



Hampshire  
County Council

# 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. Lockdown three
4. In practice
  - Some examples
5. Lessons learned and in conclusion

# Our approach through the lockdown:

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 – non- 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 until Lockdown 3 when some of Phase 2 was implemented**

# Maintaining management grip

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

- Guidance has been issued promptly and updated
- 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 fewer have been leaving

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

- Daily/bi-weekly 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 Workshops
- All manager meetings



# Activity Data:

	Mar-19	Apr-19	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20	Apr-20	Sep-20	Dec-20
CiN Referrals	1644	1563	1690	1572	1710	1180	2283	1767
Assessments completed within 45 working days	1041	1189	1015	13031	1511	1231	1285	1306
% Within Timescale	94.0%	92.3%	89.3%	91.3%	93.4%	90.3%	95.3%	95.6%
ICPC	95	91	119	129	163	160	111	169
RCPC	336	285	320	204	280	194	309	243

Re: Child Protection conferences we have seen a significant rise throughout 2020 because of the complexities of families needs magnified by Covid

Whilst there was a slight reduction in referrals and assessments during April, by the end of May we were back to normal levels and have stayed around 17% higher than the previous year.

# Visit data:

Across March and April 2020, we completed 18,367 visits (Assessment, CIN, CP, CLA, LC)

In March 15% of visits were undertaken virtually, 85% in person

In April 53% of visits were undertaken virtually, 47% in person

In September 2020 we completed 10,471 visits, 77.5% of which were face to face and 22.5% virtual

And in December 2020 we completed 10,783 visits, 76.5% of which were face to face and 23.5% virtual

# 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

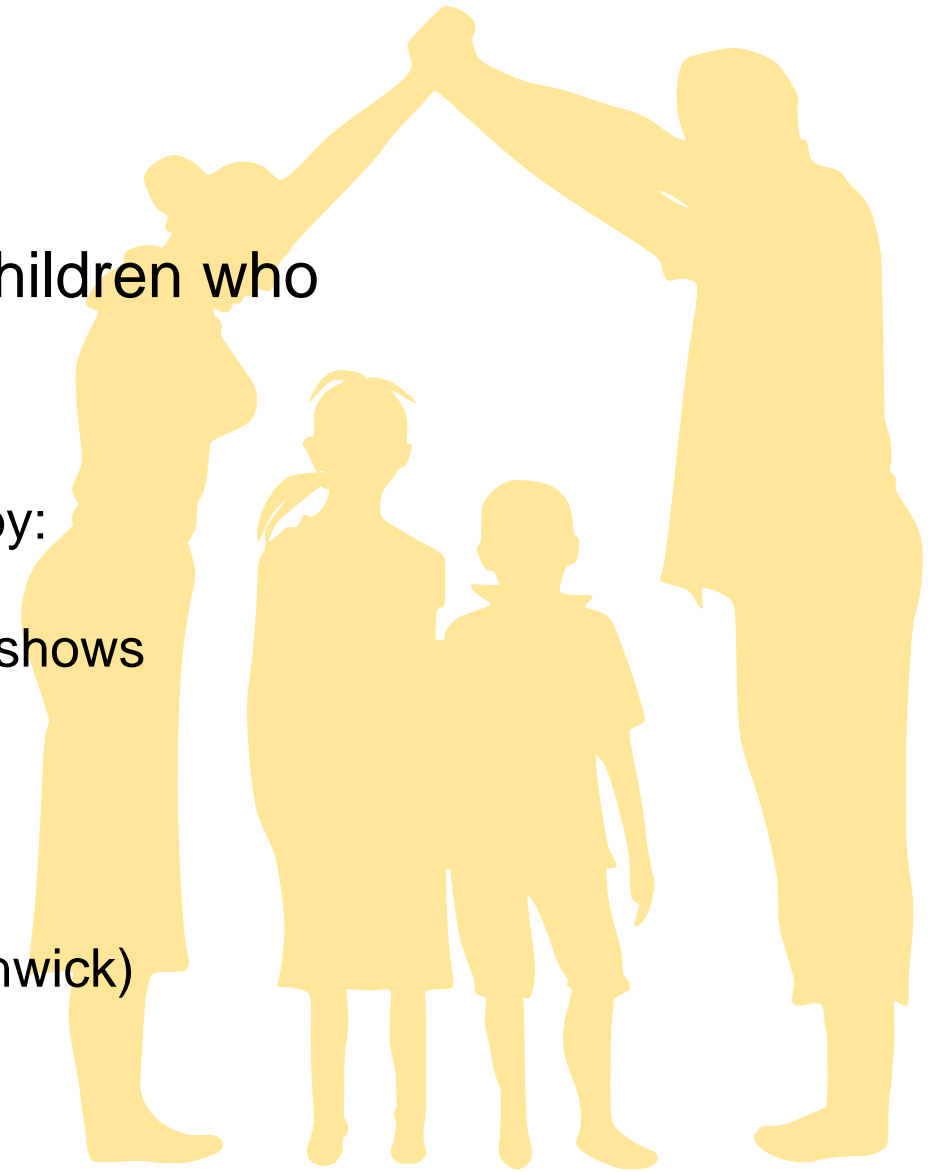


# Children in Care

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 in lockdown – 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 when staffing has reduced
- Volunteers have also offered support for foster carers
- Further support has been put in place for foster carers if needed (i.e. financial)



# 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 with partners across the health economy
- 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 duties, on those who have paid the price.

**HELPLINE**  
**0808 800 5000**  
heln@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 11-17 years old living in Hampshire & Isle of Wight.  
Launching on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2020.  
This service will be available Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday, 9 – 5.30pm.  
Freephone 0800 303 1020  
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
- Unusually living on their own
- Unusually coming to school

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 WORRIED 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.

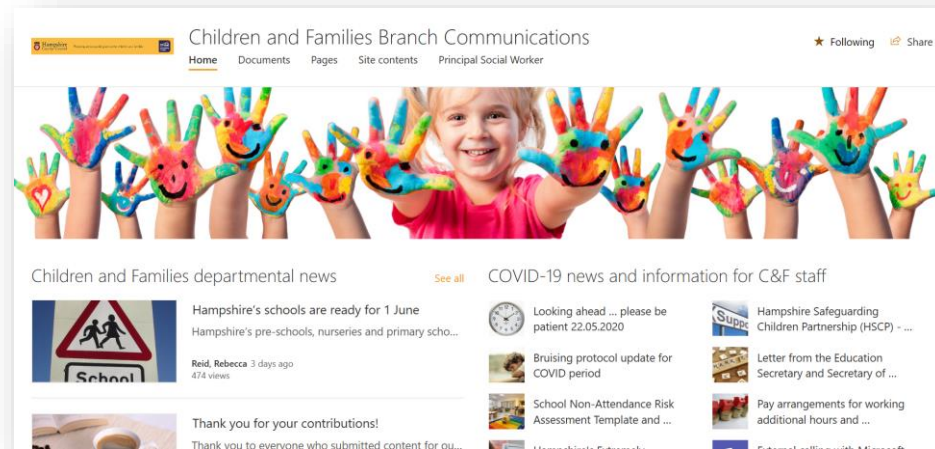
Mind, Havant and East Hants, NHS

Hampshire & IOW Crisis Line for Young People

# Our staff

Due to the dynamic situation throughout Covid-19, we quickly reviewed how we communicate with 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.

# Lockdown 3

- Complexity of children's circumstances better understood
  - Behind the numbers, more urgent/serious child protection situations presented during June-October
- New ways of working have become 'business as usual'
- Able to quickly resume strategies from lockdown one
  - Enhanced communication with staff
  - Emotional support for those who needed it
  - Risk assessment and face to face visiting
- Resumption of QA processes (peer inspections/observations/audits)
- Continued support to other LAs under PiP programme



# In practice: some examples

Social workers have used technology to observe relationships, home conditions and to engage with children and families in a virtual way

Young people see social media and video communication as part of their daily lives and have enjoyed their personal advisors becoming more engaged with this

*Video calling very useful for offering nurture sessions to families. I have emailed them sheets and tasks to complete before a session for us to then discuss and go through together via video. It keeps the sessions focused with really good time. It also seems to help record keeping as I can immediately write notes after talking with them rather than waiting until my next admin slot in my diary.*

*...how lovely it's been to face time my clients .... Wow - it has been amazing - they have loved it! It seems that a lot of mine have valued this more than when i trek miles to see them face to face. They have been so much more relaxed and definitely this is in their comfort zone - they seem to have taken it as a huge personal compliment that I am contacting them this way. I've been shown around their homes, met their cats and dogs, seen their gardens and relatives and it was all so relaxed too.... I hope it can play a part in the normal world when we come through this.*

*The use of video has been very helpful as the child has been able to show me things which they have been doing during the lockdown. They have also enjoyed meeting my puppy which was very helpful in engaging a child that is new to my caseload so haven't built as much rapport with him yet*

# 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:

When lock down eases 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 transition the ease of lockdown by continuing to operate in an agile way. This will enable us to continuously maintain services if we need to go back into lock down at a later stage.

Thank you  
and  
any questions

