



## **OMICRON WAVE TO CRASH DOWN ON CHILDCARE NURSERIES**

The Omicron wave is about to come crashing down on the private nursery sector, with repercussions felt throughout the economy.

As council run nurseries start to close for the Christmas holidays, it's the private nursery sector that will continue to provide childcare for keyworkers across Scotland: our nurses and doctors who are rolling out the vaccine booster programme; our supermarket staff and delivery drivers who are keeping our shops stocked; and those who work in the vital services and retail sectors.

The Scottish Private Nursery Association (SPNA) is calling on Scotland's Government to help the sector by classifying childcare workers as keyworkers, so they can continue to provide care to those children who need it.

CEO of SPNA, Sharon Fairley, said that the new guidance for household isolation was already having an impact on nursery settings.

"SPNA members have already been reporting a worrying level of staff absence from work, not because those staff were COVID-19 positive, but because someone else in their household was.

"There is simply not the workforce – not in the private sector, nor the public sector – to be able to cover these sorts of absences. Within weeks, if not days, we will start to see private nurseries having to close due to a lack of staff. This will have an impact on the keyworkers on which the whole Scottish economy relies."

Sharon noted that the throughout the pandemic, the private nursery sector has received very little direct support from the Government.

"It's been a tough time for everyone, we understand. But with a few pragmatic decisions, we can all get through this together.

"Our staff and, most importantly, the children in our care, will continue to be bound by the high levels of COVID-19 protocols which the sector has to follow.

"We're simply asking for the Government to make a pragmatic decision, which will help everyone, no matter where they work, or what they do, continue to access the high-quality childcare that we provide."

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SPNA: For nursery owners, by nursery owners.

[www.scottishpna.org/home](http://www.scottishpna.org/home)

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