

COVID-19 EMERGENCY PLANNING HIGHLIGHT REPORT

SERVICE AREA:	Education
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KEY ACTIVITY HEADLINES

- The DfE requested (not mandated) that schools and settings remain open over Easter and the response has been magnificent to provide child care for vulnerable and critical workers children when they need it.
 - Around 280 schools have been open across most of the week – we have seen numbers fall from the level we expected but there has been around 1,100 pupils in daily.
 - Early indications suggest around 160 schools have opened on Easter Friday and there are around 350 children attending schools.
 - The position on the 9th April with early years can be outlined in the table below -

	Childminders		Early Years	
	Number	% Open	Number	% Open
CCC	220	37%	133	38%
PCC	57	36%	11	10%

- Vulnerable pupils – we have seen a steady increase in the number of children with a social worker attending school (to a peak of 220 last week). We continue to work with children's social care and schools to ensure the children who need support, are accessing their school. The DfE has complimented our process for risk assessing vulnerable pupils and have asked to share our process with other Local Authorities elsewhere in the country.
- We continue to provide updates and interpretation for schools and settings on the government guidance on a daily basis.
- A process has been established to give schools and settings a small emergency 'grab bag' of PPE made available for schools in the emergency scenario where a child has symptoms and are waiting for parents to collect. We have reinforced public health messages that PPE is not required in other scenarios and national advice/guidance should be followed on distancing and handwashing.
- Working with the CCC Transformation team, we have developed a toolkit for schools and settings around commercial and traded issues resulting from the Covid-19 situation to ensure they have the correct advice on dealing with issues such as furlough, grants and how to pay suppliers.
- We have given schools letters / advice to encouraging parents to apply for a free school meal. The changing economic circumstances have meant that more families will now be eligible and will benefit from either a meal or £15 a week voucher and longer term around £1k a year to support the pupil.
- The DfE have agreed to fund free school meals over the Easter holidays which is a positive step. They have also launched their free school meal system (Edenred) and there has been significant teething issues with this. We have supported schools to continue to find alternative payment routes and we hope these issues are resolved shortly.
- Funding for schools for the additional costs relating to Covid-19 have been announced. This will provide additional funding for exceptional cleaning, free school meals and costs associated with opening over Easter. Limits have been applied to the amount a school can claim (up to £75k for schools) but crucially it doesn't allow for additional staff costs or lost income from the emergency. We have made representations to the DfE on this.
- Paediatric First Aid - To support legal requirements in schools/settings, the first round of paediatric first aid training has been undertaken – 3 more rounds are being undertaken. We normally charge £100 per participant but these costs have been waived to allow schools to access and remain open (training needed for any pupils under the age of 5)
- We have started discussions with school leaders around ICT access for disadvantaged pupils and considering plans for delivering including funding and distribution routes.

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 continue with the new September intakes allocation process into reception and Year 7 (primary allocation day is the 15th April). 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. We will look at options around growing the market to meet need for early year's provision and the potential for the LA provision as provider of last resort (using staff who have been made redundant). Catering options will also be considered. We are working with our building partners to understand their financial standing and ability to finish projects.
- Legal requirements around EHCP continue – 20 weeks (plus 4 week extension) – expecting further updates to come. We are planning to redeploy our staff from other services within SEND services to support this process. We have written to parents to outline the current situation and how we are working to undertake these statutory processes. Other authorities have judicial reviews starting as a result of inability to meet the requirements of the EHCP.
- Schools financial position – we have closed maintained schools accounts and will work with schools in financial difficulties. We are unable to undertake restructures during the period of closure. We continue to work closely with teaching unions over these challenges.
- 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.

WORKFORCE UPDATE

- Plans are in place to ensure adequate cover for senior leadership to support schools and settings over the Easter break.
- Redeployment list are now complete and we are currently reviewing opportunities for staff. We have collected data on qualifications including qualified teacher status, early years practitioners and first aiders. Focus will be on supporting schools and settings to continue to operate.

FINANCIAL IMPACT (increase in costs / reduction in income)

- We continue to quantify the loss of income across all services. All training and traded service have been cancelled until May half term.
- Providing transport over the Easter holidays is a further cost on our budget, albeit transporting around 2% of the normal number of children.
- There is no identified funding to support ICT requirement for pupils that have no access at home. We intend making a claim to government for this money to support a roll out of devices.

RECOVERY ACTIVITY (plans being considered / future steps)

- We have developed a list of key issues to consider should schools reopen. We will be working with academy trusts CEO's next week to further develop this plan to ensure schools are well supported when they reopen and we can restart our statutory requirements as soon as possible.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Daily positive news story continue and we continue to publicise our advice line to parents for accessing early years provision.
- Campaign to encourage free school meal take up has commenced.
- Positive interview with BBC Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Telegraph journalist to outline key positive aspects of current situation including home learning and the collegiate approach.