**Early Years Settings - Preparing for Phased Return**

**STEP ONE: Immediate response to latest Government update**

***Government Guidance:***

*Education and childcare settings are already open to priority groups. Now that we have made progress in reducing the transmission of coronavirus,* ***we are encouraging all eligible children to attend*** *– it is no longer necessary for parents of eligible children to keep them at home if they can. In particular, as per the* [*existing guidance on vulnerable children and young people*](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)*, vulnerable children of all year groups continue to be expected and encouraged to attend educational provision where it is appropriate for them to do so.*

*Any educational or childcare settings which have closed* ***should work towards reopening*** *from the week commencing 1 June 2020, if* supported by the science and government tests.

Ensure you are familiar with government guidance:

* [Actions for educational and childcare settings](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/9z3XCK8mDtDyW2zCvglgZ?domain=gov.uk)
* [Implementing protective measures in education childcare settings](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/1fH4CLZnEUkD9RyFPVLOl?domain=gov.uk)

**Actions for EY providers:**

* Settings should start to plan to enable them to open and provide care for key worker children & vulnerable children as soon as possible.
* Parent Audits should be carried to out to establish parents' intentions for children returning to the provision.  Settings should prioritise and plan for the return of vulnerable children, children whose parents needing to physically return to work and 3 & 4 year olds transitioning to school
* Staffing Audits should be carried out to identify the percentage of staff that are ready to be deployed.  Considerations should be made regarding members of staff who are shielding or have family members who are shielding

**STEP TWO: Planning and preparing to open to more children or Re-opening from 1 June** (If supported by the science/government tests)

***Government Guidance*:**

*In childcare settings, providers will be asked to welcome back all children below statutory school age from the week commencing 1 June 2020.*

*Demand for childcare is likely to be lower than usual at first, and existing space requirements and staff to child ratios for these age groups should allow for small group working. Where the physical layout of a setting does not allow small groups of children to be kept at a safe distance apart, we expect practitioners to exercise judgement in*

*ensuring the highest standards of safety are maintained.*

*In some cases, it may be necessary for providers to introduce a temporary cap on numbers to ensure that safety is prioritised. From 1 June 2020, childminders can look after children of all ages, in line with usual limits on the number of children they can care for.* *If necessary, settings have the flexibility to focus first on continuing to provide places*

*for priority groups and then, to support children’s early learning, settings should prioritise groups of children as follows:*

* *early years settings– 3 and 4-year olds followed by younger age groups*

**Actions for EY providers:**

* Use information from parents and staff audits to identify numbers of children expected to return from 1 June
* Use the LA ***Stay Alert, Monitor-Respond-Communicate*** guidance to audit and risk assess your provision

**STEP THREE: Before Opening**

***Government Guidance:***

*Every setting should carry out a risk assessment before opening. The assessment should directly address risks associated with coronavirus (COVID-19), so that sensible measures can be put in place to control those risks for children and staff. All employers have a duty to* consult employees on health and safety*, and they are best placed to understand the risks in individual settings*

*Schools and other settings should communicate their plans to parents once they have had a chance to work through them in detail*

**Action for EY providers:**

* Review risk assessments
* Communicate plans to re-open with all staff and parents
* Be prepared to review and revise plans in response to feedback, changes or updated Government advice