



## Childcare provision in Nottinghamshire Factsheet

Updated April 2020

### Information for parents and carers about closures of childcare settings

Many parents use childcare services for their children under the age of 5. As with schools, childcare providers were asked to close on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020. They will however stay open for vulnerable children and parents who are in critical jobs.

We understand there is anxiety and confusion about these closures, so we have prepared this factsheet to help you understand what can and can't be provided.

Information from the Department of Education for parents and carers regarding closures is also available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

### Frequently Asked Questions:

#### 1. Why has the government made the decision to close schools and childcare provision?

The most recent scientific advice on how to further limit the spread of COVID-19 is clear. If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading. That is why the government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools and childcare providers to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend.

It is important to underline that early years providers, schools, colleges and other educational establishments remain safe places for children. But the fewer children making the journey to childcare settings, and the fewer children in educational settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society.

Schools and childcare providers are, therefore, being asked to continue to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

#### 2. Who can still access Childcare?

The government announced the list of parents who are classed as **Critical Workers** in light of the guidance on school closures.

In summary, schools and education settings (Including Childminders) are expected to provide usual care for parents working in:

- Health and social care
- Education and childcare
- Key public services
- Local and national government
- Food and other necessary goods
- Public safety and national security
- Transport
- Utilities, communication and financial services

A full list of job roles is available here: [Guidance for schools, childcare providers, colleges and local authorities in England on maintaining educational provision - GOV.UK](#)

At least one parent needs to be in a critical role and early years settings will ask you for **evidence** so that they can prioritise places for parents in critical roles above others. This evidence is usually a letter from your employer to confirm your role and to confirm that you are a 'critical worker'.

Childcare provision will also continue to be provided for **vulnerable children**. These include:

- Children known to Social Care
- Children who have been assessed as vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities
- Children with Education and Healthcare Plans (EHCP)
- Young Carers
- Disabled Children

Nottinghamshire County Council is working with local childcare providers to continue to support vulnerable children and children of critical workers.

View flowchart: [Can I continue to send my child to school or early years provision? \[PDF\]](#)

### **3. If only one parent or carer is a critical worker, can I send my children in to school**

Children with at least one parent or carer who is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) response can attend school if required.

However, many families with a parent or carer working in critical sectors will be able to ensure their child is kept at home. Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be, to limit the chance of the virus spreading

### **4. What age groups does this cover?**

The changes cover children at registered childcare providers (including nurseries and childminders and schools). This is for both state-funded and independent schools.

### **5. Will it be mandatory for registered childcare providers to remain open in some form?**

Government has asked registered childcare providers (schools, nurseries, childminders, preschools) to remain open for children of critical workers and vulnerable children where they can.

Some may be unable to do so especially if they are experiencing severe staff shortages. If your childcare provider has closed, this may mean that your child may need to go to a different registered childcare provider during this closure period.

If you need help to find alternative childcare please contact the Early Childhood Services team at [eycovid19@nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:eycovid19@nottscc.gov.uk) or call us on 0300 500 80 80.

### **6. How long will schools and childcare provision be closed for?**

Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, schools, colleges and childcare providers will remain closed until further notice, except for children of critical workers and vulnerable children.

### **7. Will registered childcare providers be open over school holidays for holiday clubs and childcare?**

Where possible, we would encourage childcare providers, schools and colleges to continue to look after critical workers' children and vulnerable children throughout the school holidays.

### **8. I am a critical worker or have a vulnerable child - can you guarantee that my child will attend their usual childcare provider?**

We are expecting the majority of settings to stay open for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children so they can continue to attend their usual provider, but we acknowledge this will be impossible for some - such as small rural schools or child minders if they have been asked to self-isolate.

Where a setting is unable to stay open, they will work with the council and other local childcare providers to find an alternative setting for your child.

**9. I am a critical worker or have a vulnerable child - how will my child get to childcare if the only provision open is not nearby?**

The government are working closely with councils to ensure the necessary arrangements are in place to support children. We want to enable children to attend the best setting for them, if you are unable to access childcare provision due to transport please contact us at [eycovid19@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:eycovid19@nottsc.gov.uk) or call us on 0300 500 80 80.

**10. I am a critical worker or have a vulnerable child but I don't want to send my child in to school or childcare, do I have to?**

Many parents working in these critical sectors will be able to ensure their child is kept at home. Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.

This is an offer to parents and carers and there is no requirement for parents and carers to send their children to school if they do not need or wish to do so. We encourage you wherever possible to keep your children at home.

If you have a social worker, they will work with you to assess the best option for your child.

**11. I don't think that I am a critical worker but my employer has asked that I work, can I still access childcare?**

Childcare is only available for children critical workers because of the need to limit the chance of the virus spreading. That is why the government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible.

Your employer will need to provide you with some evidence of how your job is critical before a decision is made.

If you are unsure and struggling to find childcare, please get in touch with us at [eycovid19@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:eycovid19@nottsc.gov.uk) or call us on 0300 500 80 80.

**12. Why is my nursery telling me that they will continue to charge me during corona virus-related closures?**

The government acknowledges that in many cases, the insurance that early years providers have will not cover them for income lost during coronavirus (COVID-19) related closures.

That is one of the reasons why it was announced on 17 March that the government would not claw back early years entitlements funding from local authorities during closures, or where children do not attend because of coronavirus (COVID-19). This protects a significant proportion of early years providers' income.

However, we appreciate that in many cases fee paying parents are a crucial part of keeping childcare settings sustainable, therefore you may continue to be charged for your childcare place. This will often depend on the contract you have signed with your childcare provider as a fee-paying parent. It may be that your childcare setting asks for a voluntary contribution or a retention fee towards your child's place, even though you are not using the place. Any financial contribution requested by a childcare setting will be supporting that individual setting to be sustainable during the Covid-19 crisis and to be able to offer a childcare service in the future.

The government has set out a range of support for businesses to reduce the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on them. This includes a business rate holiday for all private childcare providers for one year from 1 April. Local authorities will be fully compensated for the cost of this. The government has also announced significant support for workers, which will help support private early years providers.

In light of these steps taken already, the Government are asking providers to be reasonable and balanced in their dealings with parents.

### **13. Will there be reduced childcare fees for parents who pay for their childcare?**

The Council understands that a very small number of childcare providers are offering a discount to fee paying parents, however this is not required by Government and is at the discretion of the childcare provider.

In the majority of cases, childcare providers will continue to charge parents at their usual rates.

### **14. If I get funded childcare, will that continue, or will I have to pay? Does this change if my child has to move to a different childcare provider on a temporary basis?**

If you currently receive funded childcare, parents will not have to pay extra apart from the usual charges to pay for meals etc.

If you have a critical role or your child is considered 'vulnerable', and you need to relocate to a different childcare provider than your usual one, the council is asking Childcare providers not to charge the parent for the funded part of the child's place. Instead, we are asking that funding from the vacant places where children are staying at home. If this is not possible i.e. not having enough funded spaces, a parent may be directed to a different childcare provider.

If you need to find alternative childcare, please contact:

- your current childcare provider in the first instance as they already have good links with neighboring services.
- the Early Childhood Services team at [eycovid19@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:eycovid19@nottsc.gov.uk) or call us on 0300 500 80 80.
- You can also check the Notts Help Yourself website which is being updated on a daily basis with information about closures and which settings remain open. [Childcare | Notts Help Yourself](#)

### **For more information:**

The latest Guidance for parents regarding closures of schools and childcare provision

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

Hints and tips for parents and carers at home with preschool children has been developed and is available at <https://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/kb5/nottinghamshire/directory/advice.page?id=nR2WshAKVBk>

Practical Local Information for Parents and Carers

[https://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/kb5/nottinghamshire/directory/parent\\_zone.page](https://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/kb5/nottinghamshire/directory/parent_zone.page)

Department for Education: Help children aged 2 to 4 to learn at home during coronavirus (COVID19)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-aged-2-to-4-to-learn-at-home-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

**Early Childhood Services**

**Nottinghamshire County Council**

**28<sup>th</sup> April 2020**