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Australian Government  
Department of Education,  
Skills and Employment

## COVID-19: Seven-day lockdown for Newcastle and the Hunter

The New South Wales Government announced yesterday a seven-day lockdown for Newcastle and the Hunter. Details can be found on the [NSW Government COVID-19 website](#).

The affected Local Government Areas include Newcastle, Cessnock, Dungog, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Muswellbrook, Port Stephens and Singleton.

Early childhood education and care services can continue to operate during the lockdown.

At this stage there is no change to fee charging or absences in relation to the lockdown. If Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is being claimed by services, families are liable to pay the gap fee. Families have access to 42 absence days per financial year that can be used for any reason.

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the New South Wales Government and peak organisations from the sector as the situation evolves.

### COVID-19 Disaster Payment

Information about the [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) is available on the Services Australia website.

### Support for services

Providers and services in New South Wales may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, visit [business.gov.au](#).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants must request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.

### Support for families

Families can get CCS when their child is absent from a session of care they would normally attend for up to 42 days per financial year. These absences can be used for any reason.

Allowable absences reset on 1 July 2021 for the new financial year. This means that on this date all children had 42 absence days available to them.

The [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

### If you have to close

You must also tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

### For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [NSW Government COVID-19 website](#) for local updates.

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