

COVID-19 EMERGENCY PLANNING HIGHLIGHT REPORT

SERVICE AREA:	Education
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REPORTING PERIOD:	W/C 4 th May 2020

KEY ACTIVITY HEADLINES

- The number of pupils in schools and settings has seen an increase in attendance this week. We expect around 160 schools to be open on the VE Bank Holiday to support critical worker and vulnerable children.
 - Around 290 schools have been open across most of the week with schools only being closed due to lack of demand or schools merging their provision. The increase in numbers now means around 3% of the school population attending. We have consistently had over 350 children with a social worker attend and around 200 pupils with Education Health and Care Plans. We continue to meet all parental demand.
 - The position on the 7th May within early years provision can be seen below –

	Childminders		Early Years		Overall Children
	Number	% Open	Number	% Open	
CCC	239	40%	146	42%	1136
PCC	73	47%	21	20%	346

- We are communicating daily with schools and settings giving updates and interpretation on government guidance. We have provided support this week on changes to legislation for schools, risk assessments, inset days, reopening, assessment, remote learning, leadership challenges and safeguarding. We continue to share best practice documentation from schools including a risk assessment from our newest school, the Martin Bacon Academy.
- The DfE Free School Meal scheme (Edenred) continues to present issues for schools and parents. Our daily sharing of concerns with the Department for Education is resolving some issue but it is still a source of much frustrations for leaders and parents. We continue to advise schools to use alternative payment methods until the issues are resolved.
- We have shared our [reopening planning guidance](#) with schools which was a collaborative effort between the two Academy CEO forums, the Diocese of Ely and CCC/PCC. [A video was produced by Andrew Read](#), Diocesan Director of Education for Ely, which explains how the document was produced and should be used. It developed local and national thinking on reopening alongside feedback from 280 schools in both authorities. The guidance provides questions for leadership in schools across 15 areas - safeguarding, premises, health and safety, HR, governance, staffing, phased return of pupils, vulnerable pupils, curriculum home/school, communication pupils, communication parents, LA/Trusts, transition of pupils, finance, COVID 19 infection control.
- Briefings have been held via Zoom with around 280 Headteachers and leaders for LA maintained and academy primary schools across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. These have focused on re-opening and the concerns around the current Covid-19 situation. Briefings are being held with secondary and nursery schools next week. We will also be providing briefings for early years settings.

RISKS / CHALLENGES (AND MITIGATION)

- Admissions – we currently have in-year applications on hold due to schools being closed. We have developed our approach to these and allocations will recommence in the coming weeks.
- Anxiety in leaders / staff in schools is a huge concern – the briefings held were aimed to give reassurance that every school would be supported. Phased return will need careful managing with staff. In Peterborough, we have included schools in our employee assistance programme which provides support to all staff.
- 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 and the requirement to review children with SEND provision - we are working hard to ensure we meet the new legislative requirements and are redeploying schools from elsewhere in the directorate.
- 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 to cleaning, meals and increased premises costs results from opening in holidays.

WORKFORCE UPDATE

- There are no critical issues currently with staff absence. We continue to have capacity challenges in the Schools Funding team in Peterborough with support being provided by the Service Director. Across the wider service, our capacity for business as normal activity is significantly impaired.
- 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 especially where furlough is used in schools and settings. We continue to provide advice where we can.

RECOVERY ACTIVITY (plans being considered / future steps)

- We are expecting an announcement from government over the reopening of schools and settings on Sunday. We have key plans in place with schools and settings and we will continue to provide daily advice to schools on reopening.
- We expect there will be a three week notice period for schools / settings to prepare and any opening will be partial – i.e. particular year groups e.g. year 10, year 5. It is expected that attendance will be optional.
- Key elements of planning moving forward for LA services will be support for SEND, home to school transport, restarting traded services, admissions, appeals and support for school leaders.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Daily positive news story continue to be publish and we continue to promote 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 and the focus of discussion has been on how best to support reopening.
- The Service Director for Education presented at a Zoom conference with leaders from Multi-Academy Trusts on Planning for Schools during the Covid-19 situation.
- For the VE day celebration, we have received over 80 responses from schools to our request to send pictures and videos with children in school holding up a poster which says "To those who gave so much, we thank you.". The videos can be found here – [Cambridgeshire / Peterborough](#)