

COVID Email Update 2 August 2021

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

It is exactly a year to the day that we returned to full face to face work after the first lockdown in 2020. At key 'anniversary' moments like this, it feels really important to reflect the journey taken, the challenges we've faced and continue to face, personally and professionally, what's got us through the difficult moments, and what we might need now and into the future. We've said so often in the last 18 months that resilience is never a solo effort – so as ever, please do reach out if you feel you need a helping hand.

Updates for you this week:

Home Office COVID Hotels

Many of you are now working with families who are staying in one of the Home Office COVID contingency hotels for migrant families seeking sanctuary during the pandemic. There is now a fifth hotel in Camden, and the number of children staying in those hotels is higher than at any point since they first opened in June 2020.

This is just a reminder that there is a whole Guidebook section on support and care for migrant families which you can find here <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/migrant-families-families-seeking-asylum/> . I am part of the Camden Oversight Group that is supporting work in the hotels, so if you feel stuck or need advice please do contact me and I'll do my very best to help or find someone who can.

Ofsted Preparation

I wanted to give you some headlines about preparations taking place for an Ofsted inspection. Camden Childrens Services last had a full inspection in 2017. Its widely expected that we'll have another full inspection in the autumn. This could be as early as September, but we won't know until the day we get the call from Ofsted. We also had an inspection 'focussed visit' in 2018, where Ofsted looked at how we help children in need of help and protection (front door, early help, CIN and CP). You can find the summary report of that visit here (5 minute read) <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50004461>

Having been through seven of these inspections over the years, their overall purpose always feels two-fold:

- To check we are helping children and families to the very best of our abilities and are making a difference to their lives
- To check we know ourselves well, that we're self-aware and are doing things to make our help even better

Ofsted have a list of things they look at, which they use to judge how we're doing. You can read this list here (8 minute read) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services-from-2018/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services#evaluation-criteria-and-grade-descriptors>

There is lots of work going on to prepare for inspection. The Director of Childrens Safeguarding and Social Work Rashida Baig and our Director Eve Stickler are jointly leading that work. All children's services departments participate in this preparation, from front door through to Looked After Children.

There will be more comms about the inspection coming soon, including some guidance to help you prepare for a conversation with the inspectors if they select one of your pieces of work to look at. But the most important thing to focus on, always, is the families we're helping. Camden families really are what matters most, above all else.

Parking Extensions - Update

You'll remember that the extended parking permits for staff ended on 30 July. We have asked Parking Operations if we could extend some permits for staff where we felt their risk assessment needed the added mitigation of a parking permit. Regrettably our requests were

turned down, but we felt strongly that this needed to be considered further, so we have asked Eve to raise it with Martin's DMT. I will of course keep you posted on any progress.

Holiday Activities and Food Programme – PLACES STILL AVAILABLE

There are still some places available on the Holiday Activities and Food Programme, particularly for secondary school-age children. If you're working with families who might be interested, here is a link to the programme and how to book <https://haf.youngcamdenfoundation.org.uk/>

9th Floor Tidy Up

You'll have seen from Internal Comms that a tidy up/deep clean is starting on the 9th floor. If you have possessions that aren't in cupboards or lockers (including things under desks or on top of shelves or in the stationary cupboard areas), you need to collect them as soon as you can, or ask someone to collect them for you. Any items not retrieved will be stored in the breakout area behind the kitchen on the Google side until 1 September. Managers, there may be team items (for example shredders or laminators) that you need to retrieve – please can you make some time this week to go to the 9th floor to check. More info here <https://lbcamden.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/communications/Pages/tidy-up-and-clear-out-activity-in-5ps.aspx>

Incredible Years Parenting Programme

In addition to FIFs brilliant parenting programmes, CAMHS are running an Incredible Years parenting programme for parents of 5-11 year olds from September. You can find information about it, including how to refer, on the Guidebook here <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/conflict-or-violence-in-the-home/parenting-programmes/#main>

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 2 AUGUST 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>Incredible Years Parenting Programme Information about a new Incredible Years Programme being run by CAMHS for parents or 5-11 year olds https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/conflict-or-violence-in-the-home/parenting-programmes/#main</p>		
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We are now in week 72 of COVID and our capacity is holding steady.

To end this week with this. Sincerely, thank you. One of the things I'm most proud of our service during this whole pandemic is that we have never once lost hold of our values and ethics. Our service exists to help Camden children and families to feel stronger, and our mission is give families practical and emotional help with love and care. Whatever this pandemic has thrown at us, that has never changed.

Every single week, I see examples of practice that shows the difference you are making to children and families. This week's examples included a beautiful social story written to support a child with endings, a workers persistence and compassion that helped a child to attend school regularly and enjoy new social connections through youth centres, a managers relationship-building skills that helped secure rehousing for victims of domestic abuse, and a two-woman mission to get the right NHS forms so that a child from the Home Office COVID hotels can get a sight test and replace a pair of glasses lost on the journey to the UK.

Family help being the difference that makes the difference. Lets keep going.



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

Becca

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