

## SERVICE HIGHLIGHT REPORT – COVID-19

<b>SERVICE AREAS:</b>	Education
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<b>REPORTING PERIOD:</b>	To end of November
<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

### Part 1 - COVID-19

#### NEW GUIDANCE AND IMPACT

There has been a lot of new guidance from the DfE this month including –

- Contingency arrangements – this update outlines that where infection in a local area is significant, there is the option for additional measures to prevent further outbreaks in educational setting. This has been agreed between the Director of Public Health and the government. The key measure is to move to remote learning for pupils but an expectation that vulnerable pupils and key worker children are supported in school. The area needs to be in tier 3 before these discussion can happen.
- Assessment and accountability – the DfE have announced changes in their approach for the 2021 summer assessment / examination period –
  - Primary – Key stage 1 tests have been cancelled and are replaced by teacher assessments. The new year 4 multiplication assessment has been delayed by another year. The spelling punctuation and grammar test has been cancelled at key stage 2. There will be no science assessments this year. Schools have been giving more flexibility over the timing of the assessments.
  - Secondary - more generous grading than usual, in line with national outcomes from 2020, so students this year are not disadvantaged. Students will receive advance notice of some topic areas covered in GCSE, AS and A levels to focus revision. There will also be exam aids - like formula sheets - provided in some exams giving students more confidence and reducing the amount of information they need to memorise
  - There will be no school level reporting of outcomes again in 2021. Data will be published on destinations and attendance only.
- Funding – the DfE have reopened their exceptional cost schemes for costs from March until July for providing meals, costs of opening in holidays and additional cleaning costs. They have also opened up a scheme for schools to claim more funding for supply cover where schools have 20% of their teachers absent. Schools can only claim if they have less than 4% of their annual income in reserves. No school in Cambridgeshire or Peterborough has reached this level of absence to date.
- Ofsted - Full, graded Ofsted inspections will not resume until the summer term. Ofsted will conduct supportive monitoring inspections to those schools and colleges currently judged “inadequate” and some that “require improvement”. These inspections will focus on important issues like curriculum, remote education and pupil attendance, particularly of vulnerable children. Ofsted will also continue to have the power to inspect a school, further education or early years provider, if they have serious concerns, including about safeguarding and remote education.
- Remote Learning – the government has updated expectations to outline that schools should set work that is of equivalent length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school, and as a minimum 3 hours a day, on average, across the school cohort for primary and 4 hours a day for secondary, with more for pupils working towards formal qualifications this year. It is a requirement that they provide frequent, clear explanations of new content, delivered by a teacher or through high-quality curriculum resources or videos
- New Tier guidance – schools continue to remain open until all three tiers. The key change for schools is the return of those staff and pupils who are critically extremely vulnerable. We have been clear on our expectation for a risk assessment for those CEV staff / pupils.
- Winter Grant Scheme – Following the successful campaign by Marcus Rashford (the Manchester United striker), the government did a u-turn on providing support for families in need during the holiday period – Christmas and February half term. The Winter Grant scheme was announced at the start of November and detailed guidance was received on the 24th November. Cambridgeshire received £1.459m and Peterborough £744k. 80% food, energy and water bills for household

purposes (ring-fenced) and up to 20% for other essentials. We have worked with our data and are making two approaches –

- Support with food – central food scheme - A voucher will be sent to families automatically via a system many schools are already using. Each eligible child will receive a £15 voucher for each week of the school holidays. Those eligible for the voucher will be those pupils who are Early Years Pupil Premium, access funded two year olds, eligible for Free School Meals or eligible for 16+ bursary. 8 supermarkets are supported. Around 67% of the grant will be used on these vouchers.
- County Hub – for all other families, an offer will be made from the hub arrangements. We have worked with the Districts councils and the voluntary sector to provide the right support for those that need it. Grants will be made to support local organisations to make the right support offer.

## NEW CHALLENGES AND ACTIVITY

- We continue to monitor the weekly local public health data reporting to help inform schools and early years providers of position around Covid-19 including pillar 2 testing. The test and trace process continues to operate well and we are working well with Public Health to provide advice and guidance to schools. We now have 5 members of the team working shifts to provide advice. The chart below shows the position for schools (including independent), colleges and early years setting since the start of September.

	Confirmed Cases	Staff Isolating	Children Isolating
Cambridgeshire	621	806	8,960
Peterborough	606	562	8,678

- We continue to operate our CCG commissioned testing but the demand is dropping and we are now only running 3 days a week out the site in Peterborough. This shows the increase availability of testing via NHS sources. We have committed to review this provision in January.
- Pupil attendance in our schools has remained strong in comparison to other areas of the country. Cambridgeshire was a high as third nationally during November and Peterborough is high compared to similar authorities. Attendance for the 2<sup>nd</sup> December can be seen below -

	Cambridge City	East Cambs	Fenland	Hunts	South Cambs	Cambridgeshire	Peterborough
Primary Schools	95.4%	96%	91%	95%	95%	94%	89%
Secondary School	92.4%	90%	88%	93%	88%	90%	79%
Special School	60.0%	75.0%	86.0%	83.2%	75.3%	77%	81.2%
Pupils with an EHCP	77.8%	83.7%	85.5%	86.9%	83.2%	84.0%	84.8%
Pupils with a social worker	81.5%	85.2%	91.4%	89.8%	84.7%	82.5%	75.8%

- Early years settings continue to be open but attendance is currently running at around 82% of previous year's attendance as parents remained concerned about Covid-19. The LA is funding settings in line with previous years children numbers but this protection will end in January. We continued to be concerned around the viability of the sector although there are only a few closures so far, none which have been directly linked to Covid-19.
- We continue to provide advice to schools on all issues around covid. During the last month we have provide advice on covid safe Christmas activities, lesson observation, elective home education, well being support, ventilation, music and transport. We also provide a weekly data update on Covid infection rates across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough including maps.

## RECOVERY ACTIVITIES

- A workshop with the Oak National Academy (online lesson provider) and GL Assessment (an organisation that provides testing for children) was well attended by schools.
- We have recommended some onsite school visits to ensure schools are on track and working with leaders where they need support.

## DECISIONS MADE SINCE LAST REPORTING PERIOD

None

#### **NEW COVID-19 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS SINCE LAST REPORTING PERIOD**

- There is an emerging need to provide more capacity in certain service areas (as outlined in the workforce challenges) due to increased demand. We are currently developing business cases for this additional support and hope to have the additional capacity in place in January.

#### **WORKFORCE CHALLENGES**

- The ongoing increase for demand for Education services arising from pupils returning to education has meant that we have some shortfalls in capacity in our statutory assessment teams, our support for exclusions and support for those pupils who are becoming electively home educated. We cannot absorb this within existing capacity as there is an expectation we continue to meet all our statutory duties.
- An all staff Education briefing took place in November and over 400 staff attended. A staff Christmas quiz is planned

#### **COMMUNICATIONS**

- We have written to parents in relation to the Winter Grant Scheme and will be writing at the end of term to outline the need for continued adherence to the covid safety rules both in school and outside.
- We held a Headteacher briefing which as 320 attendees. This was the highest we have ever had.
- Following concerns around the number of Covid cases in teenagers, we are running a media campaign on being safe in Covid using videos recorded by school students.

### **Part 2 – BUSINESS AS USUAL ACTIVITY**

#### **KEY SERVICE UPDATES – INTERNAL / EXTERNAL**

- Term dates 2022/23 – we are consulting with schools on the proposal to increase the October half term from 1 week to 2. This is done in other areas. We are running a consultation until the end of January. There are a number of advantages and disadvantages to making this change and we have to consider where this time is made up – either at Easter or in the summer holidays.
- Jason Howard, Assistant Director for School improvement left at the start of December. We are currently recruiting with interviews taking place on the 18<sup>th</sup> December. It is unlikely we will have someone in post until April. The line management responsibilities will revert to the Service Director.
- Interim Executive Board – Following concerns over leadership, CCC made an implication to establish an IEB for Kinderley Primary to replace the existing governing body. This decision was not challenged and we have established a strong group of professionals to support the improvements needed at this school. We have also brought in interim school leadership from an experienced head.

#### **FINANCIAL ISSUES**

- The DfE have announced that they will continue to provide funding to support Nursery Schools with the additional costs they face from working with different regulations compared to the rest of the early years sector (including the need for a Headteacher and qualified teachers). The funding will only be for a further 12 months in the first instance. There is 8 nursery schools in Cambridgeshire and 1 in Peterborough.
- On the 21<sup>st</sup> November, Cambridgeshire applied to the Secretary of State for a disapplication to transfer money from the schools budget to the high needs block. The current deficit rests at an estimated £28m at the end of this financial year and the 1% transfer will mean an additional £3.7m of funding. We made a similar application last year but this was rejected (alongside all LA's in the country who made this request).

#### **PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES AND CHALLENGES**

- Our statutory assessment teams have worked exceptionally hard and have issued the following EHCP on timescales (typically 20 weeks). This performance is above average and in the context of demand and also parental queries, this is an amazing effort.

- Cambridgeshire 90.63%
- Peterborough 86%

#### **UPCOMING ISSUES & HORIZON SCANNING AREAS**

- Holiday activities and food programme 2021 - Local authorities are being asked to register to access this scheme. The Local Authority are asked to ensure that the offer of free holiday club provision is available for all children eligible for free school meals in your area. The grant funding will be informed by the numbers of children eligible for free school meals in your area. This is a huge undertaking but we are going to bid as two authorities together and we will have to engage with the community to ensure we can meet the need. The objectives of this programme are that children who attend this provision:
  - to eat more healthily over the school holidays;
  - to be more active during the school holidays;
  - to take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with their wider educational attainment;
  - to be safe and not to be socially isolated;
  - to have greater knowledge of health and nutrition; and
  - to be more engaged with school and other local services.