

Rebuilding Back Better Covid19 Update

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee
29 June 2020

Overview

- We have reshaped services to respond to Covid19 by:
 - Using virtual visits to continue supporting families and children and young people
 - Vulnerable children and children of key workers attending school/all primary schools open
 - Swiftly adapting 11by11, 100 Hours World of Work and Music Education to online and offline offers
 - High quality offer for home learning and a home learning site online.
 - Virtual professional development for teachers and leadership meetings and a range of guidance for schools and parents through the Back to School Bulletin
 - Direct support to families such as food distribution and laptops/equipment for young people
 - Supporting schools to engage with students in innovative ways
 - Headteachers and governors engaged in future strategy planning
 - Adult Community Learning adopting a blended approach teaching and learning & providing devices
 - Going virtual with operational and strategic partnership meetings going which has actually increase and maximised attendance
- We are now managing services through the initial peak of Covid19 and planning for the “new normal.” This is an opportunity for a new and better normal.
- There are additional opportunities and challenges to advance our strategic ambition for our children and families. We now need to progress and implement a programme that delivers the “new normal” that:
 - incorporates the lessons learned from our Covid19 experience
 - builds on our strengths
 - strengthens our ways of working and approach to equalities, diversity and inclusion
 - incorporates our collaboration, innovation and partnership aspirations



Potential impact and lessons learned from Covid19



Life long learning and enrichment

- Impact on school readiness/attainment – Covid19 may compound existing inequalities
- Potential gaps in learning, Recovery Curriculum, Behavior for learning and attendance must be secured, clear strategy to link home and school learning, examinations and testing
- Young people's future prospects impacted by an economic downturn
- A significant rise in unemployment in an increasingly competitive labour market
- Buildings closures resulting in residents unable to access services including access to PCs and Wi-fi
- Pressures could lead to some groups being further disadvantaged

Working together for a safer Islington

- Vulnerabilities of children and young people could increase due to safeguarding mechanisms being delivered in a different way
- Reductions in offending were seen during lockdown but this has gradually increased with some very serious offences in neighbouring boroughs
- Increased incentives to become involved in criminal activity due to worsening economic conditions
- Heightened awareness in communities about domestic abuse due to campaigns with numbers being lower than anticipated
- Online tensions and the need to generate income - youth violence, gang activity, exploitation of children and Serious Youth Violence could increase following the first phase of Covid19 in the UK

Early help and supporting our vulnerable children

- Gaps in/disruption to early childhood outcomes and relationships
- Disruption to the development of social & emotional capabilities connected to issues such as employability, youth crime and preparation for adulthood
- Continued stress and anxiety for families including the impact of loss and bereavement and increase in parental mental health issues through isolation and stress
- Higher risks in BAME populations and the impact on children who are seeing higher mortality in their families.
- Hidden harm
- Difficulties in securing the best placement that meets children's needs because of national placement sufficiency issues

Connecting with our communities

- Families living in poverty more likely to feel excluded due to lack of access to IT/wifi access.
- Limited or restricted engagement with online resources and service offers such as home learning and cultural enrichment
- The move to a more 'online' world has accelerated the need for digital literacy, and reliable access to the internet, to not only look for work but also carry out relatively basic day to day tasks.
- The online mode of delivery can be a barrier to future participation due to lack of residents' access to technology or the internet, or the expertise to make use of devices, should they be available.

Potential impact and lessons learned from Covid19



Resources and partnerships

- External providers may face financial difficulties, such as losses in income, potentially making them less able to deliver services
- Capacity to deliver activities if/when social distancing relaxed.
- Potential impact on admissions, staffing, recruitment and retention and professional development
- Increased creativity - ways to reach out to each other and families.
- Excellent practice by Social Workers and practitioners in response to challenges
- Swift and responsive joint support between safeguarding services, school improvement and schools put in place for vulnerable children
- Greater enhanced joint understanding of safeguarding and increased contact to vulnerable children and families using virtual platforms
- Increased proficiency with IT systems, accessibility of training and development opportunities and greater opportunities to engage family/friends from outside of Islington in supporting children through better use of technology
- Partnership/collaborative working - strengthened, video conferencing more accessible to a wider range of professionals than physical meetings.



Transition to recovery themes and objectives



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1. Lifelong learning and enrichment

A strong focus on sustained targeted support: from early years, transition from primary to secondary, closing the attainment gap and progression to adulthood - underpinned by equitable enrichment

Progression routes for our young people to inspire and equip them for the transition from school to further/higher education, vocational training or employment

Expand a compelling EET offer to sustain our vulnerable young people as the social and economic impact of Covid19 unfolds.

Open up high quality vocational pathways, with the right support for our vulnerable young people and adults to thrive.

Secure a high quality and high performing, inclusive schools system; build on relationships for a locally responsive further education and skills offer and ensure no one is left behind by a fast changing, and potentially unequal labour market as a result of Covid19

Accessible lifelong learning to skill-up / re-skill residents who need our help the most

Launch pad for a new normal – objectives:

- Safe phased return to lifelong learning: in early years, education, alternative provision , library and community settings
- A joint plan of action to improve EET outcomes
- A joint plan of action to embed enrichment in the recovery curriculum



Transition to recovery themes and objectives

2. Our early help offer and support to vulnerable children

- Advance better take up and relationships with those who most need it within Early Help Services
- Increase capacity and take-up of early years provision for families particularly those who most need it
- Ensure there is a sufficient childcare offer to give parents an element of choice
- Align with Fairer Together, embedding the principles from the Early Help Review and harnessing a strategic partnership approach to Early Help
- Embed our motivational practice model, outcomes focused practice and behaviours to continue to empower our children, young people, parents and staff
- Embed learning, insight and evidence-informed approaches such as the Keel Project throughout our early help offer and services for vulnerable children to mitigate the social and economic impact of Covid19
- Secure stability for our looked after children and develop best practice for adoption and post-adoption support as host for Adopt North London
- A strengthened focus on developing our response to adolescents at risk of poor outcomes
- Expand our integrated social, emotional and mental health approach for children and young people with health and the third sector
- Advance an integrated approach to progression to adulthood for young people with SEND
- **Launch pad for a new normal – objectives:**
 - Respond to increased demand to ensure children’s disclosures are responded to
 - Safe return to contact and visits with vulnerable children and young people
 - Support for vulnerable children and families within universal settings
 - All age mental health approach to ensure the right services and capacity is in place particularly for BAME communities



Transition to recovery themes and objectives

3. Working together for a safer Islington

- Ensure that universal Play and Youth provision can provide children and young people with adequate support as part of the 'earliest help' offer
 - A stronger focus on prevention and early intervention support for key groups of children and young people who are at risk of, or involved in youth crime, exploitation or serious youth violence as the social and economic impact of Covid19 unfolds
 - Influence systems and build upon multi-agency relationships for a responsive universal and targeted youth support system, ensuring young people have the skills required for life and work in response to the impact of Covid19
 - Accessible integrated and effective support for survivors of violence against women and girls and domestic abuse via commissioned and new internal resources
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- **Launch pad for a new normal – objectives:**
 - Safe return to play and youth work at adventure playgrounds and youth hubs
 - Respond to increased demand to ensure Covid19-hidden domestic abuse or involvement in youth crime or exploitation are responded to
 - Safe return to commissioned services for VAWG and domestic abuse survivors that includes face-to-face contact
 - Safe return to face-to-face contact with young people in targeted youth support and youth offending services to fully engage them



Transition to recovery themes and objectives

4. Reinvent and Rebuild

• **Connecting with our communities**

- A stronger focus on digital inclusion and skills for children, young people, adults and staff
- Embed virtual delivery and engagement with residents and staff as part of support, delivery, training and development
- 'No recovery about me, without me' – involvement and participation of children, young people and parents/carers in recovery planning and implementation

• **Alliances for fairer futures**

- Consolidate and build on the system connectivity, both locally and with partners, and the impetus for growth and change to unblock blockages, remove barriers, quickly share learning, ideas and tasks
- Advance the relationships with the third sector to reach out to our communities in support of a shared prevention and early intervention approach
- Further develop links with health professionals to overcome health impacts and inequalities

• **Enabling and supporting our staff**

- Skill up our staff and senior leaders including in bereavement, cultural differences/cultural competence and digital technology
- Support our staff's emotional recovery experienced through personal loss or working with children, young people and adults who have experienced loss
- Consolidate and build on a culture of creativity and flexible and agile ways of working
- Embed a culture of visible, strong, supportive and inspiring leadership
- Recruiting, retaining and developing a highly skilled flexible workforce

