

Scrutiny Children & Young People Sub-Committee Agenda



To: Councillor Robert Ward (Chair)
Councillor Sean Fitzsimons (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Sue Bennett, Mary Croos, Jerry Fitzpatrick, Bernadette Khan,
Gareth Streeter and Callton Young

Co-optee Members

Mr Leo Morrell (Voting Diocesan Representative), Ms Elaine Jones (Voting Diocesan Representative (Catholic Diocese)), Mr Dave Harvey (Non-voting Teacher representative), Geoff Hopper (Voting Parent Governor Representative) and Paul O'Donnell (Voting Parent Governor Representative)

Reserve Members: Margaret Bird, Sherwan Chowdhury, Patsy Cummings, Felicity Flynn, Patricia Hay-Justice, Helen Redfern, Andy Stranack and David Wood

A meeting of the **Scrutiny Children & Young People Sub-Committee** which you are hereby summoned to attend, will be held on **Tuesday, 23 June 2020 at 6.30 pm.** **This meeting will be held remotely.**

JACQUELINE HARRIS BAKER
Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
London Borough of Croydon
Bernard Weatherill House
8 Mint Walk, Croydon CR0 1EA

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www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings
Monday, 15 June 2020

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If you require any assistance, please contact Stephanie Davis
02087266000 x84384 as detailed above.

AGENDA – PART A

1. Apologies for absence

To receive any apologies for absence from any members of the Committee.

2. Minutes of the previous sub-committee meeting (Pages 5 - 12)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2020 as an accurate record.

3. Disclosures of interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct and the statutory provisions of the Localism Act, Members and co-opted Members of the Council are reminded that it is a requirement to register disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) and gifts and hospitality to the value of which exceeds £50 or multiple gifts and/or instances of hospitality with a cumulative value of £50 or more when received from a single donor within a rolling twelve month period. In addition, Members and co-opted Members are reminded that unless their disclosable pecuniary interest is registered on the register of interests or is the subject of a pending notification to the Monitoring Officer, they are required to disclose those disclosable pecuniary interests at the meeting. This should be done by completing the Disclosure of Interest form and handing it to the Democratic Services representative at the start of the meeting. The Chair will then invite Members to make their disclosure orally at the commencement of Agenda item 3. Completed disclosure forms will be provided to the Monitoring Officer for inclusion on the Register of Members' Interests.

4. Urgent Business (if any)

To receive notice of any business not on the agenda which in the opinion of the Chair, by reason of special circumstances, be considered as a matter of urgency.

5. Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service (Formerly CAMHS)

To receive an update on the Covid-19 response.
(Presentation to follow)

6. Children's Improvement Plan Update (Pages 13 - 26)

To receive the outcome of the re inspection of Croydon's Early help and Children's Social Care and to scrutinise the draft Improvement Plan 2020-22.

(The draft Children's Continuous Plan for Improvement 2020/22 to follow)

- 7. Children's services response to COVID 19** (Pages 27 - 56)
To scrutinise the response to the Covid-19 crisis.
- 8. What difference has this meeting made to Croydon's children**
To discuss the findings from this meeting and the expectations for Croydon's Children.
- 9. Work Programme 2020/21**
To discuss the work programme for the meeting of 15 September 2020 of the Sub-Committee.
- 10. Exclusion of the Press and Public**
The following motion is to be moved and seconded where it is proposed to exclude the press and public from the remainder of a meeting:

"That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within those paragraphs indicated in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended."

Scrutiny Children & Young People Sub-Committee

Meeting of held on Tuesday, 3 March 2020 at 6.30 pm in The Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Robert Ward (Chair);
Councillor Sean Fitzsimons (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Jerry Fitzpatrick, Bernadette Khan and Callton Young

Co-optee Members

Geoff Hopper (Voting Parent Governor Representative)

Also Present: Councillor Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children Young People and Learning
Councillor Margaret Bird
Councillor Andy Stranack
Robert Henderson, Executive Director, Children Families and Education
Kerry Crichlow, Programme Manager, Children's Improvement

Apologies: Councillor Gareth Streeter
Councillor Sue Bennett
Dave Harvey (Co optee)
Elaine Jones (Co optee)
Paul O'Donnell (Co optee)

PART A

12/19 Apologies for absence

Councillor Gareth Streeter gave his apologies, Councillor Andy Stranack was in attendance in his absence.

Councillor Sue Bennett gave her apologies, Councillor Margaret Bird was in attendance in her absence.

13/19 Minutes of the previous sub-committee meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 January 2020 were approved as an accurate record.

14/19 Disclosures of interest

There were no disclosures of interest.

15/19 Urgent Business (if any)

There was none.

16/19 Action list update

The Sub-Committee reviewed the action list which was now up to date with a large percentage of the actions completed and those outstanding with an expected date of completion.

The recent trip to the CALAT centre in Thornton Heath was successful, giving Members the opportunity to meet and interact with the students. In particular the working relationship between staff and students was praised.

Members welcomed opportunities like this to get out into the community to interact with services and service users, and would welcome future such sessions.

The Chair informed the Sub-Committee that a specialist social worker from the National Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) centre would attend a future meeting to raise Member's awareness of the issue and of Croydon's work in this area.

17/19 Children's Improvement Plan Update

The Executive Director for Children Families and Education provided an update on the Improvement Journey during which it was noted that the department had recently undergone a three week Ofsted inspection which ended on 14 February 2020. The full report and rating was due to be published on 16 March 2020.

The draft letter had been received and as a result of the recommendations from the inspection, which will be shared at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee, the improvement plan would be updated.

Steady progress was still being made in all areas of the service although there were still areas that required further improvement. This was reflected in the recommendations made by Ofsted following their inspection.

The Chair thanked officers for their attendance and looked forward to receiving the revised improvement plan at the next meeting.

The Sub-Committee came to the following **Conclusion:**

- The Sub-Committee looked forward to notification of the outcome of the Ofsted inspection and the revised improvement plan in response to OFSTED recommendations.

18/19 Children's Looked After Pledge and Care Leavers Local Offer

The Executive Director for Children Families and Education presented the report, during which the following was noted:

- The Pledge was an overall commitment to Croydon's children in care and leaving care population, which set out what the Council and its Partners had agreed to provide.
- There had been a Local Offer in place in the past which was criticised as being vague and inconsistent in its application.
- The proposed Pledge and Offer was still in the initial stages of development with further work needed before it launched including a greater analysis of the financial implications.
- In drawing up the draft pledge, the department worked with Empire (Children in Care Council) as well as the Leaving Care Forum to gain insight on their historical experiences.

The Sub-Committee was given the opportunity to ask questions on the content of the report and the information provided during the presentation.

Concerns were raised that the pledge gave the impression that young people would be given anything they asked for and that some of the wording used may be misleading or interpreted in the wrong way. Officers highlighted that this Pledge was about rights and responsibilities, with social workers tasked with undertaking assessments and negotiating on an individual basis to reach an agreement with the young person on what was available and right for them. There would be an ongoing assessment process in place. The Commitments in the Pledge were intended to be broad to assist in identifying young people's needs. Officers appreciated the feedback and comments and agreed to reflect on the broadness of the language used.

A Member suggested that additional thought should be given to how the Council could ensure that life events of its care leavers were celebrated. Officers agreed that this was an area of priority and as such had initiated a weekly open house dinner at the Turnaround Centre to enable young people to socialise. The cafeteria at BWH had also been booked for a Christmas dinner for this year.

In response to a question about the extent to which Children's Services encouraged care leavers to maintain links, officers confirmed that care leavers were encouraged to maintain contact with their foster carers. Some opted to use the 'staying put' option and remained with the foster carers at a reduced rate until they were ready to live independently.

In response to a question about the affordability of care packages, it was highlighted that some things were currently being funded with extensive work due to be carried out with the finance department on the budget prior to the presentation of the paper to Cabinet.

To follow up it was asked if the amount allocated in the budget was likely to increase and whether the service could be deliverable within budget. It was

advised that a contingency would be put in place to allow for overspend until the average spend could be realised over a number of years.

At the conclusion of this item the Chair thanked Officers for their attendance at the meeting and their engagement with the Sub-Committee's questions.

The Sub-Committee came to the following **Conclusions**:

- The decision to revive the Local Offer and Pledge for young people was welcomed and seen as a positive step towards addressing the inconsistencies in support for care leavers.
- Further work was required on the paper before it was presented to the Cabinet to fine-tune the details of the Offer for young people.
- It was important that careful consideration be given to the language used in order not to raise unrealistic expectations.
- Further work was required to gain a greater understanding of the financial risks involved in the scheme to ensure that it was deliverable.

19/19 Question Time: Cabinet Member for Children Young People and Learning

The Cabinet Member for Children Young People and Learning, Councillor Alisa Flemming gave a presentation, during which the following points were noted:

- The consultation period for the Children and Young People Plan was coming to an end, the vision had been updated and once findings were formalised the final details would be disseminated
- There was still much to do to ensure there was a balance in the amount of cases held by social workers.
- A new Virtual Head had recently been appointed which had given pace to the service, resulting in a positive impact for both the service and children served.
- There was an open invitation for young people to attend the Corporate Parenting Panel to put their views across, allowing their voices to be heard directly.
- There remained challenges in the leaving care service in ensuring good access to support for young people, adequate preparation for them in leaving the care system as well as improved housing and gateway service.

- Further work was needed to address recruitment issues. Currently 61% of staff were permanent employees with a lot of work invested in improving this area.
- The service continued its pilot of whole family partnership which put families at the centre of decision making and looked to address the complex needs of both young people as well as the adults in a family unit.
- There were challenges in DSG and High Needs Block and although there has been investment from the Government it was not rising at the same pace as the level of need.
- The Legacy Youth Centre had been successful with a good uptake in the number of young people attending. All LAC children were able to access the centre as their membership had been paid for. The Ofsted inspectors visited the facility and had spoken to young cared for children in attendance.

Following the presentation the Sub-Committee was given the opportunity to question the Cabinet Member on the content of the report and the information provided during the presentation.

Concern was raised over the statistics for off-rolling and exclusions, and the level of support being offered by the Council to support families. In response it was advised that there were link officers in place who worked directly with schools to improve standards in accordance with attainment targets and also to support children by helping to keep them in mainstream education.

The stability of the workforce through the increasing number of permanent staff recruited to the service was commended.

A Member raised concern about the measures used for missing LAC children. It was questioned how improvements could be realised with the number of children going missing and improving RHI figures which remained consistently low. The Cabinet Member advised that this was an issue of national focus with more work to be done to address the issues concerned. There was complexity around why young people go missing and where they went. Regular multiagency panel meetings took place with the Police and Health Service. RHI offer was over 90% but take up remained low, in particular with young 17 year olds.

It was questioned what was being done to improve the educational performance and outcomes of KS4 and KS5 children. The Cabinet Member acknowledged that there had been more of a focus on KS2 outcomes which had impacted on KS4 and KS5 performance. The priority was now addressing issues with KS4 with measures being taken such as the merger of colleges and work with CALAT.

It was questioned what was being done to monitor spending and school budgets. It was highlighted that there wasn't an obligation for schools to inform the local authority of their budget, with any information provided on a voluntary basis. It was often found that schools were more willing to have an open dialogue when they were experiencing difficulties and the Council provided support in various ways during these instances.

It was further questioned what was being done to address the effect of surplus places in schools on both budgets and performance. Additionally whether lessons had been learnt from the issues that led to the closure of St Andrews Church of England School. It was acknowledged that due to parental choice, some schools were left with surplus spaces and the Council was aware of those schools at risk. Support was given to schools through working with them on reduction of classes and exploring ways to manage budget.

Members raised concern about the risk of other schools suffering the same fate as St Andrew's School and questioned the means of identifying schools experiencing similar problems to ensure that adequate preventative support was provided. The Cabinet Member said that the Council took all necessary steps to explore ways to support a school prior to any decision on possible closure, with the final decision not made by the local authority. As part of lessons learnt, the Council was consistently monitoring schools with early intervention processes in place to be deployed where necessary. It was further acknowledged that the closure of St Andrews was a great loss for local residents, the Council and Croydon as a Borough.

A Member questioned the rationale behind the decision for Octavo services being brought back as an in-house service. Officers advised that Octavo was commissioned for a fixed period and the contract was coming to an end. A decision was made to bring the service back in house for a number of reasons which included difficulties experienced by other LA's that had procured private companies to run the service as well as the lack of coordination and communication between Octavo and the Councils Education department. It was felt that the Council could deliver the service that Octavo had but better whilst retaining the training offer, protecting the name and reputation they had held with schools. Additionally the service would be brought back in house to a bigger infrastructure at a period that the service was moving towards a Locality Model of service delivery.

In response to a Member question on how the decision had been made for the location and site of the Legacy Youth Centre, it was confirmed that during the development stage, it had been agreed that the site must be as close to the town centre as possible due to transport links. Ofsted visited the centre as part of their inspection and were impressed.

As a follow up it was asked what could be done to address the concerns of some young people about their personal safety when travelling to the site. It was highlighted that there would always be complexities and the Council would always work to safeguard children. There were regular police and

neighbourhood safety officer patrols around the site, all working to prevent confrontation between young people as much as possible.

A Member noted that on their visits to the site they had spoken with many young people who were pleased with the provision of the centre. Previously many young people who may have been loitering in the town centre, possibly getting in trouble were now making the decision to go straight to the centre after school to utilise its facilities.

The Chair informed officers that at the next meeting, the Sub-Committee would expect them to demonstrate how they were driving up standards and using evidence lessons learnt from this Ofsted Journey.

At the conclusion of this item the Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and Officers for their attendance at the meeting and their engagement with the Sub-Committee's questions.

The Sub-Committee came to the following **Conclusions:**

- The dedication of the Cabinet Member, Senior Management and all staff in Children and Education services in the Improvement Journey was commendable.
- It was evident that the accountability framework for school oversight was not always held by the Council which often made it difficult to hold the Cabinet Member and Executive Director to account in certain instances.
- It was important for the Sub-Committee to discuss in detail accountability issues in terms of school standards, with work needed to explore whether a different approach was needed to ensure the appropriate persons/bodies were invited to meetings.
- A piece of work on understanding the remit of the relationship with the Department for Education, what powers were held and accountability may need to be arranged for the next cycle of meetings.
- Depending on the outcome of the Ofsted inspection, there may be opportunity for in depth scrutiny on Education and School Standards.
- The high level of Croydon missing children remained problematic and a cause for concern. This was an area that the Sub-Committee must continue to be sighted on for further scrutiny.
- The decision to bring the Octavo services back in-house should be reviewed in detail in six to twelve months to determine the effectiveness of the business plan and implementation. Additionally the response of schools to the changes and how training needed were being met.

20/19 What difference has this meeting made to Croydon's children

At the conclusion of discussions, the following points were made:

- Further discussion was needed on how to ensure that the correct bodies were brought before the Sub-Committee to be held to account.
- The opportunity to challenge the Local Offer and Children's Pledge whilst providing suggestions on improvements and in early development stage was beneficial.
- That officers were reminded of the ongoing work that was needed to increase their efforts on the recruitment and retention of good quality staff.

21/19 Work Programme 2019/20

The Chair confirmed the three items on the agenda for the 14 April 2020 meeting of the sub-committee as stated on the work programme was:

- Children's Improvement Plan Update
- Workforce and Financial Sustainability- Long Term
- Safeguarding Themes: Neglect, Vulnerable Adolescents & Children with Disabilities

It was agreed that an informal session would be arranged to discuss work programming for 2020/21 cycle of meeting

The Chair of the Task and Finish Group, Councillor Jerry Fitzpatrick asked it be noted that the group had reduced from five to four members.

The meeting ended at 8.52 pm

Signed:

Date:

For general release

REPORT TO:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee 23 June 2020
SUBJECT:	Ofsted Inspection of Croydon’s Early Help and Children’s Social Care Services and draft Improvement Plan
LEAD OFFICER:	Rob Henderson, Executive Director, Children, Families & Education
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	Rob Henderson, Executive Director, Children, Families & Education

<p>CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/ AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON</p> <p>To offer a clear commitment to children in care and our young adults leaving care is fully aligned to our Corporate Plan for Croydon (2018-2022) in the following areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our children and young people thrive and reach their full potential • Everyone feels safer in their street, neighbourhood and home • Everyone has the opportunity to work and build their career. <p>Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022</p>

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	This item is contained in the Sub-Committee’s work programme.
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	To report on the outcomes of the Ofsted standard ILACS inspection and provide committee with the opportunity to scrutinise the Children’s continuous improvement plan 2020-21.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report advises committee of the outcome of Ofsted’s re-inspection of Croydon’s Early Help and Children’s Social Care Services and invites scrutiny of the draft Children’s Continuous Improvement Plan 2020-22 that includes actions to address the recommendations.

2. Ofsted ILACS inspection, March 2020

- 2.1 The re-inspection of children's services took place between 4th – 14th February 2020 with the final inspection report published on the Ofsted website on 16th March 2020. The report is included at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The Ofsted grading's for Early Help and Children's Social Care Services were as follows;
- Children in need of help and protection – **'Good'**
 - Children looked after and care leavers – **'Requires improvement to be good'**
 - Impact of leaders on SW practice – **'Good'**
 - Overall effectiveness – **'Good'**
- 2.3 Ofsted recognised that services for children and families had been "transformed" through strong corporate and political support, and leaders were creating "the right conditions for effective social work".
- 2.4 However, there is still work to do to ensure that change is sustained in our services for children in need of help and protection and we to continue to improve our services and support for children in care and care leavers.

3. Children's continuous improvement plan 2020-22

- 3.1 Inspectors described the children's improvement programme as ambitious, and the department is determined to build upon the momentum and pace gained in the last twelve months to push on with improvements to services to children, young people and families. It will be important to sustain the methodology of an outcome-focused project approach coupled with intelligence that draws on strong performance management to achieve this.
- 3.2 At a high level, our priorities across the partnership for children young people in Croydon are set out in the Children, Young People and Families Plan 2020-24.
- 3.3 A refresh of the 2019-20 children's improvement plan has been completed and a draft children's continuous improvement plan 2020/22 developed with three strands that focus on Practice, Partnership and Platforms. The plan includes actions to respond to Ofsted's recommendations alongside new priorities for further service innovation and improvement.
- 3.4 Committee members are invited to review and comment on the draft plan before it is submitted to Ofsted on 1st July 2020.

Contact Officer: Robert Henderson
Executive Director
Children Families and Education

Background Documents: None

Appendices: Appendix 1: Inspection of Children's Social Care Services, London Borough of Croydon, Ofsted, 16th March 2020.
Appendix 2: Children's Continuous Plan for Improvement 2020-22, draft

London Borough of Croydon

Inspection of children’s social care services

Inspection dates: 3 February 2020 to 14 February 2020

Lead inspector: Tara Geere
Her Majesty’s Inspector

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Good
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Requires improvement to be good
Overall effectiveness	Good

Children’s services in Croydon have improved dramatically since the last inspection in 2017, when they were judged to be inadequate. Services for children and their families have been transformed as a result of strong corporate and political support, substantial investment, and the appointment of highly experienced senior managers. The current executive director for children, families and education and the director of early help and children’s social care were appointed towards the end of 2018. Building on the changes that had already been made, they quickly grasped the full extent of the improvements that were required, and they have systematically and effectively tackled the weaknesses.

Services for children in need of help and protection are now good, and services for children in care and care leavers are improving well. Senior managers have ensured that they are well informed about the quality of services through performance management information and directly engaging with frontline staff. They are fully aware of the areas that still require improvement and demonstrate a relentless determination to deliver high-quality services to all children in Croydon. They have created an environment in which staff feel valued and enjoy working in the borough.

What needs to improve

- The quality of written plans for children in need, children in care and care leavers.
- Services provided to homeless 16- and 17-year-olds.
- Services for care leavers, particularly the range of suitable accommodation, responses to emotional health needs and preparation for independence.
- Placement sufficiency for children in care, and accommodation for care leavers.

The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection: good

1. The vast majority of children and families receive the help that they need in a timely way. Early help is offered through a broad range of good-quality universal and targeted services. These include the new purpose-built Croydon youth zone, named by the young people as 'Legacy', which is having a positive impact on children's experiences. The interface between early help services and social care is well understood, with clearly defined step-up and step-down arrangements. Some families have to wait too long for early help services, and managers are taking appropriate action to reduce delay.
2. A vastly improved understanding of thresholds, together with co-located partners at the 'front door', known as the single point of contact (SPOC), means that almost all children who are at risk of harm are swiftly identified and receive the right support. Well-established relationships and effective information-sharing with partners, with a shared focus on children's needs, have strengthened decision-making and improved the quality and timeliness of strategy discussions. Responses to presenting need and risk are consistently triaged and prioritised, and for the vast majority of children, the decisions are appropriate.
3. The work of the assessment teams has been transformed by a whole-system review, additional capacity, and effective management oversight at all levels. High-quality, child-focused assessments, increasingly strengthened by the use of research, now contain a good understanding of the child's lived experiences. Equality and diversity issues are well considered and recorded in assessments and plans. Risk is well understood and clearly identified, and proportionate responses demonstrate a thoughtful and sensitive consideration of children's needs and vulnerabilities.
4. Social workers understand the purpose of their involvement in children's lives, and they describe clear and focused plans. Child protection plans are mostly well targeted and specific, but written plans for children in need are more variable, and are not consistently timebound or outcome-focused.

5. Effective use of the family group conferencing service leads to timely identification of members of the wider family to offer support or to provide care to children. Increasing use of assessment tools with families in identifying and understanding the impact of neglect is helping to ensure that children receive a timely and well-coordinated service.
6. Pre-proceedings activity under the public law outline has significantly improved since the last inspection. Timescales and final outcomes for children are monitored, and managers are aware of the need to further develop the tracking tool. Most letters to families in pre-proceedings are clear about risks and the potential outcomes if risks do not reduce. If circumstances do not improve, decisive action is taken to safeguard children. The judiciary and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) were complimentary about the improvements in both pre-proceedings and care proceedings work.
7. Children receive effective support from the out-of-hours service. However, this is not always well recorded, and managers are aware of the need to strengthen information-sharing between the out-of-hours service and the daytime teams.
8. Since the last inspection, there has been a total transformation in management oversight across all levels of work. Management authorisation and the rationale for decision-making are routinely in place, although there is some variability in the quality of recording. Regular performance information is used well by managers to track the timeliness of cases and to prevent delays for children.
9. Social workers know their children well. The turnover of social workers has reduced, meaning that they have the opportunity to build more trusting relationships with children. Children are regularly seen and seen alone.
10. Services for disabled children are delivered by knowledgeable, passionate social workers with high aspirations for their children. The restructure and relocation of disabled children's services into children's social care have been valued by the staff and the changes have led to improvements. Workers understand the needs of individual children and demonstrate good awareness of risks resulting from children's additional vulnerabilities. Caseloads in this service have risen recently and managers are monitoring this closely.
11. Services for homeless 16- and 17-year-olds are significantly under-developed and result in poor experiences for these young people. Managers took immediate action to address deficits in the very small number of cases found during the inspection. Senior managers have recently developed a strategic plan and pathway and are aware of the need to have greater oversight to embed the processes.
12. The management of allegations against adults working with children has improved. Formal tracking systems are now in place. Responses are timely, and

strategy meetings are held when needed and are well recorded. Links are made with any other known information, and themes are quickly identified.

13. Senior managers have developed effective processes for the oversight of children living in private fostering arrangements. The recently developed statement of purpose provides clear pathways and guidance, and a new private fostering panel has improved management oversight, with a focus on children's lived experiences. Managers are taking action to improve record-keeping, and a private fostering worker has recently been appointed to ensure more timely visits to children. However, developments still need to be embedded to ensure that assessments record the child's wishes and feelings regarding the arrangements, and include safety planning and risk assessments.
14. The investment shown in understanding the risks for adolescents is very evident. Improvements can be seen through the raised profile and significant volume of work undertaken, including the Vulnerable Adolescents Thematic Review, published in 2019. The strengthened arrangements to identify and respond to young people at risk of exploitation, including sexual exploitation, are ensuring increasingly swift and well-targeted responses to reduce risk.
15. Children at risk of exploitation benefit from effective multi-agency information-sharing. Action plans developed through the multi-agency complex adolescents panel are increasingly comprehensive and well targeted. Risk assessments are not yet consistently used and the quality of subsequent action plans to reduce risk to children is variable. Well-targeted work to identify adults who may present a risk to children leads to successful disruption activity.
16. Children who go missing from home receive a timely and appropriate response. This is less consistent for children who go missing from care and care leavers. Senior managers are currently improving the processes for strategy meetings for all children who go missing. Return home interviews for children who go missing have improved in both quality and timeliness, and most result in meaningful actions to reduce risk. Information from these conversations is systematically collated and used effectively to inform safety plans.
17. The number of children who are electively home educated (EHE) has increased rapidly in Croydon over the past 18 months. Historically, oversight of these arrangements has been weak. However, senior managers are now increasing the capacity of the EHE team. Effective systems are now in place to engage with parents who educate their children at home, and to ensure that the welfare of those children is monitored. Additional oversight is given to monitoring vulnerable children, including those who have an education, health and care plan; reviews of provision for these children are now carried out on an annual basis.
18. For children missing education, services have been remodelled effectively, with the welfare of the child at the centre. Departments work in a joined-up way to minimise the risk to young people who are out of education. Tracking systems

maintain good oversight of all pupils missing education. Strong partnership work with schools ensures that appropriate provision is quickly identified.

The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers: requires improvement to be good

19. Services for children in care have improved since the inspection in 2017, and some aspects are strong. Services for care leavers are improving, although some weaknesses remain.
20. Social workers work hard to enable children to remain in the care of their families. When this is not possible or appropriate, decisive action is taken, including effective pre-birth planning, so that the majority of children come into care in a timely manner. Children who return home from care, including those placed with parents, have robust plans in place to support such arrangements. All decisions for children to enter or leave care are overseen by a care panel which is chaired by a senior manager, to ensure sound and consistent decision-making.
21. Arrangements to work with adolescents who are on the edge of care are well embedded and effective. Staff in the edge of care team deliver bespoke and creative interventions, and these are further supported through the targeted youth support service.
22. The majority of workers know the children well and are focused on building meaningful relationships. Children are now seen regularly, and records of visits increasingly outline a purpose and focus on key aspects of the care plan. Careful consideration is given to the diverse needs of all children and young people, and this is embedded in day-to-day practice. Social workers are skilled in direct work and in engagement with children. However, the effectiveness of this work is undermined by the high turnover of staff and the frequent changes of social workers for children in care. Some children are reluctant to engage meaningfully with a new worker as they feel that the worker will move on quickly. Senior managers know this and they are unrelenting in their efforts to recruit and retain a more stable workforce.
23. Social workers and independent reviewing officers (IROs) are focused on ensuring that children's health and emotional well-being needs are met. However, case records do not consistently contain information about health appointments. Children's services and health professionals are committed to improving the timeliness and quality of initial and review health assessments for children in care. A recently established operational health group is focused on improving processes and developing training across services. The current absence of shared data is limiting progress in identifying and understanding the impact of delays in assessment and provision of appropriate health services. This is particularly pertinent in Croydon, due to the high levels of children who have experienced neglect.

24. The emotional health needs of children in care are appropriately identified and met through a range of services, support and therapy. Senior managers have worked closely with health partners to strengthen the offer to children in care, supported by a planned co-location of child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) for children in care with children's social care in April 2020.
25. Children in care and care leavers increasingly benefit from access to a strengthened participation offer. Children's achievements are celebrated well. Empire (empowering, memories, positivity, inspiring, respect and educational), the high-profile children in care council, has well-established links with the corporate parenting board and this is improving the prioritisation of the needs of children in care and care leavers. Alongside this, children have access to a vast array of clubs and activities that they enjoy, supported by foster carers.
26. Children benefit from good support from advocates, independent visitors and learning mentors, who listen to them and help them to share their views and opinions.
27. Children benefit from regular reviews, and letters to children from IROs are increasingly child-focused and written in sensitive, child-friendly language. However, this is not yet consistent. Plans for children in care are not always written so well and are template-orientated rather than providing a bespoke account of clear actions to support the child.
28. The large cohort of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in Croydon benefit from effective multi-agency work to ensure that their needs are assessed and responded to promptly. Assessments contain a clear analysis of identity needs and any potential discrimination that children might face. Managers are addressing the need to strengthen recording when children transfer to other local authorities, to ensure that the decisions made and the actions taken are clear.
29. Senior managers have recently restructured and increased capacity in the commissioning and placements services to improve processes. A placement and accommodation needs analysis is underway, to inform the commissioning strategy. Managers are focused on increasing the range of good-quality placement arrangements to meet individual children's and care leavers' needs.
30. When children are placed out of borough, placement matching is not routinely informed by consultations with host authorities. Further work is required to ensure that notification letters to host authorities explain how the placement will meet the child's needs. The recent development of a post to oversee this activity is intended to provide greater oversight.
31. Foster carers are provided with a good learning and development offer, and they are positive about the support that they receive. Senior managers have made

improvements to the fostering service and are currently working with an external organisation to increase foster carer recruitment and retention levels.

32. Senior managers have used the learning from the Ofsted monitoring visit in October 2019 to focus on placement stability and securing permanence for children in care in Croydon. Although relatively recent, inspectors saw improved strategic planning and decisive actions being taken to ensure positive impacts for children in care. The revised and clear permanence policy, and a robust meeting structure that includes permanence planning meetings and adoption tracker meetings are helping to drive improvement. As a result, appropriate plans are being put in place and there is now good consideration of early permanence and prompt action for some young children.
33. Work on life stories and later-life letters is developing and improving. However, managers are taking steps to ensure consistency in both quality and timeliness.
34. Croydon is now part of the Adopt London South regional adoption agency. The arrangements are relatively new, and managers are working together to develop a more detailed overview of family finding for Croydon children.
35. A multi-agency approach, delivered through the complex adolescents panel, is ensuring more effective oversight of young people at high risk, including those who are missing. Young people are being helped to recognise risks such as grooming, and outcomes for individual young people are improving. However, actions and minutes from the complex adolescents panel are not systematically followed up to ensure that actions to reduce risks to children are consistently effective. 'Missing' strategy meetings for children in care are not always sufficiently specific, detailed or timebound, and in addition, risk assessments are not currently being completed for all children in care and care leavers who go missing.
36. Since the last inspection, the virtual school has been transformed and the education provision for Croydon's children in care is good. Critical to this success has been the excellent leadership and implementation of a staffing model that is fit for purpose. As a result, there have been recent improvements, in particular the achievements of children in care at key stage 4, and provision for post-16 students.
37. When children and young people come into care, they make good progress in overcoming many of the barriers that they face in engaging with learning. Staff from the virtual school work closely with partner services, schools and colleges to ensure that children get the right level of support with their learning, grow in confidence, and improve their behaviour and attendance. Consequently, overall attendance levels are now broadly in line with the national average and fixed-term exclusions are below average. School staff speak highly of the quality of support that they receive from the virtual school and the impact that this has on the children.

38. Children now benefit from regularly updated personal education plans (PEPs). Emphasis is given to ensuring that the PEP process is of good quality. Most PEPs are effective at charting the pupil's journey in a holistic way, providing a live tool for ongoing improvement and having a positive impact on children's attainment.
39. Targeted support for pupils in Year 11 and through the transition process is benefiting 16- to 18-year-olds, with improving levels of entry into education, employment or training. Work with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children is having a strong impact, as their needs are assessed early on and provision is made to get them school-ready. The picture is not as strong for 18- to 25-year-olds. Senior managers recognise that more work is needed to enable more young people to benefit from education, employment and training and to be equipped to access suitable apprenticeship opportunities.
40. Social workers and personal advisers in the leaving care teams are committed to the young people they work with and know them well. While caseloads for social workers and personal advisers in these teams have reduced since the last inspection, they remain high in this service. Workers are in touch with the majority of care leavers and most visits to care leavers are regular. However, records of these visits do not always do justice to the work undertaken. They are not always sufficiently comprehensive and do not routinely include an analysis of the young people's wishes, feelings and experiences.
41. The quality of pathway planning and plans for care leavers is variable. Pathway plans are not always sufficiently specific about risks and vulnerabilities. Consequently, actions to address and reduce risk and vulnerability are not prominent. There is little evidence of pathway plans being co-produced with young people. However, the new pathway plan format is helping to reflect young people's views and strengthen planning. Implementation of this new approach is incremental, targeting those who have been assessed as having greater vulnerability, but it is still in its early stages and senior managers are aware that they need to accelerate the pace of recent developments.
42. The health needs of care leavers are well considered in direct work, but this is not always reflected well in plans. Senior managers are in the process of implementing health passports to ensure that children in care and care leavers have access to a comprehensive summary of their health histories. Consideration of the emotional needs of care leavers is variable and there is limited systematic and effective consideration of young people's past trauma.
43. While preparation for independence takes place, Croydon does not currently have a systematic process or cohesive offer to ensure that care leavers are helped to develop their skills in preparation for adulthood and for maintaining tenancy arrangements.

44. Most care leavers live in suitable accommodation. However, senior managers recognise that the range and availability of this offer need to be broader. Staying put arrangements are promoted effectively and offer support to an increasing number of care leavers.

The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families: good

45. Since the last judgement inspection in 2017, services for children and families in Croydon have improved dramatically. There is now a clear and determined focus on continuous improvement. The chief executive, political leaders, strategic and corporate leaders have all worked together to ensure that services for children and families are a priority. An ambitious and comprehensive improvement programme has been underpinned by significant investment. The appointments of a skilled and experienced executive director for children, families and education and other senior managers have enabled the development of services that focus on the needs of children and families and this is changing the culture within the organisation.
46. Leaders and managers have embraced and made good use of a wide range of improvement support, including a robust improvement board, strategic partnerships and formal monitoring of progress.
47. Senior managers have taken an effective, measured and considered approach to achieving change, and this has resulted in the establishment of a core sustainable infrastructure and resources to improve practice. They now have the staff with the right skills and experience to continue to change the culture of the organisation to one where staff feel valued and supported, thus creating the right conditions for effective social work.
48. Partner engagement has been re-invigorated, supported by the improvement board and the Croydon safeguarding children partnership. Representatives from Cafcass, the local judiciary and schools have noted better communication and improved practice since the last inspection, resulting in more timely improvements to children's experiences and progress.
49. Senior managers are fully aware of the current quality of practice and are realistic about the challenges ahead. This is reflected well in their self-assessment, which sets out clear objectives, actions and expected impact and outcomes. The areas identified for development, practice and partnership priorities reflect a clear understanding of the need for momentum and continuous improvement to provide the best for children in Croydon. Senior managers were already aware of the areas for improvement identified during this inspection.
50. Operational management, frontline decision-making and the frequency and quality of supervision have all improved significantly. Managers at all levels consistently drive improved practice for children and support staff in developing their understanding of the reasons for their involvement in a child's life.

51. Performance management arrangements have been considerably strengthened since the last inspection. Managers routinely access the self-service performance reports, including the interactive weekly 'Croydon Five' report to track the timeliness of cases and prevent delay. This is further supported by the monthly performance clinics that are held routinely for all service areas.
52. Further work is needed to embed the learning from the regular quality assurance auditing programme and to inform the training and development of staff. A 'windows into practice' quality assurance model, designed to strengthen learning and development through a reflective coaching and mentoring approach to auditing, is due to be implemented in April.
53. Senior managers have a detailed knowledge of their services and the local community. Commissioning arrangements have been restructured since the last inspection, recognising the importance of integrated commissioning in meeting the needs of complex and vulnerable children and young people. An accommodation strategy, focused on sufficiency and need, is being further developed and work is underway to increase the range of high-quality placements to meet the diverse needs of children in care.
54. The local authority is a highly committed corporate parent. Elected members have received training about their role and the qualities of being a corporate parent. Members of Empire, the children in care council, routinely attend the corporate parenting panel and are engaged with improving and developing services.
55. Senior managers are maintaining a sustained focus on increasing stability and capacity in the workforce. This has resulted in very positive impacts on reducing turnover and lessening the reliance on agency staff. Significant investment has resulted in manageable caseloads in the assessment, social work with families, and adolescents teams, enabling staff to have more time to undertake direct work with children. However, caseloads remain too high in the care leavers teams.
56. Staff morale is high. Workers value the systemic model of practice, the training offer and the new culture that is being embedded. Staff report that they are well supported, and they speak very highly about managers and visible senior leaders. They report that the increasingly regular supervision helps them to meet the needs of the children that they work with. Workers take a real pride in their work to meet the needs and improve the experiences and progress for children and families. Staff told inspectors that they enjoy working in Croydon.



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For general release

REPORT TO:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee 23 June 2020
SUBJECT:	Children’s services response to COVID 19
LEAD OFFICER:	Rob Henderson, Executive Director, Children, Families & Education
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	Rob Henderson, Executive Director, Children, Families & Education

<p>CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/ AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON To offer a clear commitment to children in care and our young adults leaving care is fully aligned to our Corporate Plan for Croydon (2018-2022) in the following areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our children and young people thrive and reach their full potential • Everyone feels safer in their street, neighbourhood and home • Everyone has the opportunity to work and build their career. <p>Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022</p>
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ORIGIN OF ITEM:	It has been determined that an in-depth review of the support in place for vulnerable children as a result of the Covid-19 crisis was required.
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	To provide reassurance regarding the most vulnerable children and what support is in place for them as we emerge from lockdown including educational provision.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides an overview of the actions taken by the Children, Families and Education Department to support vulnerable children and families during the COVID 19 pandemic, including with and through schools. This report includes information in relation to risks, challenges and lessons learnt in light of possible future lockdowns. Specific information is included to highlight support provided to our looked after pupils, NEET cohort and how we have delivered the admissions process to ensure allocation of reception school places.

2. Education COVID 19 response:

2.1 Actions taken by the Directorate to support schools during the pandemic

General support for schools.

On March 20 2020, the Secretary of State for Education announced the closure of schools to all but vulnerable children and children of key workers until further notice. Education, nationally, and in Croydon, was required to be radically redesigned almost overnight.

The majority of schools remained open for vulnerable and key worker children, with some school developing a 'hub' model across two or more schools. Schools in the borough have worked in partnership to ensure enough provision was available.

Local Authority Officer and Advisers supported schools, recognising that each school has its own unique context and ecosystem and demands, followed a methodology of 'walking alongside' headteachers and school leaders in whatever their context. This involved (but is not an exhaustive list):

- Daily phone calls with headteachers and school leaders – checking on their welfare and that of their staff.
- A dedicated email account set up for schools and families
- Supporting schools and vulnerable families with free school meals and food parcels
- Co-ordinating Healthcare guidance with PH colleagues
- Ensuring National guidance had a Croydon context
- Regular meetings with Trade Unions and Professional Organisations.
- Twice weekly officers and advisers catch up meetings
- Devising recovery curriculum guidelines to support schools in the transition to wider provision
- Pastoral care of headteachers to support their wellbeing
- Virtual locality meetings with school leaders
- Transition guidance developed with school leaders
- Support the DfE Digital Devise rollout

The Local Authority make no distinction between the type of setting during the initial phases of the pandemic as we are supporting Croydon Children.

Schools have submitted attendance data to us on a daily basis and we have been able to oversee provision in the borough. As the graph below shows numbers of pupils in schools has significantly increased since 1st June when primary schools widened their opening. Attendance of vulnerable pupils has been low since the start of the lockdown, schools have worked with colleagues in CSC to ensure oversight of pupils not attending. They have reported any safeguarding concerns through the SPOC.

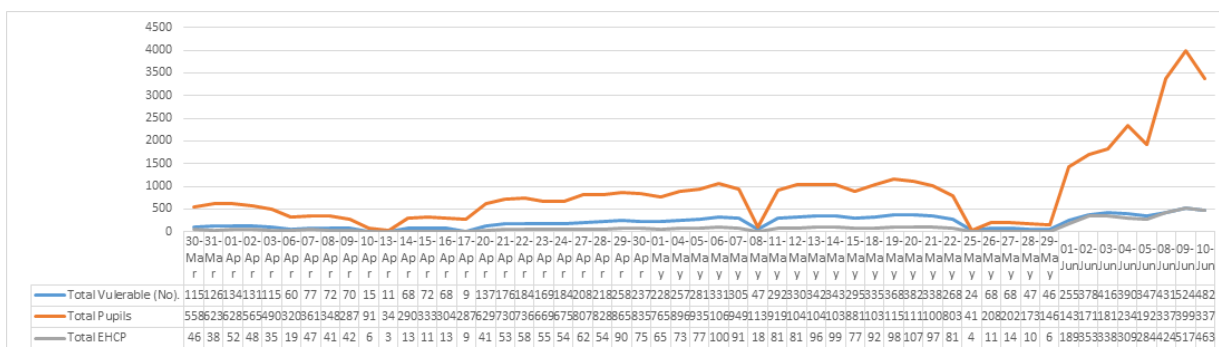


Table 1: Attendance across Croydon Schools

2.2 Response to Food Provision for Schools and Families

At the first notification of school closures in March, the Education Directorate developed a plan to support schools and families to continue to access good food, as outlined below.

Early response (from 19th March)

Guidance and recommendations were shared with all school, as follows:

- Schools should continue to cook for pupils still attending school.
- Where possible, schools may choose to cook extra hot food and families collect meals or meals be delivered to families most in need.
- Schools to provide food hampers for FSM pupils to support families for 1-2 weeks at a time – examples of healthy balanced foods to be included were provided.
- Schools purchase their own supermarket vouchers to issue to families in receipt of FSM (before the national scheme launched).
- Education directorate purchased £10,000 of emergency supermarket vouchers for those schools not able to issue their own.
-

Launch of National Free School Meal Voucher Scheme

This scheme was hugely welcomed but created a huge amount of anxiety amongst school staff due to the technical difficulties and long wait time on the system. The Education Directorate offered a huge amount of support to schools to use the Edenred voucher system or find an alternative option to suit their school. This support is ongoing.

Launch of Family Support service

In early April, it was decided that a dedicated support inbox would be launched to offer advice and guidance and a referral service for schools and early year's settings worried about food provision, vouchers or families having limited access to food. The feedback from schools and families has been very positive. Referral statistics from the 650 e-mails received are below:

Referrals made to the hub for food packages to be delivered		Referrals made to Gateway for assessment for financial support		TOTAL REFERRALS
Shielded	Non-shielded	Shielded	Non-shielded	
16	98	8	65	187

Table 2

A community support services document has also now been created to enable schools to access ongoing support for those families most in need.

Surplus Food Distribution

In partnership with Legacy Youth Zone, 7 local schools (with high FSM levels) were identified to collect regular surplus food from Legacy and use this to create and distribute food packages to local families.

In partnership with Gateway, 9 local schools have been identified and now registered with FareShare and are collecting surplus food from one of four local collection points, every week. This is then being distributed to families in need.

2.3 Education support for Children Looked After.

The Virtual school team have been able to maintain all functions as usual while working remotely.

We have focused on weekly calls to Foster carers and young people in semi-independent accommodation to allow us to really understand our young people's picture. Each case has had individual consideration and risk assessments have been completed including Social workers and School staff, where returns to school has been appropriate. We calculate figures weekly. At present (in the open year groups, and as vulnerable young people) approximately 40% whole cohort has returned to school. (This is approx. 60% of our Y6 group, and 30% Year R and 1, with 15% of other pupils already attending as vulnerable pupils) This is under weekly review by our team and Social care and felt to be the best balance, of young people getting what they need at home where safety is the priority.

We have supported carers and young people to access their children's schools options for learning and to ensure schools have been aware of the specific needs of our cohort at this time via regular communication with the designated teachers.

We have issued our own online resources to support learning for our 450+ young people of school age. We have over 100 school age pupils signed up to Flash Maths academy online and similar numbers engaging with Britannica resources that we fund licenses too. We have sent lists of online learning resources to carers and on individual basis supported with home learning timetables and ideas as needed. We have maintained our online volunteer mentoring support for young people already in our system and this has ensured some of our most vulnerable Y11 students who were impacted by CV-19 have had ongoing weekly video sessions and tailored work sent. Similarly, our careers advice information and guidance programmes have been still running and accessible via our team and Social workers. Many of our young people have accessed our licenses to Kudos programme that offers a full careers interview and suggestion of next steps in the local area to our young people.

We have also been able to process and issue over 100 laptops/tablets to young people via a combination of our own PPG funding and the governments' laptop scheme. This will continue over the coming months and we expect every child or young person in our care who has needed a device and/internet to have been given this by the end of the academic year. This has meant young

people have been better able to stay in touch with schools and not lose out on learning and communication with their schools.

The Virtual School has also been using the additional technological power in our new online ways of working to look at how best to facilitate support for our young people most affected by the current school opening challenges. We were able to glean from our Y11 cohort that they need support with their college transitions and have developed a series of bespoke online taster webinars of A-levels and other level 1/2/3 courses in different subjects for students to trial with us over the summer. The team are also working hard on what this year's summermix provision for extra-curricular work may look like for our young people. Similarly, we have more pupils than ever signed up for TLC live online tuition that assesses and supports the specific gaps in a students' learning and then develops online programme of tuition for them. This is proving a powerful way to track and maintain progress for our youngsters. We have trialled it this term with a group of out of borough young people who historically, have not had such strong support from us due to challenges with distance. The CV situation has really strengthened our ability to support these initiatives. This work has all been made possible through our now almost fully staffed team (28 staff), that gives us capacity to serve our 850+ young people better. We have used our PPG funding and our staffing fund (high needs block), to make all this growth this possible. We are able to monitor our young people closely through their individual workers. This gives us insight and allows us to target spend better than ever before.

2.4 Support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities

Since the introduction of COVID-19 pandemic measures the SEN Service has adapted practice to maintain performance and work virtually whenever possible.

The Government has made two temporary changes to SEND legislation. The first of which changes the Local Authority's absolute duty to secure special educational provision and health care provision in accordance with an EHC Plan to 'reasonable endeavours' to secure the provision and the second amends the duty to meet timescales for EHC needs assessment and EHC Plans, if the reason for delay relates to incidence or transmission of Coronavirus.

Education, Health and Care Co-ordinators have continued to undertake EHC needs assessment for Croydon's children and young people with special educational needs. Currently 180 children's EHC needs assessment are in the process of being co-ordinated. Assessments of children and young people's needs are being undertaken by practitioners virtually or based on phone conversations and school and health records. Despite the challenges of the current circumstances the SEN Service has issued 75% of EHC Plans within the regular timescale of 20 weeks and continues to work with school and parents to undertake annual reviews of EHC Plans. The SEN Service has developed approaches to maintain rigorous decision-making processes virtually.

The Youth Disability Service has remained open three days a week and has been providing post 19 care, support and training for independence for young

people with complex and severe learning difficulties; prioritising attendance for young people whose family circumstances are such that 'lockdown' and staying at home puts a strain on the family and the young person's well-being.

The Early Years Inclusion and Intervention Team have worked hard to develop and publish resources on the Local Offer website for parents and carers of young children with SEN, in particular for those with autism. Team members are keeping in contact with parents and, for those children with special educational needs who will be starting school in September, team members have been arranging meetings between early years settings, schools and parents to support planning for the autumn term.

The Department for Education has charged Local Authority's with working with schools to undertake risk assessments for all young people with EHC Plans, to establish whether these young people are safer at home or school and the approach to maintaining children's educational progress through reasonable endeavours to meet children's SEN. We have has 3200 children and young people with an EHC Plan, to date we have received risk assessments for 1125 of the children. Each risk assessment is reviewed and if there are concerns about a young person's well-being the child's social worker and the school are contacted. We have engaged the support of the lead education HMI for London in following up the provision of risk assessments from for children and young people who are placed in independent sector schools. This support has been welcomed and is already resulting in improved responsiveness from schools in providing risk assessments and, we anticipate, in increasing the numbers of young people with EHC Plans who attend on-site education during this term.

All our special schools are now open with increasing numbers of children returning week on week. Attendance at Enhanced Learning Provisions (ELPs) is also increasing; most ELP provisions have remained open throughout with an offer of places to all ELP pupils.

Some parents are still reluctant to agree a return to school before September – reasons vary, and include concerns about using public transport, fear of infection from children of key-workers, siblings not returning. Croydon schools are maintaining regular contact with parents and are reassuring parents it is safe to return as required. A numbers of children are not able to return due to medical conditions (up to 40 at St. Giles)

Schools have commented positively on the:

- Support from Croydon school transport service with willingness to adapt to changing demand for school places and offering flexibility to reflect part-time attendance and different drop off and pick up times
- Guidance and resources from the EP service as well as access to the parent advice line.
- Support from speech and language service

2.5 Support for vulnerable pupils

Learning Access has continued to have the safety and wellbeing of pupils at the heart of its work throughout Covid-19. Officers have continued to stay in touch with families and have liaised with their schools and other services where

needed. Examples of this work include securing food support for a family who was struggling to secure food; online mentoring for a young man who was becoming increasingly anxious about Covid-19; and continuing to liaise with the schools and other services in respect of a pupil who has been out of education for some time to ensure he has education.

Other aspects of the teams work such as SPOC; complex admissions applications; children missing from education and elective home education have continued to be business as normal but working from home. We have switched to engaging with parents of electively home educated children remotely. This has been well received by families. We are also carrying out wellbeing calls to our more vulnerable families. One of these calls identified a safeguarding concern that led to a SPOC referral.

Prosecutions and fines for absence from school have stopped as a result of Covid-19. As schools widen their attendance the service is now focused on providing support to schools to ensure vulnerable children resume attendance and do not become missing from education.

Finally the service has supported the wider directorate's response to Covid-19 by providing supplementary guidance to schools; delivering PPE; and assisting colleagues in SEND.

2.6 Education support for Post 16 Transitions and NEET

Our response to COVID-19 has been to support young people we will continue to be guided by our Corporate Plan priorities that everybody has the opportunity to work and build their career and that every child and young person in Croydon has access to high quality education and youth facilities. We want to continue to raise their aspirations, increase their opportunities, help them to make the right career choices, and develop the necessary wider skills to provide businesses with a potential future talent pool.

There are a huge range of services on offer to young people in Croydon to support them to find employment and training opportunities, and many have adapted their offer to meet the needs of our young people during the crisis. Introducing new ways of engaging, new virtual and online methods of delivery, and stepping up their health and mental wellbeing support.

Partners are following the government's temporary flexibilities through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to make it easier for colleges and apprenticeship providers to support learners to continue and complete their courses remotely and to make appropriate arrangements to support key gateway points in studies such as end point assessments and working with qualification.

NEET Prevention Support (14-17 year olds)

The NEET Team continue to work with schools to ensure that all pupils in years 11 and 12 are applying for places for the next academic year and receiving offers. To support this work, details of local providers who are able to support pupils with their post 16 transition were shared with schools and also posted on the Young Croydon website. Furthermore, virtual appointments

have been offered for pupils and / or their parents / carers who have any concern or would benefit from personalised information and advice. Throughout the lockdown, schools/colleges have been providing outreach services to those pupils deemed as particularly vulnerable. From 15th June 2020, schools will be providing some direct contact education to pupils in year 10 & 12. Once schools are able to accommodate this, we will continue to provide the Risk of NEET (RON) programme in targeted schools is a 6 to 10 week programme working with year 10 and 11 pupils in school who have been identified most at risk of becoming NEET. The programme focusses on making the right choices, building resilience and confidence, careers advice and guidance. Explore virtual delivery to particularly vulnerable pupils. NEET Support (16-18 year olds and up to age 21 for care leavers)

An Instagram video has been created and posted on the Youth Service's Young Croydon platforms, signposting the website for information and also to the NEET team's inbox to request transition into EET support.

An Opportunities Bulletin is distributed (at the beginning of each month) to all young people on our database whose is recorded as either NEET or Not Known. This bulletin is also circulated to professionals working with the cohort, likewise posted on the Young Croydon website. We continue to deliver our 'Local Offer for Care Leavers' which sets out the services Croydon Council provides to care leavers. This is given to all care leavers. The document was produced in consultation with care leavers, understanding their perspectives and designing a system which responds to their needs.

2.7 School Place Planning and Admission & Early Years

The council continues to meet its planning duties (s13-14 Education Act 1996) to promote high standards of education and fair access to education; secure provision for children with SEN; and respond to parental preference.

Ensuring sufficiency of school places and that residents have access to high quality schools within the borough is central to achieving our priorities / outcomes: 'Our children and young people thrive and reach their full potential; and Children and young people in Croydon are safe, healthy and happy, and aspire to be the best they can be.'

We continue to work with the childcare sector to ensure sufficient childcare for children of critical workers and vulnerable children, alongside the wider opening of schools for eligible year groups.

All children who applied for a reception place for September 2020 have received an offer of a place, with 84% being allocated a place at their 1st preference school on national offer day – 16 April; and 96% receiving one of their first three preference schools. In-year applications are being processed and offers made in line with current processes. School admission appeals will take place in line with the temporary changes to the School Admission Appeal Regulations 2012, during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Work is underway to get an estimate of the like number of children and young people and associated costs in relation to the suspension of tree travel from September 2020.

2.8 Key risks and challenges

- Low pupil attendance rates
- Sufficient Social distancing within the environment.
- Staffing attendance – particularly of anxious colleagues or BAME colleagues.
- School estate may not have enough classrooms needed to apply social distancing
- Ensuring that families have access to food provision
- Pupils being able to access on-line learning
- Achievement gaps
- Increased rate of children and young people suffering trauma as a result of COVID 19 and long period of time away from school
- Possible increase in CME and EHE referrals
- Possible increase in safeguarding disclosures
- Lack of clarity about what provision will look like in September
- Summer holiday provision
- Concerns about how well pupils will transition into Reception, KS2 and Year 7

The Education Directorate has produced a working action plan outlining the response to the risks and concerns identified above, see Appendix 1

3 Vulnerable children and families COVID-19 response

3.1 Single Point of Contact and assessment service

The Front Door continues to manage all referrals into Early Help and Children's Social Care. The Service is working remotely and ensuring all referrals meet the agreed timescales for response and action. Strategy Meetings are taking place by phone and partners dial in to support the planning for children and young people at risk of or who have suffered significant harm.

SPOC and Assessment managers continue to work together closely to ensure that those children most at risk are responded to in a timely manner SPOC staff have been provided with details of resources and support that families can access, linked to COVID 19 needs. Our Emergency Duty Team (EDT) covering adults, housing and children continues to manage out of hours emergencies, we have supported the team with back up workers when necessary. EDT staff have been provided with comprehensive details of support services available to vulnerable families and adults and are provided with weekly updated information around emergency accommodation for children, families and vulnerable adults

Assessment teams are managing duty remotely. Social workers remain responsive to Section 47 enquires, with the main duty social worker being office based where appropriate. All children subject to a Section 47 enquiry are being visited at home, with face to face interaction taking place to properly assess risk. Children subject to a new Section 17 assessment have a face to face visit, with managers then risk assessing if virtual visits are appropriate. Managers are reviewing assessments following the first and subsequent visits

3.2 Visiting children and families

Social workers and their managers are continuously reviewing and assessing risks and protective factors for the families they work with, and visits against the three priority groups are reported and monitored on a weekly basis (see table 3 below)

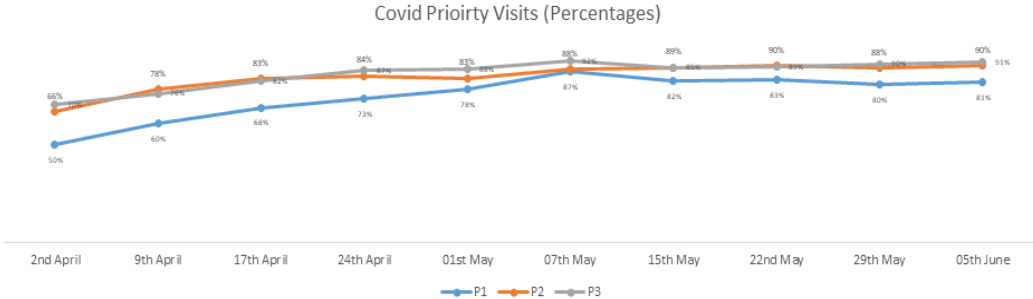


Table 3

In priority 1 cases, where children and young people are subject to child protection plans or where there are safeguarding concerns social workers continue to carry out face to face visits to the required timescales. For priority 2 and 3 every other visit, subject to the risk assessment described above. is virtual social workers and family support workers continue to complete virtual visits video/face time every two weeks. Close liaison between the education directorate and children’s social care is supporting the promotion of school attendance for vulnerable children, although this continues to reflect the national picture of lower levels than we would like. Families that are self-isolating have been identified and their specific needs recorded, working closely with the Council’s response to shielded residents.

3.3 Systems and processes

Cases where care proceedings have been initiated have all been reviewed to ensure actions are being taken to keep these on track. Close consultation with the local judiciary has resulted in a hybrid approach, with families offered remote hearings which they can choose to take up if they wish.

Expert assessments such as parenting assessments have been taking place as required, with the benefit of full PPE. Risk assessments are also underway to support face to face contacts between children and birth families.

Quality assurance activities have continued at pace during the lockdown period. Deep dive reviews of the quality of child in need plans, of child protection plans open for over 9 months and the quality of practice in pre-birth work have all been completed. Plans are in place to disseminate the findings to continue to improve day to day practice.

3.4 Impact on activity

The service is confident that all statutory requirements have been met during the COVID-19 pandemic, however there has been a reduction in activity at the front door (SPOC) for services, although seasonal patterns needs to be taken into account. Table 4 below shows the reduction over March and April in contacts to children’s social care and referrals to early help, as well as contacts that become referrals to children’s social care.

As a result the SPOC and assessment services are currently holding lower caseloads. Staff are being retained in anticipation of rising demand for services from the autumn, as more children and young people attend school and partner agencies such as health have more contact with residents. Activity levels are monitored and discussed on a weekly basis to ensure the service is ready to respond.

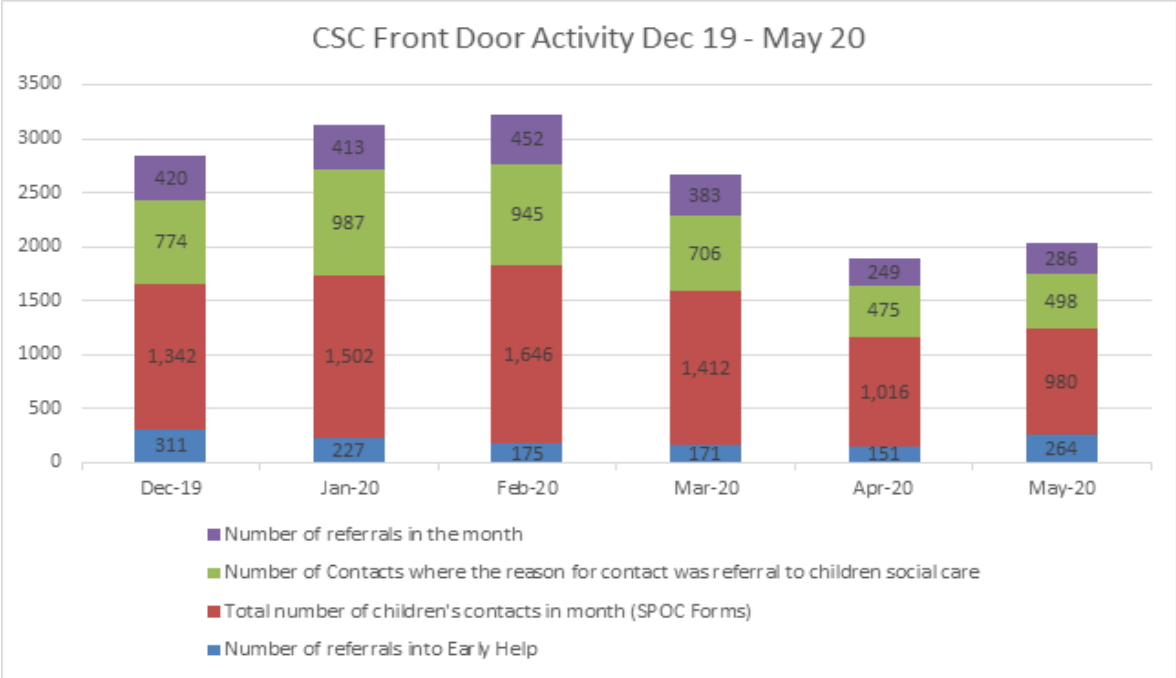


Table 4

Tables 5 and 6 below track activity levels around care and placement orders, and the number of children in Croydon’s care. There is limited headline impact over the same time period for these two areas, although there are reports that the pandemic has prevented unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people reaching the UK, which may be a driver for the decrease seen in these numbers since December 2019. The children looked after service are working closely with other Gateway authorities and the Home Office to share intelligence and anticipate where possible the impact of the relaxation of lockdown arrangements in the UK and abroad.

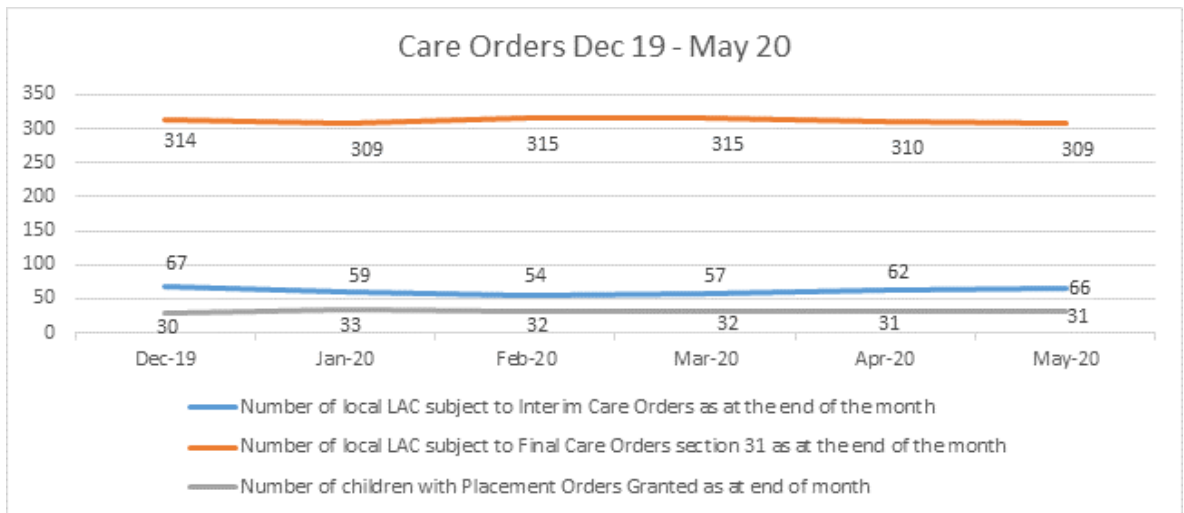


Table 5

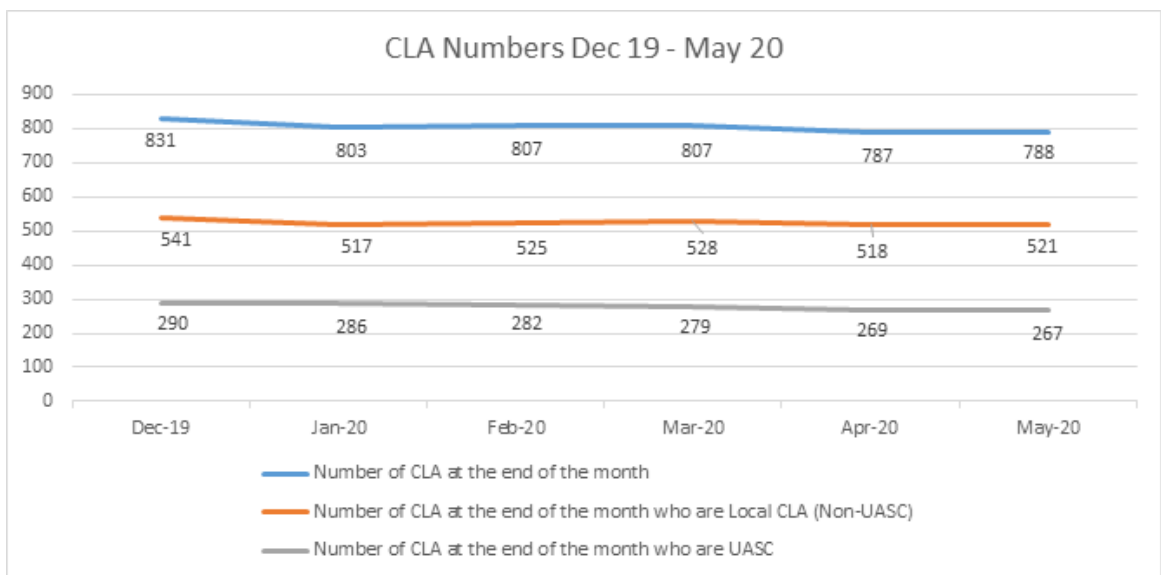


Table 6

Contact Officer: Robert Henderson
Executive Director
Children Families & Education

Background Documents: None

Appendices: Appendix 1: Education Directorate Covid-19
Transition Action Plan

Education Directorate Covid-19 Transition Action Plan

Introduction from Shelley Davies, Interim Director of Education

Dear Colleagues,

The last few months have seen Education radically redesigned to support all our children in Croydon in the light of the Coronavirus and I have been humbled by the energy, commitment and care our whole educational community has shown – from devising resources and sharing them with one another, to creating ways of feeding and supporting our most vulnerable, to ensuring that we provide a safe place for the children of key workers so that they can carry on contributing to life in Croydon.

Throughout this period, the Education Directorate has sought to walk alongside school leaders in these testing times – not directing, not demanding, but being there at whatever level or need is required. I hope you have welcomed this approach. In the spirit of continuing this dialogue I have enclosed some extracts from our early draft action plan for supporting schools, teachers, leaders and children and young people back to school. I would welcome your thoughts.

The guidance and this document will also be shared with the Local Professional Associations to ensure that the initial thoughts on supporting schools is as transparent and as open as possible. While we all have differing national priorities the most important focus should be on the wellbeing of all.

None of the actions contained in the following pages are devised as a way of monitoring performance but to continue our efforts in walking alongside you during the next phase of Government policy towards Covid-19. Inclusion and Opportunity for all remain our watchwords.

DRAFT ACTION PLAN: Education Directorate schools reopening				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools reopening in the near future. Planning assumption is for some year groups to return in June/July and all year groups to return in some from September onwards with a possible 'eyes on' day for all year groups at some point in the summer term. This can be flexed in response to scientific advice and political decisions. We need to put in place systems/structures that are ready to go from the reopen to ensure children resume school in line with the re-open plan and can sustain their school place. 				
Priority areas	Actions/tasks	Outcome/success criteria	Lead (& support staff)	Completion date:
Standards, Safeguarding & Inclusion				
Ensuring pupils do not become children missing from education.	Implement process by which the LA can account for all pupils on roll at shutdown (include PEx/FAP/IYA in process)	Process devised and agreed	CR	7 th May 2020
	Provide supplementary guidance to schools around CME and absence arrangements	Guidance written and circulated	CR	15 th May 2020
	Include within daily return headline figures to account for every pupil	Daily headline reporting of headline data from all schools agreed	SD/MKY	12 th May 2020
Identifying vulnerable pupils who are at risk of become CME or do not resume attendance	Use daily return figures to cross reference with CSC priority 1 pupils.	Daily reporting from all schools in place from point of re-open	CR/ JR/ MKY	15 th May 2020
	Establish process for pupil level reporting for vulnerable pupils who are still missing from education 10 days after the re-open.	Weekly pupil level reporting of vulnerable pupils in the returning cohort who do not resume attendance	CR/JR/MKY	7 th May 2020
	Repurpose Missing Monday to focus on vulnerable pupils who are still missing from education 10 days after the re-open.	Multi-agency oversight in place through Missing Monday from 1/6/20	CR/MMa	9 th May 2020

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Priority areas	Actions/tasks	Outcome/success criteria	Lead (& support staff)	Completion date:
Interventions when pupils do not resume attendance – in conjunction and agreement with schools.	Provide advice to schools around the interventions to take in respect of pupils who become CME or do not resume attendance.	Schools are aware of the advice and any changes to procedures	CR/ MKY	5 th June 2020
	Ensure schools can have systems in place following up on CME and pupils who do not return.	LA providing support to schools.	MKY/CR/MMa	5 th June 2020
	Agree the appropriate use of enforcement powers, if any , in the event of pupils not returning to school.	Use of enforcement powers agreed.	MMa (CMc)	20 th May 2020
	Advise schools and implement any changes to enforcement work.	Schools/EWS providers made aware of any changes/advice. Changes implemented.	MMa (AIOs/MJ)	22 nd May 2020
	Provide targeted intervention work with schools who agree additional support to secure pupils return to school.	schools receiving additional support to secure pupils' return.	CR/MKY/MMa	From 1 st June 2020
	Agree provision (and threshold) for pupils unable to attend school (i.e. shielding)	Offer and threshold agreed with schools and SVC. Provide guidance to schools on alternative arrangements.	CR (AG) CR	22 nd May 2020 29 th May 2020

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Priority areas	Actions/tasks	Outcome/success criteria	Lead (& support staff)	Completion date:
Ensuring children without a school place can obtain one	Review arrangements for pupils without of a school place (COOS) including complex cases & agree steps necessary to secure places.	All schools recommence admitting new IYA pupils	CR/MA	29 th May 2020
	Identify complex admissions cases that need to secure places through FAP.	Complex cases identified for FAP. Referral paperwork completed.	VBW/MA (JA/MJ)	29 th May 2020
	Identify Y6-7 transition pupils without a Y7 school place	Pupils identified and plan agreed	VBW/NA	29 th May 2020
	Consider if/when we can restart FAP (12 th June) for IYA and whether we need to do it virtually or need alternative arrangements.	Arrangements for FAP in relation to IYA agreed and implemented.	CR/VBW/MA	29 th May 2020
	Consider options for current Y10s (going to Y11) for COOS		MKY/JR (CR/MA/AG)	Timescales TBA
Supporting pupils when they do resume attendance	Ensure schools are aware of the support service offer around bereavement.	Agreed package of support for schools, families and children around handling bereavement in place.	Educational Psychologists (AM)	

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Priority areas	Actions/tasks	Outcome/success criteria	Lead (& support staff)	Completion date:
	Trauma awareness (conference)	Move conference date to November /date in New Year are in place –Fairfield Halls and keynote speakers in process of being notified. Theme of conference will be refined to reflect current situation	MH et al	
	Put in place arrangements to provide on-going advice and support to school leaders	Inclusion Advisor and SEPs working with schools in supportive role	MKY/ SEPs	
	Ensure schools are aware of the offer from other service such as Early Help and Youth Engagement.	Schools made aware of the wider offer from the council.	Extended SLT	
	Review available support for schools and commission further services as required.	Services reviewed and commissioned where required.	Extended SLT	
Managing exclusion and referrals to FAP	Consider if/when we can restart FAP (12 th June) for risk of PEx managed moves and whether we need to do it virtually or need alternative arrangements. Series of one-off 'team around the school' meetings in priority schools to provide multi-agency support around vulnerable pupils.	Arrangements for FAP in relation to brokering managed moves for pupils at risk of PEx agreed and implemented. TAS meeting held with priority schools.	MKY/CR/VBW MMa	29 th May 2020

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Priority areas	Actions/tasks	Outcome/success criteria	Lead (& support staff)	Completion date:
	Providing advice to schools around conduct of socially distanced exclusion hearings and ensuring statutory processes are followed	Guidance provided to schools on managing exclusions	CR/MMA	From 8 th June 2020 29 th May 2020
Curriculum	Document sent to all schools to support staff online training (including curriculum development). Schools signposted to online learning and resources for pupils Provide schools with information and support re how to adapt curriculum for reintegration e.g. signposting to recovery curriculum Provide guidance for schools re reporting to parents at the end of the academic year 2019-20	Teachers continue to be well equipped for curriculum delivery Schools are able to successfully adapt their curriculum for a phased return to school with a particular focus on pupils' well-being and mental health Schools are able to provide parents with information about their pupils that is measured and appropriate to the current situation	School Effectiveness team in conjunction with EP team AL	19 May 2020 13 May 2020
Support and communication for school leaders	Regular update from Directorate with key messages from government and LA	Central point for communication of key messages to headteacher	Interim Director of Education School Effectiveness team	Ongoing during Covid-19 crisis

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Priority areas	Actions/tasks	Outcome/success criteria	Lead (& support staff)	Completion date:
	<p>Link advisers in regular contact with headteachers in order to provide guidance, support and a listening ear to head teachers, including for new heads, interim heads and small maintained schools</p> <p>Continued support for any schools causing concern</p> <p>Continue to support recruitment of head teachers</p> <p>Continue to source and communicate relevant information to key leadership groups in order to support best practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SENCOs Primary assessment leaders Primary core subject leaders (English and maths) 	<p>Head teachers feel supported and know that there is a point of contact for their many and varied enquiries</p> <p>Link advisors report regular contact with schools through Officer's and Advisers' meetings.</p> <p>LA representatives on HT recruitment panels were possible</p> <p>Regular email updates to headteachers and senior leaders including SENDCOs</p>	School Link Advisors	
Helping school staff to manage their emotional resilience over a return to school	<p>Prompt whole staff meetings</p> <p>Offer work discussion groups</p> <p>Provide guidance</p>	Schools able to adequately staff settings	All	

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Priority areas	Actions/tasks	Outcome/success criteria	Lead (& support staff)	Completion date:
Managing the workforce, knowing who can return	Pastoral care to see who can return Planning deployment Covid testing to aid return to work	Rates of staff absence return to pre-Covid levels	Schools and link advisors	
How to establish a safe school, classroom, playground	Clear H & S guidance Work with unions Provide information at school level to parents	Schools able to accommodate growing numbers of pupils	Schools and link advisors	
Providing advice and guidance to parents about arrangements but also their children's well-being	Provide written guidance Support Schools to offer parent briefings if required. Offer telephone consultation	Inclusion Advisor supporting SENCOs in liaising with parents and answering queries and allaying anxieties and concerns Good attendance in year groups returning to school	MH Schools and link advisors	ongoing
Plan how manage the return of limited year groups whilst continuing home learning	Clarify expectations for parents and supporting headteachers. Consolidate home learning offer	School staffing arranged to accommodate year groups attending and remote learning for others	Schools and link advisors	
Managing children's emotions in preparation	Clear messages from school with LA guidance Written guidance	Good attendance in year groups returning to school	Schools and link advisors	
Training for staff in preparation	Offer a suite of training on bereavement and loss, emotional resilience, keeping safe, dealing with traumatised children etc. Offer	Colleagues feel well supported and their revised CPD needs are met	Schools and link advisors	

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Priority areas	Actions/tasks	Outcome/success criteria	Lead (& support staff)	Completion date:
	specific DSL support for potential disclosures. Highlight the need to identify vulnerability			
Planning the activities of return: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledging fears, loss, separation anxiety, loss of confidence and skills Marking the transition Rebuilding relationships Re-establishing routines Managing behaviour 	Offer guidance on areas to consider, activities at class, year group and individual level.	Schools to liaise with Inclusion Advisor and EP Service as well as SENCO Cluster Groups to identify need and support for traumatised pupils Support offered to all schools who require it. Link advisors work closely with schools during their recovery planning phase	MH Schools and link advisors	Ongoing
Plan welfare support for those in need and not able to afford the essentials	Continue food poverty approach Consider school clothes issue, offer guidance in relaxing rules	Schools refer into 'family support' service for emergency food parcel deliveries or onward referrals to Gateway.	LF/ZB Gateway	Ongoing Ongoing

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Priority areas	Actions/tasks	Outcome/success criteria	Lead (& support staff)	Completion date:
		<p>Gateway assess families (referred by schools) and support with vouchers or food bank referrals.</p> <p>Schools with high levels of FSM pupils sign up to FareShare surplus food collection at 1 of 5 local collection points.</p>	<p>LF/ZB Education leads</p> <p>LF/Gateway</p>	22 nd May
Managing transitions	Input guidance from other work flows	Full transition guidance issued	Link Advisors	May 20 2020
Helping schools to provide emotional support for children & staff returning from lockdown	<p>Working group created to look at using the mental health aspects of the RHSE curriculum to support the return</p> <p>Provide guidance and resources for schools</p> <p>Link to more specialist work eg bereavement support or trauma-informed schools *</p>	<p>Group "meets" from 14th May and creates package of advice and support</p> <p>Package as above plus other resources eg new RHSE primary resource pack; link to work delivered in secondary schools, and support/training for staff</p> <p>Use existing Health and Wellbeing professionals mailing list to share work or to ask for further help (eg from EPS or MHST)</p>	ZB	Mid-June 2020, although could provide year-group specific materials if these ages go back to school earlier

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Priority areas	Actions/tasks	Outcome/success criteria	Lead (& support staff)	Completion date:
	Signpost schools to further sources of advice such as Anna Freud Centre, NSPCC and CEOP	Continue to use existing Healthy Schools network and mailing lists		Ongoing Ongoing
Supporting successful transition for pupils (including those with SEND) starting Reception, year 7 and post 16 destinations	<p>Link advisers to lead 'task and finish' groups with head teachers and relevant LA colleagues to develop guidance for early years, year 6-7 and years 11-12 transition</p> <p>Link advisers provide support to schools in delivering transition plans.</p>	<p>Guidance documents for schools which supports them in providing effective transition arrangements for their pupils. Document to be an annex to the whole borough guidance.</p> <p>Pupils in these year groups are well supported in transition to new education settings.</p> <p>Inclusion Advisor currently working with SENCO Cluster Leads and schools to plan for transition arrangements and in school</p>	<p>Link advisers Early years JW 6-7 & 11-12 MS SEND to be included in all groups</p> <p>MH</p> <p>MH</p>	<p>May 31 2020</p> <p>May and ongoing</p>

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Priority areas	Actions/tasks	Outcome/success criteria	Lead (& support staff)	Completion date:
		support for SEN pupils particularly in the sharing of information Transition Afternoon for SENCOs June /late August/September Possibility of having to spilt event into two groups due to social distancing		3 possible dates booked and one/two to be confirmed
Ensuring adequate and appropriate food provision is available for pupils and families.	Provide advice and guidance to schools with concerns around food provision.	Advice/guidance provided to schools raising concerns	LF	Ongoing
	Plan the future of the 'family support' referral and advice service. Review current support and plan a hand-over to other internal/community services. Review periodically to decide when the service should be withdrawn.	Plan is in place for the short-term continuation of the service and the support being offered.	LF/ZB	Ongoing
		Plans are communicated with schools and alternative support services are promoted.	LF/ZB	Ongoing
Croydon Music and Arts				
Children and young people's well-being	Create well-being course based on the Children's Society five ways to well-being and parental guidance	Other services refer young people to the course to supplement their interventions / support	GS and CMA staff	9 May 2020 (course created)
	Launch as part of Croydon Music and Arts online offer which can be completed using	1,000s complete the online course and are offered additional online		18 May 2020

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Priority areas	Actions/tasks	Outcome/success criteria	Lead (& support staff)	Completion date:
	CMA Seesaw home learning app supported by CMA staff; circulate pdf version which can be printed and used without IT, supported by a parent / carer or other trusted adult	and in person arts courses as part of CMA's ongoing blended learning arts offer Any additional needs revealed through the course are referred to appropriate service		(course launched)
Education Compliance, Commissioning & Post -16				
Ensuring risk of NEET Yr. 11 – 13 leavers are identified and aware of support available	Collation of Yr. 11 September Guarantee information, i.e. what current Yr. 11s intend to do in Sept 2020 (including KS4 provision in FE colleges). Any Yr. 11 with no / few plans can be identified and offered support. Notify schools and colleges of support available from caseworkers, namely virtual 1:1 or group information sessions for any Yr. 11 – 13 leavers or their parent / carer that needs support for Post 16/18 transition in addition to the already standing email / 'phone enquiries.	Process completed, support ongoing. Notification circulated to schools and colleges (careers leads)	JJK / CBE JJK	30.04.20 <i>(small number of schools being chased for data).</i> 20.04.20

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Priority areas	Actions/tasks	Outcome/success criteria	Lead (& support staff)	Completion date:
	Liaise / negotiate and confirm with providers re their provision for Yr. 11s (ordinarily support commences after last Friday in June).	<p>Online provision confirmed.</p> <p>Online provision for Yr. 11 – 13 leavers confirmed and shared with schools / colleges (careers leads).</p>	<p>JJK</p> <p>JJK</p>	<p>30.04.20</p> <p>01.05.20</p>
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities				
Children & Young People with an EHC Plan are supported back into school	<p>If CYP in specific year groups are identified to 'go back to school', in order to maintain social distancing and provide adequate staffing, it may be necessary to prioritise which CYP with EHC Plans return in advance of others. Schools would be expected to do so using the risk assessment that has been undertaken or by prioritising known vulnerable groups (e.g. CYP with CP or CIN Plan). LA action: Provide guidance for education settings accordingly.</p> <p>EPs, therapists and SEN Teams to identify CYP with EHC Plans for whom additional support is likely to be needed to re-establish attendance and engagement</p>	<p>All CYP with EHC Plans are attending school at the expected levels (i.e. no worse than prior to COVID-19 by the end of September 2020 (guidance permitting).</p> <p>Updated guidance to be developed in response to emerging issues (e.g. EP advice regarding school refusal to be amended and made appropriate for current circumstances).</p> <p>Daily reporting of attendance of CYP with EHC Plans to be maintained during defined</p>	<p>JL/MH/AF/SVV/RB/DC/AM</p> <p>Inclusion Advisor liaising with SENCOs to ensure effective transition practices are in place to support pupils with EHCPs</p> <p>Models of good practice are identified and shared to develop practice across the LA</p>	<p>15th May – Sept 2020</p> <p>as above and ongoing</p>

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Priority areas	Actions/tasks	Outcome/success criteria	Lead (& support staff)	Completion date:
	with learning. Liaise with school SENCo and parent/carer as appropriate to build support for transition back into school and monitor need for on-going support.	'recovery period' to support joint working across Education and Children's Social Care Directorates.		
Ensuring support for all children on SEND support	Identify most vulnerable children (PMLD/SLD) who may return to settings. Ensure risk assessments in place. Process for monitoring and updating – allocated to team members to support and monitor	All children with PMLD/SLD accounted for and team members responsible for weekly updates	PS/RB/KC	22 nd May 2020
	Provide guidance and support for all children on caseloads, update support plans and provision maps, review inclusion funding	Weekly reporting of caseloads from all team members		
	Support transitions to reception for all children on EY SEND caseload	All schools contacted	PS	31st May 2020
Virtual School				
CLA	Separate guidance will be issued	Issued	SB	
Pupil Place Planning, School Admissions & Early Years				
Children out of school	Primary Schools:	Primary Schools:	MA JPM	Ongoing

DRAFT ACTION PLAN: Education Directorate schools reopening				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools reopening in the near future. Planning assumption is for some year groups to return in June/July and all year groups to return in some from September onwards with a possible 'eyes on' day for all year groups at some point in the summer term. This can be flexed in response to scientific advice and political decisions. We need to put in place systems/structures that are ready to go from the reopen to ensure children resume school in line with the re-open plan and can sustain their school place. 				
Priority areas	Actions/tasks	Outcome/success criteria	Lead (& support staff)	Completion date:
	<p>Applications are being sent as normal to schools who process their in-year admissions. Offers are being made by admissions team for all other schools pending re-open dates. Details of offers made will start to be sent to schools prior to them re-opening.</p> <p>Secondary Schools: Applications are being sent as normal to all secondary schools, outcomes for these are being chased with the schools. In readiness for the reopening of schools, a report is being updated weekly of a list of children to be sent to each school who are eligible for the low attainment funding.</p>	<p>Offers have been made and accepted for almost all children out of school, start dates to be arranged upon schools re-opening.</p> <p>Secondary schools: Responses from secondary schools have been minimal with some informing they will not be processing admissions until after they have returned to normal practice.</p>	<p>MA TG</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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