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# Children and Families

Stuart Ashley



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# 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



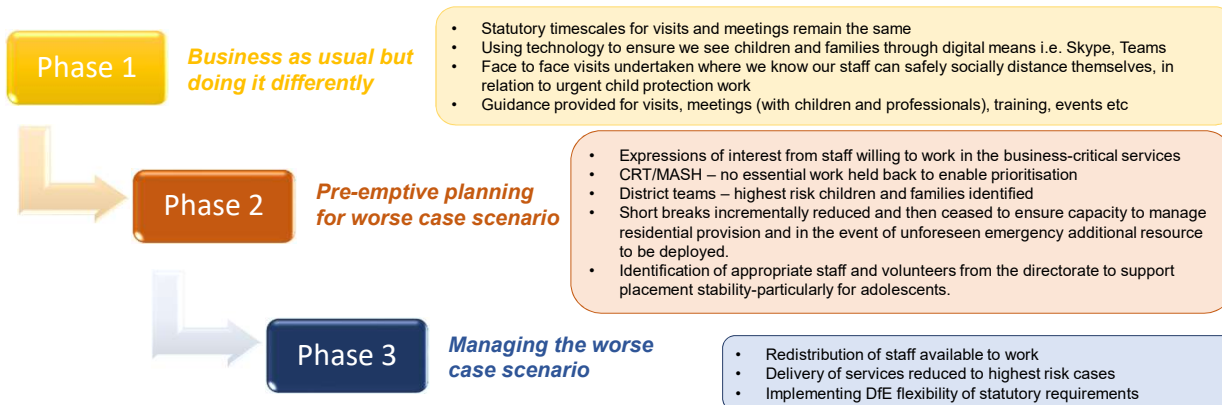
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# Our approach through the lockdown:

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



**We have remained in Phase 1 throughout the current lockdown**



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# 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 lockdown 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 & TM 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		Mar-19	Apr-19	Mar-20	Apr-20
No of referrals		422	343	412	269
Assessments authorized (within 45 working days of referral)	Number	149	157	164	134
	Timeliness	93.1%	89.7%	91.6%	91.2%
ICPCs		6	12	17	14
RCPCs		48	26	41	21

Whilst there has been some reduction in referrals and assessments during April, by the end of May we were back to normal levels

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

Across March and April 2020, we completed 2102 visits (Assessment, CIN, CP, CLA)

In March/April 84% of visits to children subject to child protection planning were undertaken either in person or through 'virtual' visits.

# 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
- MS Teams
- Skype
- Google Translate

## 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



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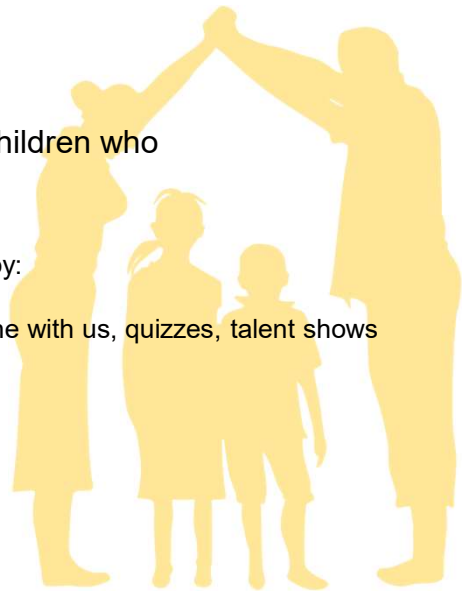
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# Children in Care

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 – virtual come dine with us, 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 home



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# Foster Carers and Residential

Early on we reduced short breaks at Beaulieu House to ensure capacity and to build resilience for our staffing levels

Support across all areas has been **Outstanding**

- Some children have had supported move of placements
- Foster carers have take children from homes where there has been a risk of infection
- We've had volunteers from the wider service (and across the Council) offering help if staffing reduces-this has supported a number of placements
- Further support is in place for foster carers if needed (i.e. financial out of hours support line)



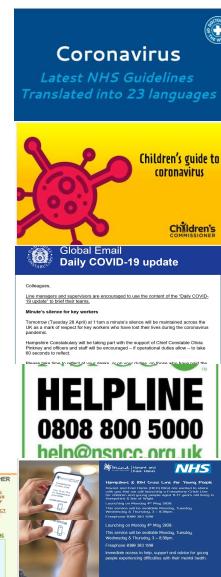
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# Partners

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
- Weekly meetings with health partners



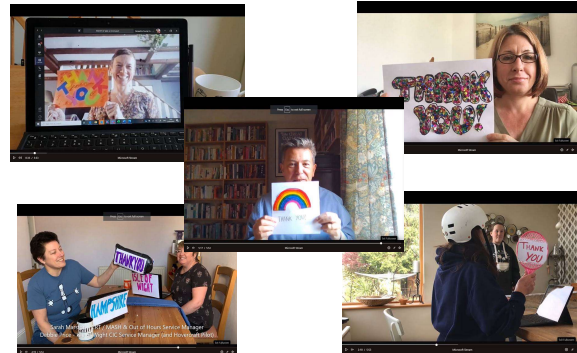
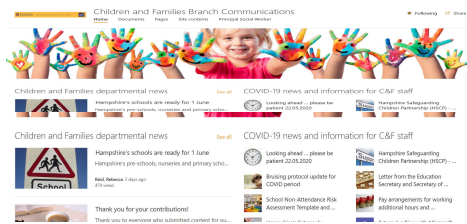
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# Our staff

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

Our internal comms has included a weekly newsletter to all staff, regular updates on Children's Services intranet pages and daily Team Managers meetings, so that COVID-19 guidance and practice updates can be shared quickly and easily



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



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# 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.



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## 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*



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## 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
- IOWSCP 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**



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## What next:

As 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.



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## Education and Inclusion



Brian Pope



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## PM announcement - Schools closed from end of Friday 20 March 2020

- Open for children of critical workers and vulnerable children
- List of critical workers produced by the DfE
- Definition of vulnerable children produced by DfE but extended on the Isle of Wight
- Vulnerable:
  - Open to social care – early help, child in need, child protection plan and looked after children
  - Education Health and Care Plan

## PM announcement - Schools closed from end of Friday 20 March 2020

- **Critical workers** – conflicting advice, one parent or two
- **Vulnerable children open to social care** – partnership system put in place, schools, social care and school improvement teams
- Built up proportions over time – 8% up to 37%
- **EHCP** – risk assessment, “as safe or safer in schools”
- Education team sampling and quality assuring risk assessments
- 28% now in school

## Home Learning – rapid adaptation

- School autonomy to determine approach
- First-hand experiential learning.
- Daily blog, resource pack, e-mail
- Manageable chunks, quality over quantity
- Family friendly – parents aren't subject specialists
- Emphasis on enjoyment as well as learning
- Some on-line learning
- Regular feedback key
- Support from DfE, LA, BBC, etc

## Support to Schools

- Education Team - frequent conversations with headteachers
- Governor Services – support to governors
- DfE guidance, based upon public health guidance, should be followed
- Advice / FAQs rapidly produced to exemplify DfE guidance within Isle of Wight context
- Think pieces drafted to support recovery in primary, secondary and special school contexts

## Support to Schools

- Major focus on well being and mental health with good signposting to a raft of support (staff and pupils)
- Laptops for children open to social care and disadvantaged in Year 10
- Info cell set up – enquiries from parents, heads, council staff, governors. Matters addressed - HR, FSM, finance, buildings, PPE, PH, media, legal etc

## 1 June 2020. Wider reopening in Primary

- Extensive advice from DfE to schools
- Bubbles of no more than 15 children plus staff
- Separate bubbles – start, finish, play and lunch times
- Good hygiene and cleaning
- No rotas
- Priority order for return – children of critical workers, vulnerable, Year R, Year 1 and then Year 6
- Headteachers supported by Education Team and Health and Safety Team to help work through risk assessments

## 1 June 2020. Wider reopening in Primary

- Challenging circumstances – staff, professional associations, parents, DfE, media etc
- Call for patience
- 2,100+ pupils return



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## 15 June 2020. Wider reopening in Secondary

- Year 10 only
- Some face to face supplemented by home learning
- 25% of Year 10 on site at any one time
- Year 12 (where applicable) also some face to face
- 3,900+ students now back
- Supporting national system for awarding GCSE grades for current Year 11



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## Business as usual but doing things differently.....

- Special Educational Needs Team
- Educational Psychology Team
- Inclusion Team
- Virtual School
- Island Futures

## Next Steps

- Supporting all schools to open to all pupils from September
- Tensions – size of bubble and size of potential lockdown, zoning and access to specialist spaces
- Additional furniture
- Parental confidence
- Behaviour intervention
- Persistent absence
- Strengthening home learning offer in case of local lockdown

# Strategic Development & Capital Delivery

Peter Colenutt



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- Majority of construction sites remained open adhering to government guidance:  
    “Construction can continue where it is done in line with public health guidance”
- A few sites closed initially to review H&S plans and then reopened
- All sites now open with contracts closely monitored
- Non essential school repair and maintenance work - suspended at first but projects now restarting – all schemes reviewed on a case by case basis
- Productivity likely to be lower than before the crisis
- All schools and governing bodies are being fully consulted about the scope of works and planned delivery
- Weekly liaison with the DfE Capital Directorate



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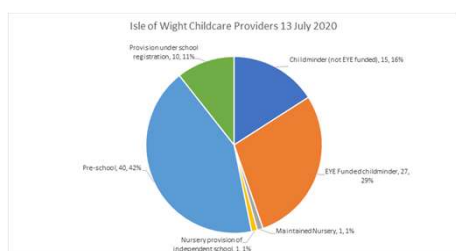


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# Access, Resources and Business Development

Suzanne Smith

## Early Years Childcare Market – Pre-Covid Context



Age of children	2 year olds	3 Year olds	4 Year olds	Total
All children funded & non funded	691	1166	493	2350

Age of children	2 year olds	3 + 4 Year olds Universal	3 + 4 year olds Extended
No. of funded	317	1572	727
Percentage of funded	46%	95%	44%
No. of non funded	374	87	
Percentage of non funded	54%	5%	



# Early Years Lockdown

- 17 March 2020, Government confirmed that local authorities should continue to pay for free early years entitlement places for 2,3 and 4 year olds even if settings were closed
- Isle of Wight ensured payment were prompt to providers to support cashflow. All Early Years Entitlement funding paid until the end of the summer term
- Childcare settings closed from 23 March for all except vulnerable children and those of keyworkers
- All keyworker and vulnerable children who needed a place were able to access one
- Confusion within the sector regarding furlough
- Small business grants or discretionary grants were paid to all Pre-schools who met criteria
- PPE was made available at cost price for all Providers from the Local Authority
- Double funding agreed for keyworker and vulnerable children
- Regular FAQs produced and circulated to help sector navigate and understand guidance
- Meetings with sector to explore their concerns, provide guidance and encourage peer to peer support
- Frequent engagement with government to raise questions, explore issues

# Early Years Recovery – DfE Return 25/6/20

	Total	Open	Closed
How many childcare settings are in your area?	93	73	20
How many are childminders?	41	27	14
Are any childcare settings planning to close next week?	No		
Approximately how many children are attending in your area?	329		
How many are children of critical workers?	271		
How many are vulnerable children?	58		
Are there enough places for all children of critical workers and vulnerable children who need one?	Yes		

# Future Challenges

- Financial challenges and sector sustainability
  - Continued need to double fund
  - Cost of fixed prices
  - Loss of earnings from privately funded children
  - Low numbers of children in the autumn term
  - Withdrawal of furlough
  - Access and cost of hygiene supplies
- Capacity
- Wraparound care
- Shared care
- Sector confidence and infrastructure
- Parental update
- Business Planning
- Longer term changes to working patterns and employment

# Home to School Transport

## Business as Usual Service

- 106 Primary Age Pupils transport each day
- 900 Secondary Age travellers
- 360 SEN Travellers including Post 16 Transport
- Costs approximately £4M p.a.

## Lockdown

- During lockdown very few (7) mainstream children were using LA funded transport, 14 SEN children attending Medina House and St George's.
- Bus and Coach Operators Paid at 100% (DfT requirement), small taxi companies paid at least 50%.

# Home to School Transport

## Recovery

- Transport re-instated for the Yr 10 return, approximately 70 Year 10 travellers expected; Southern Vectis services re-instated where required for 3 schools, Carisbrooke, Medina and IFS.
- Some services since reduced as Southern Vectis reported no children travelling.
- 34 children attending Medina House and St George's, using all 8 buses.

## Future Challenges

- New bus and coach contract delivered for September.
- No social distancing on closed door contracts but need to be sympathetic to school 'bubbles' where possible.
- Delivery to two settings not possible in September (Medina and St G's, Carisbrooke and IFS).
- SEN transport in small vehicles a challenge; some exploration of using parental mileage allowances underway to reduce seat utilisation.



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# Admissions

- National primary offer day on 16 April 2020 - 1,150 applications processed
- Just under 98.5 per cent of parents have been offered a reception year place for their child in one of their three preferred choice schools, with 95.7% being allocated a place at their first choice of school
- The West Wight School Place Re-organisation concluded in mid March the admissions service quickly handled applications for all current All Saints Primary School children to attend a new school from September. All first preferences were met; two schools admitting most children were Yarmouth Primary School and St Saviours Catholic Primary School. including
- Additional mini-admissions round run for parents who had named All Saints as one of their preference schools, so that all West Wight families received a viable offer of a place for September.
- Temporary changes to legislative arrangements made on 24 April allows for admissions appeals to be heard virtually or as a paper based process. IWC have adopted a flexible process with appeal hearings commencing 1 June 2020. Hearings have a combination of attendance and 'dialling-in'; first outcomes are being received, no unfavourable impact identified.



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Thank you  
and  
any questions

