



## LA Briefing for PCF – Tuesday 26th May 2020

As nurseries and schools prepare to re-open following the recent government announcement and parents consider the return to the usual learning environment at a time when there is still the requirement for social distancing, lots of guidance has been published over the last week. On Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May, the DFE issued an update on the Overview of scientific advice and information on coronavirus (COVID-19), including information on infectivity and transmission in children and social distancing in education settings.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/885570/Overview\\_of\\_scientific\\_information\\_on\\_coronavirus\\_COVID-19\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/885570/Overview_of_scientific_information_on_coronavirus_COVID-19_.pdf)

More recent guidance around the re-opening of learning settings for parents and carers can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

The following link includes new information on the recommended approaches that local authorities, educational settings and parents should follow for the return of more children and young people with complex needs or education, health and care (EHC) plans to educational settings from 1 June 2020, at the earliest.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance>

## National Mental Health Awareness Week

Our emotional well-being is always important but never more so than now, during the Coronavirus, when our lives have had to adjust so drastically, with most children and young people learning from home, isolated from friends and even close family members. For parents and carers too, the pressures of coping in these circumstances can be extreme. Never have there been more uncertain times in our lives, with the whole world affected beyond that which we could ever have imagined. If you, your family or friends are in need to support at this time, here are details of useful contacts for support services for all ages, including adults.



SP Mental Health  
Wellbeing List.pdf



SP Mental Health 5  
Ways.pdf



General Listening  
Lines and Support.d

## Social Care Update



**Gareth Dakin Head of Service (Pre COVID-19 haircut)**

Hello from Children's Social Care. Like everyone, we have had to adapt very quickly to COVID 19. Our service is rooted in our social interactions and observations of children and their wider networks and so COVID 19 has required some rapid rethinking. We have a fantastic and committed workforce that have consistently maintained a child focus in continuing to deliver all our key services during this period. We have needed to do lots of planning and adaptations to how we respond to these unprecedented times.

A key change for us is how we have needed to use technology to be more creative in our approach with children, families and professionals. This has not been without its challenges, but we are getting there. We have been using WhatsApp, skype for video calls and meetings as well as phone calls and other communication methods to keep in touch and to support families during this time of need and vulnerability.

With most of our staff working from home, we made some very swift changes to how we practice with more and more remote meetings, contacts with children and our families. However, for our most vulnerable at-risk children, Social Workers have continued to visit and see children and their families.

We are also doing a lot of work with schools both how we meet the needs of the children of Leicestershire now, but also how we ensure that their needs are met in the future.

Recovery is our next phase of work in how we return our services to pre COVID 19 levels, but also how we take what learning we have developed over this period so to influence and improve the ways we deliver our services for the better.

## Specialist Teaching Service Update

The Specialist Teaching Service (STS) continue to be available to support and advise schools. Although they are currently providing our service virtually they are still meeting with SENCOs and other staff in schools staff using phone or video calls. They are also offering video calls to families where they have been able to do some observation work and some direct work with children as well as having telephone calls with families, offering advice, gaining parental voice; sharing ideas and resources.

Pre-school children with a sensory need who are open to the service are being provided with a weekly activity sheet of things they can do at home. The STS are also:

- continuing to write reports for schools
- preparing transition reports for new schools/placements
- attending annual reviews via video call
- providing some pastoral support alongside school through shared video calls
- creating lists of resources for sharing with families

- supporting students with strategies for how to organise themselves

Vision Support are still performing direct teaching such as Braille using video where possible and Vision Support Technicians are continuing to produce hard copy resources for students to use at home; in particular reading books and reading schemes such as Oxford Reading Tree

Pupils who are supported by the Intensive Support Team have a time table of contact and virtual support available to them.

The Autism Outreach Team are still providing training and bespoke training packages remotely and are available to have consultative discussions about children within schools with a diagnosis of ASD.

The Learning Support service are still offering free consultations and discussions about dyslexia and other specific learning challenges to schools

The Hearing Support team are supporting the use of radio systems at home for children who have them and ensuring they all have direct input leads. They are also linking Sign Support Workers over video calls with families of children they work with, so the children and families have access to signed support.

If parents or carers need advice on home learning for pupils vision or hearing challenges or autism need please get in touch using the STS email: [STS@leics.gov.uk](mailto:STS@leics.gov.uk)

### **Children and Families Wellbeing Service Update**

The Children and Family Wellbeing Service continues to receive new requests for support from Leicestershire families, and although the referral rate is reduced due to fewer schools making referrals, staff continue to be very busy supporting children, young people and families who are open to our service. 'Doorstep' and home visits are taking place where needed, and most families are having regular contact with staff over the phone and by email, making use of skype video calling where we can.

We are continuing to work with our IT colleagues to find better ways to deliver our services through non-traditional face to face methods; in the last week or so we have started to deliver our Triple P 'seminars' over skype, for referred families. Triple P is a parenting programme which we have fairly recently trained a number of our practitioners in. We will be offering a range of approaches which include seminars – these are 90 minute sessions on specific topics, discussion groups – these are 2 hour sessions, a mix of presentations and 'round table discussion' and 8 week parenting programmes. We will be offering 3 different types of programmes; for parents of primary school aged children, for parents of teenagers, and for parents of children with SEND – this programme is called Stepping Stones. Unfortunately Covid-19 has caused a bit of a disruption to our plans to roll this out. We hope to be able to share more information with you over the summer, and have a more developed programme ready by September. We are working on digital information flyers for parents from the autumn. We are also trialling 'on-line' programmes for parenting and for people who have experienced domestic abuse.

Our locality Facebook pages are being used to share helpful resources for families and in some areas our creative staff are even posting story-time videos whilst dressed as the

character from the book! The Local Offer page is being continuously updated as is the LO Facebook page.

Our SEND young people's groups and young carers groups continue to be supported by telephone and on-line – we continue to introduce new young people to these groups – again we are hoping to explore different IT formats to make sure these groups are accessible as possible.

Finally, from Leicestershire County Council. Leicester City Council, Rutland County Council. Leicestershire Police and the Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust....

**During this time of social distancing and isolation, please remember, you are not alone.**

**The right support for you or your loved ones is just a click or a phone call away.**

**For further support on where to turn if you're struggling, feeling lonely  
or worried about drug or alcohol use, go to**

**[www.startaconversation.co.uk](http://www.startaconversation.co.uk)**

**Remember to follow Government guidelines on social distancing at all times**

Yours Sincerely,



Paula