

COVID Email Update 12 January 2021

Good morning to you all, I hope you and your families are doing okay.

Last Friday you were all briefed about our working arrangements under the third national lockdown which started on 5 January 2021. My sincere thanks to Tim Cosh for coordinating this whilst I was on leave.

Lockdowns present big challenges for us, our own families, and the families we help. Whilst we have the muscle memory to draw on from previous lockdowns, and a clear way of working during lockdowns, this doesn't and cannot fully mitigate the physical and emotional fatigue or the logistical challenges that lockdowns brings. I feel this acutely too (I am writing this during a break from home schooling!).

Whilst our policies and procedures are clear, please do keep reflecting on, and talking about, your daily lived experience of actually implementing those procedures. If anything feels harder than it needs to be, please do talk with your line manager, drop me a line or give your view in the weekly survey.

You know me well enough to know that I want to hear it all, good stuff and difficult stuff, and that its always okay, whatever role you do, to put your hand up and say '*I think x could work better and here's my idea for how it could work better*'. This whole pandemic is a process of continual learning and adjustment for us all, so please do say if we can be doing anything differently/better.

In this week's update, I have covered both new information from the last 7 days, and some reminders about Guidebook sections that you might not have had to use for a while that have been updated for third lockdown:

National Lockdown Information Now on Guidebook

Links to the national lockdown guidelines are now on the Guidebook here <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/covid-nhs-and-government-information/social-distancing-government-guidance/#main>

Shielding Programme Now Activated

The shielding programme for clinically extremely vulnerable people is now live again. You can find more information here <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/covid-nhs-and-government-information/clinically-extremely-vulnerable-high-risk-people-shielding/#main> . If you are clinically extremely vulnerable, or live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, please stay at home and have a conversation with your line manager about what we can do to support you.

If you are working with a family that includes someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, please check if they have the help and support they need to stay at home, including access to priority shopping delivery slots, help collecting prescriptions etc. You can find more about the help available for people who are clinically extremely vulnerable here (scroll about half way down) <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/covid-nhs-and-government-information/clinically-extremely-vulnerable-high-risk-people-shielding/#main>

Eviction Freeze Now Live Again

You may remember that the Government temporarily froze all evictions during the first lockdown and that freeze was lifted in September 2020. The freeze on evictions is now back in place during lockdown. This prevents anyone being served with an eviction notice until at least 21 February 2021, except in specific circumstances. This is important to be aware of if you are working with a family in rented accommodation (social or PRS). More information here <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/homes-housing-and-council-tax/evictions/#main>

Furlough Scheme Still Live

A reminder that the furlough scheme, where employers can put someone on temporary leave and claim back part of their salary from the government, is still live. Worth holding in mind for families you are working with. More information here <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/employment-jobs-and-benefits/>

Increasing Data Allowances and Wireless 4G Routers for Children and Families

A number of the major mobile and broadband providers are now offering free mobile data increases for some children and families in specific circumstances BUT this can only be requested through the child's school. Schools can also request 4G wireless routers for children if increasing mobile data isn't a suitable option. You can find more information here <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/mobile-phone-credit-broadband-and-wifi/>. If you need to contact a child's school to request this help, you can find contact details for all Camden schools here <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/schools/contact-details-for-camden-schools/#main>

Vaccinations Update

I am still liaising with the project leads and Directors who are managing vaccination rollout about the inclusion of family workers who do face-to-face work in people's homes on the vaccination priority list. As you can imagine this is taking a bit of time to work through and the priority list is constantly changing and updating. However, the signs so far are positive. I'll let you know any news asap.

Grants and Benefits to Help with Energy Bills

Citizens Advice have recently produced a helpful list of grants and benefits that could be used to help pay down or reduce energy bills specifically in the winter months. You can find this and other information about energy bills here <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/energy-water-bills/>

Weekly Survey

The weekly survey is now open to let us know about any emerging family needs, and anything you need [FSCF FAMILY NEEDS SURVEY W/C 11 JANUARY 2021](#)

New information uploaded to the COVID Guidebook this week link here

<https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/>

Third National Lockdown Information Information about the third national lockdown and restrictions https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/covid-nhs-and-government-information/social-distancing-government-guidance/#main	Shielding Information Updated information about the shielding programme which is now live again during the third lockdown https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/covid-nhs-and-government-information/clinically-extremely-vulnerable-high-risk-people-shielding/#main	Increasing Data Allowances for Children Information on how to get increase mobile data allowances or 4G wireless routers for children during lockdown https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/mobile-phone-credit-broadband-and-wifi/
Eviction Freeze in Force Again Information about the ban on evictions during third lockdown https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/homes-housing-and-council-tax/evictions/#main	Help with Energy Bills Information about grants and benefits available during the winter months to help with energy bill payments https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/energy-water-bills/	

We are now in week 43 of COVID. Our capacity is still lower than usual due to sickness and is likely to stay lower for the next few weeks, so we are now considering bringing in agency staff short-term to help ensure we can manage the requests for help coming through front door. We're also keeping a very close eye on your individual caseloads to make sure they are manageable. If anything doesn't feel manageable, please do talk with your line manager so we can help (that goes for managers too!).

Stay safe and well, and as always shout if there is anything you need

Becca

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