

COVID Email Update 18 January 2021

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

Late on Monday evening last week, we had it confirmed that family workers doing face-to-face frontline work could be added to a vaccination priority list. To put it diplomatically, the process 'emerged organically' over the 48 hours that followed. I'm so sorry this may have felt quite chaotic and rushed at times, this one was out of my control!

Later today at our whole service briefing, I will go through the details of Camden's priority vaccination programme, what your choices are, and give you signposts to more information. Our webinars with UCLH's consultant virologist on Wednesday and Thursday will be your chance to ask questions to a medical professional. Your supervision space will also give you the opportunity, if you want to, to talk about vaccination with your line manager and the feelings it raises for you.

The question of whether to have the vaccination or not is one that only you can answer for yourself and your family. Whatever you decide, you have full control over that choice. I will do all I can to get you the information you feel you need, and the spaces to explore what the vaccination means for you. More at our briefing later this morning.

Updates for you this week:

Camden Safety Net Joining the FSCF Family

I'm delighted to let you know that in a few weeks' time, Camden Safety Net will be moving from Supporting Communities to Eve's Early Intervention and Prevention division in Supporting People, and will join my Family Support and Complex Families service group. Catriona Scanlan will join my SMT and report to me.

The incredible skills, experience and knowledge of the IDSVAs will be a welcome and invaluable addition to our family, building on the already strong relationships between our two services and our shared commitment to helping Camden families to feel strong, safe and resilient. I will let you know exact dates for this move as soon as possible.

What Makes A Good Virtual Home Visit?

Manchester Metropolitan University has just completed research with families on what makes a good virtual home visit, and it's well worth a read for ideas, tips and things to think about. There is a slide pack and a short summary here <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/direct-work-kit-bag/building-virtual-relationships/#main>

Webinar – Introducing Miro, Google Jamboards and Interactive Whiteboards

Delighted to welcome our good friends Mar Murube and Fozlu Miah from the Digital Transformation Team who will be leading this webinar on using interactive platforms and whiteboards. If you're not currently using these platforms, they might be a gamechanger for your virtual work with families or your remote working as a team. Not mandatory but hope you can make it. 25 January, 3-4pm, calendar invite to follow

Webinar – Housing Allocations in Camden and How It Works

A reminder that our webinar on how housing allocations works in Camden with Head of Housing Needs Shaun Flook is tomorrow at 11.30am. Not mandatory, but given how many of your questions about housing relate to this subject, it will be worth coming along. Let me know if you need the calendar invite again.

Free School Meals – Voucher Scheme Starts Again This Week

From today, schools will be able to request supermarket vouchers for children eligible for free school meals as the Government's national online voucher programme starts again. This means schools will have the choice to either give vouchers or food parcels to families. Please

contact the child's school for information on their plan for the voucher scheme as every school will be doing it slightly differently.

Seeing Children in School During Lockdown

If you need to do a face-to-face visit with a child or family during lockdown, it is worth contacting the child's school to discuss if the meeting can be held there. Camden Public Health have given advice to schools that

"Specialists, therapists, clinicians and other external providers providing support for pupils with SEND or other additional needs should provide interventions as usual. Where it is necessary to use supply staff and to welcome visitors to the school, those individuals will be expected to comply with the school's arrangements for managing and minimising risk and schools should ensure that all temporary staff have access to the information on the safety arrangements in place".

Dependency Leave Allowance Has Increased Again During Lockdown

For a temporary period Camden has again increased dependency leave allowance from five days to 10 days, to help cover any exceptional circumstances where the care requirements of your dependent(s) mean that it's not possible for you to work at all, or for some periods of time. Dependency leave can be used flexibly – including taking part days if you're sharing caring responsibilities with your partner for example. There is no need to use up their other leave entitlements – such as annual leave – before receiving paid dependency leave.

If you feel you need to take some dependency leave, or if you are finding juggling work and home school/childcare/care a bit overwhelming please talk with your line manager so we can help you think about options.

Vaccinations Page on Guidebook

You might have already seen that there is a new Guidebook page on COVID vaccinations. This contains links to information and advice from Public Health England and the NHS, plus information about Camden's priority vaccination programme. This may be useful if parents have questions about the vaccines. You can find it here <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/covid-nhs-and-government-information/vaccinations/#main>

Parking Permits

Just a reminder that you can apply for a parking permit during lockdown. You can find the process here <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/parking-and-transport-for-workers/parking/#main>

Coping Through COVID – New Guide for Parents

There is a new short booklet on the Guidebook for parents about coping through COVID including managing through periods of lockdown. Might be worth a look for conversations with parents who might be finding third lockdown difficult (hands up all parents) <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/keeping-families-emotionally-well/keeping-parents-emotionally-well/#main>

Lateral Flow Testing in Camden Schools

A heads up that COVID lateral flow testing (the quick result tests for people who are non-symptomatic) is now taking place in Camden secondary schools testing staff and pupils onsite, and will be rolled out to staff in primary schools during January. If lateral flow testing is introduced for primary school pupils, it is likely this will be via home testing kits and not performed onsite in school, although this is to be confirmed. You can read more about this here <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/mass-testing-to-be-rolled-out-in-primaries-despite-accuracy-warnings/> . If parents have concerns about lateral flow testing in schools, the advice is to contact school in the first instance.

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 18 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/>

<p>What Makes A Good Virtual Home Visit?</p> <p>New slide pack from Manchester Met University on their research with families on what makes a good virtual visit https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/direct-work-kit-bag/building-virtual-relationships/#main</p>	<p>Vaccinations</p> <p>Updated information about the national and Camden vaccination programmes https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/covid-nhs-and-government-information/vaccinations/#main</p>	<p>Parents Guide to Coping Through Lockdown</p> <p>A new guide to support parents to keep emotionally well with their families during lockdown https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/keeping-families-emotionally-well/keeping-parents-emotionally-well/#main</p>
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We are now in week 44 of COVID (although it is now a year since the first COVID case was reported in China) and a warm welcome back to those of you who have been poorly and just returned to work, it's good to have you back.

At the beginning of March, I'll be calling a very special whole service meeting – our Family Early Help Black Lives Matter Symposium. At this session, we will all bring together our collective learning and exploration since last July, make our assessment, and write our goals and plan to contribute to racial justice. Our frontline practitioners Black Lives Matter groups continue to meet throughout January and February.

Each week until our Symposium, I'll be ending my weekly email update with a link to a very short biography about one of the Black pioneers of family welfare work (as we heard from June Thoburn at Christmas, we share roots with our social work friends). This week - Ida B Wells <https://www.naswfoundation.org/Our-Work/NASW-Social-Work-Pioneers/NASW-Social-Workers-Pioneers-Bio-Index?id=509%20> .

I hope you enjoy reading about these men and women who laid the path for the work we do today – their contribution and courage needs to be talked about more.

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

Becca

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