



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Department of Health and Social Care
Ministerial Correspondence and Public Enquiries Unit
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

1 February 2021

Dear Matt

I am writing to ask you to add childcare and early education businesses to the sectors that have been offered the option of providing lateral flow device testing on their own premises.

Nurseries and early years education settings have been mandated to remain open for the benefit of working parents and the children themselves. Lateral flow testing will help them to contain outbreaks and continue doing this vital work. Currently, though, the lateral flow tests are only being provided from central locations and only during business hours, when nursery teachers need to be at their places of work.

In my constituency, many nursery teachers have to take multiple buses each way to get a lateral flow test, increasing risks to themselves and others. They then have to queue and wait with others while performing the tests. The testing process itself becomes an unnecessary pathway for transmission.

Early years settings attached to schools are able to access on-site testing, to contain outbreaks without adding to teachers' risks and burdens. Private nurseries are doing equally important work providing the most important years of education. They deserve the same consideration as school-based settings.

This is not just a matter of protecting health and educating children. Childcare provision is essential infrastructure for British business; we need to foster its success in order to keep our economy working. There is an important equalities issue involved as well, with a sector that almost exclusively employs women conspicuously failing to attract Government support.

I ask you to roll out on-premises lateral flow device testing to private childcare and early years education providers as quickly as possible.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Olney

Sarah Olney
Member of Parliament for Richmond Park

Cc: Kwasi Kwarteng, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Gavin Williamson, Secretary of State for Education
Liz Truss, Minister for Women and Equalities