



Early Years workers should be counted as key workers - SPNA

The Scottish Private Nursery Association (SPNA) is calling on the Sturgeon Government to include nursery care givers as key workers under the exemption to isolate if “pinged”.

Private nurseries are the single largest source of nursery care places in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee and their surrounds, and provide 40% of all nursery places across the whole of Scotland. During school holidays – times such as now – the private nursery sector provides the overwhelming majority of nursery care, as almost 85% of Local Authority nurseries are closed.

Founder and CEO of the SPNA, Sharon Fairley, has described the situation facing nurseries around Scotland as “...deeply concerning”.

“The reality is that many of our frontline workers – our NHS doctors and nurses, our ambulance drivers, police, firemen and women, even our supermarket truck drivers – rely on being able to place their children in nursery in order to attend their own job.

“Nurseries have to maintain set staff-to-child ratios, a requirement which is already being made harder by the expectations of safe distancing at work because of COVID-19. Many of the safe work requirements – such as staff maintaining social distancing from each other – are understandably difficult to achieve within a nursery setting. While the sector is managing to get by using relief staff, we are constantly facing the prospect of a downgraded rating by the Care Inspectorate. Maintaining standards could be just impossible if we get hit by the pingdemic. That could see nurseries having to close, meaning our frontline workers are potentially absent from their own critical work.”

The SNPA was formed this year by concerned private nursery owners to represent the sector and to represent the interests of parents who often require longer care hours for their children.

Essential workers frequently fall into this category and the inclusion of nursery workers as key workers will enable these parents to continue their work.

Sharon commented “There is already a significant shortage in the number of qualified nursery workers, something which is affecting the whole industry – private nurseries, Local Authority nurseries, and those in the independent and not-for-profit sector. Our workers are predominantly younger and so may not have been offered both jags yet, so there is a greater risk that they will be impacted by a self-isolation order. The private nursery sector needs to do everything we can to hold on to the staff that are double jagged to avoid nursery closures.”

****ENDS****

Sharon Fairley is available for comment.

Please contact:

Mark Egelstaff – 07340 99 73 76

SPNA Communications Consultant

SPNA: For nursery owners, by nursery owners.

www.scottishpna.org/home

Scottish Private Nursery Association Ltd (Company Limited by Guarantee SC703969)