

# Response to questions about Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Services during Covid-19 Measures

Please see below for response to questions we have received. The Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS), Local Offer and [MASH](#) for social care queries are also good first points of contact.

## What happens about transition for children and young people with SEND especially when they will be moving to a new setting?

Good transition planning is essential for children and young people with additional needs. It is recognised that the current situation will mean that schools need to work creatively with families and other professionals to ensure this still takes place. As we do not know when schools will return, it is recognised that some children may have finished school unexpectedly early and the emotional difficulties associated with that. The IASS has already spoken to the Educational Psychology Service about providing some support and resources to reassure and support families with this.

## How will annual reviews/transition reviews take place?

The timescales and duties around reviews may relax but, at the time of writing, there is NO CHANGE to the legislation. The Local Authority SENSTART team will continue to monitor the situation and advise schools and settings accordingly. The Secretary of State has not given notice to allow LAs to relax their duties under the Children and Families Act yet, and when this does happen it will be for the shortest time period possible.

When/if the Secretary of State gives notice it will also effectively allow LAs to postpone Annual Reviews, they may well still go ahead if everyone is happy/able for them to do so, but the LA can decide to put them on hold. We await further instruction. The latest guidance is [here](#)

## Can any consultations that are going on or coming up around SEND be delayed?

All live and closed consultations can be found [here](#). Each consultation has a named contact with contact details who should be the first point of contact regarding queries about the consultation period in light of the current situation.

## What happens about short breaks and direct payment? Do parents need to keep paying carers even though they are not offering any respite? Will families lose their direct payment funding if they are not using it?

Short Breaks are being provided albeit on a reduced offer due to agency capacity, some parents/carers have already stopped their support during the Covid pandemic. Progress has said (now 4 weeks in) a community support group can be offered again where possible. Disabled Children and Young People's Team (DCYPT) has prioritised those deemed most at need.

If Direct Payments are not used, they will not be lost and if PA's cannot provide support then the parent/carer would not be expected to pay. The issue of PAs not receiving pay etc would be taken up with their agency where appropriate.

Direct Payments are being used more creatively and in some cases have agreed the purchase of toys/materials particularly outdoor toys.

The DCYP service is fully operational virtually and SW's, FSW's supporting and signposting parents and carers as situations/issues arise.

- ALL DCYP cases have been ragged based on risk and ALL RED ragged cases receiving face to face visits whilst AMBER & GREEN Ragged cases receiving virtual visits. Risk register reviewed daily to reflect escalating/deescalating risk.
- DCYP & SENSTART liaising and discussing all YP on EHCP where not allocated to a SW & referrals may need to be made to the MASH for assessment.

## Is there any emotional support available for families at this challenging time?

It is certainly a stressful and challenging time and we recognise the additional challenges facing families where there is a child or young person with SEND. A lot of work is taking place to offer additional support.

There is dedicated information on the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust website, City of Wolverhampton Council website and the Local Offer. The IASS is also trying to pull together additional resources and support options in one place on the IASS website.

There is a lot available from local and national organisations. We encourage local families to follow the IASS on social media where possible @Wolves IASS. The WV Holiday Squad has turned into the WV Virtual Squad full of ideas and activities for families for the coming weeks. There is a dedicated section for 'SEND' which is being continually updated and linked to the Local Offer.

A new, remote parent/carer consultation service is being offered by the Inclusion Support Team and Outreach Service. This offer includes professionals from Educational Psychology, Specialist Teacher, Attendance and welfare, Inclusion Support, Virtual School and Outreach.

Parent/Carers can complete a request form with a professional they are already working with or parents/carers can call the service administrators to fill out the request forms. Parents/carers can directly request the service by going on to the EP website: <http://www.educationalpsychologywolverhampton.co.uk/parents/remoticonsultation-service.html>

Initially this offer started only as an Educational Psychology team and targeted families who were vulnerable identified by caseworkers, IASS and Strengthening Families Hubs. After Easter the offer is extended to include all professionals in the Inclusion Support Service and Outreach Service and to all parents/carers who live in Wolverhampton who may be finding things difficult. The feedback from the service so far has been really positive.

## Is there any guidance for families if their child or young person is on the vulnerable or extremely vulnerable list?

Over recent weeks guidance has been changing at a fast pace. The most up to date information (dated 1st April) is here

Please see BACCH letter

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-andprotecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shieldingand-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

## What help and support are schools ( mainstream and special) giving regarding doing school work at home?

Schools are working hard to keep in touch with families. Each school will have different arrangements for doing so. Lots of schools are offering work or ideas for activities that can be done at home whilst recognising the additional pressures on families.

Guidance released on 7th April is helpful to see what guidance is being offered to schools. Extract here:

### **“Do schools need to provide educational support for pupils at home?”**

We recognise that many schools have already shared resources for children who are at home and are grateful for this.

We want to support parents and schools to ensure young people’s education can continue. Support available includes:

- a list of online education resources which have been identified by some of the country’s leading educational experts to help pupils to learn at home
- the BBC enhancing its education provision to include daily lessons, starting from 20 April 2020”

There is an agreed process that all schools are following for those children and young people who have an Education, Health and Care plan which will identify any difficulties that may arise as a result of not being in school. Headteachers are leading on this in conjunction with colleagues from the local authority and health where appropriate.

City of Wolverhampton Council is launching a survey after Easter hoping to gather information about what schools are offering to the majority of pupils not in school and whether this is differentiated to support and challenge pupils working at different levels of learning in each class group. There is also consideration to ‘digital poverty’, recognising that some pupils may be limited by a lack of access to technology. It will also include looking at how schools are fulfilling pastoral roles through the frequency and type of communication they are having with families. After the survey it is anticipated there will be some celebration and sharing of good practice.

## How will families keep in touch with professionals who support their children?

Contact will mostly be in the usual way, via telephone or email. Services may have made alternative arrangements, but we would expect these to be communicated where appropriate.

Professionals may be classed as Critical Workers or will be working from home in most cases. Please note that many staff, especially colleagues in health, may have already been redeployed to other roles.

Nearly all medical appointments are being cancelled how can families stay in touch with their health professionals and get any advice and help? Will cancelled appointments be carried out in a different way? Some families have reported difficulties getting repeat prescriptions and having to make countless and unnecessary visits to the pharmacy and not being able to get through by phone.

We recognise that this is a really troubling time for families and we wanted to help by updating you about what is happening with relevant services locally.

The Black Country and West Birmingham is experiencing the impact of COVID19 ahead of many parts of the country and our services and staff are under significant pressure as they cope with the pandemic.

Non-urgent appointments have been cancelled or postponed. Families should use their existing communication channels for contacting professionals (as above) whilst following government instruction about social distancing.

The Gem Centre still open 5 days a week with 2 Doctors present every day and those not covering the ward still available to answer queries. Blood clinics are still running at Gem centre by appointment.

Here is a letter from the Chief Nurse for West Birmingham and the Black Country Clinical Commissioning Groups

A lot of pharmacies are doing deliveries for those who cannot collect so perhaps advice is to check websites or be persistent with calling. Failing that perhaps the GP surgery can advise.

## Update on Health Services

### **COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S NURSING SERVICE**

Our Community Children's Nursing Service continues to run as normal 7 days a week, 0830-1700, with the weekend and bank holidays having a reduced service to cover essential visits only such as wound care, injections, IV antibiotics and enteral related issues. The support we offer is for nursing care queries or activities. We can offer telephone support as well as face to face visits. We may try and reschedule visits where we can, if the child or family member within the home has symptoms that may suggest they have the CIVID-19 virus. If we do visit the home, our nurses will be wearing personal protective equipment that includes a mask, to protect the child and family as well as the nurse.

If you have any queries or relating to your child's care or are concerned and need advice and support then please do not hesitate to contact us on 01902 444700 Monday-Friday. On a weekend please ring 01902 307999 and ask to be put through to the Community Children's Nursing Service.

### **SPEECH & LANGUAGE THERAPY SERVICES**

Therapy Services have a skeleton staff in place including admin and so we are able to reply to emails and answer the phone. Therapy Services have centralised everything so that a Speech and Language Therapist and the Group Manager have a clear oversight of all the children's workstreams along with key staff leading on each piece of work and reporting in regularly with progress.

We are currently offering telephone reviews to families. We have also put together work packs for all children who had begun therapy and for those who were due to start therapy.

We have just begun contacting new referrals by phone to triage and offer some initial advice.

## **PHYSIOTHERAPY AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICES**

Where face to face appointments have been cancelled we have either spoken to the family directly, followed up with a letter with contact details, or sent a letter outlining the plan. The exact course of action has been tailored to fit needs. We continue to work together with the wider teams, mostly by telephone/video.

We have arranged that families contact us when needed in most cases. We recognise this is a very challenging time for families, and therefore have tried to give some flexibility. Some of the team have been redeployed to work directly in Covid-19 service. In this case they have been able to inform other team members of the situation, and ensure they have access to the individual record. We have an administrative service in place from Monday – Friday, and Senior OT and Physiotherapists on site every day to respond as needed. We are carrying out regular video consultations where appropriate, and have had a very positive experience with this. We have had specialist equipment delivered to homes where possible, and ensured that families know how to use the items, and are familiar with the therapy plans.

The only services which are completely closed are some of the equipment manufacturers.

The office numbers are 01902 446290 and 01902446302. Emails can be sent to [rwh-tr.childrenstherapyservices@nhs.net](mailto:rwh-tr.childrenstherapyservices@nhs.net) this email box is opened every day.  
**ORTHOTICS**

Orthotics have now had guidance from BAPO regarding virtual clinics for orthotics which is now back up and running, with virtual and telephone appointments, face to face appointments for very urgent patients only.

Patients and families can contact Orthotics on the usual number 01902 694082 8:30 – 16:30 Mon – Friday or email us at [rwh-tr.orthoticservice@nhs.net](mailto:rwh-tr.orthoticservice@nhs.net)

## **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

A 24/7 phone line for mental health crisis is being developed for all children & young people, their parents and carers and adults and will be available in the near future. This phone number will be made available as soon as it is known.

Base 25 are offering virtual counselling as appropriate and Specialist CAMHS are offering a choice of phone or video call therapy.

Crisis, Eating disorders team and Early Intervention in Psychosis are working as normal.

The contact details for all is still 01902 444021 which is the usual number for the Single Point of Access (SPA).

## **COMMUNITY PAEDIATRICIANS**

Currently many appointments are being done by telephone/video consultation so clinics still running virtually where possible unless the clinician is off unwell or is covering the acute wards.

## Numbers for Emergency Supplies

Numbers for emergency supplies, continence products, medical equipment

- Children's Community Nursing Team and Therapists may be able to advise.
- **ENTERAL** i.e. Nasogastric or gastrostomy - For any enteral enquiries around equipment and ancillaries, contact Homeward on: 0800 093 3672.
  - **OFFICE HOURS** - Monday to Friday 8am until 8pm and Saturday 9am until 1pm. Outside office hours, advice and support is available on pumps, equipment and feeding tube problems but not on individual deliveries 0800 093 3672.  
[www.nutriciahomeward.co.uk](http://www.nutriciahomeward.co.uk) <https://www.nutriciahomeward.co.uk/home/>
- **CONTINENCE** - Any issues around continence and stock ring the Continence Department on 01902 446149.
- **MEDICAL EQUIPMENT** - Any queries or concerns around the medical equipment for your child or ancillaries then please contact the CCNS team on 01902 444700.

## Prescriptions

Pharmacy delivery services are under extreme pressure and a number of them are doing deliveries for those who cannot collect but please make contact with them and explain your individual circumstances.

Other information:

The Council for Disabled Children has published [Issue 1 of a response to questions asked about the current situation](#).