

## COVID-19 EMERGENCY PLANNING HIGHLIGHT REPORT

<b>SERVICE AREA:</b>	Education
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	Jonathan Lewis
<b>REPORTING PERIOD:</b>	W/C 18 <sup>th</sup> May 2020

### KEY ACTIVITY HEADLINES

- The number of pupils in schools and settings has continued to increase this week.
  - 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, with the highest number of pupils attending schools on Wednesday since closure with 3591 pupils attending. We have also seen increases in vulnerable pupils with up to 390 children with a social worker attend and around 250 pupils with Education Health and Care Plans. We continue to meet all parental demand.
  - The position on the 21<sup>st</sup> May within early years provision can be seen below (the DfE have changed their definitions this week) –

	Childminders		Early Years		Overall Children
	Number	% Open	Number	% Open	
CCC	242	41%	153	44%	1293
PCC	66	42%	19	18%	371

- PPE has been delivered to all schools in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and we are distributing to all early years settings in the next week. We hope to also provide visors to those schools who have requested them this coming week.
- We are communicating daily with schools and settings giving updates and interpretation on government guidance. We have provided support this week on admissions appeals, reviewing EHCP (Education Health and Care Plans), liability during partial reopening, PPE, shielding, parent reporting, home to school transport, PE, swimming pools, updated safeguarding policies, premises, finance and first aid. There remains no detailed government guidance on secondary and special school reopening.
- We have shared 'best practice' documentation prepared by schools across the authorities. This has included return to school videos for pupils, letters to parents and risk assessment tools. These continue to be well received and save school a lot of time.
- Over 240 senior leaders from maintained schools attended seminar / Q&A session with senior leaders across the council to cover safeguarding, social distancing, Health and Safety, communication, transition and staffing/HR. The feedback has been very positive. Next week we will be running sessions on governance, vulnerable pupils, finance and premises.
- The DfE has revised the legislation in regard to the management and assessment of EHCP for children with SEND. We have worked together with the CCG and our parent forums, Pinpoint and Family Voice, to review the legislation and have drawn up a plan of action to ensure we are fully addressing the temporary changes (easements) in duties. This involves seeking the views of all families of children and young adults with an EHCP and to ensure "reasonable endeavours" are being made to deliver provision in an EHCP. We are currently contacting all parents / carers of children and young people who have an EHCP and asking them to complete a questionnaire. This information will be collated and shared with schools and settings. Schools will be contacted directly to support them with this process. We will also be asking schools to make contact with any parents who request any further support through the questionnaire. If there is disagreement, the appropriate local authority will meet with the parents / carers involved. This meeting will then result in the local authority confirming what has been decided. All changes will be kept under review by the relevant local authority.
- We have provided training on support children with challenging behaviour in a school with restricted opening. This follows the roll out of the Steps therapeutic behaviour management support.
- We continue to wait for scientific evidence from the Department for Education on the 28<sup>th</sup> May to support the reopening on the 1<sup>st</sup> June. Meetings are planned with Headteachers and the Trade Unions on the 29<sup>th</sup> May following the release of this information.

## **RISKS / CHALLENGES (AND MITIGATION)**

- Anxiety in leaders / staff in schools is a huge concern – the announcement of school reopening has caused a huge amount of concern in schools. We continue to speak to Headteachers and settings on a regular basis and reply to a significant volume of emails to support their concerns.
- Financial viability of providers in early years – due to the challenges of government funding and uncertainty over numbers, we have prepared business cases in both local authorities for providing sustainability funding to those providers that need it. We also intending investing in further marketing of early years provision from September to ensure high take up.
- Opening building used by early years provision – we are having some challenges getting landlords to reopen buildings to support early years provision. This has include church owned provision where the national situation remains being closed.
- School wrap around provision – under the government guidance, schools are required to form bubbles and keep children in the same group. The downside to this is that existing out of school clubs (breakfast and after school clubs) cannot operate with this bubbles due to the staff needed to maintain the bubbles being unviable. We have asked the DfE for advice. This means parents will have to consider shorter working hours if there isn't any alternative childcare available.
- Schools financial position – we continue to work with 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 and run out in May.

## **WORKFORCE UPDATE**

- There are no critical issues currently with staff absence although the workforce has worked extended hours over a 2 month period. Our capacity for business as normal activity is significantly impaired.
- Four members of the regional Ofsted team continue to support the work in Education.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT (increase in costs / reduction in income)**

- Education has quantified all its financial impact for overall council reports. All training and selected non-contracted traded service have been cancelled until September.
- The cost of PPE has been funded from the Local Authority resources for all schools and early years provision.

## **RECOVERY ACTIVITY (plans being considered / future steps)**

- Schools have been developing their plans for reopening and risk assessment. Our school improvement teams have been working with maintained school Headteachers to review these and ensure compliance with the DfE guidance. We are collecting details on schools opening plans.
- Our early years team are working well with settings on their plans for reopening. We have offered surgeries for reception leads and settings and these have been fully booked up. Positive feedback has been received.
- Key elements of planning moving forward for LA services will be support for SEND, home to school transport, restarting traded services, support to schools around premises, 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 wrote a further letter to parents outlining some of the challenges school will be facing with reopening including a limited curriculum, that the limit on numbers may mean that parents will not get their normal teachers and that other part of the normal school operation may not be available e.g. school meals, breakfast and after school clubs.
- We have weekly meetings with the Trade Unions to discuss key concerns for their members. These continue to be productive discussions and we will be co-ordinating the sharing of school risk assessments.