

COVID Email Update 15 March 2021

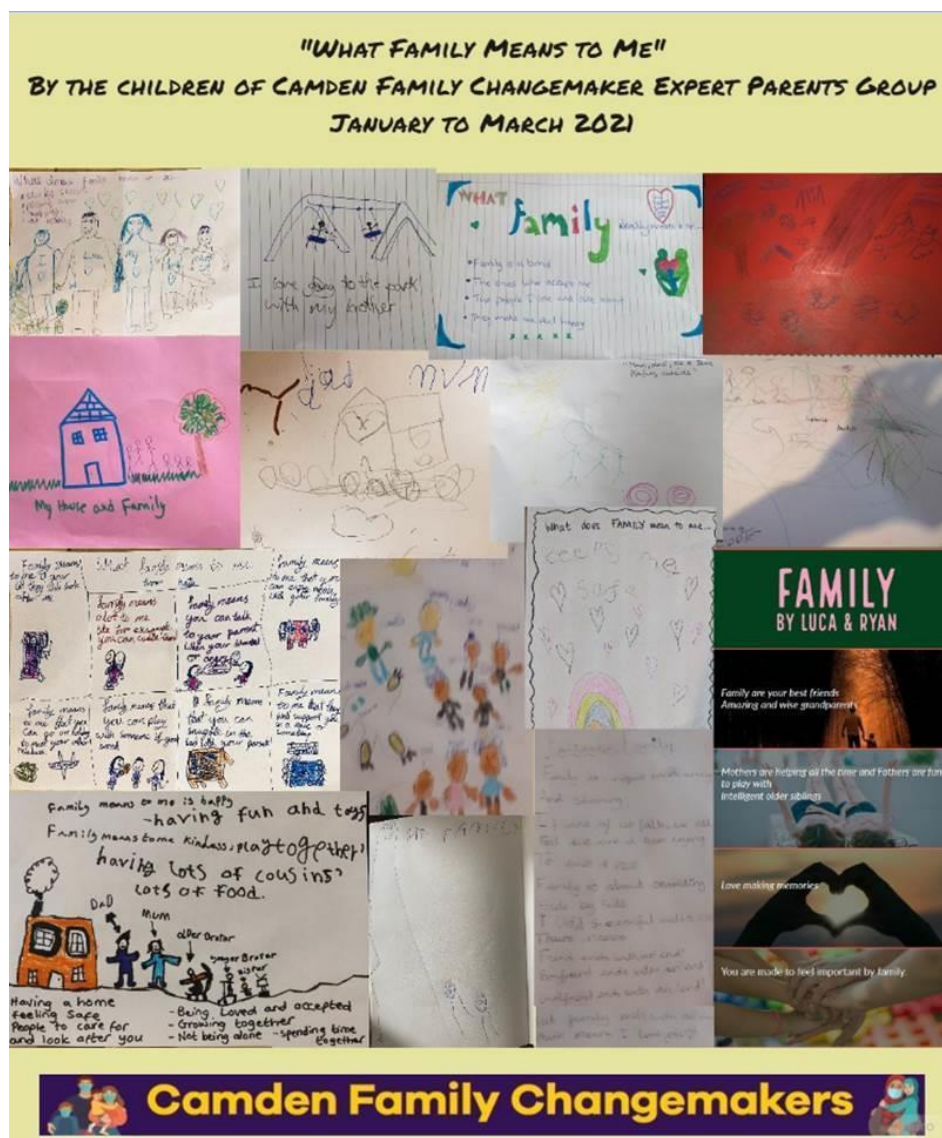
Good morning to you all, I hope you and your families are all doing okay.

Today marks week 52 of COVID for our service. My first COVID email to all of you went out on 13 March 2020. I don't think any of us had any idea of the magnitude of what was to come, nor the enormity of the journey we would take together over the next year. It takes my breath away reading through the email bulletins I have sent you every Monday since then. By the things we've faced, by how far we've come, by how much has changed and yet how strong our care for each other has stayed since day one.

I know I've said it many times in the last 12 months, but I'm so unbelievably proud of every single one of you. There is not another group of people on the planet that I would rather have done this with than you. Thank you for everything.

The twists and turns of this pandemic will continue and there are some storms brewing for families in the coming months. The end of the universal credit uplift in the autumn, the end of the eviction freeze in June which will hit hard on families in rent arrears and in private rented, the end of furlough and the unemployment and rise in insecure gig economy jobs that may bring. All these things will inevitably impact child poverty, on top of processing the emotional impact of the pandemic itself.

Our job is practical and emotional support, to help create the conditions for change so that families feel stronger and can get where they want to be. I don't think there will ever be a more important time to do that job than in the next 12-24 months.



I got a reminder from children of the parents taking part in Family Changemakers of why we do this job. They drew pictures of what family means to them and we made them into a collage on Miro. One of our Changemaker students said that family should feel like a harbour. I'll be holding onto that, and to these pictures, as we go onwards to the next chapter of our FSCF story.

Updates for you this week:

Webinar – Tree of Life: A Resource to Help Children and Families Tell Their Story Their Way

Delighted to be co-hosting this webinar with Dr Neelam Kumar from the Educational Psychology Service on 30 March, 10-11.30am. The Tree of Life is a strengths-based technique from narrative therapy. It supports people to tell their stories “in ways that help us feel stronger” and to move away from problem-saturated narratives and deficit descriptions.

The webinar will give you information on what Tree is, who its' for and how it works, and then an opportunity to give the Tree a try! We'll also be using Tree of Life at our Racial Justice event after Easter, so it's an ideal opportunity to familiarise yourself with the approach if you haven't seen it before. Calendar invite to follow.

Survey – Cultural Responsiveness Confidence – Please Click the Link Below

Thanks to everyone who has taken part in our Cultural Responsiveness Confidence survey so far. If you haven't had a chance to complete the survey yet, I would be really grateful if you could take 5 minutes to complete the survey here [FSCF Cultural Responsiveness Confidence Survey](#).

The survey is anonymous and is for all FSCF staff, regardless of role. The more responses we get, the clearer we can be on the things you think we should be focussing on when we set our Racial Justice goals.

Webinar - Family Early Help Guidebook

For all new starters, our online Guidebook contains a wealth of information and resources about topics that you will come across in your work. There is a search function on each page, or you can click on a square to explore each topic. You can find the Guidebook here and I recommend you bookmark it on your browser <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/>

I will be doing an 'Introduction to the Family Early Help Guidebook' webinar later this month, please do come along if you would like a walkthrough (or a refresher) of what the Guidebook is, what it contains and how to use it. Calendar invite to follow.

Interpreter Support – New Camden Scheme

You may have seen on Essentials that Camden has started a staff interpreting scheme. This matches staff who speak a range of community languages with residents who need support. Whilst this doesn't replace our existing language and interpretation service, it may well be a useful addition to your work. But have a conversation with your line manager first to make sure the confidentiality of our families is protected. You can find more about the scheme here [find a language interpreter on essentials](#).

Eviction Ban Extended to 31 May

The Government has announced the current freeze on evictions has been extended again until end of May, which brings some welcome but shortlived breathing space. I know I keep repeating this one, but so many families in Camden live in rented accommodation, particularly private rented, and could be affected when the freeze ends. If you are working with a family where rent arrears is an issue, or where eviction may be a problem in the near future, please have a look at the Guidebook information here so we can help them to prepare and address problems as soon as possible <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/homes-housing-and-council-tax/evictions/>

A debt respite scheme is on the way to support people in certain circumstances but this doesn't come into force until 4 May. More info here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/debt->

[respite-scheme-breathing-space-guidance/debt-respite-scheme-breathing-space-guidance-for-money-advisers](#) and more to follow as soon as I get it.

TFL School Travel Guidance Updated

The Guidebook section on TFL school transport services has been updated for the return to school and you can find it here, in case of any questions from parents <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/schools/transport-to-school/#main>

COVID Testing in Schools – Information and Factsheets

There is some confusion about what parents should do if their child has a positive COVID lateral flow test in school or at home. Public Health have sent out clarification and I have put it on the Guidebook here <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/schools/covid-testing-face-coverings-in-schools/#main>

There are also now ‘COVID testing in schools’ factsheets in English, Somali, Bengali and Arabic on that link too.

Webinars – Child Exploitation

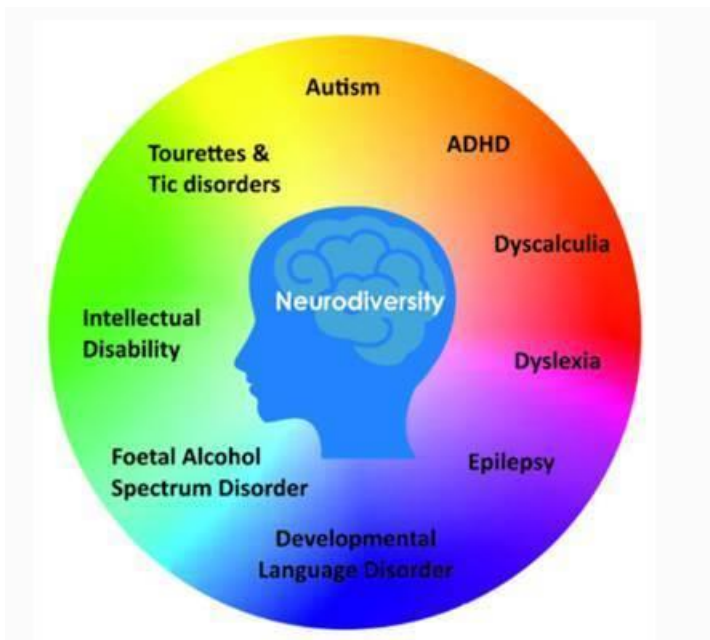
A reminder that the Child Exploitation Week webinars are every day this week, 12.30 – 1.30 – links and details below

- **Monday 15th March: Child Exploitation in Camden.** Bryony Smith, the Missing & Child Exploitation Coordinator, will discuss our strategic approach to disrupting exploitation, the borough profile and using tools such as Contextual Safeguarding. [Click here to join the meeting](#)
- **Tuesday 16th March: Our response to Missing young people.** Florence Lindsay-Walters, the Child Exploitation Analyst, will be explaining Camden’s approach to missing, best practice and what we can learn from themes and trends. [Click here to join the meeting](#)
- **Wednesday 17th March: National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and Harmful Sexual Behaviour.** Harriet and Toyah from The Children’s Society will be discussing the role of the NRM. They will also share their experience of working with Harmful Sexual Behaviour. [Click here to join the meeting](#)
- **Thursday 18th March: Working with young people exploited through Youth Violence.** The Evolve Team will be sharing their experience regarding building relationships with young people, transitional safeguarding and safety planning. [Click here to join the meeting](#)
- **Friday 19th March: Gender and Exploitation.** Jocelyn Yeboah-Newton from Rescue and Response will discuss the role of gender in exploitation. Rescue and Response is a pan London approach to tackling County Lines. [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Neurodiversity Celebration Week Starts Today

Today marks the start of Neurodiversity Celebration Week. The term neurodiverse was developed by Judy Singer in the late 1990’s. It is part of the social model of disability thinking, where we reframe how we think about conditions like ADHD, autism, dyslexia and dyscalculia. An estimated 1 in 7 people (more than 15% of people in the UK) are neurodivergent. This means that their brain functions, learns and processes information differently, and with that come incredible strengths, talents and positive qualities.

I hope you can take a few minutes this week to celebrate neurodiversity and reflect on why the reframing from deficits to strengths is so important. Here’s a link to some brilliant resources for schools, which includes a quick introduction to neurodiversity – well worth 5 minutes of your time to have a look <https://www.neurodiversity-celebration-week.com/neurodiversity-celebration-week-2021>



Weekly Survey

This week's family needs survey, for you to raise any issues you're seeing and noticing for families and anything you might need yourself, is now open here [FSCF FAMILY NEEDS SURVEY W/C 15 MARCH 2021](#) . Some updates on last week's survey comments:

Mentoring for Children	Picked up the point about Kids Network now charging for referrals, which is a real shame. I'll follow up with commissioning colleagues to see what if anything could be done to create a spot purchase opportunity for the time being. I'll also talk with FYA about their peer mentors to see whether there's any scope there. Will get back to you asap.
Eye tests	Camden has a free eye test scheme and you can find out more here https://lbcamden.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/HR/Pages/Free-Eye-Tests.aspx
Blended visits recording	<p>When a family opts for blended visits, follow the face-to-face procedure, and record the face-to-face visit and the virtual visit as a normal casenote. You only need to follow the virtual visits procedures if a family chooses virtual visits only.</p> <p>When a family chooses blended visits, the expectation is a face-to-face visit one week and a virtual visit the following week as a minimum. The gravity, severity and frequency of the risk to the children may mean you are seeing a family more than that, and this is of course fine, just casenote each contact with the family as normal.</p>
Housing	<p>I'm hoping that all the information that you've listed in your question is already on the Guidebook here https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/homes-housing-and-council-tax/</p> <p>Housing Solutions e.g. bidding for properties is in the 'Finding a Home' section Repairs is in the 'Housing Repairs' section Rent Arrears is in the 'Tenant and Rent Issues' section – first port of call should be the Camden Landlord Services Neighbourhoods Team and there is a link on this page to every neighbourhood officer and which estates/roads they cover</p> <p>You can also find all this information and more in the Housing Hub (Landlord Services equivalent of our Guidebook) here https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/homes-housing-and-council-tax/tenant-and-rent-issues/#main</p>
Parking Permits	Here is a link to how to apply for a parking permit https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/parking-and-transport-for-workers/parking/

New information uploaded to the COVID Guidebook this week link here
<https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/>

COVID Testing in Schools Updated information about lateral flow tests in schools + factsheets in different languages https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/schools/covid-testing-face-coverings-in-schools/#main	TFL School Transport Guidance from TFL on school transport has been updated following the reopening of all classroom-based teaching https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/schools/transport-to-school/#main	
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It was a very tough news cycle last week, particularly for women. Processing it all, making any sense of it all, takes physical and emotional energy from our already depleted stores. Whatever you are feeling this week, as ever, we love you, we stand with you and we're here for you. I'll leave you this week with an offering from Amanda Gorman, who became the youngest ever Black female poet to speak at a U.S. Presidential inaugural last year. This is not the poem she read then, but a piece called the Miracle of Morning and its stunning. I hope you enjoy it (there's a link in there to listen to her reading the poem too).

<https://ruralcoffeecaravan.org.uk/the-miracle-of-morning-by-amanda-gorman/>

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

Becca

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