

Councils given flexibility with free childcare funding

Councils will be able to move around government funding for free childcare entitlements in exceptional circumstances, to make sure sufficient childcare places are available for vulnerable children and those of critical workers.

The Government has confirmed that councils will temporarily be able to use the funding they receive for the free entitlements for two, three and four-year-olds differently, redistributing it where absolutely necessary for the benefit of critical workers and the parents of the most vulnerable children, when their usual arrangements are no longer possible as a result of Coronavirus.

This builds on existing commitments to continue paying free entitlement funding – worth £3.6 billion a year – to local authorities throughout the Coronavirus outbreak. Childcare businesses will also benefit from other support schemes, including a business rates holiday, the Small Business grant for those that don't pay business rates, the Self-Employment Scheme and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS).

On Friday (17 April) the Department for Education published [guidance](#) to set out how the CJRS and free entitlement funding interact, confirming that early years providers can access the CJRS to cover the proportion of their income considered to have been paid from private income, such as parent fees. Any setting which sees their early entitlement funding reduced in order to fund childcare places elsewhere will be able to increase the proportion of their salary bill eligible for the CJRS.

New guidance will be published to support councils with the steps they will need to take if moving around government funding between settings, where all other options have been explored and more childcare places are still needed locally for children for the duration of the Coronavirus outbreak.

In addition, to provide further support to early years settings who are staying open for vulnerable children and children of critical workers, providers will be given greater flexibility in meeting some of the requirements in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework. This is to manage expectations and reduce burdens during an unpredictable time for the sector.

Children's safety remains the priority for the duration of these temporary changes, and safeguarding and welfare requirements will still remain a requirement with the exception of a small number of changes, including staff qualification requirements to allow flexibility around staffing, in recognition of the challenges facing employers whose staff may have to remain at home.

Children's Minister Vicky Ford said:

Our early years professionals are central to this country's response to the coronavirus outbreak, and I'm grateful for their work to continue providing safe and high-quality childcare for those who need it the most: critical workers and parents of vulnerable children.

Councils are best placed to respond to the childcare needs in their area, so it's right that we give them extra support to face these unprecedented challenges. They can use flexibility to redistribute entitlements funding in exceptional cases where other options have been exhausted, helping nurseries and other settings stay open and making sure enough childcare places are available.

The government continues to monitor the early years sector and provide support where possible, including guidance that is currently regularly updated and a range of business support available through the government.

[Glasgow COVID-19 Mega Lab Opens](#)

Funded by the UK Government, the Lighthouse Laboratory in Glasgow is part of what will be the biggest network of diagnostic testing facilities in British history, alongside other Lighthouse Lab sites in Milton Keynes and Alderley Park. All have been opened in recent days.

The newly operational lab will test samples from the regional centres where NHS staff and frontline workers with suspected COVID-19 infections are tested. It is hoped the lab will quickly move towards processing several thousand tests per day, before scaling up further to tens of thousands of tests per day.

Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

The UK Government has committed to expanding our testing capacity across the UK. The completion of our network with the Lighthouse Lab in Glasgow is a tremendous achievement for all the partners in such challenging circumstances and only five weeks after this project was started.

Scotland has world-class universities and I am pleased they have been involved in this UK-wide effort as we work together to protect the NHS and save lives. Dr Jodie Hay, a Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia researcher at the University of Glasgow, is one of the volunteers at The Lighthouse Lab in Glasgow. A cancer scientist with experience of working with patient samples and molecular lab

techniques, Dr Hay volunteered so she could use her skills to help with COVID-19 response in the UK.

The Lighthouse Lab in Glasgow is hosted by the University of Glasgow at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital Campus.

Professor Dame Anna Dominiczak, University of Glasgow Vice Principal and Head of the College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences, who leads the team said:

I am pleased that after weeks of hard work and continued effort by all involved, the University of Glasgow can now deliver the country new, large-scale testing facility, in conjunction with our industry partners and the NHS.

I remain incredibly grateful to all partners and colleagues who have volunteered their time, expertise and skills for this testing facility. As a result of their willingness to help, we have equipped, staffed and set-up a new testing facility that is now operational and will be vitally important in the NHS efforts against this coronavirus pandemic. It has been said all over the world and confirmed by the WHO that we have to test, test and test more to fight the virus that has killed so many.

The Glasgow facility will be staffed on a 24/7 basis by around 100 staff members. More than 800 volunteers came forward to help with the facility, including highly experienced molecular scientists, technicians and bioinformaticians – all with the relevant skills and experience to carry out COVID-19 testing.

Dr Hay said:

I was one of the first volunteers selected to begin working in the Lighthouse Lab in Glasgow and it has been incredible to see how quickly everyone has been able to get this lab up and running so that we can begin processing the testing samples.

Like my other colleagues working in the lab, we volunteered so that we could use the skills and expertise we have from our usual lab work in this response against COVID-19. Although these are challenging times, it feels positive to be able to use my skills and experience in this way and to be able to help.

The facility has been made possible through the work and commitment of partners, volunteers and University of Glasgow staff, including lab technicians, IT services and colleagues from the Professional Services across the College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences in Glasgow.

[Dame Louise Casey writes to Local Authority homelessness managers and rough sleeping coordinators](#)

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

[Funding boost for remote victim services](#)

- £600,000 for charities to offer remote based support services
- helplines across the UK get funding boost to meet growing demand
- part of government action to ensure help remains available during this difficult time

Social distancing measures mean that some charities can no longer offer face-to-face support, and must transfer to mainly remote based services to provide victims with the practical and emotional help they need.

£600,000 will therefore be reallocated to services immediately, allowing helplines to stay open longer and employ more support workers to handle calls. It will also help fund the technology needed for other forms of contact such as video calls as well as a new online chat service and digital hub run by Victim Support.

Six organisations that together cover the whole of the United Kingdom will benefit from the funding, meaning victims of crimes, in particular sexual and domestic abuse, can still access this essential support.

Justice Minister, Alex Chalk MP, said:

Now more than ever victims need to know that they are not alone, and despite this challenging period help will always be there.

This cash boost will ensure that these vital services – which so many rely on – will continue to be available during this difficult time.

Victim Support Chief Executive Diana Fawcett:

We welcome funding from the Ministry of Justice to expand our online support services to every region of England and Wales, during a period which will be very difficult for victims of crime.

Our message to victims is very clear. Our trained supporters are here to offer you free and confidential support. It doesn't matter where you live, what type of crime you have experienced, when it happened, whether you want support in the day or at night, or if you have reported the crime to the police. Victim Support is here to support you.

Today's (23 April 2020) move follows [a 50 per cent funding boost](#) for rape support services which totals £32 million over the next 3 years for a range of services including tailored face-to-face support and counselling.

Alongside these measures, additional support is available to protect victims of domestic abuse during the coronavirus outbreak. The government recently published guidance on applying for domestic abuse injunctions remotely and we are boosting domestic abuse helplines and online support with an additional £2 million.

Charities across the UK will also benefit from a £750 million package of support, announced earlier this month by Chancellor Rishi Sunak, to ensure they can continue their vital work during the coronavirus outbreak

Notes to editors

- The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) is reallocating £600,000 of existing funds to ensure helplines for victims and witnesses can deal with a surge in demand.
- The organisations benefiting from this include Safeline, The Survivors Trust, National Association for People Abused in Childhood, Rape Crisis England & Wales and Victim Support.
- MOJ funding for victim support services has almost doubled since 2012 to 2013. This year we awarded about £92 million on these services. In previous years this has been £96 million due to a £4 million MOJ contribution to the Home Office's modern slavery contract – this funding has now been directly transferred to the Home Office.
- [Information on Victim and Witness support](#) provision can be found on GOV.UK.
- [Information on specialist support for victims of sexual violence](#) can be found on GOV.UK.

Philippines travel during coronavirus (COVID-19): local car rentals

Metro Manila Nissan Rent-A-Car 0917-819-5406 / 0917-598-7201 / 0917-598-7223 / 0998-963-7682 Cavite and Batangas Carfield Tourist Transport (028) 8535331/0917-887-8112 Batangas Tourist Transport Corp 0917-540-0267 BAPSSODA Transport Services (046) 5735739 Will Go Tour & Transport 0906-262-2284 GM Joe Tours & Transport 0905-827-5956 La Union Briggs-Kaith Travel & Tours (072) 607-2786/242-0172 / 0919-6477-417 briggs.kaith.traveltours@gmail.com Krenzella Travel & Tour 0939-925-3474/0906-244-4839 Ranchez Express Travel and Tours Agency (072) 607-6264/0918-308-7811 rancheztravelsandtours@yahoo.com Ilocos Norte Northern Ilocos City of Laoag Transport 0910-096-7929/0998-547-4900 njayboy@yahoo.com Ilocos Sur Partas Transportation Company (077) 725-1756 ptci.legal@gmail.com Baguio/Benguet/La Trinidad Baguio City Tourist Transport 0916-588-1845 alfredmirandadimla@gmail.com Bukod Pulic Utility Vehicle Operators 0910-768-9695 indianajones965@gmail.com Bokod Transport Cooperative 0949-419-6881 eihmjhie@gmail.com Community Local Travellers & Tours Transport Service 0995-144-3568/0999-990-9957 cltttsc@yahoo.com Cordillera Tourist Transport Cooperative 0930-581-6655 norbertcayatocl0@gmail.com Enclean Transport Cooperative 0929-311-8173 josepholsem@yahoo.com ITTAG Transport Service Cooperative 0929-953-9033 hjuwentrish@yahoo.com John Baguio Movement Tourist Service 0908-708-8228 jbmtourist@yahoo.com Sagadian Tourist Transport Cooperative 0919-931-9334/0929-336-3216 sagadiantranscoop@yahoo.com Smokey Transport 0918-277-8026 smokeytransport@gmail.com Trusted Blistt Alliance of Transport (074) 244-0653 tbatmpc@yahoo.com Isabela Northern Luzon Transport Operators 0926-595-4543/0905-363-2366 RVTJ Tours (078) 305-1564/09267250868 Cagayan Hotel Delfino Tours 0927-445-0969 Tahntahn Van Rental 0917-858-0885 Pampanga/Nueva Ecija MDR Transport 0917-393-2455 Sean Angel Transport 0925-357-0859 Cebu Catalina Car Rentals 09176287777 Crius Tourist Transport 09176253786 Sanfort Safety Tours Rent A Car 09173251645 Planet J Rent A Car 09063083336, 09175874145 Orient Sun Transport Corp 09173284371 Pearl of the Pacific Rent-A-Car 09177931271 Divaishnavi Intl. Inc. 09778241287, 09173294457 CLB Tours and Transport Services 09178479620, 09228815183