

CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 5
9 NOVEMBER 2020	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Wendi Ogle Welbourn, Executive Director, People and Communities	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Lynne Ayres - Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Skills and the University	
Contact Officer(s):	Jonathan Lewis – Service Director (Education)	Tel. 01223 507165

SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION UPDATE REPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Jonathan Lewis – Service Director (Education)	Deadline date: n/a
<p>It is recommended that the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee:</p> <p>1. Note the position of Education around Covid-19 and comment on areas the committee may wish to review moving forward as we move into a recovery phase.</p>	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report has been written by the Service Director (Education) at the request of the committee.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the latest position on Covid-19 for Education in Peterborough following reopening in September. The report also covers issues raised by members of this committee in the October meeting.

2.2 This report is for the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2.1 Functions determined by Council :

Education, including

- a) University and higher education;
- b) Youth service;
- c) Careers; and
- d) Special needs and inclusion.

2.3 This report links to –

- Corporate priority:
 - Improve educational attainment and skills
 - To drive growth, regeneration and economic development
- Children in Care Pledge: Support children in care to have a good education.

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

Issues raised in the last Scrutiny meeting

4.1 In the last meeting, there were a number of questions where a further response was required -

- Availability of Educational Psychologists (EP) – Peterborough has a highly effective EP team and they have worked diligently throughout this crisis to continue to support statutory processes and provide support to schools on challenging issues such as bereavement. Funding restraints do not allow further recruitment and there is a national shortage of EPs but we continue to prioritise our work and strive to meet statutory deadlines.
- National Literacy Trust Hub – a briefing is provided in Appendix 1 outlining the positive relationship between PCC and the National Literacy Trust. There has been excellent work since 2014.
- Catch up funding / National Tutoring Programme – details on this funding and initiative is included in the main body of the report.
- Attendance in rural schools - Attendance in rural schools in Peterborough has been higher throughout Covid-19. For the w/c 12th October, the average attendance in rural primary school attendance was 96.5% and secondary attendance was 91.9%. These figures are influenced by bubble closures and other illness.
- Guidance around mock exams – further details on the assessment process for Year 11 and Year 13 students is included in this report. Schools are currently considering how best to deliver mock exams in the second half of the autumn term.
- Newly Qualified Teachers and Teach East – further information will be shared in the January report.

Responding to Covid-19 - Update

4.2 Since the 20th March, schools and settings have remained formally closed. During the spring and summer term, they opened first to critical workers and vulnerable children before wider opening to children in Early Years, reception, year 1, year 6 and years 10 and 12. On the 1st September, schools and settings formally reopened in line with the Education Act 1996.

4.2 The latest highlight report for responding to the Covid-19 position can be found in Appendix 1.

4.3 Key issues to note are –

- Remote Learning Requirements – schools have a formal legal requirement from the 22nd October to ensure they can meet a specified level of education remotely. The LA has reviewed all maintained schools' remote learning plans and supported with the development of policies to ensure education is uninterrupted in the cases where children are unable to attend school due to Covid-19.
- The national laptop scheme has been launched to provide access to ICT equipment for those pupils who are 'digitally' disadvantaged. Maintained schools in Peterborough were originally allocated access to 962 laptops in the scenario where there were children who were unable to access learning remotely. Following a review by government, this number has been reduced to 381. We are trying to establish the rationale behind this change especially in light of the high deprivation in Peterborough. Schools can claim laptops where they meet certain criteria.
- Attendance in Peterborough remains high, consistently in the top 20% in the country. We have also seen higher attendance relatively for those children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and those children with a social worker.
- Take up of Free School Meals in Peterborough continues to increase as we see the economic impact of Covid-19. We have heavily marketed access to this scheme. As well as providing a meal for the child, schools are able to access the Pupil Premium grant, up to £1300 annually.

- 4.4 From the period from the 3rd September until the 25th October, there had been 145 reported Covid-19 cases across early years settings, schools and colleges in Peterborough. This has led to around 200 staff and 2,689 pupils/students being unable to attend schools. Schools have dealt with these cases appropriately following Department for Education (DfE), Public Health England and Local Authority guidance. Remote learning has been put in place and vulnerable pupils continue to be supported directly.

Key Service Updates

- 4.5 The Education service covers three areas (all under an Assistant Director) –
1. Education Capital and Place Planning (Hazel Belchamber)
 2. School and Setting Improvements (Jason Howard)
 3. SEND and Inclusion (Toni Bailey)
- 4.6 The following sections cover the key updates for these services since the last report -

Education Capital and Place Planning

Elective Home Education (EHE)

- 4.8 During the summer we saw an increase in the numbers of children and young people being off rolled from schools to be educated at home. This was not entirely unexpected, and we recognised that the environmental impact of COVID-19 led many parents to decide to take full responsibility for their child's education, either in the short/medium term but perhaps also permanently. The rise in pupils being home educated is not an isolated issue relating to Peterborough but a trend being seen nationally and has been commented on by Ofsted. During the period from the 1st July to 15th October, we had 167 new registered EHE cases bring the number to a total of 487. Whilst there are no comparative figures on recent situation, the number of EHE in Cambridgeshire is roughly three times higher, in line with the greater number of pupils compared to Peterborough.
- 4.9 However, locally there does appear to be a recent decrease in the numbers off rolling to home education, which might indicate that the numbers are beginning to stabilise.
- 4.10 A current Education Select Committee inquiry into 'Home Education' aims to explore the impact of COVID-19 on home education as well as seeking to "understand the extent to which current arrangements provide sufficient support for home educated children to access efficient, full time and suitable education". This has been a challenging area for many years and Peterborough has always been proactive in supporting and challenging home education. We also have good links / arrangements with Peterborough College to support the transition to adulthood from 14 to 19.
- 4.11 On the 22nd October, we received some new guidance for dealing with EHE –
- The DfE now strongly recommend that LAs work with schools, parents and carers, and other key professionals (such as social workers) to coordinate a meeting before the parent makes a final decision. This ensures the parent fully considers what is in the best interests of each individual child. This is particularly important where vulnerable children and those at greatest risk of harm are involved.
 - LAs normally become aware of a child who is electively home educated once the name has been removed from the school roll. The DfE now expects schools and other professionals to engage with LAs where a parent is considering withdrawing their child from school for EHE before the child's name is removed from the roll. This will enable the LA to coordinate a meeting ahead of the child being withdrawn from school and the parent confirming in writing that they are being electively home educated instead. If a child attends a special school and this was arranged by a local authority, the local authority **must** give consent for the child's name to be removed from the roll.
 - The aim of the meeting is to ensure a positive choice taken without pressure from their school and signpost the guidance on gov.uk. LAs, schools, and other professionals have a

responsibility to help parents fully understand the implications of withdrawing their child for EHE and their ongoing obligations, making clear that:

- Parents assume full financial responsibility,
- Their child may not be able to return to the same school if they change their mind.
- Support from schools will not continue, including any special educational needs support, and in cases where LAs are not satisfied a child is receiving a suitable education, the parent may be issued with a School Attendance Order and / or the court may make an Education Supervision Order.
- LAs should also make parents aware that in extreme cases, where concerns over the suitability of education extend to safeguarding matters, a Care Order could be made by the court.
- Providing the information above should be considered as part of one of a number of ways in which LAs can undertake their duties in respect of safeguarding children.

4.12 Significantly, there is a clear statement that Ofsted will continue to look for any evidence of off-rolling. The DfE guidance makes clear that pressuring a parent to remove their child from the school (including to home educate their child) is a form of off-rolling.

4.13 This change, whilst welcomed, does not bring with it any resources and additional capacity will be needed to deliver this requirement. We expect further guidance to be forthcoming to support this significant change.

Greater Peterborough University Technical College

4.14 The Greater Peterborough University Technical College (GPUTC) are currently consulting on changing the school's current age range from Years 9-13 to Years 7-13. The consultation period is running for seven weeks from 25th September 2020 to 13th November 2020. The GPUTC's Governing Body will then give consideration to all comments received before deciding whether or not to proceed with requesting permission of the Secretary of State to make the proposed change. If the change is agreed the GPUTC plans to admit 80 pupils into Year 7 from September 2021.

4.15 PCC have supported this proposal as:

- There is a forecast shortage of Year 7 places in Peterborough next September, this proposal would meet this shortage and provide some much needed additional secondary capacity
- A Year 7 offer from the GPUTC would increase the choice and diversity of education provision in Peterborough
- Admitting in Year 7 will mean the GPUTC is working with the same major admission point as the secondary schools

4.16 Officers are currently preparing a business case to part fund the build of a small sports hall and outdoor play space (other potential funding partners are Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust and the Department of Education) in order for the GPUTC to offer a broad and balanced curriculum to the potential Year 7 and 8 students

School and Setting Improvements

4.17 As reported previously, we had managed to appoint to the role of Assistant Director – Schools and Setting Improvement across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The post holder has had a significant impact but unfortunately has secured a promotion in Ofsted and will return to them from the 1st December. We will shortly be advertising this role as there is a need for more capacity especially in light of the challenges of Covid-19 continue in our schools.

Catch up Funding and National Tuition Programme

4.18 The DfE have made available £1bn nationally to support the catch up programme. This is split into 2 elements –

- 4.19 Coronavirus Catch Up premium
A £650m fund for the 2020 / 21 academic year to ensure all state schools have the support they need to help all pupils make up for lost teaching time. Schools' allocations will be calculated on a per pupil basis, providing each mainstream school with a total of £80 for each pupil in years reception through to 11. Special, Alternative Provision and hospital schools will be provided with £240 for each place for the 2020 to 2021 academic year. This will be paid in 3 tranches in autumn 2020, early 2021 and Summer 2021. Schools are required to use this funding for specific activities to support their pupils to catch up for lost teaching over the previous months, in line with the guidance on curriculum expectations for the next academic year. The Education Endowment foundation has released a guide for schools on how to spend the funding. Schools have the flexibility to spend their funding in the best way for their cohort and circumstances.
- 4.20 Schools are required to have "costed plan" for delivery and have to be able to account for how this money is being used. When routine inspections restart, Ofsted will make judgements about the quality of education being provided, and that will include how leaders are using their funding (including catch-up funding) to ensure the curriculum has a positive impact on all pupils. Given the low value per pupil, support will be targeted at pupils who are most in need of support. Although funding guidance refers to being spent on 'disadvantaged' it does outline that teachers and school leaders will be able to exercise their professional judgement to determine which pupils are in most need of support.
- 4.21 National Tutoring Programme (NTP)
A £350m programme which is split into 3 programmes -
- a 5 to 16 programme that will make high-quality tuition available to 5 to 16-year olds in state-funded primary and secondary schools from the second half of autumn term 2020;
 - a 16 to 19 fund for school sixth forms, colleges and all other 16 to 19 providers to provide small group tutoring activity for disadvantaged 16 to 19 students whose studies have been disrupted as a result of COVID-19 - guidance setting out further detail of this element will be issued shortly; and
 - A reception year early language programme that will make training and resources available at no-cost to schools where additional targeted support for oral language would be particularly beneficial.
- 4.22 The clear focus on the use of tutors is based upon extensive evidence that demonstrates the potential of one-to-one and small-group tuition as a cost-effective way to support pupils who are falling behind in their learning, suggesting that it can boost progress by up to 5 months.
- 4.23 Tutoring has long been accessed only by parents who can afford it. The Department for Education is offering 75% subsidy on costs of tutors accessed through the National Tutoring Programme. They have undertaken a procurement exercise to identify accredited NTP Partners will be published at the beginning of November. Partners are required to evidence access to high-quality, evidence-informed tutors with a rigorous quality assurance process. The tuition is designed to be flexible using different timing and mediums of delivery.
- 4.24 We have been working with our Teaching Schools to join with the Schools Partnership Tutors (SP Tutors), part of the Unity Schools Partnership and Research School. We are keen to use existing capacity who are known to the school to ensure continuity and impact. Whilst not confirmed yet, the indicative costs are £50/hour (qualified teacher tutor) or £40/hour (tutor). The school pays 25%, i.e. £187.50 (qualified teacher tutor) or £150 (tutor) for three children to have 15 hours tutoring with the other 75% of the costs being reclaimed from the DfE. Tutors will receive training including safeguarding. We expect an announcement on the commencement of this scheme to come in November and we hope all Peterborough schools engage. A briefing held with Headteachers on the 22nd October covered the proposed arrangements.

School Improvement

- 4.25 During the summer term, school improvement advisers offered help to headteachers as they completed their recovery/school improvement plans. Since the beginning of September, school improvement advisers have been working with curriculum advisers to provide support and, where

necessary, challenge to school leaders since the beginning of term in the implementation of those plans. The English and Mathematics teams have produced guidance and resources to help subject and senior leaders to ascertain pupils' knowledge gaps and to start to fill these. Training sessions for subject leaders have been well-attended and positively received. Over 45 virtual training visits in English and mathematics have taken place since the beginning of term. In addition, school improvement advisers have been working intensively with a small number of schools causing concern, supplementing virtual support with on-site visits.

- 4.26 Following the Department for Education's 'direction', it is a legal requirement for schools to have arrangements in place to provide remote education to pupils who are unable to attend school owing to COVID-19. The DfE has issued guidance setting out its expectations in this regard. We have shared a draft 'model policy' with schools. As the responsible body, the local authority is required to sign-off each school's remote education plan as being fit for purpose. We have kept the criteria straightforward so that individual schools can adopt approaches that fit their contexts and circumstances. The Cambridgeshire ICT team has provided guidance for schools on the different online platforms that they can use – although the majority of schools have already settled upon systems that suit them.
- 4.27 Headteachers have been provided with information about COVID-19 related catch-up funding that is available to schools, and some of the flexibilities that they have in spending it. Much will be spent on additional 1:1 and small group tuition. We are encouraging headteachers to make use of standardised tests so that they can baseline what pupils know and can remember post-'lockdown', and what it is that individuals have forgotten or not understood. Subsequent testing can help to establish how far additional tuition and tutoring has helped to close pupils' learning gaps. As a local authority, we have negotiated a significant discount on reading and mathematics tests for schools that wish to use these. Also discounted are tailored resources that provide teachers and teaching assistants with all that they need to provide 1:1 or small group teaching on the precise things that assessment indicates pupils are struggling with. These discounts are available to the large number of schools that are existing users of the tests and other resources, as well as to schools that decide to purchase them for the first time.
- 4.28 Leaders, including governors, will want to base their catch-up spend decision-making upon evidence as to what is most effective. Although the quality of some providers of tuition services cannot at this stage be known given the absence of a track-record, the Education Endowment Federation (EEF) has provided research-based guidance on the 'catch-up' strategies that are likely to be most effective. We have shared these with headteachers and created a template that schools can use to set out their plans; indicate the research that supports each priority; and evaluate the outcomes. Leaders are likely to find this document useful when explaining their use of these funds, and their impact, to Ofsted in the future.
- 4.29 Our direct school improvement work has been challenging as we have tried to avoid formal Autumn visits. However, we have had regular contact with schools and the general emerging themes seem to be -
- The hard work on Risk Assessments seems to have paid off. Getting pupils back into school seems to have gone relatively smoothly.
 - Schools seem to be striking a good balance between quickly getting to grips with where pupils are in their learning now whilst also being mindful of a broad curriculum and PHSE type work.
 - School leaders are finding creative ways for the school to come together whilst also maintaining distancing - e.g. virtual assemblies etc.
 - Most pupils are glad to be back in school and seems to have settled into new routines well. Any children with well-being type issues were already known to the school before COVID-19.
 - Now that pupils are back in HTs seem to enjoy being able to refocus some more of their time on school improvement priorities.
- 4.30 The emerging challenges seem to be –
- Creating a quality plan for remote learning which is also manageable, especially in a scenario where some pupils are at home and others are in school

- Concerns where there are high numbers of pupils without access to ICT at home.
- Teacher well-being and workload; teacher tiredness and illness are leading to pressure linked to covering staff absence
- Anxiety about the volume of health-related work support staff, pupils and parents.

To support Headteachers, we have written to all Chairs of Governors with advice on how best to support Headteacher wellbeing.

Ofsted's 'supportive visits'

- 4.31 A number of schools have had 'supportive visits' from Ofsted over recent weeks. The aim of these visits is to gather information from schools about how they are responding to the challenges of COVID-19 that can be fed back nationally. The HMI-led visits have a number of foci, including how schools are catching pupils up with the curriculum; the plans leaders have in place around remote learning; how schools are promoting good attendance and behaviour; how leaders are identifying the needs of pupils with SEND and ensuring these are met; the schools' safeguarding arrangements, including for pupils who need early help; and how leaders are managing safer recruitment and allegations against staff.
- 4.32 The visits typically begin after the pupils have arrived at school, and finish before they leave. Inspectors do not visit classrooms or tour the school; instead they speak with leaders during a series of socially distanced meetings. Ofsted does not regard the visits as 'inspections', so formal feedback is not given at the end of these. The visits cannot result in a change of Ofsted grade, as only a Section 5 inspection can do this. Following a visit, a very brief letter is published which outline the steps the school has taken to support pupils.
- 4.33 Thus far, school leaders report that the visits have been positive rather than a source of intense additional pressure on school leaders. Some inspectors have offered helpful comments, thoughts and suggestions during their conversations with school leaders. Inspectors have not raised concerns during any of the visits that have taken place or indicated that any further inspection activity will occur as a result of them.
- 4.34 Ofsted have also published an overview from 121 school visits from the 14th to the 18th September for the pilot phase of the supportive visits (this included 2 schools in Peterborough). Key findings are -

Remote learning 'not aligned' to curriculum - Leaders reported that in some subjects their remote education was only aligned with their pre-existing curriculum "to some extent". In others, it was not yet aligned. The report found that schools were using remote learning to educate pupils at home, and the materials were in many cases not fully aligned with the regular curriculum. Ofsted said pupils must not lose the progression that a strong, well-sequenced curriculum brings. Without that structure, remote education becomes more about filling time than about effective learning. Meanwhile some schools had reported safety concerns over the use of live lessons, "such as pupils being alone in a room while the lesson was taking place and had chosen not to use live teaching because of these concerns".

Primaries focus on reading, secondaries re-order curriculum - Ofsted said secondary schools were "teaching most of the subjects they usually teach, though many have reordered topics within subjects, however some had suggested that pupils may need to drop an option". Primary schools were giving "even more attention to reading than usual", including phonics, as they "wanted to make sure that if there have been any losses in learning, particularly in reading, these are quickly put right". The schools said that they planned to return to their normal curriculum by the summer term 2021 but many said they thought they would be able to achieve this earlier".

Pupils are struggling to concentrate - While pupils were adapting to schools' COVID-19 rules, some were "finding it more difficult to concentrate on their learning than usual. Leaders felt that some were showing less resilience, for example becoming quickly upset if the work seemed difficult or giving up more easily."

Testing failures are ‘real barrier’ to keeping schools open - School leaders were concerned about not being able to keep their schools open when staff had to self-isolate to wait for coronavirus tests and test results. Many leaders saw the lack of availability of COVID-19 testing in their area as a real barrier to getting – or staying – properly up and running again. Concerns over safety also meant leaders were struggling how to work out including practical subjects such as PE, design and music.

COVID-19 ‘anxiety’ leads to home education rise - Over a third of schools reported that some parents had removed their children to electively home educate them, or were about to do so, because of their anxiety over Covid-19.

Teachers recruited on fixed-term contracts because of online interviews - The report also touched on recruitment: it found schools had generally continued to recruit over the summer, with interviews done online. However, the “biggest concern expressed by leaders was not being able to see a prospective teacher teaching”. “Occasionally, schools had recruited teachers on fixed-term contracts for this reason”, Ofsted found, although some schools said online interviews had “worked much better than they had anticipated”. A small number of leaders “did not like the idea of interviewing virtually so had delayed the process until this term”.

- 4.35 This is a useful overview of many of the issues which schools have faced. Reassuringly, we have provided advice and guidance to schools on all these issues previously. It is a surprise however that neither the costs of funding COVID-19 compliance or the pressure on school staff were included.

Exams – 2021

- 4.36 Following the use of centre assessed grades in the summer 2020 examinations, the DfE have announced that students will be given more time to prepare for their exams next year, as most AS, A levels and GCSEs will be held 3 weeks later to help address the disruption caused by the pandemic. The government’s view that that exams are the fairest and most accurate way to measure a pupil’s attainment. The summer exam series will start on 7 June and end on 2 July for almost all AS and A levels and GCSEs. Results days are Tuesday 24 August for A and AS levels and Friday 27 August for GCSEs so students will start the following academic year as normal.
- 4.37 However, the government is going to continue to review this situation as the current rising case numbers and the battle to suppress the virus mean further changes might be needed. Risks are currently being identified to allow mitigation for issues such as students unable to sit exams due to illness or self-isolation, or schools affected by a local outbreak during the examination season meaning centres cannot open. Ofqual have already made some proposed changes to the examinations to allow for students not being taught fully during this time. Further details on the exam approach is expected in November.

Virtual School – Destination of Care Leavers.

- 4.38 In the current academic year 2020/2021 there are 10 Peterborough YP (care leavers) who are studying at university. One more is looking to start in January 2021. They are studying a range of subjects, such as Nursing, Veterinary Science, Criminology, Midwifery, Business, Social Work, Primary Education, Performing Arts and so on across different universities. The table below provides some detailed information:

Midwifery	Kingston University	Year 1
Health & Social Care	University of Northampton	Year 1
Musical Theatre	Goldsmiths, University of London	Year 1
Criminology	London Metropolitan University	Year 2
Social Work	Anglia Ruskin University	Year 1
Veterinary Science	University of Nottingham	Year 2

Primary Education		Year 3
Business	Nottingham Trent	Year 1
Performing Arts	De Monfort University	Year 2
Acting & Stage Combat	University of Essex	Year 2

- 4.39 A first-year students who has gone to university this year says she is settling in well. However, the COVID-19 situation has had an impact; a 2nd year student explained that this academic year is very different to last year due to the pandemic, for example mainly studying online. Another student said they were experiencing added financial pressures which was impacting on mental health. Below are comments from students have shared of their experiences -
- 4.40 The comments below are from a first-year student:
"How is uni going? So, I'm studying at Kingston university completing my first year as a student midwife. When I first started I was so nervous because I was moving to a new area and I thought I would really struggle to make friends and I was also worried about being financially stable in a city were everyone said would be incredibly expensive (London). After a few weeks I feel that I have settled in well, I've managed to make a few friends and I have gotten into a routine that allows me to focus on my uni work without too much trouble and balance doing things I enjoy. I really feel that I have been supported well by the people around me and the university to make my transition to higher education as stress free as possible. There are times when I do feel overwhelmed but I just keep reminding myself that I'm not the only person in this position and try and focus on how much I have achieved up to this point".
- 4.41 The below comments are from a 2nd Year student:
*"I know starting university can be a daunting time for many people. Not least of all, care experienced students. Whilst it was a bit unnerving moving into new accommodation to live by myself for the first time in my life, my overall experience was amazing. Over the last year, I feel I have grown so much both as an individual and as a student. Living alone, I had to start taking responsibility for everything I did to maintain my living space, my health and my education. This included keeping on top of cleaning, ironing my own clothes, organising and cooking my own food and making sure I was arriving at lectures on time. To start with, I struggled to keep on top of everything as it takes a lot of time to fit it all in! But after a couple of months, I found my feet and had a routine going that I was happy with.
From the beginning, my main concern was falling behind on the lecture material. I knew there was a heavy workload, so did not want to get behind at any point in case it all started to pile up. I made my work the main focus, and fit in sports and socialising around this. I signed up to the climbing society straight away at the beginning of term 1. This allowed me opportunities to meet like-minded people who enjoyed the same sport as me. It was a great release from my studies to go and be active 3-4 times a week. There was also the social aspect, as we went on trips to local walls together and had many social events (such as quiz nights, film nights and went to the local pub for friendly drinks, pool nights and darts nights).
There has been a very different start to this year, as a direct result of COVID restrictions. Almost all of our lectures are online from homes/flats, we are only going in for practical sessions and are restricted to the same small groups of people to work with. Whilst in university buildings, we all have to wear our masks. In addition to this, we have been provided with visors for practical sessions. As I am sure you can imagine, almost all social activities and university clubs have been very limited in what they can do. Personally, I find that I do not learn as well from home as I do physically going in to uni, as the environment is very different and it can be hard to maintain focus on work. That said, I fully support all the measures that we have in place to prevent the spread of coronavirus and keep the student body safe".*
- 4.42 Peterborough Virtual School (PVS) continues to promote higher education aspirations and opportunities for children in care and have linked up with a regional project (12by24) that supports young people in care and care leavers and aims to increase HE participation for this group. PVS organised a presentation on the HE project in November 2019 which various Team Managers attended, as well as an online event for foster carers in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council, University of Cambridge and 12by24 Project during Foster Carers Fortnight in May 2020. PVS also promotes university open days aimed at children in care / care leavers via social

workers, carers, and education providers. Higher Education is discussed at PEP meetings from Year 9 (at the latest) in school reviews and in Post 16 reviews.

Whilst PVS involvement in terms of capacity ceases when a YP reaches the age of 18 we continue to offer support until the YP reaches the end of Year 13 and are available for ongoing support.

Early Years

4.43 Since the start of the Autumn term the service has continued to provide support to the Early Years and childcare providers across the city to meet the needs of children and families during the challenging situation:

- The on-line training/ support offer providing virtual forums and training for all sectors has been well received and there has been a good take up from providers. The NASEN (National Association for Special Educational Needs) Level 3 Early Years SENCO Award has commenced with an online delivery, there are 24 early year practitioners attending this, 12 sessions will be delivered by February 2021. (The LA are receiving financial support for this from DfE via NASEN)
- The on-line childminder registration course is continuing to develop the home-based childcare workforce.
- We have developed and are delivering a training programme for the autumn term to support the sector, having adapted a number of courses to be delivered in a virtually including safeguarding, well-being, observation and assessment. Work is underway on developing the training offer for the Spring term.
- Keep in touch (KIT) calls have been made to all providers to identify any issues, ensure appropriate support being offered to all families, with particular focus on those children with SEN. These have been well received by the providers, after half term we will be starting KIT calls with the childminders
- To support Home Learning and parents, work has started on the joint approach to implementing the 50 Things to do before your 5 app.
- Messages in relation to developing children's communication, provided by I CAN, have been widely shared across partners (BSiL) and social media to encourage parental engagement and provide consistency of messages.
- Regular email updates and weekly newsletter to the Early Years sector to ensure they had the most current information and to share practice have continued through the autumn term.
- We are working with reception colleagues to support children who have moved into reception and have complex needs are ongoing.
- DfE data collection is still happening weekly as of last week we had 5049 children under 5 accessing early years provision.
- The work to support sustainability of the sector is ongoing with all the applications for the sustainability grant having been reviewed. There is £150k allocated to support this however a total of £430k has been requested. The decisions over the allocation of funding will be happening shortly.
- There are ongoing briefing sessions to support the early years sector with the test and trace process. To date although we have had a number of possible cases identified within early years and childcare settings there have only been 3 positives, 2 staff members and one child involving 2 separate settings.

Looking ahead, we will continue to support the sector to ensure high quality provision is available.

SEND and Inclusion

4.44 The return to school for children with EHCPs across Peterborough has been supported by all educational settings and the following data outlines the current position as of 14th October.

Attendance Rate (Peterborough) (Attending Pupils with EHCP / Total Pupils with EHCP)	Attendance Rate	Total Pupils with EHCP	Attending pupils with EHCP
% of children with EHCP's who have returned to special schools (all ages and all types of special school)	86.9%	746	648
% of children with ECHP's who have returned to Mainstream settings (includes independent, AP and PRU settings)	91.1%	595	542
% of children / young people who have returned to 16 plus settings (excludes 16+ special schools)	71.0%	107	76

Attendance Rate (East of England) (Attending Pupils with EHCP / Total Pupils with EHCP)	Attendance Rate	Total Pupils with EHCP	Attending pupils with EHCP
% of children with EHCP's who have returned to special schools (all ages and all types of special school)	81.2%	11,703	9,507
% of children with ECHP's who have returned to Mainstream settings (includes independent, AP and PRU settings)	88.5%	14,727	13,031
% of children / young people who have returned to 16 plus settings (excludes 16+ special schools)	81.3%	2,283	1,857

- 4.45 We are currently reviewing attendance in post-16 provision. A number of providers have been closed due to COVID-19 outbreaks and we believe numbers will increase when those isolating return.
- 4.46 Special Schools have been able to offer access to placements for the vast majority of pupils since September 2020 and were able to offer placements for all pupils apart from a small minority of pupils who have complex health needs which include Aerosol Generated Procedures (AGP) or issues in relation to their care which require ventilation equipment. This cohort of children is mainly placed within Special School environments although there are 2 pupils in this bracket who are on roll at mainstream schools.
- 4.47 The challenges for this group of pupils have been based around a lack of national guidance for settings in the effective management or the confirmation of the levels of risk associated with AGP and the COVID -19 virus. The SEND team have worked closely with health colleagues within the CCG to push for the guidance to be finalised and we are very close to that position now. It remains an ongoing issue that there is a lack of PPE 'fit testing' training to ensure that settings have the appropriate skills in place to effectively mitigate any possible risks. We are working to identify solutions to this as quickly as possible to ensure that all pupils are given access to a school place, wherever appropriate.
- 4.48 All pupils have been given access to an educational offer, remotely or through communication with their school or setting, but it is clearly important to return to children / young people to schools as quickly as possible and within safe parameters.
- 4.49 There are a range of other challenges that have created potential barriers for the return of all children and young people to their school's placement. COVID-19 symptoms and the following of national guidance with regard to test and trace is responsible for some of the gaps in the data

and this is having an increased impact across Peterborough. However, there are groups of pupils who have not yet returned to school due to the level of anxiety being felt either by the children and young people themselves or by parent carers, who may well have complex health needs themselves. The SEND team are monitoring the individual cases across Peterborough and supporting the reintegration of pupils into school by utilising a recording system for all pupils who are not yet attending full time. This is an agreed policy that requires settings to regularly review the attendance of pupils not yet attending full time. A working group made up of members of the attendance and inclusion team are now monitoring these cases closely.

Attendance policies have been implemented to support the work of this team, in partnership with settings, however, we have taken a more flexible approach to ensure that we are applying empathy for families who have genuine anxieties due to the current situation. Nevertheless, there are families who have historical issues in relation to attendance and for these cases we are capturing the full extent of the attendance procedures and thus supporting the right message about the importance of regular attendance.

- 4.50 The anxiety being felt by families has also created a spike in interest for Elective Home Education (EHE). Some families (in discussion with Family Voice) have shared that they have recognised additional benefits to providing education from home, especially for children who may be on the Autism Spectrum. This may be due to the removal of anxieties based around uniform, transport or leaving and returning to the home environment. LA officers have been working closely with schools to ensure that parents are fully aware of the risks and full consequences of EHE and we have set up additional monitoring of these cases to try and limit the move towards this option. We are trying to collate our positive learning from these difficult times, and we are looking to alternative options that we may be able to offer such as a blended approach, however, this is still in the very early development stages.

Inclusion

- 4.51 Following the challenges with the Peterborough Pupil Referral Service (PPRS) in summer 2019, we have been working hard to put in place new arrangements to provide support and challenge to exclusions and ensure the capacity at Richard Barnes Academy (RBA) is managed appropriately.
- 4.52 During the period of COVID-19, we have made the following changes –
- We have appointed a joint Head of Service with Cambridgeshire (Anna Wahlandt) to lead on the management and strategic oversight of inclusion. Anna is a hugely experienced and skilled senior leader.
 - We have appointed a new Senior Exclusions Officer (a former secondary Headteacher) to provide the link between schools and RBA and ensure that legal processes are followed.
 - To provide greater support to schools, we have moved the 3 education inclusion officers, previously part of the PPRS back into the City Council. We will be shortly appointing new early intervention family workers.
- 4.53 We have commenced a consultation with schools on our proposal to develop inclusion in Peterborough. This has been undertaken to –
- Promote the inclusion of school age pupils and students within mainstream settings within Peterborough.
 - Ensure the Authority meets all statutory requirements to exclusions.
 - Support the development of processes and systems to promote inclusion and reduce exclusions across Peterborough.
 - Provide challenge, advice and support to Schools and Local Authority staff on procedures and practice in relation to exclusions and managed moves.
 - Support the quality assurance and rigorous monitoring of all Alternative Provision across Peterborough.
- 4.54 We want to be clear about our “Inclusive offer and support pathways” from the Local Authority and with our colleagues from Richard Barnes Academy and provide clarity regarding the

resources that we can offer prior to fixed term and/or permanent exclusion. We want to work with all colleagues to strengthen inclusive practices and ensure that processes are fair and equitable.

4.55 As part of the redesign of the service we are consulting on the following -

- Draft Inclusion flowchart – outlining our new Inclusion pathway and support.
- Introduction of Behaviour Panel - links to MASG and Fair Access Panel and will serve as the multiagency consideration panel for all Richard Barnes Academy Referrals, ensuring fair access when required.
- Proposed Richard Barnes Academy Referral Process – justifying the need for a placement which will be presented at Behaviour Panel.
- Introduction of the Local Authorities Individual Alternative Education Plan – These plans will need to be completed and returned to the Local Authority as part of our tracking system and quality assurance of Alternative Provision across the Local Authority for any student on Alternative Provision.
- Use of Reduced Timetable Plan that captures all the required details that we would expect to see in the arrangements of a reduced timetable even during the COVID pandemic. Any mainstream timetable that is adjusted by 20% of the normal school week should be recorded and then submitted to the Local Authority, as part of the statutory responsibilities of schools to inform us of any student not receiving a full-time education.
- Introduction of an Alternative Education Provision Register for every Peterborough School – to be submitted to the Local Authority every half term so that AP data can be analysed, quality assured and AP Census data can be returned to the Department of Education.
- Revised Fair Access Protocol – we are reviewing this process in light of the changes in the AP provision in the City. We expect governmental changes in this area following a recent consultation with schools nationally.
- Mainstream ready document – We have developed a document, alongside the Head Teacher of the Richard Barnes Academy, to ensure that when we are considering the opportunities for a student to return to mainstream education, that we can evidence all interventions and progress made whilst at the provision.

4.56 A huge amount of progress has been made in this area and we will bring further details back in the new year.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 We have continued to communicate with schools and Early Years settings throughout the COVID-19 situation. Numerous meetings have been held online with Headteachers, CEOs and early years settings – all of which have been incredibly well attended. We intend keeping up this contact as the COVID-19 situation continues.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

6.1 The actions outlined above have provided support for pupils, families, schools and Early Years settings. There is a significant amount of work to be undertaken to fully understand the impact the situation has had on pupils.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

7.1 The position around Education remains fluid. We are receiving daily updates from the Department for Education and we continue to monitor closely the public health position. Some of the consequences around Covid are not yet known and it will be important the committee continues to monitor the situation and challenge and support officers in their ongoing response.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 The report outlines our response to COVID-19 and we have approached this with the best intention to support children, young people, staff in schools and setting and the wider community.

This has changed by the day and we have reflected on our action and the impact that they have had.

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 9.1 Additional funding has been sought via the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government grant for Covid. Key costs have been in relation to Home to School transport and our capacity for Educational Psychologists. We recently made another request for additional support for Elective Home Education.

Legal Implications

- 9.2 None

Equalities Implications

- 9.3 None directly but we have provided advice and support to schools on developing an equality impact assessment on reopening to ensure all groups are considered in this process.

Rural Implications

- 9.4 All schools and settings have received the same report. We have provided individual support to individual schools when requested. The key challenge for rural schools has been their relatively small size and how staff absence has limited their ability to open.

Carbon Impact Assessment

- 9.5 There has been no direct impact as a result of this report outside of the normal projects we are undertaking around COVID-19.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 10.1 Documents we have prepared for schools for Covid-19 can be found here – <https://www.cambslearntogether.co.uk/recovery-plan>
Ofsted Review of Pilot Supportive Visits can be found here - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/923953/Schools_briefing_COVID-19_series_Sept-2020.pdf

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix 1 - National Literacy Trust Hub
Appendix 2 - Covid19 Highlight report Education October