

**Early Years Providers (EYPs) –
Nurseries, Pre Schools and Play Groups**

Request more support from Havering Council



Cllr Stephanie Nunn

Several of us across the wider group of Havering's Residents Associations were invited to a zoom meeting by nursery/preschool providers who advised us they had not had enough support from Havering Council during the pandemic.

The reason they brought this to our attention was because they did not feel a recent article in the Romford Recorder quoting the Havering Cabinet Member for education, children and families told the whole story. The article spoke of regular phone contact with the groups, which we were informed had not happened. They had not been phoned until the article appeared and previously their phone calls had not been returned. The main support they received was from each other.

They were not offered free PPE like the schools, but sent a price list to purchase this which was expensive (in the last couple of weeks they have had a delivery of free PPE). The EYPs have not been able to access self-testing kits for Covid that schools have, they have to go in their own time to the local centres and queue. Schools have closed, but EYPs have been told to stay open with both health and financial implications.

We looked into their concerns, some of which are listed below:

- 1 No initial guidance or telephone support or visits
- 2 The health and mental wellbeing of their staff
- 3 Lack of onsite testing
- 4 Financial impact
- 5 No rent holiday in council premises
- 6 Being asked for a Covid risk assessment 11 months after the start of the outbreak
- 7 Being told to stay open for all children (schools only open for key workers' children)

I contacted our local MP Jon Cruddas to ask for support in central government. He has contacted the government minister to request that EYPs are treated equally as key workers with teachers in terms of any priority for Covid vaccination.

Emma, the owner of Scallywags Nursery requested a meeting with the Havering Cabinet member and all those who attended the zoom meeting. She was eventually allocated 30 minutes, but no Residents' Association councillors are allowed to attend!

We know that furlough and some discretionary grants have been available, but we believe more should have been done and everyone can learn by sharing knowledge – if they are invited.