

## Topic of Importance Response

<b>Deadline for response:</b>	Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> August 2020
<b>Topic of Importance</b>	Education and Communication During COVID -19
<b>Areas for Consideration</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communication with Parents</li> <li>2. Parental involvement with Risk assessment process</li> </ol>
<b>Who is this response from?</b> (ie, service, panel, person?) Please consider all relevant areas suggested above, and state where areas are not applicable.	Toni Bailey – Assistant Director SEND & Inclusion
<b>Response from local authority / services</b>	<p>Communication with Parents.</p> <p>It is important that communication between parents and the Local Authority is maintained and effective. The Local Offers have been consistently updated and reviewed to ensure that covid-related information has been up to date. This has been challenging at times due to the speed at which government guidance has been changing and evolving. The Local Offers remains an excellent resource for supporting communication with parents.</p> <p>The Director for Schools was providing twice daily briefing for schools throughout the lockdown and both Parent Carer Forums were copied in. This enabled them to share relevant information with their parent carers in real time and to ensure that all information was consistent.</p> <p>Both Parent Carer Forums provided live feedback on emerging needs and issues and this was reflected in updates provided to schools as well as additional information being provided back to Forums to share. In addition, Forums provided parent information for the LAs to share with schools and all parents. A series of co-produced letters have been written to address emerging issues and communicated via schools and the Forums. There has been some difficulty in ensuring these letters get to every parent-carer (please see actions below) but we will be working on a more efficient way of ensuring all parent-carers have access to a database of communications as it's an important resource for all.</p> <p>Extensive communications with the Forums have been undertaken in response to the temporary SEND legislation easements, with daily sessions in initial stages of responding to these changes. Staff from education, social care and health with the Forums co-produced the process and communications. This was a hugely challenging piece of work given pressing timescales, the need to set up the infrastructure to manage the process and the number of parent carers / young people to be in touch with. It should be noted that issues raised by the Forums were given regard and included. This was a mammoth task which requires a great deal of gratitude and set a standard of co-production which has been exemplary and not seen elsewhere in the country.</p> <p>Risk assessment and parent carer involvement</p>

	<p>This was challenging as was a new requirement as the pandemic developed, with LAs required to provide their own supporting guidance to schools at the height of the lockdown. All school and settings were asked to complete a provision wide risk assessment that details how the setting will manage and mitigate any covid-related risks.</p> <p>It emerged that there were different interpretations amongst schools with some having conversations with parents that explicitly talked about risk assessments and others not telling parent carers that was the purpose of the call. Not all parent carers were engaged in conversations with schools and settings and many who were didn't know as risk assessment had taken place. Some schools also struggled with capacity due to staff absence. To try and ensure that all schools engaged with parent carers and were explicit about including them in the risk assessment, at the suggestion of the Forums we included it as part of the Form M document used under the Easements work.</p> <p>For children and young people who present some additional challenges, the Multi Agency Risk Assessment (MARA) document is still in use and parent-carers should be included in the completion of this document in partnership with the school/ setting. Head teachers and managers have been advised to be explicit when discussing details of the MARA with parent-carers. The MARA also requires contributions by health and social care partners. The Local Authority will be providing an update on how the MARA should be used, including reconfirming that parent-carers and, where appropriate, children and young people must be consulted and their views recorded.</p> <p>The Local Authority continues to work closely with Family Voice and Pinpoint - this productive (and sometimes challenging) relationship is vital in enabling us to react quickly to emerging issues shared by parents.</p>
<p><b>Actions / Impact of considerations</b> (please use bullet points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create and deliver a co-produced letter to SEND parents before 1<sup>st</sup> Sept helping prepare for a return to school.</li> <li>● Review delivery mechanisms for communications so that all parent-carers have access to information shared included a database or letter and other communications.</li> <li>● Provide an update on how to use the MARA for schools and settings – ensuring clarity about the role of parent-carers</li> <li>● Invite the Forums to continue to provide feedback as to the impact of these proposed actions.</li> </ul>