



Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State

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Dear colleagues,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, and your staff, for the vital work that you continue to do in supporting children and families throughout this incredibly challenging period. I fully recognise and value the vital work that early years staff do, and I would like to thank you for remaining open to all children throughout this national lockdown.

I am delighted to announce that from next month, the asymptomatic testing programme in education will expand to all staff in private, voluntary and independent nurseries, who will start to receive deliveries of Lateral Flow Devices (LFDs). Staff will be asked to take their test kits home and carry out the test twice a week. The LFD test will give a result in around 30 minutes. Staff who test positive will then self-isolate, helping to reduce transmission of the virus.

This will help to break the chains of transmission of coronavirus in education settings by identifying asymptomatic positive cases. This is important as up to one in three people who have the virus have it without symptoms (they are asymptomatic) so could be spreading the disease unknowingly.

The Department will be in touch shortly to provide you with further guidance for the use of the LFD home testing kits, which will also include information about upcoming webinars.

We are continuing to work closely with colleagues across government and local authorities to secure the most effective approach to asymptomatic testing for childminders. Childminders should continue to access community testing facilities for asymptomatic testing. Early years staff, as critical workers, continue to have priority access to Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing if they develop symptoms. If symptoms develop, they should follow the stay-at-home guidance and book PCR test via the online portal.

Once again, many thanks to you and your teams for the invaluable work you are doing.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State for Education