

Welcome to this week's edition of What's new. We know that many of you have been affected by the decision by all nations to delay the start of the new school term so we've updated our Covid-19 pages to reflect these changes. And if you have a child who will be starting primary school in September make sure you meet the deadline this Friday to make your application – take a look at our information and advice to help.

Don't forget, if you need any advice or support, our free helpline is open between 9.30am and 5pm Monday to Friday. You can call us on 0808 808 3555. We also have a [Live Chat](#) service so you can ask us about your rights to services and support.

Don't miss the deadline for primary school applications

This Friday (15 January) is the [deadline for families in England applying for primary school places](#).

The deadline applies only to children who don't have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and go through what is known as the normal admissions system. We've got information about [choosing the right school and how the process works for those children with and without an EHCP](#).

Who can still attend school during the lockdown in England?

As part of the national lockdown in England, primary and secondary schools and colleges have now closed for the majority of pupils, while early years settings remain open. All pupils not in school will receive remote learning. [Education settings will remain open for certain groups of children and young people](#). This includes children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans.

Dates for your diary

Here you'll find our latest workshop sessions, webinars and more!

Families in Scotland - join our free workshops!

Why not make it your new year's resolution to book onto one of our new, free online workshops designed especially **for parent carers in Scotland**? We have a number of workshops coming up in January and February covering a wide range of issues including sleep, encouraging positive behaviour and preparing for adult life, money matters and parent carer wellbeing. [Take a look at the workshops on offer for parent carers in Scotland and how to book.](#)

Other parent carer workshops available wherever you live in the UK

We run lots of workshops and information sessions for parent carers. Our [Brighter Beginnings](#) workshops are all free and are for families with children with additional needs. They cover a range of issues like educational support for children with additional needs, how to handle meetings with professionals who work with your child and growing up for example. Take a look at the [full list of workshops we offer](#) and book your place today.

Are you struggling at the moment?

We don't blame you - and we're here to listen and to offer you the emotional and practical support you might be looking for right now through our Listening Ear service. Our family support workers are available for a free and confidential chat about anything you want to talk about – for a whole hour, at a time convenient for you where you can air your concerns, vent your frustrations, ask for help and talk to someone who truly understands what you're going through. We've got some last minute availability this week so [book your free, confidential phone appointment with us](#) for the listening ear, reassurance and emotional support you're looking for.

Exclusive clear panel face masks in our online Fledglings shop

As we find ourselves in another lockdown, we wanted to let you know about some new products in our [online Fledglings shop](#)! These ingenious see-through face masks are available in three different designs - [Grey Stars](#), a [Dinosaur print](#) and [Plain Navy](#). And since we'll all be staying at home more, the [TomTag Sticker Pack – In the House](#) may come in handy to help you and your child organise their daily activities at home. Use with the award-winning [TomTag Component Pack](#) – a communication tool inspired by a young boy with autism to help children and young people develop coping strategies to manage their day. Take a look in [our shop](#) for these and other inspiring home learning and wellbeing resources.

We've updated our Covid-19 vaccine Q&As

Last week we told you that the government's vaccine committee has now recommended including [unpaid carers in the vaccine priority list](#). Take a look at our updated [Q&As about Covid-19 vaccinations](#) which we are reviewing regularly. One thing we are advising every parent carer to do *as soon as possible* is get in touch with your GP to make sure that you are listed as your children's official carer. This will ensure you are included in the government's priority group 6 (unpaid carers) and are offered the vaccine once it becomes available for that priority group.

Get your free copy of our Helpful Guide sent to your letterbox

Our all-in-one book has all the information and help you need to enjoy family life. [Get your free copy of our Helpful guide for families with disabled children](#) straight to your letterbox.

Thanks for reading What's new!

If you haven't already, subscribe to [our other email newsletters](#) or [get your free copy of our Helpful guide for families with disabled children](#) straight to your letterbox.

You can also visit [the Contact website](#) for advice and information about any concern you might, visit [our Fledglings online shop](#) full of practical products for your child and family, [join our closed \(private\) Facebook group](#) for parent carers or [sign up to one of our virtual family workshops](#).

If you can't find what you need you can call Contact's free helpline on 0808 808 3555 between 9.30am-5pm Monday to Friday, [use our Live Chat](#), or email helpline@contact.org.uk.

And if you're interested in ways to support our work, find out about [the Contact Weekly Lottery](#).

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London, England
United Kingdom

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