

SEND 0-25



Telford & Wrekin
COUNCIL



NEWSLETTER

April 2020

Update from SEND Service Delivery Manager – Simon Wellman

Dear all,

How are you? Well I hope! We are indeed living in interesting times and we all, I know, are doing our best to keep going! This week it was a pleasure to take part in the Inclusive School Forum (virtually) where I had the opportunity to catch up with school colleagues, in which we problem solved and considered solutions regarding provision for children with SEND. It took me back to the day job which for many of us has changed somewhat over recent weeks. The DfE are issuing guidance rapidly, and we are working with you to understand how best to implement new requirements. The current task, which all educational settings are helping us with, is to complete risk assessments for all children with EHC plans. Many thanks for taking the time to do this. Those that have been received are exceptionally helpful and provide a rich picture of what is happening. If you haven't completed yours yet please do send them to us via localoffer@telford.gov.uk. More details about this can be found in this newsletter.

Whilst our current focus is very much on safeguarding and support we are also thinking about the future. There is a need for some creative thinking about transition in particular and we will focus on that during May's edition of the SEND newsletter. We have also begun to consider 'the journey back' and the evident need to focus on wellbeing for all. This will require significant focus, but knowing Telford we will embrace the challenge together.

Very best wishes to you all, Simon.

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SEND statutory duties

On the 24th March an 'open letter' was published by the DfE from the Minister for Children and Families, Vicky Ford who is responsible for SEND. It explained that on 19th March, the Government introduced new legislation into Parliament, in the form of the Coronavirus Bill ('the Bill'), in response to the outbreak and that this would provide opportunity for the government to amend some features of the Children and Family Act, which as we know is the legislation on which the SEND system is based. The letter specified the following:

Our overwhelming aim for SEND, through the Bill and the proposed changes to regulations that are to follow, is to balance the needs of this vulnerable group to receive the support they need with managing the demands on local authorities and health bodies to respond to this outbreak. As a result, we have included in the Bill temporary emergency powers to enable us, where necessary, to modify the legal requirements on local authorities in fulfilling their duties in relation to EHC plans.

In practice, this will mean that where a local authority is, because of the outbreak, unable, for example, to put in place stated provision, they will need to use their reasonable endeavours to do this, but won't be penalised for failing to meet the existing duty as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. These emergency powers will only be exercised for the shortest period and where necessary, and will be regularly reviewed. We will also be seeking to amend regulations on the timescales for EHC plan processes where this is appropriate because of COVID-19. I want to reiterate that these decisions are not taken lightly but I believe strike the right balance in these difficult times.

The current position is that emergency powers have not yet been enacted by the Secretary of State and therefore there is no change in duties (this was reinforced in the DfE [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): SEND risk assessment guidance](#)) however over the coming weeks we fully anticipate change regarding greater flexibility and we will update you about what it means for educational settings, parents and their families as soon as we are aware.

For full details the open letter can be found [HERE](#).



For local information and advice
for vulnerable people, businesses
and families, visit:
www.telford.gov.uk/coronavirus



DfE SEND Risk Assessment Guidance

Below provides a brief summary – full details should be considered by reading the document in full which can be found here: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): SEND risk assessment guidance](#)

- This is new guidance issued April 19th 2020– which supersedes previous guidance on EHC risk assessments that was included in guidance for vulnerable children.
- Risk assessments are required for all children with EHC plans and are conducted by the Local Authority and educational settings in consultation with parents, children and young people.
- At present the law in force in relation to EHC plans is unchanged although steps are being taken to provide some flexibility soon.
- Under the current framework it is for parents/carers to decide whether the children should continue to go to school or college.
- The purpose of the risk assessment is to determine whether a child or young person with an EHC plan will be safer at home or at an educational setting. Where the risk assessment determines a child is safer at an educational setting the DfE recommends they attend the educational setting.
- Where risk assessments have already taken place there is not a need to re-do these because new guidance has been issued. Where the Local Authority considers additional information may be necessary, in light of the new guidance, it will make direct contact with individual educational settings.
- Risk assessments should be proportionate. In both assessing risks and meeting needs there should be concentration of resources on those children with the most complex needs.
- One new feature of the risk assessment (alongside the features which are already part of the risk assessment sent out by the LA) is to consider any out of school or college risk or vulnerability. For example a child or young person becoming involved in dangerous behaviour or situations or requiring support from a social worker. This applies to those whose needs are best met in educational settings, particularly in order to stop a care placement breakdown.



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DfE SEND Risk Assessment Guidance Cont'd

- Consideration is also needed, as part of a risk assessment, as to whether moving equipment or services into a child or young person's home would enable them to be supported there rather than staying at school or college, particularly where this offers a medically vulnerable child or young person a way to have their needs met with fewer contacts than might be achievable at school or college.
- Educational settings could be using knowledge of specialist workers – EPs, LSAT, SIS, Portage, speech and language therapists etc to support distant 'at-home learning'.
- Where a risk assessment determines that a child or young person will be safer at home the educational setting and local authority need to ensure the family understands the support plan that is in place for them, before a child or young person stops attending their educational setting.
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- Scientific advice indicates that educational staff do not require PPE. PPE is only needed in residential special schools and colleges if pupils develop symptoms. It is recognised that some children and young people with SEND present behaviours that are challenging to manage, such as spitting uncontrollably. It will be impossible to provide care without close hands-on contact. In these circumstances, staff need to increase their level of self-protection, such as minimising close contact and having more frequent hand-washing and other hygiene measures, and regular cleaning of services. Reference is made to PHE Cleaning in non-healthcare settings guidance

Prior to the Easter break Telford local authority sent an EHC risk assessment template to educational settings for completion. Many thanks to those who returned. For those yet to be completed please do send them to localoffer@telford.gov.uk as soon as you are able. The local authority has begun to collate the responses and is checking the information with its own intelligence. Further correspondence will then be held with educational settings and families as necessary.



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LA to conduct phone calls to parents and young people with EHC plans as part of the risk assessment process.

The DfE has asked local authorities to consider the needs of all children and young people with an EHC plan, and make a risk assessment, consulting educational settings and parents or carers, to determine whether children and young people with special educational needs will be able to have their needs met at home, and be safer there than attending an educational setting.

We know that educational settings have worked closely with parents when completing EHC risk assessments but in order to provide the assurance that the DfE is seeking, we need to be able to confirm ourselves that families have had that contact and we propose to do this by contacting those families by phone. Having spoken to some of our colleagues in the West Midlands, they are also adopting this approach.

The purpose of these phone calls is to reinforce the expectation that where children are safer at home, then they should remain there. However, we will also promote attendance where it is judged that children and young people should be in their educational setting. For example, a school, as part of its risk assessment, may have identified that it would be safer for a child to be in school, especially where these children have a social worker and that will require a joint approach between school and social worker

We are clear that the majority of children with an EHC Plan should be, and currently are, at home. Where there are a handful of children who really should be in their educational setting we will get in touch with schools, although we fully anticipate that you are trying to get them in too! We are aware of the many schools who have visited children's homes already to secure attendance. For the majority then, the phone call we make will be a 'check in', in which we will ensure they know about the local offer, which hosts a wealth of resources that can be used to support home learning, and information about how to access SEND support services, which have featured in this SEND newsletter. If we think it would be helpful to speak to schools further, we will be in touch. Phone calls to parents will begin week beginning 27th April.



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Inclusive School Forum (ISF)

The Inclusive School Forum will continue throughout the summer term. We are conducting these virtually using Microsoft Teams. All members of the ISF panel take part and schools are invited, through Microsoft teams, to provide an overview of the children they bring to panel. Advice and guidance is given and requests for funding considered. We held a virtual ISF meeting this week and it was a great success!

We are strongly advocating use of the Inclusive School Forum where you feel a child requires additional provision due to their special educational needs. Where funding is agreed it will begin once schools are fully back up and running.

As a local area we want to make sure that children receive support as early as possible, so if you have been planning to come to ISF and or need a quick route to funding please don't wait until we are back up and running. We want children to get the support they need from the moment our schools re-open to all.

Further information about the Inclusive School Forum and referral paperwork can be found on the [Local Offer](#).

Date of Forum	Time	Papers due in
5th May 2020	9am-1pm	30th April 2020
2nd June 2020	9am-1pm	28th May 2020
7th July 2020	9am-1pm	2nd July 2020



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Extension of EY Inclusion Panel Funding for children with SEND heading into their reception year

We know transition this year between nursery and reception will be tricky and therefore we will continue EY inclusion panel funding for all children who are currently in receipt of it, who are heading into their reception year at school. This will continue until the end of the Autumn Term 2020. This aims to provide schools with funding required to support a child's needs upon their entry and where longer term funding is required, the time to submit an application for ISF funding.

The EY Inclusion Panel will continue to sit this term (11th May and 6th July) and will consider new children who may benefit from this funding alongside all other applications. Criteria for EY Inclusion Funding remains the same and can be found on the [Local Offer](#) along with the referral paperwork.

The Local Authority will inform schools about children currently in receipt of EY Inclusion funding to support transition arrangements.

[Early Years Inclusion Panel Referral Form](#)

Microsoft Teams

The teams in SEND have been having great success using Microsoft Teams! Teams is used for video calls, conferencing, meetings and more and we would like to share some information with you about how to download and use it.

[Information on Microsoft Teams](#)

[Microsoft Teams for Education](#)

[Download Microsoft Teams](#)



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The statutory SEND Team

The SEND team are continuing to offer support to all of our settings, families and partner agencies 0-25. We are finding new ways of working virtually so we can complete our statutory work. This has been an interesting challenge!

Some of you will have been involved in virtual annual reviews, moving forward meetings and the ISF panel. These can still go ahead thanks to the use of Microsoft teams. **Please do download the programme so that you can get in contact!** We have had some lovely feedback from parents and settings who have been involved in these meetings saying how productive they were and how lovely it was to see someone from outside of their own home.

With regard to any possible new EHC need assessment requests we ask that all educational settings first discuss these with your allocated SEND officer before starting an application. They will work with you to discuss how best to get SEND support and provision in place for children which might involve the use of more flexible release of ISF funding.

Where we have EHC needs assessments in the system we are trying, in partnership with agencies, to continue with the process however given the current situation this is becoming more difficult and it will be necessary to apply some exceptions to meeting the 20 week timescale. Parents and schools will be informed where this has been necessary.

With regard to annual reviews, we are asking where possible that these are completed (although we know that will be a challenge!) and sent into the SEND team. We can help if you need a bit of help setting up virtual meetings —please ask your SEND officer or coordinator to 'attend' where you feel it is appropriate.

The team are currently collating the EHC risk assessments that settings have been asked to complete and we are working with colleagues in social care and health to build our collective intelligence.

As you may already be aware we are also updating the local offer hourly with any new information we receive from the DfE, the local area and our partner agencies.

The SEND team are very much open for business! For support or advice please contact your SEND Officer or Coordinator via email or if you are unsure who to contact please email sendandinclusion@telford.gov.uk and someone will get back to you.



Educational Psychology Update

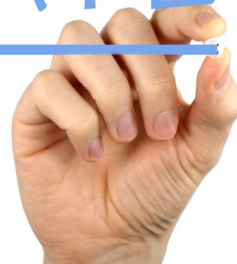
Over the last few weeks we (Educational Psychologists) have been adjusting to working remotely. So we're all set up working from home now and we continue to provide services to schools, students and families. Not quite business as usual but business in a new way. We know this is a difficult time and we are here to help.

Your link EP will respond to emails and provide a telephone consultation service on request. It may also be possible to arrange virtual meetings through Microsoft Teams or Skype. We are here to support the emotional well-being of staff during this difficult time so please let us know if your staff would like us to make contact with them. We can also telephone parents should they want advice or guidance on their child's/young person's emotional well-being and other matters.

EPs still have statutory responsibilities as part of the EHC needs assessment process; this means we will be contacting schools/settings and parents/carers to gather information and where possible carry out assessments through non-face to face methods. Psychological advice produced in this way will make clear the conditions under which these assessments have taken place.

We will also continue to develop and provide schools/settings and parents with helpful guidance and resources. For example we anticipate the return to school and 'normality', when the time comes, may well be challenging for some especially our more vulnerable students so we are working to ensure we are able provide support and advice. We also offer support in situations of loss and bereavement. Please contact your link EP for more information.

UPDATE



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Critical Incident Support from your Educational Psychology Service

Did you know that all schools can receive support free-of-charge from Telford & Wrekin Educational Psychology Service if a critical incident occurs?

What is a 'critical incident'?

A critical incident is one which has the potential to cause disruption and distress to a school and wider community when members of the school community are affected by a significant loss, event or on-going situation. Sadly in the current climate of the COVID 19 Pandemic such incidents may be more likely to affect us.

Examples may include:

- The death of a member of staff or a pupil attending the school.
- A serious accident involving pupils or staff members.

What support can we provide?

- Immediate response.
- Consultation with SLT focusing on practical next steps and organisational support.
- Identification of those at risk using Circles of Vulnerability.
- Guidance on referrals to the appropriate support services for those who may experience longer-term difficulties.
- Advice to school staff and parents on appropriate ways of understanding and managing children and young people's reactions.
- Involvement in team meetings if required.

Who to contact?

Dr Karen Grandison

Principal Educational Psychologist

Karen.Grandison@telford.gov.uk

For more information, please contact us at:

Educational Psychology Service

Telephone - 01952 385216

E-Mail - SENDandInclusion@telford.gov.uk



LSAT Team Update

The LSAT team have been working hard over the past few weeks to ensure we are still able support schools through these strange times. We are now all set up to work from home, and offer virtual support to our settings. We are currently in the process of contacting all of our SENCOS to see what initial advice we can give.

Our priority is to support SENCOs in their approach to home learning for each child, the team have a wealth of ideas, and are currently collating a range of online resources which schools may find useful to draw upon. We are also able to continue with aspects of our role such as teacher consultations, strategic support and providing advice through virtual consultations. We are able to collate information from teachers, SENCOs and parents to continue to provide reviews and initial reports where individualised, face to face, assessments are not a requirement.

The team are working hard to set up new ways of delivering bespoke training to schools, which we hope to deliver via Microsoft Teams or by creating training materials that teachers and TAs can study at home, with further advice available over the phone. Please speak to your LSAT for further details on this.

We are particularly aware that this would be the time of year where children would be engaging in transition activities to support their move to new establishments in September. For this reason, we have collected a range of ideas that can be carried out online (and should be quite fun) to support this move.

Essentially, we aim to be here as you need us, either email your LSAT directly for further guidance or contact me on deborah.carpenter1@telford.gov.uk.

A downloadable pack of resources to support learning at home have been collected together by the LSAT Team and is available on the [Local Offer](#) called 'Resource Pack for to support home Learning'.



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Sensory Inclusion Service Update

Like all services we are exploring new ways of working during this period of time. Our focus is to continue to support schools, settings and families to ensure that the needs of our sensory impaired children are met: This is some of what we are doing:

All the team are in regular contact with families and schools over this period of time. We are setting up online support for learning through Microsoft Teams to support activities directed from schools for children to complete at home.

- We are contacting schools to enhance the accessibility of any materials they are requiring CYP to complete at home.
- If schools need advice around the accessibility of these materials for sensory impaired children please contact your ToD or QTVI who will offer support.
- If children do not have activities to complete we can signpost families to relevant and accessible materials they can engage with at home. This is being facilitated through a **weekly SIS update to families on the Local Offer**
- We are offering guidance to families around technology being used to support communication during this period of time.

Most importantly we continue to offer regular contact with carers to offer a 'listening ear' at a time when many families feel isolated and vulnerable. Our social inclusion facilitators are supporting this work.

SIS will continue to fulfil its statutory duties where required including:

- Attendance at any virtual annual review and completing submissions for EHCP processes.
- Ensuring reports and other documentation are in place for annual reviews
- Link with parents to support parental/child or young person submissions as required
- Links with other authorities, SEND and schools to ensure needs of children or young people are being met
- Support of LAC and guidance to independent schools as required

Sensory impairment can cause barriers to learning and lead to social isolation. During this period of time we are ensuring that hearing and vision needs continue to be met through:

- Online support with hearing aid technician / ICT officer for child/young person at home and settings
- Online resources and technical support through Local Offer.
- Weekly online meeting with SATH Audiology department to discuss cases / issues to address
- Hearing aid repairs/manufacturing are continuing through new agreed pathways.
- If families have concerns around a child's hearing or vision they can contact their relevant team member at SIS and these can be addressed directly by the Educational Audiologist with ENT and Ophthalmology
- New referrals continue to be processed through online meeting with ENT / Ophthalmology. If schools have concerns about a child that is not known to SIS they should be referred by families in the normal way for a hearing or vision test through their GP.

We are all learning as we go along in this process and if school have any enquiries please contact the Joint Team Leaders Graham Groves (graham.groves@telford.gov.uk) or Theresa Robinson (theresa.robinson@telford.gov.uk) or the Tod/ QTVI assigned to your school.

Portage Update

We, like other services have had to adapt to different ways of working and make many changes to the way we deliver our service and offer support to our portage families during the Covid-19 pandemic.



The families we work with have been absolutely brilliant in taking on board the changes and have worked with us so we are now able to deliver a service via telephone and email. We are hoping from next week to be able to offer interactive sessions through Microsoft Teams.

So what's happened so far?

- All families receiving portage have been contacted.
- They have been offered a weekly time slot. This is generally when the home visit would have taken place.
- The families are being offered support and advice and portage sessions are taking place via the families preferred contact method.
- The 'new style' portage home visit consists of the portage home visitor (PHV) and the parent/carer reviewing and discussing progress and the next steps for the child within their learning and development. They then agree a method of implementing this. The families practice this throughout the week as they would on a normal home visit, this is reviewed during the following contact.
- Where appropriate PHV's are making bespoke resources for children they work with and these are being emailed to families for them to print or use via laptops/phones/ tablets.
- General resources have, and are continuing to be adapted where possible to make them electronic so as they can be sent to families.
- PHV's continue to be available for families to contact them during the week, this is alongside the families allocated time slot.
- The team are attending virtual meetings to enable business to continue as normal.

Our next steps as a team are:

- To contact families who are waiting to receive portage to offer support.
- To complete, and distribute an update to our portage families. This will consist of general useful information, some simple activity ideas, or where to find them and updates from parents which they wish to share with other portage families.
- To further develop electronic resources.
- To offer support to settings if they feel this would be of benefit to them.
- To catch up on those jobs which we have very little time to do!
- To keep ourselves up to date via online training where appropriate.
- To look at how we can use Microsoft Teams with our families. We are very excited about this and are hoping to have interactive sessions with families. This may be in the form of us demonstrating an activity or by having our weekly sessions in this way.

The portage team hope you are all keeping safe and well and are following the government guidelines. If you wish to contact us please email us at portage@telford.gov.uk



Resources to support wellbeing and learning on the Local Offer

A new section has been created on the Local Offer to support professionals, parents, carers and young people during this challenging time.

It can be found on the home page of the Local Offer:

[Resources for learning and wellbeing for all children, including those with SEND.](#)

The information is presented in easy to use sections which include:

- Stories that explain Coronavirus
- How parents can support children
- Mindful and relaxation exercises that can be done with younger children to manage anxiety.
- Helping children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Inclusive resources
- Activities for children
- BEAM: contacts and service information
- Supporting children and young people with Autism
- Supporting children and young people with Learning Disabilities
- Support and advice for Professionals, Settings and Family Carers

The resources are updated on a regular basis so do keep a lookout for new information and activities throughout the week.

www.telfordsend.org.uk



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Links, resources & online training

Safeguarding children with SEND

Online training by NSPCC

An introductory course for anyone who works with children who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and additional needs.



COVID-19 guidance on vulnerable children and young people

Coronavirus (COVID-19): SEND risk assessment guidance

Guidance published on 22 March, which explains the practicalities for local authorities and other providers in undertaking risk assessments for vulnerable children and young people with education, health and care plans, in light of school and college closures. It asks local authorities to work with educational providers, families and the child or young person to carry out a risk assessment to judge whether the child or young person's needs cannot be met safely at home. Where the risk assessment determines a child or young person with an EHC plan will be as safe or safer at an educational setting, it may be more appropriate for them to attend the educational setting.

Supporting vulnerable children and young people during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

Determines the different groups of vulnerable children and young people who might benefit from being encouraged to attend educational settings, where appropriate, and recommends how providers might follow-up on non-attendance.

Coronavirus (COVID 19): list of online education resources for home education

Includes SEND-specific home learning resources to help support parents, teachers and schools, during this period. These have been developed in collaboration with SEND organisations, charities, special school head teachers and multi-academy trusts.



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Telford & Wrekin SENDIASS

**Giving support to Young People with Special Educational Needs or Disability,
To help them make decisions about their future.**

Young people monthly drop in sessions

- Either a telephone meeting
- A face to face meeting on an online platform.
- Discuss any concerns that you may have in relation to your education, health and social care needs.
- If you have recently had a draft EHCP ready for post 16, we can go through it with you.
- Signpost you to any appropriate services.

For further details please contact SENDIASS to speak to our dedicated young person case worker.

SEN Information Sessions enable parents/carers and young people to access impartial and independent information in relation to any aspect of Special Educational Needs and Disability

- Either a scheduled phone meeting
- Alternatively a face to face meeting on an online platform
- Discuss your concerns and inform you of the support we provide
- Signpost you to any appropriate services
- Support to read reports/assessments

For further details please contact the service.



Look out for regular updated posts on Telford and Wrekin SENDIASS Facebook page

To find out any further information contact SENDIASS.

01952 457176



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PODS HELPLINE

(Supporting families with disabled/Additional need children aged 0-25 years)

Are you in need of some guidance or
information? Would you like to access our
Befriending service or maybe receive a call from
one of our staff?

Then please give us a call or email us!

Hello it's PODS,
how can we
help?



01952 458047

info@podstelford.org

Calls will be answered between 10am-4pm Monday-Friday, outside these
hours please leave a message.





Our Health Visitors, School Nurses and Family Nurses are always here for you

During this period of national coronavirus pandemic we are still able to support children and families with:

- Advice for parents and young people from a local Health Visitor or School Nurse through our dedicated advice lines
- Confidential text service 'CHAT Health' for young people from a School Nurse and parents from a Health Visitor
- Supporting all mothers with caring for a new baby during the early weeks, including breastfeeding
- Emotional health and wellbeing support for children and young people
- Antenatal support for mums where extra support is needed
- Family Nurse Partnership support for young mothers known to us
- Working throughout in partnership with social care colleagues to support families
- Helping you with sleep, behaviour, toileting, feeding and the effects of Coronavirus on the family
- Sexual health advice for young people from School Nurses

Contact details to access these services, which are available Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm, are:

Shropshire:

- Telephone advice: 0333 358 3654
- CHAT Health text confidential service for school age children: 07507 330346
- CHAT Health text, confidential parent line: 07520 635212

Telford & Wrekin:

- Telephone advice: 0333 358 3328
- CHAT Health text, Confidential service for young people: 07520 619051
- Chat Health text, Parent line 0-5 years: 07520 619053





Local Offer for Special Educational Needs and Disability

Discover everything you need to know about education, health and care services in your local area for children and young people with SEND 0-25yrs at...

www.telfordsend.org.uk

Key features...

- > Search for clear and accessible information, advice and sources of support.
- > Explore leisure, fun and short breaks activities.
- > Find out about specialist services and education health and care plans.
- > Learn how schools support special educational needs.
- > Use the interactive map showing what is available near to where you live.
- > Have your say through our online feedback form.

