



Hampshire
County Council

Children and Families Advisory Panel
13th October 2020

Agenda

1. Our approach

- Phases, oversight and data

2. What we did

- Use of technology
- Children in Care, Foster Carers and Residential
- Partners
- Our staff

3. In practice

- Some examples

4. Lessons learned and in conclusion

Our approach over the last few months:

As part of our contingency planning we developed a phased approach, with each phase based on having fewer staff available to work should the situation worsen

Phase 1

Business as usual but doing it differently

- Statutory timescales for visits and meetings remain the same
- Using technology to ensure we see children and families through digital means i.e. WhatsApp, Teams
- Face to face visits undertaken where we know our staff can safely socially distance themselves, in relation to urgent child protection work
- Guidance provided for visits, meetings (with children and professionals), training, events etc



Phase 2

Pre-emptive planning for worse case scenario

- Expressions of interest from staff willing to work in the business-critical services*
- Staff drafted in from the Residential Children's Homes to ensure a minimum staffing levels at Swanwick
- 2 homes closed meaning that in the event of an unforeseen emergency there was additional resource to be deployed*
- CRT/MASH – no essential work held back to enable prioritisation
- District teams – highest risk children and families identified



Phase 3

Managing the worse case scenario

- Redistribution of staff available to work
- Delivery of services reduced to highest risk cases
- Implementing DfE flexibility of statutory requirements

We remained in Phase 1 throughout lockdown and actioned some elements of Phase 2

Maintaining management grip

It was imperative, from the very start, to respond quickly, be agile, and maintain control:

- New guidance has been issued promptly
- Statutory timescales have been maintained
- Visits have continued - virtually
- Local level management has been enhanced
- Management oversight has remained...

... all whilst children have continued coming into care and less are leaving

Throughout the Covid period there has been constant engagement and feedback to understand and capture how teams are responding to the crisis. We have done this through:

- Daily CFMT Covid meetings
- AD log/action tracker
- Weekly Covid specific DM and SM meetings
- BAU team meetings and supervisions
- Q&A process and comms
- Impact log – for TSC specific activity
- DM and SM Workshop



Data:

Measure		Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20
No of CiN referrals		1563	1687	1705	2037	1180	1411	1977	1936
Assessments completed (within 45 working days of referral)	Number	1100	1045	1005	1364	1115	1007	1196	1501
	Timeliness	92.3%	93.1%	90.5%	94.1%	90.4%	93.0%	96.1%	96.3%
ICPCs		91	104	129	188	160	164	139	162
RCPCs		285	303	269	260	194	244	277	329

Whilst there was **some reduction in referrals and assessments during April**, by the end of May we were **back to normal levels and since June have been 15 to 20% above normal**

We have seen an increase of c140 children subject to a Child Protection Plan since April. The level of complexity within families that we are assessing has increased as a result of needs being magnified by COVID

Across June and July 2020, we completed 11,508 visits (Assessment, CIN, CP, CLA, LC)

	% of Visits Undertaken Virtually	% of Visits Undertaken in Person
April	49%	51%
May	46%	54%
June	68%	32%
July	12%	88%

How we worked with children and families

We have continued to see children face to face when needed (**an essential and necessary part of keeping children safe**), however our teams have also been creative in how they are using technology to engage with children and families:



Technology used:

- WhatsApp
- Zoom
- MS Teams
- Skype
- Twinkl
- Google Translate
- Team Talk App

Used for:

- Visits
- Care planning and review
- Pathway planning
- Participation
- Building Rapport
- Life story work
- CLA Reviews
- TAFs
- EPMS
- Life story work
- Supervised contact
- Family Star
- Observing home conditions
- Translation
- Parenting programmes
- Nurture sessions

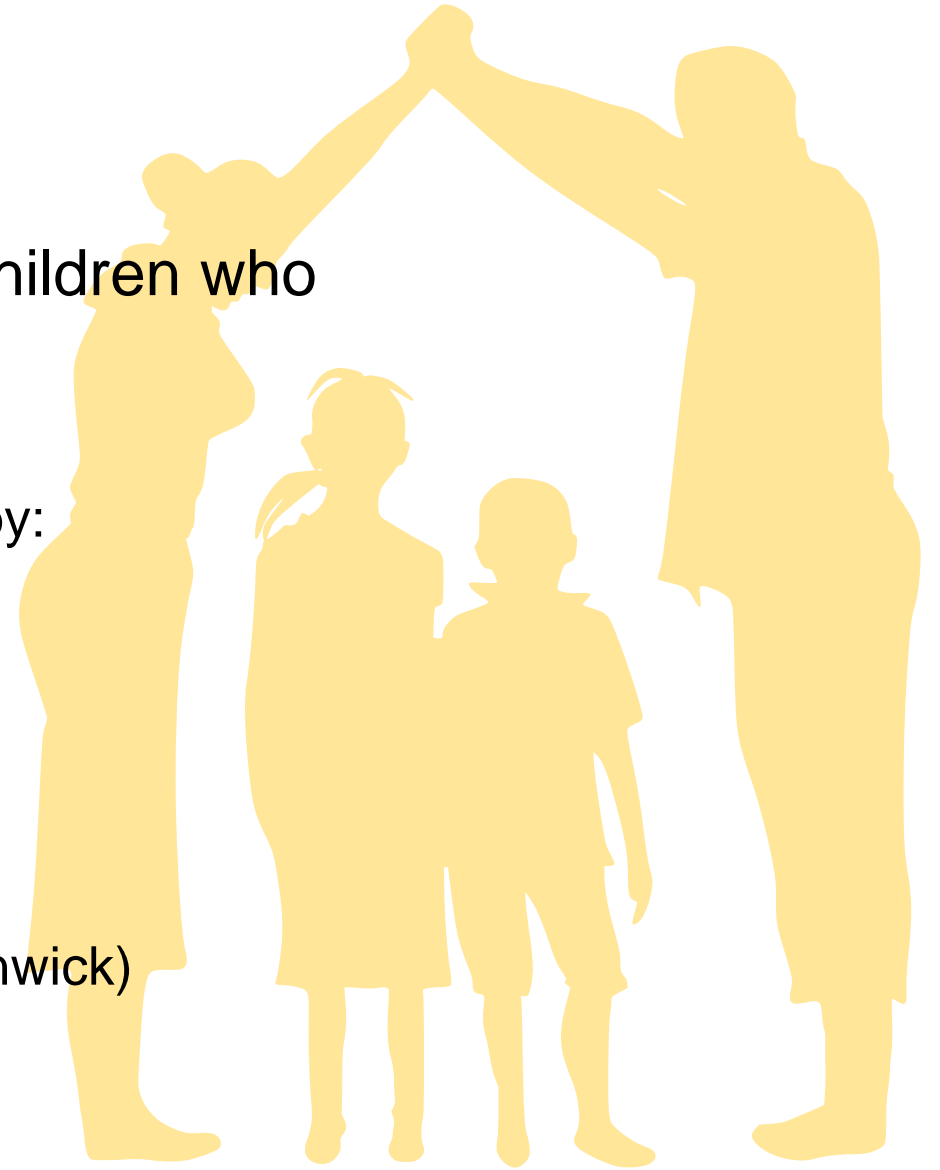


Children in Care

Our staff have worked *relentlessly* to support our children who have all been seen either in person or virtually

We have been focussing on supporting our children in care by:

- Being (even more) creative – quizzes, talent shows
- Stabilising placements
- Recruiting Volunteers
- Supporting our foster carers (i.e. staying put)
- The transition of care leavers to independence
- Keeping our remaining residential homes open (inc. Swanwick)



Foster Carers and Residential

Early on we closed 2 homes to build resilience for our staffing levels across the residential estate

Support across all areas has been **Outstanding**

- Some children have been unwell
- Foster carers have take children from homes where there has been infection
- We've had volunteers from the wider service offering help if staffing reduces
- Volunteers have also offered support for foster carers
- Further support is in place for foster carers if needed (i.e. financial)



Schools

We have maintained a constant dialogue with our schools

- Our schools remained opened during the crisis for children of key workers and those classed as vulnerable
- We have monitored attendance closely for our vulnerable children, and continue to do so
- We have risk assessed each vulnerable child who has not attended school
- We have worked with Education and schools to provide laptops to eligible vulnerable children
- Children & Families and Education & Inclusion have worked together in close collaboration



Partners

We have maintained a constant dialogue with our partners

- Business as usual meetings have been unchanged
- Daily contact between Assistant Director and Head of Public Protection (the police) if needed
- We are proactively sharing our important updates
- Shared high risk cases with police and vice versa to focus on right children
- We are sharing updates from partners with our staff

Coronavirus
Latest NHS Guidelines
Translated into 23 languages

Children's guide to coronavirus

Global Email
Daily COVID-19 update

Colleagues,
Line managers and supervisors are encouraged to use the content of the "Daily COVID-19 update" to brief their teams.

Minute's silence for key workers

Tomorrow (Tuesday 28 April) at 11am a minute's silence will be maintained across the UK as a mark of respect for key workers who have lost their lives during the coronavirus pandemic.

Hampshire Constabulary will be taking part with the support of Chief Constable Olivia Pinkney and officers and staff will be encouraged – if operational duties allow – to take 60 seconds to reflect.

Please take time to reflect at your desks, on your desks, on those who have paid the

HELPLINE
0808 800 5000
help@nsncc.org.uk

Hampshire & IOW Crisis Line for Young People
Havant and East Hants (HEH) Mind are excited to share with you that we will be launching a Freephone Crisis Line for children and young people aged 10-17 years old living in Hampshire & Isle of Wight.
Launching on Monday 4th May 2020.
This service will be available Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday, 9 – 5.30pm.
Freephone 0800 303 1050
Immediate access to help, support and advice for young people experiencing difficulties with their mental health.

Safeguarding Children During Lockdown

Concerned for a child

The Government has asked parents to keep their children at home wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for children who are vulnerable and for those children of workers critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) response who absolutely need to attend.

While in lockdown, there is the potential that children could be at an increased risk of harm relating to:

- Self-harm and wellbeing
- Online exploitation
- Abuse and neglect by parents/carers

Signs to look out for:

- Changes in behavior
- Sore throat
- Unusual weight loss
- Withdrawn, unusual
- Unsanitary living conditions
- Unusually coming to school

Are you concerned? Are you concerned? Do you worry?

Safeguarding Children During Lockdown

During COVID-19, we must ALL LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER and make sure we safeguard EVERYONE!

Top Tips During COVID-19

- IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT YOURSELF or SOMEONE ELSE...
 - TALK TO A TRUSTED ADULT
 - SEEK HELP AND SUPPORT IF YOU NEED IT
- IF YOU'RE FEELING FRIGHTENED IN YOUR HOME BECAUSE OF SOMEONE'S BEHAVIOUR, CONTACT SUPPORT BELOW
- KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FRIENDS & FAMILY
- LOOK OUT FOR YOUR FRIENDS. IF YOU'RE CONCERNED TELL SOMEONE

WHERE CAN I FIND SUPPORT?

There are lots of different ways you can get help if you are worried about yourself, your friends or your family.

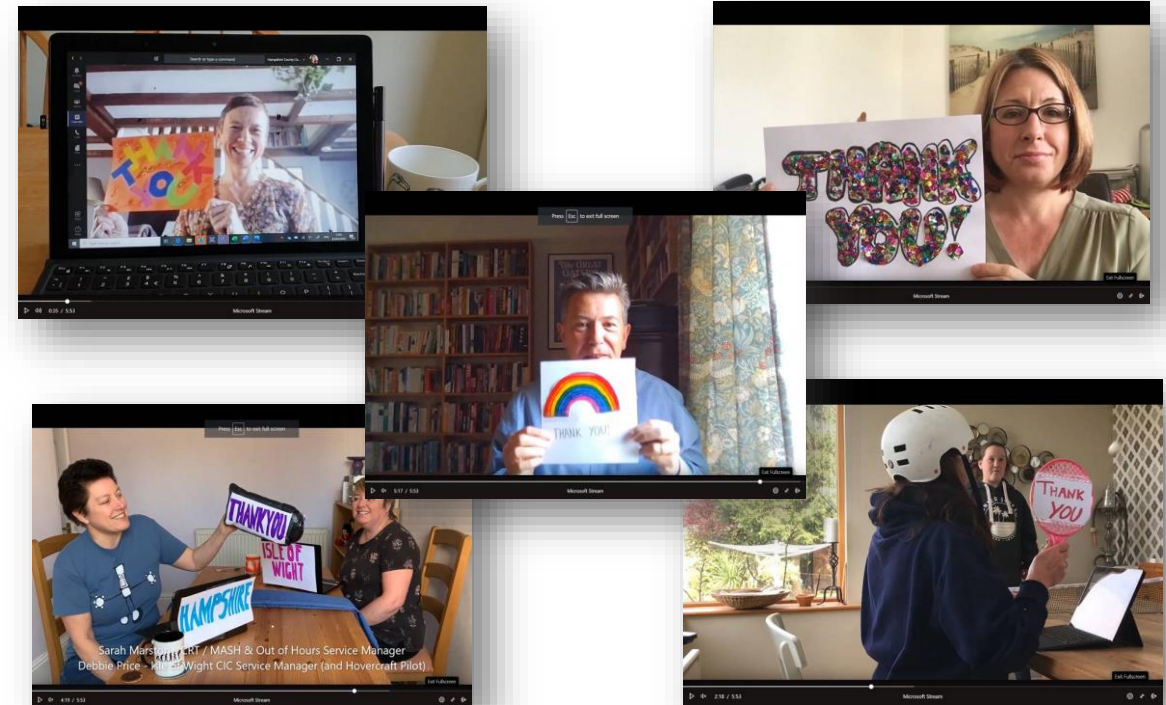
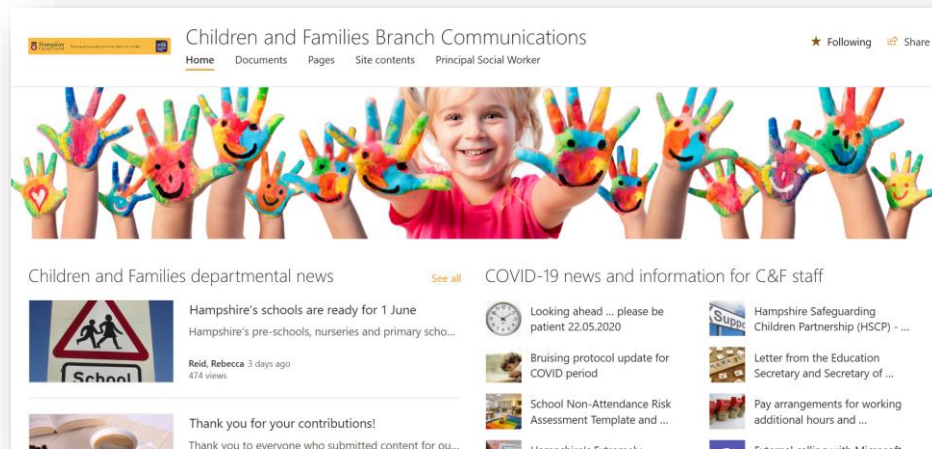
Test the YoungMinds Crisis Messenger for free 24/7 support across the UK.

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Our staff

Due to the dynamic situation throughout Covid-19, we quickly reviewed how we communicate and support our staff.

Following a refresh, our internal comms channels across Children and Families have seen a 100% increase in engagement, meaning staff are accessing important COVID-19 practice updates quickly and easily



We've been creative in use of all channels and messaging to maintain constant contact and provide reassurance

Connectivity: Our staff *(not WiFi!)*

We are hearing that some staff are feeling more connected. This is because Covid-19 has meant:

- More frequent meetings/catch-ups/touchpoints in response to the ever-changing situation
- Watching out for staff welfare, checking in on colleagues, looking out for each other
- Streamlining and more efficient communications
- Trying new and creative ways of engaging workforce through Teams/videos/other channels

Sustain after Covid-19



But this will never fully replace the face to face interactions and meetings, both formal and informal, that make us outstanding. We need to do both and use a blend of all channels available to us.

What we have learnt

Worked Well (Continue)

- **Adaptability of staff - Agile working has become the norm we can do things differently/people adapt**
- Staff have picked this up and run with it - Staff have been up for the changes and worked hard to make children safe, good can do
- **Leadership is key**
- NO TRAVEL!
- Use of estate creatively – use this as a ‘coming together’ space
- **Use of IT - MS teams has become BAU**
- Better engagement/attendance in meetings. Staff have enjoyed seeing “the person”
- Staff feedback on clear messages from Senior Managers
- **Staff creativity, improved working relationships**
- OP MET meeting – SWs dropping in to the meeting rather than travel
- HSCP meeting working well – look at Hybrid model? (different speeds of different agencies etc.)

Didn't Work Well

- Courts appear to be out of step with current circumstances of staff
- **Sensitive meetings e.g.: HR**
- Fostering health and safety checks
- Newly qualified staff not having experiential working
- Amount of MS team meetings, the need to plan diary well
- **Equipment, making sure people equipped to do the role**
- Not having face to face training how we introduce again , mixture of virtual and face to face?
- Not all large meetings work as well virtually, need to practice how to improve
- CWD cohort – **non communicative children virtual is not better.** Face to face needed when safe to do so.
- **Parenting assessments**

What next:

As the situation evolves we must continue working in an agile and responsive way

We are planning for:

- Reviewing building use-incremental increase based on maintaining social distancing, consideration of rotas for staff
- Increasing demand: both referrals and for placements
- Constantly assessing risk for face to face visits & contact
- Reporting and monitoring to continue daily/weekly. This will play an important role in assessing impact and analysing areas of need so we can deploy resources effectively
- Ensuring that staff and foster carers are accessing testing swiftly and appropriately



New ways of working

There are some great examples of how we have worked differently

- Together as teams
- In a mobile and flexible way
- With children and families

We can learn from this and must ensure the good bits are sustained in the service of the future

However, we will always be mindful that new opportunities must not compromise basic social work practice that cannot be done virtually.

Adoption of new ways of working need to be incorporated into what we already do that makes us outstanding. There are fundamental tasks that will never change and they are an integral part of keeping children safe



In conclusion



Business as usual but doing it differently



We have maintained constant and solid management oversight of service



Our practitioners, managers and foster carers have been Outstanding in adapting and going above and beyond



Our work with agencies has been collaborative and responsive

We will continue to operate in an agile way. This will enable us to continuously maintain services if we need to go back into lockdown at a later stage.

Thank you
and
any questions

