

COVID-19 EMERGENCY PLANNING HIGHLIGHT REPORT

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| SERVICE AREA: | Education |
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KEY ACTIVITY HEADLINES

- The start of the summer term has seen numbers in Schools and settings increase to a high of over 2,600 in schools. We continue to support key workers and vulnerable children.
 - Around 280 schools have been open across most of the week with schools only being closed due to lack of demand or schools merging their provision. As expected, numbers have increased with a peak of around 2,600 children during the middle of week. We have consistently had over 300 children with a social worker attend and around 180 pupils with Education Health and Care Plans. We continue to meet all parental demand.
 - The position on the 23rd April within early years provision can be seen below –

| | Childminders | | Early Years | | Overall Children |
|-----|--------------|--------|-------------|--------|------------------|
| | Number | % Open | Number | % Open | |
| CCC | 226 | 38% | 133 | 38% | 929 |
| PCC | 66 | 42% | 17 | 16% | 185 |

- Vulnerable pupils – in light of new government guidance, we have developed a new protocol for risk assessing access to schools. This has been coproduced with all services including our parent carer forum. We will be writing to parents next week to make sure they are clear on school opening. The government have also issued new guidance to encourage flexibility with the vulnerable definition and we have supported return to school for a number of children who are undertaken early help assessments.
- We continue to provide advice to schools on the challenges around finance especially where external income is involved. In updated guidance, schools has been advised that they can furlough staff and more information has been shared in relation to supply teachers.
- We are communicating daily with schools and settings giving them updates and interpretation for on government guidance. We have provided support this week on critical incidents planning, bereavement support, performance management and newly qualified teachers.
- We have collected data on schools on their approach to delivering free school meals, children without access to ICT support and how staff absence might prevent schools from reopening. We will be analysing this information next week.
- We now have now developed home learning guides to support parents and councillors can share these with their communities. These can be found here –
[Early Years / Help Me Learn Leaflet](#)
[Key Stage 1 & 2](#)
- The government has released its guidance on providing ICT access to care leavers, children and young people aged 0 to 19 with a social worker and disadvantaged year 10 pupils. Internet access will be provided through 4G hotspot devices where required. The DfE is also working with technology suppliers to provide support for schools to access online platforms where teachers can set and collect work from pupils. We have received a provisional allocation for children with a social worker of laptops / tablets of 1,327 for Cambridgeshire and 615 for Peterborough. In additional we have received an allocation of 84 devices for those pupils in schools in year 10 who are disadvantaged in the 2 secondary schools and 2 pupil referral units under Local Authority control. Similar allocations have been made to Academy Trusts. We will work with schools next week to ensure we deliver devices to these that need it. We remained concerns that other key groups (year 5 pupils for instance) are not included in this scheme and we will continue to review options for providing to this group.
- The DfE Free School Meal scheme (Edenred) continues to present issues for schools and parents. Aldi was added to the list of supermarkets this week but Lidl and Coop remain absent from this list. In addition, access to the system remains challenging and vouchers are not been processed. We are now raising issues on a daily basis with the Department for Education and all issues raised so far have

been resolved. We continue to advise schools to use alternative payment methods until the issues are resolved.

RISKS / CHALLENGES (AND MITIGATION)

- Schools and setting closing remains a concern – we have developed a contingency plan for child care to be provided from strategic hub schools around the county and city if sickness means local arrangements cannot be delivered. We continue to monitor sickness levels in schools daily.
- Admissions – we currently have in-year applications on hold due to schools being closed. We will restart this process once the new intake processes are complete and the holiday period has passed.
- Financial viability of providers in early years / catering / building contractors – there is going to be a legacy issue with provision potentially closing due to financial challenges.
- Legal requirements around EHCP continue although we are awaiting changes in legislation shortly. We are planning to redeploy our staff from other services within SEND services.
- Schools financial position – we continue to work schools in financial difficulties. We are unable to undertake restructures during the period of closure. The grants available to schools are limited.
- Alternative Provision - We have raised concerns with the DfE around some alternative provision (for those excluded pupils) which may have to close due to the financial standing of the provider. We have identified alternative provision but this will require further expenditure and will impact upon the young people placed there. To date, we have had to find new provision for 11 students to date.

WORKFORCE UPDATE

- The continued absence of the Schools Finance Manager in Peterborough is putting pressure upon the Early Years service. There are no other critical issues currently with staff absence. We have collected data on schools absence.
- We have seconded two Ofsted inspectors to support the work in Education. They will be supporting developing home learning advice for SEND, reviewing our advice to schools, enhancing our home learning support for Secondary and developing our recovery plan.

FINANCIAL IMPACT (increase in costs / reduction in income)

- Education has quantified all its financial impact for overall council reports. All training and traded service have been cancelled until May half term.
- Continue to review rent payment arrangement with early years settings that are using our buildings.
- Schools and settings continue to be confused by the government schemes for loss of income. We continue to provide advice where we can.
- We have developed a business tool for early years settings which has been shared with the DfE and in Peterborough we have advanced setting early payment of their summer allocation to support their ongoing financial viability.

RECOVERY ACTIVITY (plans being considered / future steps)

- There has been no further announcement on the reopening of schools. Our first draft of our recovery plan continues to be developed. It will cover two elements –
 - Key concerns / questions / ideas for the DfE to consider around the process of reopening.
 - A practical guide to leaders in schools to consider when we have certainty over the opening of schools.
- We have a seconded a Senior HMI to support the development of our recovery plan.
- We have met for the second time with the Regional School Commissioner to discuss our plans and the next steps. A regional meeting is taking place next week to join up Local Authorities.
- Our data collection is now complete on staff availability due to shielding / vulnerable groups and we will be analysing this next week.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Daily positive news story continue and we continue to publicise our early years advice line to parents.
- We have weekly meetings with the trade unions to discuss key concerns for their members. This has been an effective partnership with few issues raised to date.
- Undertook a BBC Look East Interview via Zoom to outline the concerns we have with the DfE Free School Meal voucher scheme (Edenred).