

Arrangements for supporting children, young people and families – special educational needs and disabilities (Covid-19 2020)

This update 10/05/2019

Schools, colleges and nurseries remain closed for **most** children. Schools should offer places in school for children of keyworkers, vulnerable children (e.g. who have a social worker) and children with education, health and care plans (EHCP) who would be at **significant risk** if their EHCP provision and placement did not continue - namely **those who could not safely be supported at home**.

Having an EHCP does not necessarily mean schools will offer children and young people a place, but it does mean the school should be considering them individually to identify if they need this. Schools and professionals who normally work with children and young people, will be **keeping in touch** with families throughout this period.

Schools are using an **EHCP Risk Assessment** to consider and record how they might deliver the provision outlined in the EHCP. More information about this is listed below.

The Government has now published a [50 page document detailing the recovery strategy](#). The Government aims to ensure that the youngest children, and those preparing for secondary school, have 'maximum time with their teachers'. The ambition is for all primary school children to return to classrooms before the summer holidays for a month if feasible, but this will be kept under review. It is expected that pre-school children will be able to return to early years settings from June 1. Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils are also set to go back to school in 'smaller sizes' from the start of next month.

[The Government has also published a notice from the Secretary of State for Education issued under the Coronavirus Act 2020 to modify section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014](#)

What remains the same for local authorities and health authorities?

- Must still consider new requests for EHC needs assessment , for example whether to agree to start an assessment
- Must ask for advice and information from all the required professionals
- Must seek the views and wishes of a child, the child's parent or a young person
- Must continue to fully involve parents/careers and young people in any decisions both at the individual level and strategically
- Reviews and re-assessments of EHC plans must still take place
- Admissions and 15 day consultations still apply
- Complaints and rights of appeal remain
- SEND Tribunals are still hearing cases

Annual reviews must still take place and there is more flexibility of timing; child or young person must be at the centre of the process and be supported to engage with the process in a meaningful way. Priority should be given to the following groups:

- children and young people with significant changes of need or circumstances
- looked after children
- children and young people in residential provision
- children and young people in out of area provision, especially independent and non-maintained provision

Admissions of children and young people with an EHCP

Settings **must** still admit children and young people and put them on roll. The child or young person must be placed on the roll and treated in the same way as other pupils or students in the setting.

What has changed?

Providing for CYP with an EHCP

North Lincolnshire Council and our health partners are still responsible and must use **reasonable endeavors** to secure the provision in an EHCP, this duty can be discharged as long as the LA has made these **reasonable endeavors** to seek provision. This applies between **1-31 May** and it may be extended.

This means we must consider for each child and young person with an EHC plan, what we can reasonably provide. This will be recorded in an individual **EHCP Risk Assessment**. We will explore with schools, parents and the child or young person what provision can reasonably be secured or arranged considering the following factors:

- Workforce capacity - does the workforce available have the skills and expertise to deliver the provision
- The child's specific circumstances
- Do the interventions stated in the EHCP comply with social distancing, for example some physical and sensory interventions need close proximity
- The themes to consider **what, where, how, when and by whom** when considering the provision

The Secretary of State's notice lists possible examples of such changes in provision. Examples of such alternative arrangements:

- a part-time timetable
- a temporary placement in another school
- class sizes being significantly reduced to ensure social distancing compliance
- weekly phone or video contact from school staff to monitor home learning programmes, to provide feedback, and to make adjustments as necessary

- specialist services providing interventions to the children and young people or family
- speech and language therapy, counselling and other approaches being delivered via video link or telephone advice

The local authority should keep a record of the provision it decides it must secure or arrange. North Lincolnshire are discussing provision with school SENCOs using our EHCP Risk Assessment template. We should then:

- confirm to the parents or young person what it has decided to do and explain why the provision for the time being differs from that in the plan
- keep under review whether the provision it is securing or arranging means that it is still complying with the *reasonable endeavours* duty, the needs of a child or young person may change over time (particularly in the current circumstances) as may the availability of key staff or provision

As there are almost 1000 children and young people with an EHCP in North Lincolnshire we will discuss with schools and specialist teams and agree who will contact families to discuss provision.

Statutory Timescales for EHC needs assessments and plan

These have been modified **1 May – 25 September 2020** and they apply only if it is **not reasonably practicable or impractical due to COVID - 19** such examples

- Decision to start an EHC needs assessment
- If the process cannot be completed with 20 weeks, as soon as we know that we are applying the exception, we must let parents know. This applies to any step within the process, gathering of advice, completing draft EHCP, finalising EHCP
- Notification to parents to re-assess following an annual review (currently 15 days)

Cases in progress on 1 May 2020

Regulations came into force on 1 May. If consideration of a request for an EHC needs assessment or one of the processes that may follow is in progress on that date, then the relevant exception to the timings could apply if coronavirus (COVID-19) had caused delay. This would depend on the facts of the case.

If the final deadline (such as the end of the 20 weeks) had passed before 1 May, the relaxations to timescales do not apply because they were not in force then.

Local arrangements

The Government advice requires that council staff must work from home if possible. We are continuing to work with schools and others to support vulnerable children and young people and children of key workers. EHCP Coordinators and Managers will be in contact

with parent/carers, schools and other professionals.

All EHCP Coordinators are contactable by phone and email and have Skype for Business for meetings.

Please see below for some details of how we will continue with our essential work:

Special Educational Needs and Disability Advisory Panel (SENDAP)

We will continue to run SENDAP remotely every week using Skype and telephone calls. This will decide whether to agree requests for an EHC Needs Assessment. It will also decide whether to issue an EHC plan after an assessment.

EHC Needs Assessments

We will prioritise completing EHC needs assessment and producing EHC plans. We will continue to work to legal deadlines where possible. Our new digital EHC Hub is now live and we encourage parents and carers and education providers to use this for new assessment requests. The digital EHC Hub can be accessed via www.northlincslocaloffer.com

Professionals will continue to provide advice towards EHC needs assessments. They will do this using their knowledge of the child or young person. They will also speak with other professionals about the children and young people. Their reports will be sent using the digital EHC Hub.

Co-production of EHC Plans

The SEND Team will write a draft plan. And will send this by email to families, schools and advice givers – and via the HUB (for assessments started after 28th January 2020). We will contact families by phone or Skype to explain the contents of the plan. We will also ask families for their views and for any amendments they would like to see. Families can also email their comments to us – and use the HUB (if the assessment started after 28th January 2020). School staff and professionals will provide their views using the Hub. We will consider all amendments requested. We will then issue a final EHC plan.

Annual Review meetings

We encourage schools to hold a review by virtual meeting using telephone or video. Examples of video applications are Skype, Zoom or Facetime.

Short Breaks allocation supporting children, young people and families.

Our main priority is to continue to support families throughout these extremely challenging times in a safe way. We fully acknowledge that the measures introduced will create specific

challenges for specific families, particularly those with complex health needs and where behaviours may challenge. Families are often supported by a number of professionals and resources which due to the risks identified regarding Covid- 19 may have been significantly reduced.

Support will continue to be offered via telephone and other methods to families where deemed appropriate, however where it is identified that there is a significant risk of parental/ carer fatigue and subsequent risk of family breakdown individual risk assessments will be undertaken. All risk assessments will be completed, or supported by a Specialist Social Worker. Short breaks will only be offered if deemed essential to reduce this risk and enable the young person to remain with family.

Any short breaks offered will:

- Be carried out in the young person's home where possible
- Not be carried out if the young person, or a member of their household is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or is self-isolating due to symptoms
- Will not be offered to families where the young person has been offered a school place but chosen not to attend
- Adhere to strict hand hygiene guidance

If short breaks are completed within the Cygnets setting:

- No more than two young people will be on site at any one time
- Families will not enter the building, medications etc. will be collected from parents in the foyer
- High standard of infection control and hygiene in place. Objects and surfaces which are touched regularly are frequently cleaned & disinfected
- Sanitiser and/or wipes to be easily accessible throughout the home
- Clear signage outlining risks and hygiene procedures visible throughout the home
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be on site for use by staff if required
- The number of staff within the home at any one time or when children are not present will be reduced wherever possible
- If a young person, or staff member displays symptoms of COVID-19 during a short break they will be isolated in a well ventilated room until able to leave the building.

Specialist Social Work

Social Workers will continue to complete visits to young people and their families and complete reviews to ensure support remains appropriate given the current situation. Social workers will be using creative strategies to ensure visits and reviews are completed safely, using a range of technologies. If any families have any concerns regarding this they are encouraged to discuss this with their social worker at the earliest opportunity.

Specialist Teaching Teams and Education Psychology

All families that teams are actively involved with have been contacted by letter and some with follow up emails. Teams are in daily contact with schools and are:

- Providing parents/carers with telephone and email details to contact teams, ensuring they are aware of the support offered.
- Providing advice and resources - sent or delivered to families as appropriate.
- Discussing individual children and young people with schools to ensure support is available.
- Adding information and resources to the [Local Offer](#) and continuing to update this over time.
- Developing strategy and ideas to support successful and smooth transition once schools return.
- Continuing to triage new referrals which are discussed on a weekly basis.
- Providing reports for EHCP assessments and reviews.
- Supporting children into new school 'hub' provisions.
- Attending and requesting virtual professional meetings to review and plan additional support.
- Developing parental support forums through social media platforms.
- Developing virtual parent 'drop-ins' alongside Children's Centres using What's App video conferencing.
- Seeking out and sharing best practice from schools to support pupils.
- Contacting students' families again to introduce the idea of transitioning back to school. Starting with Y6 and Y11
- Sending out first steps to get ready for transition which includes our Workbook and a worksheet 'My Lockdown Experience' which we are hoping will capture student voice.

Therapy teams

Our therapy teams are supporting the local NHS response to COVID-19, however teams are continuing to support children and young people with an EHCP. All families of children and young people receiving speech and language therapy have been sent a letter with details of how to contact their therapist. Therapists are keeping in touch by telephone, providing resources to use at home and where required are providing therapy in the home using PPE to protect children and families. Families of children at SEN Support are being contacted where capacity allows.

On the [local offer](#) website there are links to the general information leaflets which all offer appropriate parental advice and links to the therapy service websites.

Helpful information for families

Our [SEND Local Offer website](#) has useful resources for families including:

- **Kooth** – A free online mental health and emotional wellbeing support service to help children and young people living in North Lincolnshire.

- **How to register for support** if you or your child has a medical condition which makes you **extremely vulnerable to coronavirus (COVID-19)**
- **Update from the Carers' Support Centre, Brigg .**
- **Education, Health and Care Plan Risk Assessment.** Education and training providers will consult with families and professionals and use this risk assessment to support decision making.
- You can **watch British Sign Language versions of government advice.**
- Coronavirus support for **employees, benefit claimants and businesses**
- **Coronavirus – What it means for you** – Citizen's Advice website.
- **Free School Meals** – is your family eligible?

There is also a wide range of resources which will help you support and reassure your child if they are remaining at home, including:

- **Special edition newsletter March 2020** – A variety of information and teaching and learning resources for parents
- **MENCAP Easy Read on Coronavirus**
- **Neurodiversity 101 – Anxiety**
- **Talking to children about Coronavirus**
- **Coronavirus video for older children** – excellent guidance about the coronavirus and staying calm suitable for older children
- **Coronavirus video for younger children** – an animated video for young children on staying at home

- **Sure Start Newsletter**
- **A compilation of resources for students and families** with English as an additional language
- **5 point scale – angry birds blank**
- **5 point scale Adult guidance chart**
- **5 point scale- fan blank**
- **Coronavirus Social Story**
- **Daily schedule**
- **Friendly and unfriendly actions**
- **Full pack home symbols**
- **Ideas for making the most of your Lego at home**
- **Learning in Lockdown** – a website/blog with lots of interesting ideas to engage children updated everyday
- **Nice Hands social story**
- **The Stay Home Superheroes**

Supporting behaviour strategies in the home:

- **Active ignoring**
- **Calm down**
- **Choices (Pitstop version)**
- **Choices and consequences**
- **Choices Poster**
- **Controlling cross feelings – poster**

- **Corona explanation for children**
 - **Empathy**
 - **Giving choices and following instructions**
 - **How children display anxiety**
 - **How to use kindness chart**
 - **Kindness chart**
 - **Losing it**
 - **Negotiating**
 - **Neurodiversity 101 – Anxiety**
 - **Praise**
 - **PRAISE 2**
 - **Problem solving**
 - **Supporting children to sort out conflict situations**
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- **Timed Warnings**
 - **Fun family activities**
 - **I can't do it – Building Confidence strategy**
 - **Ideas for when you are at home**
 - **Mindfulness and activity apps**
 - **Things to do with your child at home [PDF, 128Kb]**
 - **What to do in the Mad Half Hour**

For further information please contact:

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