12 hour certificate. |
| Q: Have the rules on safeguarding changed? |
| A; No, we all continue to be responsible for children’s safety. If you have a concern about a child contact Solihull Local Safeguarding Partnership or NSPCC. <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/socialservicesandhealth/childrenfamilies/safeguardingchildren/safeguardingchildrenyoungpeople> Education settings should also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing> Lorraine Lord, senior education safeguarding officer in Solihull, sends regular updates through Headlines news.  |
| Q: Childminders- how can we help? |
| A: Childminders are very much part of the national support for vulnerable children and critical workers. They are often able to be flexible and provide care at times when other settings are closed. Childminders can support other settings by using their ability to work out of their home for 50% of the time.  |
| Q: Can a childminder look after children in the child’s own home? |
| A: Yes if they temporarily suspend their childminder registration and register with Ofsted as a nanny/ home child carer <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/childminders-and-childcare-providers-register-with-ofsted/nannies-registration>  |
| Q: How can I keep myself safe and well? |
| A: You are very important to us and those around you. The council webpage and others listed may be useful <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/news/ArtMID/820/ArticleID/2894/Message-from-the-Leader-of-Solihull-Council> Well-being guidance <http://mindsmatteruk.co.uk/minds-matter-stress-busters/> <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/socialservicesandhealth/Coronavirus> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-mental-health-and-wellbeing-aspects-of-coronavirus-covid-19> Guidance for children <http://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/resources/>  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing>  |

Please see the letter from Vicky Ford MP who confirms the national position in relation to our thanks to you for your dedication and skill during this unusual time. <http://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/news/letter-to-early-years-and-childcare-providers-in-england/>

Further support in difficult times : <https://socialsolihull.org.uk/localoffer/education/children-and-young-peoples-send-service/community-educational-psychology-service/>