

Talking points

17 May 2020

- Like schoolteacher colleagues, a number of Early Years sector employers have had reservations about opening their settings to all children and staff, where there may be a risk of Covid-19 transmission.
- Many of us are parents and are torn to make the right decision. Schools and nurseries are all wanting to 'do the right thing' and have been incredible already at finding solutions to operate during the crisis.
- Our teams have been providing care to keyworker's children for past 2 months. On May 16th, the Children's Commissioner quoted a survey of 62 nurseries attached to NHS trusts, that have been open throughout the crisis and of the 57 managers surveyed, they found:
 - there was an average operational capacity of 46%.
 - 3 cases of Covid-19 in children, with no transmission in nursery; and
 - half of the managers said staff had reported cases, but again, found no transmission in nursery.
- A short survey of providers within the Covid-19 response group found: -
 - we have collectively cared for 3,339 children each day
 - there have been just 3 confirmed cases of Covid-19 in children
 - there have been just 2 confirmed cases in adults (employees)
 - that none of these have been traced to transmission in the nursery
- We need to better understand the risk: Professor Spiegelhalter of Cambridge University, indicates that only 2 out of 10 million pre-school age children have died from Covid-19 to date.

On balance we believe it is in society's best interests to slowly open up the education and childcare sectors.

- We need to support the children in our care; many vulnerable and disadvantaged children will benefit from being back in nursery.
- Parents cannot get back to work without good childcare. We therefore need to open to support our families.
- In April, the Covid-19 response group developed a set of 'Safe Operating Procedures', using our collective experience, knowledge, and practise, with an emphasis on creating sound Risk Assessments and rigorous control measures, including but not limited to:
 - Practical realistic solutions to social distancing measures
 - Managing logistics of parent/children and employer in/out
 - Reducing access to the nursery facilities
 - Safe use of nursery resources
 - Frequent thorough handwashing and good hygiene routines; and
 - Enhanced cleaning and sanitising measures
 - Management of suspected case of Covid-19