

This is your daily email to keep you updated on the government's response to coronavirus (COVID-19).

New winter package to provide further support for children and families

Yesterday, the Government announced a [new £170m Covid Winter Grant Scheme](#). This funding will be ring-fenced, with at least 80% earmarked to support with food and bills and will cover the period to the end of March 2021.

Local authorities will receive the funding at the beginning of December 2020.

This scheme will allow local authorities to support the hardest-hit families and individuals, as well as provide food for children who need it over the holidays. Local authorities understand which groups need support, and are best placed to ensure appropriate holiday support is provided, which is why they will distribute the funds, rather than schools, who will continue providing meals for disadvantaged children during term-time.

The Holiday Activities and Food Programme, which has provided healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children since 2018, will also be expanded across England next year. This programme will cover Easter, Summer and Christmas in 2021, and will be available to children in every local authority in England.

Ofsted interim visits to take place remotely during the period of national restrictions

Ofsted has announced that during the period of national restrictions, they will carry out their work remotely where they can, only going on site where it is necessary to do so, or in response to urgent concerns.

Further information on their plans for remote inspections during the period of national restrictions can be found in the [Ofsted: coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rolling update](#).

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme extended until the end of March 2021

The [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme \(CJRS\)](#) will be extended until the end of March 2021. Workers in any part of the UK can retain their job, even if their employer cannot afford to pay them, and be paid at least 80% of their salary up to £2,500 a month. Early years providers' access to the CJRS remains as published.

The Job Support Scheme, which was scheduled to come into force on Sunday 1 November, has been postponed as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is being extended.

For organisations that are classified as public sector, and where there is continued public funding, for example local authority-maintained schools, staff that are supported by that public funding should not be furloughed.

Business premises forced to close in England are to receive grants worth up to £3,000 per month under the Local Restrictions Support Grant.

Further information on the financial support available can be found in the [guidance on the new period of national restrictions](#).

The information below hasn't changed since our last update

Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline – opening hours

The Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline is available to answer questions about coronavirus (COVID-19) relating to education settings and children's social care.

Please listen carefully to all of the available options before selecting the most appropriate option for your nursery, school, college or university.

Please select option 1 or 2 if you require specific advice on the action to take to respond to a positive case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in your setting. This option will take you through to a dedicated team of NHS Business Services Authority advisors who will work through a risk assessment with you to identify close contacts and will inform you what action is needed based on the latest public health advice.

Please select option 3 or 4 for any other questions about coronavirus (COVID-19) relating to education settings and children's social care.

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Opening hours: Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm

Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 6pm

Look up your unique organisation number (UON)

If you have not received your unique organisation number (UON) for ordering new coronavirus (COVID-19) test kits you can can

[look it up using your unique reference number \(URN\) or your UK provider reference number \(UKPRN\)](#) or by calling the Test and Trace helpdesk on 119.

Department for Education guidance

Our guidance to support education providers, local authorities and parents during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak can be accessed using the links below:

- [Guidance for early years and childcare providers](#)
- [Guidance for schools](#)
- [Guidance for further and higher education providers](#)
- [Guidance for local authority children's services](#)
- [Guidance for holiday or after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings](#)