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Chief Executives
Directors of Education

By email

22 July 2020

Dear colleague

COVID-19 RESPONSE – CRITICAL CHILDCARE UPDATE

I write to confirm that on the assumption schools re-open as currently planned, the provision of critical childcare as part of the emergency response to COVID-19 will end before the return of schools. Local authorities can set an end date in the week commencing 3 August and we anticipate there will be period of time where local authorities will transition to accommodate the start of school.

The provision of this critical childcare has been at the heart of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Without it Scotland could not have responded in the way we did. I would like to express my deep gratitude for the national effort to care for the children in families who have most needed our support in these extraordinary times.

I know discussions have been ongoing between my officials and Local Government colleagues on the right time to wind this provision down. With us now moving through and out of lockdown and with the wider opening of both formal and informal childcare options, we have agreed to remove the requirement on local authorities to make this provision available.

The legal basis for critical childcare has been underpinned by the Educational Continuity Directions we have had in place since 21 May. The details of these can be found here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-act-2020-educational-continuity-direction/>

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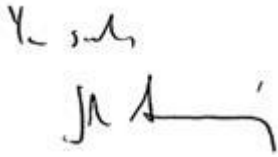
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The next Direction (No.4) is published today and will come in to effect from tomorrow (Thursday 23 July). It states that local authorities will be required to provide critical childcare until end Friday 31 July and may provide it thereafter.

Thank you again for your support and service during this time.



JOHN SWINNEY

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