

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM
Date of meeting 12 January 2021

Item No 10

Title: Recommendations of the Early Years Block Working Group

Appendices A, B and C refer

Executive Summary

On 1 December 2020, the Early Years Block Working Group considered a number of reports, including:

- Early Years Block Funding 2021/22;
- SEN Inclusion Fund;
- Take-up of Funded Places.

A summary of the information presented and the Working Group's recommendations are provided in this report.

Recommendations

The Forum is asked to:

- a) **Note the report from the Early Years Block Working Group held on 1 December 2020;**
- b) **Ratify the Working Group's recommendations.**

Background

On 1 December 2020, the Early Years Block Working Group considered a number of reports. A summary of the information presented and the Working Group's recommendations are provided below.

1. Early Years Block Funding 2021/22

On 25 November 2020, the Chancellor announced additional £44m for early years education in 2021/22. The announcement indicated that the increase was for the hourly rate paid to childcare providers for the government's free hours offers and represents an increase of circa 1.2%.

No further details linked to the increase have yet been provided, so it is unclear whether it relates to 3 and 4 year olds (as per 2020/21 increases) or will also include 2 year old rates. To date, no EYB Operational Guidance for 2021/2 has yet been received

The working group noted that the funding rise will be below the level of inflation faced in the sector, as the Chancellor's spending review also announced a 2.2% increase in the National Living Wage (NLW). Colleagues feedback on the financial pressures on the sector both locally and nationally, which was often greatest for settings serving areas of high deprivation.

A draft letter from the working group Chair to the Schools Forum was shared with members, which highlighted the significant pressures being faced by the sector and asked for consideration of three measures:

- Funding for the 2021 spring term, with at least a similar measure as applied this term in comparing it with spring 2020;
- A one off Covid support payment for each setting;
- Additional funding for the whole of the next financial year.

The working group supported the content of the letter and a final version of the correspondence submitted is provided at Appendix A.

Members were also informed that following initial modelling of DSG allocations for 2020/21, the County council has launched a consultation with schools proposing that Schools Block headroom is again transferred to EYB in 2021/22.

Responses will be reported to Schools Forum in January for a decision and any transfer will also need to be considered in the light of final DSG allocations from the Government, that are expected later in December 2020.

The Working Group

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Supported the submission of the letter from the Chair of the EYB Working Group.**

Response to EYB letter to Forum

Subsequent to the working group meeting, the correspondence from the chair was sent and an update is provided below in connection with the 3 key representations made in the EYB letter.

- **Spring Term Funding 2021**

On 17 December 2020, the DfE confirmed that funding for early years for the spring term 2021 will be purely on the basis of the January 2021 census data.

For the summer and autumn terms 2020, protection has applied to early years funding for local authorities, which has allowed settings to be funded on the higher of the summer or autumn term census data, or the numbers for the same term a year earlier, to provide some protection from lower take up of places due to COVID-19.

The December announcement from the DfE confirms that the funding for spring 2021 will return to the usual methodology. The DfE did say that there is some protection that will be provided to local authorities in exceptional circumstances. This exceptional process involves a top-up for LAs where take-up grows after the January 2021 census date, but the criteria includes a threshold of 85% of January 2020 levels and Lancashire expects to be well above that point, as overall take-up in the autumn term 2020 was almost back to autumn 2019 levels.

Initial analysis suggests that it is unlikely that Lancashire will be able to fund continued covid protection for take-up in spring term 2021 now that this has been removed by DfE, especially if the overall early years pupil numbers in Lancashire are back at previous levels in January 2021.

Lancashire will continue to offer the normal supplementary claims processes for providers in the spring term 2021.

- **A one off Covid support payment for each setting**

In response to the suggestion for a covid related payment to be made to early years providers and following further discussions with the working group chair, a consultation was issued on 14 December 2020.

The proposal is for a one-off lump sum payment to be made in the spring term 2021 of £250 for childminders and £1,000 for other early years providers, to assist with covid related costs. As the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) reserve would be used to fund this allocation, views are being sought from all Lancashire schools and academies and early years settings in receipt of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding.

A copy of the consultation document is attached at Appendix B, and contains further details about the proposals and the rationale.

The consultation closes on 8 January 2021. An interim analysis of consultation responses and a full list of comments received by 4 January 2021 is attached at Appendix C. This analysis will be updated once the consultation has closed and any additional comments received will be provided for members.

Members are asked to note that if the proposals were agreed by the Forum in January, the School and Early Years finance regulations would require the county council to submit what is known as a 'disapplication' request to the DfE. This request would need to seek the agreement of the Secretary of State to disapply the regulations and change budget allocations in-year by making the one-off Covid allocation.

The allocation could only be paid out if and when a 'disapplication' were approved.

- **Additional funding for the whole of the next financial year**

Initial estimates suggest that the implementation of the National School Funding Formula (NFF) methodology in Lancashire, including the increased minimum pupil funding (MPF) levels and the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) set at positive +2% is affordable as the local funding formula. Modelling indicates that there could still be circa £2m of headroom available in 2021/22.

A consultation was therefore issued to schools about a transfer of circa £2.0m from the Schools Block to the Early Years Block to help mitigate the impact of pressures on that block.

Further details including the consultation document and the consultation analysis and comments are included in the Schools Block recommendations and the Schools Budget 2021/22 reports.

The Forum will be asked to make a final recommendation about the transfer as part of the 2021/22 budget setting process.

2. SEN Inclusion Fund

Following concerns raised at the last meeting, the Chair wrote to the Inclusion Service expressing concerns about inclusion related matters.

Subsequently, the Chair, plus a small group of other representatives, have met with the Inclusion Service colleagues to discuss the issue raised.

Outcomes included:

- The Service to work with a maintained and PVI representative to review the Inclusion Fund process;
- The Service will reinforce the setting visits policy with staff to ensure a consistent approach is provided across the county;
- The Service to work with the Chair to produce a 'video evidence' document to address data protection concerns;
- The Service agreed to investigate delays in settings receiving Request for Involvement (RFI) reports.

A further meeting is to be arranged in the New Year to review progress.

In the meantime, settings were encouraged to escalate any unresolved issues to the service.

Members also asked if there was any feedback from the OfSTED SEND inspection of the Authority, to which some colleagues had contributed and officers agreed to check with Inclusion Service colleagues.

The Working Group

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Welcomed the actions from the meeting with Inclusion Service colleagues;**
- c) Requested that the Group be kept informed of developments.**

SEND Partnership: Ofsted Revisit

The following update is provided for members in response to the request for information:

Ofsted has published the findings from their revisit to Lancashire to assess improvements made to SEND services.

Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspectors revisited Lancashire between 9 - 12 March 2020 to assess improvements made to SEND services for children and young people in Lancashire. The purpose of the revisit was to review Lancashire's progress against the twelve areas of significant concern identified during the November 2017 inspection.

During the revisit inspectors met with leaders, managers and frontline workers in health, social care and education. More than 550 parents and carers contributed to the revisit. Inspectors spoke with children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities and looked at a range of information about the performance of the area. Inspectors considered 239 pieces of evidence and sampled more than 20 Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans.

The feedback from the revisit has been positive and overall the inspectors judged that sufficient progress had been made in seven of the twelve area of significant weaknesses identified at the initial inspection.

Some of the important improvements the inspectors found include:

- Provision for SEND is a priority for leaders;*
- Strong working relationships across the partnership;*
- Clear quality assurance systems in place;*
- Good practice being shared across the area; and*
- Improved outcomes for children and young people.*

The report highlighted five areas for continued targeted improvement work. Partners are working closely with the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England/NHS Improvement (NHSE/I) to agree the key actions for improvement, which will continue to be monitored.

For our SEND services across the partnership this includes:

- Continuing to improve our understanding about the local area;*
- Further developing and evaluating our commissioning arrangements;*
- Improving the effectiveness of the new neuro-developmental pathway;*
- Improving transition arrangements in 0 to 25 healthcare services; and*
- Implementing the changes to the Local Offer.*

Over the Autumn Term, Lancashire will respond to the findings in the report with a targeted action plan, which will be monitored by the DfE SEND Intervention Unit and NHSE/I, to address the five areas which continue to require improvement.

The report is available at: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80480>

Further information can also be found at:

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/your-local-offer/send-inspections/>

3. Take-up of Funded Places.

Information was shared with the group analysing the take-up of funded places in Lancashire. Figures showed a reduction in the take-up of 2 year old places in the county and further analysis revealed some significant variations on a district by district basis.

Officers explained that a number of initiatives were being developed to promote further take-up, both county wide, and targeted at districts with the lowest take-up, including:

- A new parental leaflet;
- A social media campaign, including WhatsApp;
- Assistance from the community engagement teams, particularly in areas of low take up, to help reach BAME communities;
- Development of banners promoting the service.

Members suggested that settings would be able to help disseminate early years information being promoted by the county council, using their own social media and group chat channels, to help spread messages in a coordinated manner. Officers were grateful for this suggestion and agreed to look at how it could be implemented.

The Working Group:

- a) **Noted the information;**
- b) **Welcomed the initiatives being developed to increase take-up, including the coordination of promotional messages using settings communication channels.**



Lancashire Schools Forum

Shaun Jukes
Chair, Lancashire Schools Forum

Tel. 07966 508 999
Email peter@lancschildcare.co.uk
Date 1 December 2020

C. Sarah Callaghan, Director of Education and Skills
Kevin Smith, Acting Head of Service Schools Finance

Dear Shaun,

Early Years Funding

I am writing to raise issues with Early Years funding across the whole sector. Many of the comments below apply to PVI and MNS alike.

For this financial year it was agreed that an extra 8p/hour would be paid by government for 2yo and 3/4yo. Lancashire, thankfully, found an extra 8p on the 3/4yo rate for one year only.

Settings have had some protection this autumn term by the government offering to protect EEF funds at the rate paid last year. Lancashire took the approach to offer settings, subject to terms and conditions, the higher of the headcount payment for this term or the headcount payment for last autumn.

50% of settings claimed EEF funding for this term higher than autumn 2019. By default this means half of settings did not reach the autumn 2019 levels of EEF.

Whilst there tends to be some relationship between EEF funding and parent paid fees, the above split does not provide any information about the downturn in parent paid fees. There is still some parental resistance to children returning to early years settings.

“Providers that are now fully open are operating with fewer children on roll and fewer numbers of new children than in March. The fact that many parents are working from home has led to a reduction in the number of children attending and demand has reduced. This is making it hard for providers to predict future demand for places. Most providers (two thirds) reported having fewer children on roll, with around a third reporting that they had many fewer children. A quarter of providers said their numbers had remained the same and only 9% reported having more children on roll. Over half of providers said they had fewer children on roll than they would normally expect.” (*Changes in Demand, Ofsted Covid-19 briefing on early years October 2020*)

Some childminders are reporting having to take extra jobs to make ends meet.



Chair Shaun Jukes

C/O The Clerk to the Schools Forum, • Financial Management (Development and Schools)
PO Box 100, County Hall, Preston, PR1 0LD

Settings have had to self-fund extra costs of managing bubbles, staff absence due to both positive test and precautionary self-isolation. Settings have had to increase the use of PPE, purchase extra equipment, increase cleaning labour and cleaning equipment. Settings have also had to reduce the occupancy to manage the bubbles and for separation of children and staff. Many settings are reporting increased SEND issues. Some settings have had to borrow through the Bounce Back Loan, overdrafts, delayed mortgage and rent payments and some owners have had to truncate or manage without their own salary to survive.

“The pandemic has put many providers in a difficult financial position. Over half (58%) of the providers we spoke to had faced financial difficulties as a result of it. Almost half (48%) rated financial difficulties among the top three challenges that they had to face. Settings were having to absorb increased costs, for example for PPE, alongside less income. Some said that government funding levels were an issue for them, including funding for increased numbers of children with SEND. A few providers were worried about what will happen when they have to repay their government loan.” (*The financial sustainability of the early years sector, Ofsted Covid-19 briefing on early years October 2020*)

What is the impact of all this on quality delivery? The importance of the first 1000 days?
“Total spending per child is projected by the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the Children’s Commissioner to fall by 12% in real terms between 2010/11 and 2020/21, thereby reversing some of rapid increases in spending that occurred during the early 2000s.” (*Section 70, First 1000 days of life, Health and Social Care Committee, 12 Feb 2019*)

With the second lockdown no real end is in sight until the latter part of next calendar year, assuming the anti-virus programme is effective. Whilst the sector appreciates Lancashire consolidating and prepaying the first two prepayments for the spring term to support cashflow, it is net neutral on the receipts.

Minimum wage is to rise by 2.2% from April 1st 2021. The government has offered an increase on EEF of 1.2%. This means that for an average setting parents will have to find an extra 3-10% depending on the mix of EEF to parent fee income for a setting to balance the books. This rise excludes any recovery of the extra Covid costs. Parents already struggling from job losses, furlough, and extra borrowings, may have to cut child attendance hours rather than pay extra, a further hit for children in lower income households.
We need some help.

In a recent All Party Parliamentary Group Zoom, I was saddened to hear that representatives of the sector reflected that they were “undervalued”, “underfunded”, “treated as second class citizens” and “not worth funding” and yet at the same time there was the expectation of higher quality and increased demands. What a sad state to be in.

“Investing in the early years is the best investment any government can make and saves money in the long-term. We recommend that the Government use the 2019 Spending Review as an opportunity to initiate the next early years revolution with a secure, long-term investment in prevention and early intervention to support parents, children and families during this critical period.” (*Summary, First 1000 days of life, Health and Social Care Committee, 12 Feb 2019*)

We all know how that turned out!

I am asking for Forum to consider how it and Lancashire County Council can support each of these measures:

1. Funding for the 2021 spring term, with at least a similar measure as applied this term in comparing it with spring 2020
2. A one off Covid support payment for each setting
3. Additional funding for the whole of the next financial year

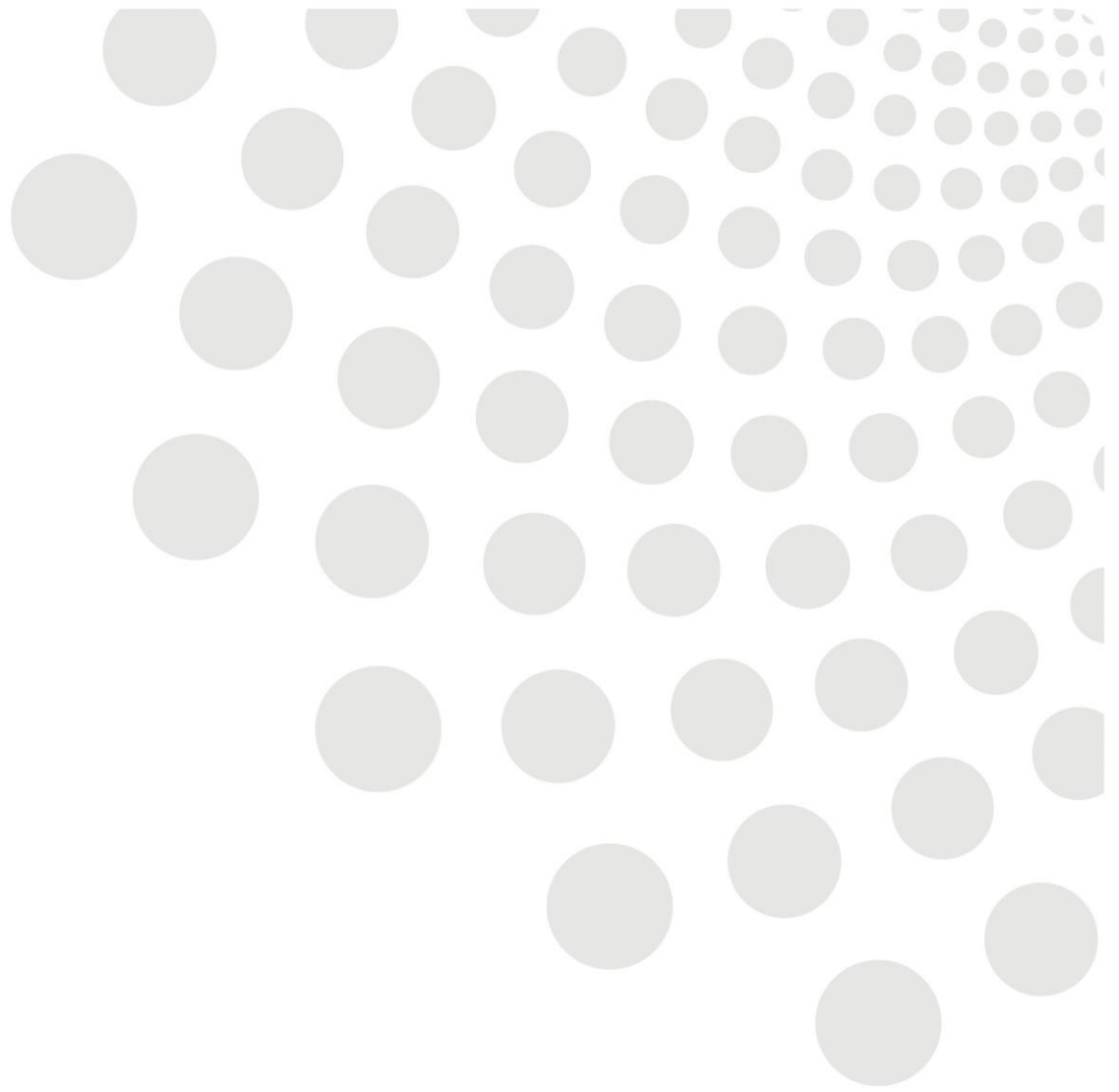
With best wishes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Hindle'.

Peter Hindle

Chair, Lancashire Schools Forum Early Years Block Working Group



Consultation on a proposal to make a one-off Covid allocation to Lancashire early years providers in Spring 2021

Consultation on a proposal to make a one-off Covid allocation to Lancashire early years providers in Spring 2021

Summary

The proposal is for a one-off lump sum payment to be made in the spring term 2021 of £250 for childminders and £1,000 for other early years providers, to assist with covid related costs.

Further information and the rationale for the proposal is provided below. Please let us know your view by using the eform available [here](#), by **8 January 2021**.

Background

Government guidance has placed the same expectations on Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS) and Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) early years providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, as those set out for mainstream schools.

Providers were asked to remain open for vulnerable children and for the children of key workers during the first national lockdown, commence reopening from June 2020 and to remain fully open during lockdown 2.0. During this period, early years settings have faced the same challenges as schools, including:

- Managing pupil bubbles and associated increased staffing costs;
- Additional premises related costs associated with extra cleaning;
- Purchasing additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE);
- Costs related to hand sanitisation;
- Managing increased staff absences due to both positive test and precautionary self-isolation.

As with schools, the core early education funding provided by Government was protected during the outbreak, but early years providers were not allowed access to the additional funding that was made available by the DfE to support mainstream and special schools and academies with some of the Covid related costs, for example:

- Exceptional cost claim related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) from March to July 2020;
- Covid Workforce fund to support with costs of staff absences in schools and colleges;
- Covid-19 Catch Up Premium.

We know that these additional funds have not met all the extra Covid costs being borne by schools and that there have been claim processes to follow and conditions attached. However, the Schools Forum believe that early years providers, both maintained and PVI, should have had access to these funds, in a similar way to schools.

The Forum and the County Council have made various representations to the Secretary of State and to DfE officials on this, and other Covid related issues. Responses from the DfE have not indicated any change to the government's position on this matter.

Following further discussions with the Schools Forum's Early Years Working Group, it is proposed to make a local contribution to the additional Covid related costs at MNS and PVI providers of early education, to acknowledge the extra costs being borne by the early years sector and offer some equity with the schools and high needs sectors in Lancashire.

The proposal is for a one-off lump sum payment to be made in the spring term 2021 of £250 for childminders and £1,000 for other providers. Providers would need to be offering Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funded early education hours to qualify and would not include nursery classes at primary schools and academies, as additional costs for this early years provision could be included in any claims to national funds available for schools.

The total cost of this one-off Covid early years contribution would be circa £700,000 and would need to be met from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) reserve.

The DSG reserve underwrites the expenditure across all the school funding blocks in the DSG budget, including the Early Years Block, and the Schools and High Needs Blocks, and had a closing balance of £11.151m, at the end of 2019/20.

For the 2019/20 financial year, the Early Years Block reported an underspend of £1.836m, so the one-off allocation to the sector proposed for 2020/21 represents less than half the amount contributed to reserves by early years at the end of the last financial year. Due to the way that the early years funding allocations to Lancashire are calculated, using data that is updated across future January census points, means that some of the 2019/20 underspend will very likely be needed in the future to offset reduced allocations if fewer children are attending settings.

Please let us know your views

A decision on whether to make a one-off Covid related allocation to early years settings in the spring term 2021 will be made by the Schools Forum on 12 January 2021 and the Forum would welcome your views to help steer their decision.

As the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) reserve would be used to fund this allocation, views are being sought from all Lancashire schools and academies and early years settings in receipt of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding.

You can respond to the consultation by completing the eform available [here](#) by **8 January 2021**.

Question: Do you agree with the proposal to make a one-off Covid allocation to Lancashire early years providers in spring 2021?

- **Yes;**
- **No;**
- **Not sure.**

DfE Approval

Please note that if the proposals were agreed by the Forum in January, the School and Early Years finance regulations would require the county council to submit what is known as a 'disapplication' request to the DfE. This request would need to seek the agreement of the Secretary of State to disapply the regulations and change budget allocations in-year by making the one-off Covid allocation.

The allocation could only be paid out if and when a 'disapplication' were approved.

Consultation on a proposal to make a one-off Covid allocation to Lancashire early years providers in Spring 2021

The consultation closes on 8 January 2021. An interim analysis of consultation responses and a full list of comments received by 4 January 2021 is provided in this appendix.

The analysis will be updated once the consultation has closed and any additional comments received will be provided for members.

Analysis

To date, 455 consultation responses have been received. An analysis of these responses is shown below:

Question: Do you agree with the proposal to make a one-off Covid allocation to Lancashire early years providers in Spring 2021?				
Type of Setting	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
Private, Voluntary and Independent Setting	103	0	4	107
Primary School or Academy with Nursery Class	55	5	3	63
Other Maintained School or Academy	28	0	3	31
Maintained Nursery School	31	1	1	33
Eligible Child Minder	197	1	9	207
Other	12	2	0	14
Totals	426	9	20	455
	94%	2%	4%	

Comments

A full set of comments received in the consultation process to date are provided in this appendix, with key themes to emerge from the responses including:

- Thanks, agree, welcome the proposals;
- Proposals not enough to cover the actual costs, or discussion of wider costs/impact;
- A different methodology should be used:

- especially childminders suggesting equal payments,
- size criteria
- recognition of opening periods/working through lockdowns;
- related to closures for self-isolation.
- Request for the proposals to cover settings not in receipt of DSG funding;
- Small number of comments not supporting the proposals at all.

A full list of comments are provided below:

Schools would welcome this!!!!

How much would the one off allocation be?

The amount is better than nothing but is still a small amount of money.

Unfortunately the funding, if approved, will come too late for some providers who may have already 'gone to the wall' due to the impact of COVID. Will there be efforts made to support these providers and assist any that wish to re-establish their provision.

I have bought more cleaning products, wipes and hand gel. I have made and bought more mailable resources such as sand and play dough as children can't share and it has to be replaced after every use.

Why should this be a one off payment when it's unclear how long the additional costs of working during the pandemic will continue for?

i think for the Amount of work we have put in throughout this unprecedented time putting our self & our family's at risk we have been open all the way through this i think the payment should be more

COVID has caused many problems for childminders. Any financial support to try and keep these small businesses afloat would be gratefully received.

Think all settings should be treat the same

Yes I would welcome extra support

There should be an equity in proposal with all early years settings benefitting from it. You are potentially giving it to private companies (nurseries) and not to the state run sector.

Yes as long as it is not discriminatory!! I haven't had any funded children this year due to covid ect so why should providers lose out

I have been Childminding and paying tax for 19 years. Due to an error in sending my 2019-2020 tax return I have had no financial support.

Where will the funding come from? Although the additional money would be useful, we would not be able to cut spending elsewhere or lose other additional funding to make this available.

Finance is spread thin as it is, we then had to purchase extra cleaning equipment, pay extra for staff to keep our bubbles separate etc

I know how much I spent getting my house covid ready for the children to attend every day, others closed their doors, never worked a day through the pandemic so had no incurred costs. I feel that some recognition of our continued hard work keeping the children in our care in a safe environment.

It is very important that we support this group as it begins to put the foundation in place for learning.

This is a good step but does not go far enough to compensate the losses that EY providers have suffered due to COVID. Also for childminders to get a quarter of the amount that nursery's will get is unfair. we have suffered significantly higher losses as nursery's have been eligible for many grants through this time that we

have been excluded from. So once again we are offered less and feel valued less, No wonder so many childminders are/ have leaving the sector.

The impact in my business due to Covid has been huge. Some days I am working for far less than minimum wage. With just two children some days working 10.5hrs my gross wage is £6/hr then take expenses including fuel, meals, activities and tax out, I'm lucky to clear £5/hr I have been a childminder for almost 12yrs and really want my business to continue with 6 key worker children on my books including head teacher, teacher, nurse, pharmaceutical distribution and council worker. I am certainly not doing this job for the money, however I am not sure how much longer I can continue operating with these low numbers.

This would be a great help towards the extra costs we have had to find due to cleaning etc and the loss of children not attending therefore loss of money.

I think that this will help towards the significant costs and difficulties that maintained Nursery Schools and Early Years settings have faced over the past 9 months and show that this has been valued.

We've had a great deal of hardship and lost earnings. I wasn't eligible for any government grants as I made a loss 3 years ago, not fair at all when I've been running my business for 13 years

I have had no help from the government

covid has really affected my business but not had much help being self employed so this would really help

Whilst anything is helpful, I feel that those settings which remained open throughout the first lockdown should receive some additional recognition. I say this as a setting which remained open throughout.

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no comments to add, thank you

Yes I agree to the proposal of £1000.00 one off payment but it doesn't cover any where near what the pre-school has lost since March 2020.

Whilst anything is helpful, I feel that those settings which remained open throughout the first lockdown should receive some additional recognition. I say this as a setting which closed but made arrangements for key worker children to attend a sister setting which remained open throughout..

Whilst anything is helpful, I feel that those settings which remained open throughout the first lockdown should receive some additional recognition. I say this as a setting which closed but made arrangements for key worker children to attend a sister setting which remained open throughout..

The past months have been difficult for most. As an ofsted registered childminders we've continued supporting other keyworker staff throughout the pandemic. This however has been with reduced hours, loss of revenue and loss of business in one way or another but yet we've still had to complete a full weeks work; 50-60 hours for some but not received a full time pay because of the losses.

Additional costs as outlined in your letter - PPE, sanitising, additional staffing costs, plus extra washing of equipment and resources plus purchase of resources due to rotation of items

I imagine a a lot off people like my self have been hard hit with the loss of income due to parents losing work ECT and no new work appearing due to the on going pandemic .every little helps to keep use going .Thank you

Private nurseries have provided essential childcare throughout the pandemic with dwindling numbers due to parents losing employment or furloughed. Any financial help would be welcome.

This would really help my setting after not receiving any other financial help through lockdowns and I know it would help many others

The impact in my business due to Covid has been huge. Some days I am working for far less than minimum wage. With just two children some days working 10.5hrs my gross wage is £6/hr then take expenses including fuel, meals, activities and tax out, I'm lucky to clear £5/hr

one-off Covid allocation should be proportionate to the size of the setting.

Additional costs incurred for cleaning materials/sanitizer etc whilst reduced numbers, as childminder, have always been full with frequent enquiries, but have had vacancies now since reopening after first lockdown

This would help greatly, we haven't been able to apply for any other grants or help, we have seen a significant drop in number of children using our service but with added pressure of separating into different bubbles means we have had to keep all staff on and use more areas of school.

Very thoughtful of this sector. Thank you.

I already submitted but realised I hadn't filled in my OFSTED registration number I am working in my home in Tier 3, and have my own two primary-school-aged children. My current risk-assessment includes that I can manage to provide childcare for one family until the situation improves; there is a lot more admin, cleaning, work-related stress, and parenting pressures due to the pandemic. The one family I childmind for are not currently eligible for FEE/access FEE at school, and I am not looking for new starters at my setting. Therefore, I do not know if I should currently be given Covid-19-related financial support linked to being a FEE provider.

I think this is a good idea as Private Early Years Settings have been extremely stretched over this past 9month period and have probably endured the most challenging financial period of there time.

I believe there should have been more support for those exempt from government grants who remained open throughout like myself due to not being self employed long enough.

Providers have been hit hard, my turnover is about 1 third of normal with no new children due to start. I don't know when things will pick up so any further support is welcome.

This would be extremely helpful to make up for lost income during the pandemic.

Thank you!

a one off payment would be a big help as for 6 months i earnt nothing although i remained available for key workers no one used my services as i was to out of the way for them .

We are not charging parents when they are isolating or when we have been closed. This seems like the fairest thing to do, but it is not sustainable and we have lost income as a result.

As a childminder I have occurred a significant increase in running costs as a direct result of Covid -19. Where I would usually be able to take the children out, we have had to stay in far more than usual, which has led to me needing to make adaptations to the setting in order to keep the children engaged and entertained for such long periods indoors/in my private garden. E.g we built an allotment solely for the children, we've bought far more craft resources than usual, converted spare

room into additional childcare space, twinkle subscription and additional educational materials for school age children whilst schools were closed. We have also had an increase in cost of cleaning materials, and we have paid for professional cleaners to do termly deep cleans.

This payment would be very much appreciated as childminders in this area did not receive any help with purchasing additional cleaning products or extra paperwork that we had to provide. Personally I worked through the first lockdown with key workers children placing myself and family at a greater risk. More time is spent at the beginning and end of the day doing extra cleaning to make sure the environment is as safe as it possibly could be. So Thankyou in advance if we get this one off payment. Tracey

Even though now I'm fully back up and running, I have had to close due to self isolating and lost a substantial amount of money and may have to do this again. Even though the government grant topped up previous loses, we have no measures in place if this happens again and again. With no end date in site, the payment would be a blessing.

I do feel that childminders should maybe get a little more as they were unable to apply for any other local grants that other settings were able to

It would be a great help,.

Very useful as I've spent lots of money on PPE since the pandemic

This would be massively helpful to me. As a childminder who had been in business just under 12 months at the time COVID-19 hit, I wasn't entitled to any financial help at all. It's been a very difficult time. The one negative thing I would like to point out is the huge difference in the amount proposed to childminders. I work as hard, provide the same level of care as other early years providers (I.e. nursery's), I had to keep my home open to children and families during a very worrying time putting my own family at risk in order to survive financially and to provide support for my key working families, yet we are potentially being offered the lowest amount. It would be nice to be recognised as the professional early year's providers we are as childminders. Many of us are feeling seriously undervalued. Many thanks, Ellen Robinson

The lump sum payment will help. But the numbers of children coming in has dropped significantly from previous years. This is having a big impact on all 3 of our settings. The funding for spring and summer terms should be based on numbers of previous year, if possible please. Much appreciated.

Covid-19 has had a massive impact on our setting. We have remained open throughout the pandemic. As a childcare setting based inside an LCC building and who buy into LCC HR and payroll services we have only been able to access the furlough scheme and no other financial help. The additional cleaning materials and covid-19 secure resources that have been required have put a strain on our finances. This has impacted on all the staff, we have had to reduce all their hours, close one of our settings and money is very tight, we are only just keeping afloat. Although £1000 is not a lot of money, it will at least help towards the continuing cleaning costs that we have still got due to covid-19.

I have no further comments to make.

I am pleased to know that the extra costs to settings due to Covid-19 are being acknowledged and an allocation will be very much appreciated.

I think this is a great idea & I will take anything atm because I am currently working at a loss, even if it is only £500. At least it will help to top up some of the funds lost

due to losing children who are no longer coming to the setting due to covid related redundancy. I just think it needs to be a little more than £250.

Would be extremely helpful to finally receive some help but we should be classed the same as nursery's as we are just as qualified and look after the same age children

yes

I think this is a fantastic idea for settings such as myself, being a limited company there has been no funding available to help through the pandemic. I have remained open every week since the start of the first lockdown with no breaks. I have lost some of my customers that weren't classed as key workers first time round and been fortunate to be able to fill those spaces with key workers children to do my part through the ongoing pandemic. The costs of PPE and cleaning materials have been extensive this year to help maintain a clean and virus free setting. While this funding is a mere drop in the ocean compared to the costs suffered to remain open, without remaining open it would have cost much more than just my livelihood, possibly my home too. Any funding/grants available to settings such as myself that have been entitled to nothing are always welcomed to help the necessary outgoing to remain open safely.

Would be good if we are classed the same as nursery's as we are all Ofsted registered and fully qualified to look after the same age children

I'm happy with the proposal

I'm happy about the one off payment

These have been difficult times for our sector and this financial support would be extremely beneficial for our children.

It will really help financially

I am a registered childminder. Unfortunately throughout the pandemic I have received no help at all from my local authority. This is because out of the 4 children I had on my books none of them received funding and only 1 child's parents was a key worker. From a financial point of view my earning was massively reduced through no fault of my own. I still had the additional cost of cleaning products and masks etc with no help at all. Other minders receiving funding still got paid funding whereas I received nothing. Maybe the authorities need to consider how this pandemic has affected those not receiving funding a little more. I personally felt let down and forgotten about.

Extra costs to our setting include additional cleaning materials, additional staffing, additional hygiene products including soap and paper towels. Any additional funding towards these costs would be gratefully received. Thank you.

This is a brilliant idea and would come in very useful to cover the cost that we have paid for extra cleaning and ppe equipment and cover the cost of paper towels etc I think you may want to increase the childminders as self isolation has a massive impact on their income, family and other families but yet still incur all their costs. This payment would help immensely as we are struggling financially due to lower numbers attending because of Covid-19 and the extra costs for PPE and cleaning materials

We are frustrated that as Maintained Nursery Schools we have not been entitled to either other school sector funding for Covid, or the council tax relief that the PVI's have been offered. It feels very unfair that we fit in neither box for support given how difficult a financial situation we are all in.

As long as it's in addition to the government announced grant for funding deficit due to covid-19 which is also due around the same time.

Very disappointed! As a childminder I was not entitled to the grant from the council as I didn't have premises. I was paid no furlough when closed because I am self employed. I received a payment of self employed income, which was not the equivalent of 80% of earns as previous years brought the average down. I lost weeks of wages then managed to reopen fir key workers children. During this time I put myself and family at risk. I paid for extra cleaning items, PPE and sand sanitiser. I spent hours cleaning the premises and toys each day. When covid was brought into my home by a child I care for and I tested positive I received no help or wages because I closed. I was happy to see the possibility of a payment but totally dismayed to see you had to have funded children! Totally unfair! Especially when you consider a lot of funded nurseries closed their doors, still took the funding, while people like myself continued to work and put ourselves at risk. Not happy with this proposal, it needs rethinking for all those who have constantly missed out!

These have been difficult times for our sector and this financial support would be extremely beneficial for our children.

Although the amount will not cover all of the additional costs that are being incurred due to COVID, the amount is a welcome gesture that will help.

This would be a great help to us as we are small setting and have been unable to access any government funding as we are based in the community centre and don't pay business rates.

A token £1000 will be very much appreciated and welcomed, this cost would cover some of the money spent on PPE/ extra cleaning materials so thank you.

However, a large percentage of our loss has been on staffing costs (covering staff off work with children isolating and / or taking tests / waiting for tests for self or other household member and / or isolating due to confirmed case in household)

Support staff are only covered on LCC insurance after 10 working days, so we are unable to claim. Staffing costs have also significantly increased due to bubble groups, if we put all children together, we could stick to EYFS ratios, however staff are working in bubbles so we are over ratios . IE we may have 20 children in one afternoon, if we didn't have bubbles we would meet EYFS ratios with 2 staff, however we have 3 bubbles , so require one practitioner in each bubble. There are many complications to the bubbles this is just one of them, but you can see how quickly additional staffing costs increase.

I have had additional cleaning costs and pp costs. I have also purchased new toys due to children not accessing the usual play centres and toddler groups and also much more fraft equipment than normal

I have forgotten to put my Ofsted number, so attached it to this one.

Would be lovely to be classed the same as nursery's as we are Ofsted registered and fully qualified the same

A token £1000 will be very much appreciated and welcomed, this cost would cover some of the money spent on PPE/ extra cleaning materials so thank you.

However, a large percentage of our loss has been on staffing costs (covering staff off work with children isolating and / or taking tests / waiting for tests for self or other household member and / or isolating due to confirmed case in household)

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however we have 3 bubbles , so require one practitioner in each bubble. There are many complications to the bubbles this is just one of them, but you can see how quickly additional staffing costs increase.

This is a very generous proposal. However I feel it doesn't reach the providers that really need it. I was unfortunate enough not to have any funded children on role, purely because the previous year I'd had an almost full cohort reach school age and moved on. Meaning that all the new cohort were too young to be eligible for funding. It was purely circumstances not that I was purposefully not choosing to provide funded placements. As a result of this I have very little financial help during forced closures and the lack of children accessing places following lockdown, meaning I was open to support those families returning to work, but it wasn't viable for me as I was running at a significant loss. I felt I had to run at a loss to secure future business or my families would have no option but to seek alternative child care. Things returned back to an almost normal level in September so I'm now just about holding my head above water so to speak, but the loss of earnings from March to September has had a huge negative impact on my business and therefore family. This allowance further supports the ones that have already been well supported. Rather than it being a blanket payment I feel it should be applied for and open to all EY providers who can prove a significant loss of earnings/ rising costs and the payment will make a real difference to. I will have children accessing funding from the January so would be eligible thankfully. However many will still be in the position I was and yet some who have been well supported already, the additional money would be a nice to have but not a life line as such. By making it a payment that has to be applied for and evidence provided would probably cost less overall and reach the most hard hit of Early Years Settings. I welcome this support as an early years provider who has seen huge financial implications during COVID. Although I do feel strongly that I must highlight that the £1000 does not even come close to the loss and additional costs we are seeing due to this pandemic. Having had a closure of two of my bubbles in the last month and a loss of over £7000 of private fees (never mind the additional costs/loss that we are facing on a weekly basis due to COVID), I wonder how long we are going to be able to cope financial, with the risk that this can happen again at anytime. I worry we will see more closures of early years settings who are in the same position as ourselves. However with all that said I don't want to sound ungrateful and I would still gratefully receive any financial support from our Authority. Thank you

Loss of income for 14 weeks then reduced income due to parent taking unpaid leave after maternity leave finished.

It is crucial that Early Years providers, especially Maintained Nursery Schools, receive this money. The financial pressures that Covid19 has brought to the school of which I am a Governor have been considerable, and clearly endanger the sustainability of the EY sector.

I support the proposal for the reasons outlined in the accompanying letter. I'm sure there are a number of childminders that have lost most of not all of their income during this time. Any contribution to help financially will be greatly appreciated.

Any financial help is greatly appreciated

The £1,000 payment will be greatly appreciated. Unfortunately our costs go well beyond this (building alternations, additional cleaning products, damage to resources due to constant antibaccing) but we appreciate that Lancashire has

recognised the financial strain on early years providers and wish that the DfE would do the same.

This would help with additional cleaning costs, and other sundry expenses incurred due to Covid.

Can I ask why the £250 is only being paid to people who had funded children , I worked all the way through lockdown putting myself and my family at risk of catching Covid but I never had any funded children , why are you not paying every childminder that has been open since March , I feel we're being penalised again for not having funded children , I think everyone should get the grant .

I think this might go some way to mitigate the additional costs for cleaning / PPE equipment / additional resources for Home learning delivery that we have had to find . We were quite disturbed by not being included in the DfE Covid funding that all schools were eligible for.

Despite the fact that most schools were not eligible to claim costs for PPE, additional cleaning, or staff absences due to the rules surrounding each; we feel the maintained nurseries and childcare places should be provided with funds to support. But ONLY if they did not charge parents when the setting/bubble was forced to close.

Covid has impacted my business hugely. I'm working for far less than minimum wage some days with just two children working 10.5hrs. I have 5 key workers children on my books including head teacher, teacher and nurse. I don't want to close a business I've managed for 12 years successfully

As it has been a tough year for everyone, I feel early years settings would benefit from any additional funding possible.

yes I agree that any funding for early years should be spread out equally.. as other funding isn't available for all. A lot of childminders are missing out and others r massively gaining Which isn't fair. Help is needed for all early years setting .

I had to lots of new resources due to spending more time at home, also had to pay insurance etc during lockdown.

I know that there was talk of the hourly rate being raised and i am not sure if this is instead of etc. Whilst a £1000 seems fair to combat the amount spent on things like sanitisers etc i am unsure if the hourly rate would have been more beneficial to providers (obviously dependent on the amount of increase). Lancashire has always been the lowest hourly rate paid which is debated each year

yes I do agree, as I am childminding part time I do before and after school and holidays, because I have only been doing this for just over 12 months, I have not been entitled to grants, we have opened up our homes and put ourselves and families at risk to provide our service.

The additional staff costs faced by nurseries has been considerable during the pandemic. Staff are regularly having to isolate because either: they've got symptoms and are awaiting test results; someone in their household has tested positive; etc. This has meant that we are having to employ supply staff (at twice the cost of regular staff). The staff wages are the largest cost to nurseries - by a very big margin. So, any increase makes a substantial hole in our budgets!!

I have lost all of my school children due to Covid and am therefore earning a lot less than I normal would.

The COVID allocation would make a significant impact. We have had no choice but to spend additional money on staffing and cleaning products - all money has come out of our allocated budget for 2020/2021 and of course, additional COVID-19 spending was not something that we had allocated for!

I had to close my business down for 3 months which resulted in no fees from my parents due to the need of childcare not needed as they weren't classed as keyworkers and could work from home. When reopening I had to provide staff with essential PPE which included aprons, gloves, masks, hand gel, hand soap, paper towels and cleaning essentials (this is still a running high cost now). We had to buy an outside storage unit with lids to store the children's belongings as they could not come in the premises. Since reopening we have not had the demand that we had previous to lockdown and parents are still working from home which has resulted in me losing a member of staff and not giving the other two part time staff as many hours leaving me regularly not to full capacity daily (some days it is not profitable for me to open). Losing anymore sessions for children would result in me having to close for good

Childminders have not been able to access other grants so this would be amazing to enable many settings to stay open

Although I am sure it would be appreciated and help, our financial costs impacted by COVID have been constant over the last 9 months and is looking to continue well into the new year, these costs will keep on mounting up.

with extra staff costs, due to self isolation a one off payment of £1000.00 wont cover extra costs the private sector have incurred

Would be a lovely gesture we have worked straight this pandemic supporting parents with extra days and hours. Childminders aren't thought of very often I would be very grateful.

Worked very hard during this pandemic extra days and hours when others around us closed their doors. Would be most grateful for a little extra income.

What I would prefer is some kind of support funding for when we have to close 'bubbles' due to covid and parents do not expect to pay if their child is not allowed to attend. This is the financial burdon at present and so far has cost me in excess of £5000. In nursery it was necessary to close our preschool room for 2 weeks. In our out of school club we have had to close 2 different bubbles on two seperate occasions due to covid in classrooms and the child/ren not even on our register but obviously other children attend. Again parents do not expect to pay for this and the government did not help by enforcing a rule that we could not charge ! Its a ridiculous situation

THIS IS BADLY NEEDED TO HELP ADDRESS SOME OF THE PROBLEMS OUR FAMILIES ARE FACING DUE TO COVID AND BREXIT

Cleaning routines and products have increased as has home made playdough and bought sand.

The payment will contribute towards rising costs to deal with COVID but doesn't come anywhere near the additional costs incurred during the past 9 months.

This should also be made available to Out of School clubs. While they have increased staffing costs in order to maintain bubbles, their income has been significantly reduced due the a fall rate demand.

As a self-employed Childminder in my first tax year working self-employed, I had no evidence of my income to be eligible for any support during the first England lockdown. I lost out on income from three families from March 23rd until June 1st 2020. This was due to the families being told to work from home if possible. I was fortunate to receive full pay from one key worker family who continued to attend and for a child receiving EEF payments. A wide range of government support was available for many but there has been no support for the self-employed like me who have not yet got proof of income from a self assessment tax return. On top of

this, we have also had to deal with the financially crippling set up fees and buying resources to set up our brand new careers. I would urge you to please prioritise those of us who have received no financial support what so ever.

The amount of £1000 is not really anywhere near the amount of monies spent on ensuring my setting is safe for our children and staff. It would be interesting to see how this amount was decided.

Coronavirus is likely to be really bad come January and no one knows how their business will be financially affect. £250 is better than nothing though.

£250 would cover the cost of addition resources to make my home Covid secure. I have still lost income with not mixing bubbles so not doing before and after school care to maintain bubbles and drop in demand so the extra payment in the Spring term to cover lost income of the 30hrs claimed is still needed.

Thank you!

It has been a very difficult year and settings are struggling maintaining their usual high standards this will help greatly

Catch up with reading / phonics needed desperately, without which access to curriculum is challenging.

Our EYFS provision has been badly affected by Covid. We lost a considerable amount of income during the summer term. Any additional funding would be extremely helpful.

As a governor at the above school I quite aware of the additional costs incurred by the nursery. £1000 will be a welcome help but will not cover all the additional costs.

This payment would be a huge help towards all the extra cleaning products. We are also a new setting and opened in Sept 2020, we have been hit hard due to opening later than planned because Ofsted had a backlog of registration visits and also we have children that were due to start with us but haven't as parents are working from home.

Significant costs spent to ensure we had sufficient personal hygiene equipment/ppe/additional cleaning hours; additional resources to ensure that bubbles are kept separate.

We have incurred various costs since March which we have not been able to recover via the government covid reimbursement scheme. Things such as - additional handtowels, hand wash and cleaning solutions, hand sanitizer and stations, the cost of extra bins in classrooms the additional commercial refuse bin due to the amount of rubbish that we now have. We have also incurred additional costs for lunchtime staff to ensure that all bubbles are covered during the lunch break and to ensure that teachers get a break. We have had to forego a KS1 toilet refurb which was badly needed due to lack of funds. We have also lost over £75k in extended day and catering income due to Covid.

We have repeated some of the early years work missed from March onwards in our setting - we have increased our spend on consumables and sensory activities in order to meet the 'halted' developmental need of our special pupils.

This is absolutely necessary , private settings have had no financial support at all, we was turned down for the £ 10,000 the £ 25,000 and the £ 1,500 grants by lancaster county council, additionally we paid all staff the first month on furlough to be told 2 weeks later that ' actually we are not entitled too the scheme' even thou we was told initially we was, again loosing out on over £ 6,000 in paid wages. We have had no help with ppe or to cover cover systems to be put inlace, we have had to pay redundancies as the work load wasn't there between March- November of

this year again another outlay. minimum wage is going up again which as it has for the last 10 years been far superior to the minute inflation rise we receive from the government for ' free funded children hours ' both 15 and 30 hrs! i appreciate that we got the full amount of funding based on previous numbers in April but that hasn't covered the short fall for the 9 months so far.

I just wanted to point out that childminders, as self-employed individuals, were also offered the HMRC self-employed support grants if they were eligible (for example due to increased costs and/or reduced income). I thought it relevant to mention just in case the consultation has not already taken this in to account as a means of some childminders having already been financially supported.

Childminders also work contracts which are paid for by parents and not always funded through FEE. Therefore, it is potentially confusing for a childminder to have claimed financial support as a self-employed individual and to then get unexpected FEE financial support later on. For example, a childminder may not fully understand where to allocate anomalous payments like the FEE 'top up' and the 'one-off Covid allocation' in to their self-employed income. Presumably, anomalous support payments like the FEE 'top up' and 'one-off Covid allocation' are income when received/in the term they are received in and presumably they are to be included as income on the self-assessment tax return in the tax year in which they are received.

Would be v gratefully received

I think this would help settings greatly especially as we have had to buy our own PPE protective resources and company's we usually use have increased the price of the PPE due to Covid times which has made it very expensive for pre-school settings like ours. Example for gloves, masks, aprons etc. The cost of these items have not been free or cheap.

It shouldn't be nurseries only though all schools should get this, we are a pupil referral & we have had to spend £12000 out of school budget (initially) to ensure school was Covid 19 safe for reopening , this wasn't planned for & are still paying to maintain this safe environment.

An additional payment of £1000 would be welcomed in our setting, particularly with additional costs this year with regards to PPE/cleaning etc.

I am not sure because a one off payment may not be sufficient to cover on going covid demands.

The proposed payment would be very helpful as nurseries have had additional running cost because of covid-19: PPE, cleaning materials etc.

Any payment should be linked to the number of children at settings as this would influence the amount of PPE spending to ensure a safe environment.

Yes, Thank you!

Great idea especially for those who have had to close for months in 2020

This does not cover the amount of money already spent on PPE etc