

**FAO Parent(s)/Carer(s):
Letter to all children and young people/
parents and carers of children and young
people in Leicestershire who have an
Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)**

Date 11th May 2020
Ref TCCM27
Phone 0116 232 3232

Dear parent/carer,

I am writing to let you know what we are doing in Leicestershire to support you/your child's education, health and care needs during this difficult period of Coronavirus, which is particularly demanding for families who are supporting children with additional needs at home

As you will be aware, schools, colleges and other education providers have been closed to most learners since 23/03/2020, with only children of key workers or certain vulnerable children able to attend. Children with an EHC Plan are recognised as vulnerable and schools/colleges had to initially assess which children need to be educated in school/college and which could learn at home. These assessments had to be made by the setting so as to take account of any staffing issues and other factors.

Whilst some children with EHC Plans have been able to attend on a full or part time basis, in most cases children have been learning at home, with work provided by the school or college with reference to their Plan.

The 1st May brought about some temporary changes to the statutory duties regarding SEND processes during the current Coronavirus pandemic. Some of those changes relate to timescales around EHCP Needs Assessments and Annual Reviews and a summary of these can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-law-on-education-health-and-care-needs-assessments-and-plans-due-to-coronavirus/education-health-and-care-needs-assessments-and-plans-guidance-on-temporary-legislative-changes-relating-to-coronavirus-covid-19>

This letter is to tell you about what we are doing to help ensure that children and young people with an EHCP are able to continue to learn and to get the vital support that they need.

It is recognised that in the vast-majority of cases it will not be possible for you/your child to receive the exact provision in the EHCP at the current time. For example, a child cannot receive a one to one teaching assistant support in the classroom if they are being educated at home.

Local Authorities will continue to work with education and health providers to put in place alternative arrangements to meet your child's needs during the Covid-19 period. Where possible provision will be as set out in the ECH Plan, however, where this is not possible discussions will take place to look at how provision could be delivered differently.

What Schools/Colleges and the Local Authority are doing to make sure children and young people get the support they need:

1. Since 23/03/2020 the Local Authority have written to every school and education provider and asked for information about whether children with an EHCP are being educated at home, at school or elsewhere. We have also asked providers to let us know if the child is unlikely to be able to make progress with their learning or access other help that they need to support their wellbeing.
2. Where schools have raised concerns, we are following this up by contacting the school and family directly. In most cases this will be done by your SEN Officer and so you will be aware if you have been contacted. The SEN Officer will discuss any issues and work with you to find a solution. We will keep a record of these discussions on your child's file.
3. All children who have a social worker, or a family support worker from the Child and Family Wellbeing Service (CFWS), will have been contacted by your worker to discuss any issues around supporting your child at home.
4. We are now contacting all schools and other education providers to highlight the recent temporary changes in legislation. Their assessment of whether a child should be at home or in school should follow the updated government guidance:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people> Schools should keep in regular contact with parents/carers and young people about the support being provided. If circumstances change or if there are any worries about the child's learning, then the school should let the Local Authority SEN Assessment Team know.

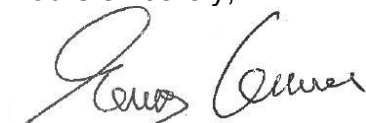
What you can do if you are concerned or worried about your child's education, health or wellbeing:

Schools, colleges and other agencies are expected to make reasonable endeavours to enable you/your child to be able to learn and to get the individual support needed to make progress and stay healthy. This includes effort to secure other types of support, for example around emotional wellbeing or wider health needs as identified in the EHC Plan. There are examples of how this might be done at the end of this letter.

- If you have concerns about the support available from school/college to support learning please contact the school or college directly in the first instance.
- If you have concerns about your child's health or wellbeing please contact the relevant health professional or social care worker.
- If you continue to have concerns and wish to discuss what further 'reasonable endeavours' might be made by the Local Authority to deliver education differently please contact your SENA Caseworker.
- If after taking these steps you remain dissatisfied with the Local Authority's response then the Council's complaints procedure can be followed, although we will make every effort to find a solution without the need for this.

A list of telephone contacts are given at the end of this letter, including key health professionals, along with examples of alternative arrangements.

Yours sincerely,



(Tom Common – Head of Service, SEND)

Examples of alternative arrangements as outlined in Government Guidance may include:

- weekly phone or video contact from school staff to monitor home learning programmes, to provide feedback, and to make adjustments as necessary
- alterations to the frequency and timing of the delivery of provision in school, for example, moving to a part-time timetable.
- a temporary placement in another school - mainstream or special. This will need to be with the agreement of the parent or young person and full account should be taken of the needs of the child or young person.
- attendance at a local hub.
- adjustments to home-to-school transport arrangements to support a modified school attendance timetable.
- video class sessions for children to keep in touch with classmates and teaching staff.
- a home learning reading programme, provided by a Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator (SENCo) and reviewed weekly.
- a school or college delivering direct education or support in the home where a young person is not able to attend school or college (subject to risk assessment and appropriate health protection measures).
- educational psychologists providing brief therapy interventions.
- specialist SEN Teachers providing advice and support to parents in relation to autism, visual or hearing impairment or literacy programmes.
- enlarged materials being provided in the home where a child or young person has a visual impairment.
- a speech and language therapist delivering sessions via video link.
- a health visitor or school nurse providing health advice or developmental reviews via teleconferencing.
- the parent and child travelling to receive the therapy at suitable premises, where this can be done in ways consistent with guidance on reducing the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- an occupational therapist or a physiotherapist video linking to a child's home and modelling exercises that the parents could do with their child.
- occupational therapists providing webinars for school staff on topics such as sensory strategies or pre-writing skills, or a teletherapy service.
- sending home accessible hard copy therapy programmes with additional phone support for parents and young persons to help them work through them.
- where an EHC plan already includes a personal budget or a direct payment, widening its use to enable the purchase of equipment or other relevant material to support home learning.
- exercise sessions by video.
- provision of alternatives to short breaks by providing online resources and activities for young people.
- loaning parents school equipment, such as specialist support equipment (seating equipment, IT equipment used at school etc.) to be used at home to support learning.
- counselling, or cognitive behaviour therapy, delivered over the phone once a week for 6 weeks by a mental health worker.

The local authority and health bodies must keep an accurate record of the provision it has secured and agreed with parents and carers, for children and young people if this is anything other than what is stated in the EHCP and this must also be confirmed with the parents and/or young people. The provision must be kept under review during this challenging period and circumstances may change over time.

Key Contacts and links to Government Guidance:

Guidance for schools, childcare providers, colleges and local authorities in England on maintaining educational provision:	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision
EHCP Guidance:	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people
Guidance on vulnerable children and Young people:	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance
Timescales around EHCP Needs Assessments and Annual Reviews:	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-law-on-education-health-and-care-needs-assessments-and-plans-due-to-coronavirus/education-health-and-care-needs-assessments-and-plans-guidance-on-temporary-legislative-changes-relating-to-coronavirus-covid-19

USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS/LINKS/CONTACT INFORMATION:

- Family Information Service - 0116 305 6545
- Children's Services 'First Response' Duty Team - 0116 305 0005
- SEN Assessment Service - 0116 305 6600
- SEN Disability Information and Advice Service (SENDIAS) - 0116 305 5614
- Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service: 0116 305 5100
- The Early Years SEND & Inclusion Team- 0116 305 7136 (9.00-12.00 daily)
- Education & Inclusion Team- 0116 305 2071
- Specialist Teaching Service on 0116 305 9400
- Fleet Helpline (Transport), 0116 305 7573. General Enquiries-0116 305 0002
- Complaints:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/have-your-say/complaints-and-comments>

- **Parent/Carer Forum:** info@leicestershirepcf.org.uk
- **Health Services:** Paula Vyze, Designated Clinical Officer

Tel: 0116 295 6779

Email: paula.vyze@leicestercityccg.nhs.uk

Secure email: paula.vyze@nhs.net

Dawn Kimberley, Leicestershire Partnership Trust:

Key Information to Support Communication and Liaison

All LPT clinical services contact details can be found on our website via the Service

Finder tool <https://www.leicspart.nhs.uk/services/>

Urgent mental health support can be accessed via the Central Access Point (CAP) on 0116 295 3060

- **Local Offer Website:**

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability>

Children and Family Services

Leicestershire County Council, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicestershire LE3 8RF

Telephone: 0116 232 3232 Fax: 0116 305 6310 Email: childrenservices@leics.gov.uk

Jane Moore, Director, Children and Family Services