

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Safeguarding Sub Committee	<b>12/10/2020</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Education and Early Years Service Safeguarding Update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Kirstie Hilton, Lead Advisor, Universal Education Services	

### Summary

In June 2020, the Safeguarding Sub Committee was updated on the work that the Education and Early Years (EEY) Service was undertaking to improve the safety and welfare of City-resident children being educated in the City of London and other boroughs, as well as non-resident children attending schools within the City of London during the coronavirus pandemic.

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, all schools were closed from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, with only some reopening for Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020. Since September 2020, in line with government guidance, all schools have reopened to all pupils.

This report is an update on the work that the EEY Service has done during the summer term 2020 and summer break to support our most vulnerable school-age population and ensure their successful return to school in the autumn term 2020.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. The City of London has a unique educational landscape in that it has only one maintained primary school and no maintained secondary schools. There are four independent schools and one independent college (David Game College); most children attending these schools are non-City residents. Most of the City of London's primary-age children and all secondary-age children in the maintained sector are educated either in the independent sector or outside the City of London altogether. Consequently, this puts them outside the standard reporting and/or legal framework that governs the City of London's statutory responsibilities.

2. From 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 to 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020, all schools closed due to the coronavirus pandemic. Efforts were made to identify the most vulnerable children and in doing so this resulted in a number of children being provided with the necessary IT equipment to ensure successful engagement in remote learning.
3. Revised government guidance in May 2020 resulted in schools opening to select few year groups within the primary age group and some face to face sessions for those in Year 10. Therefore, for many secondary aged pupils, a full time return to school did not take place until September 2020. Further government guidance issued during the summer break confirmed that all children would be required to return to school in the autumn term 2020.

## **Current Position**

### **Vulnerable Children's List**

4. In April 2020 the EEY Service worked collaboratively with the Social Care, Early Help and Short Breaks Service to create a list of vulnerable children of statutory school age known to our services. The key priority at this time was to identify their current situation – what home learning was taking place, whether their school was open and whether they had the means by which to learn remotely from home if required.
5. Since then the Lead Advisor for Universal Services has met on a monthly basis with the Children's Social Care Team Manager and Lead Advisor for SEND to review the list.
6. As of the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020, there are 50 children on the list. Out of these:
  - 19 are of secondary school age
  - 21 are of primary school age
  - Less than ten are in further education (post 16)
  - Less than five are early years children

These children can also be categorised in the following:

- 38 are known to the Children Social Care, Early Help and Short breaks Service (either on CP Plan, CIN, EH, receiving short breaks or going through a C&F assessment)
  - 21 have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC Plans)
  - Less than five are being electively home educated
  - Less than ten are known to the EEY Service as being at risk of missing education (CME)
7. The list is now monitored on a weekly basis by the Lead Advisor for Universal Education Services and includes all known vulnerable children who attend either an early years setting, school or further education setting. This list does

not include any Looked After Children, all of whom are being monitored separately by the Virtual Headteacher. Prior to the beginning of the autumn term 2020, allocated social workers were asked to comment on any concerns they had on individual children. The Children's Social Care, Early Help and Short Breaks Service also provided an attendance report for all children known to their service to ensure they were actively attending.

8. For City resident children who are making the transition into Reception class or Year 7 as part of a standard transition, the EEY Service commissions Islington Admissions Service to carry out an annual check to ensure that these children are actively attending school as well as identifying any children who may be at risk of missing education. This work is carried out during the month of September and the 'no show' report is sent to the EEY Service upon completion.

## 9. Attendance Figures

10. The Aldgate School has been reporting their attendance to the Department for Education (DfE) on a daily basis since the beginning lockdown, when only vulnerable children were in attendance, opening up to all year groups in the summer term 2020. Since the beginning of the autumn term 2020, the school is making great efforts to ensure that children are attending and as a result the attendance figure is above 90%.

First Week w/c 7 <sup>th</sup> Sept	80%
Second Week w/c 14 <sup>th</sup> Sept	93%
Third week w/c 21 <sup>st</sup> Sept	93%

The attendance figures for the Virtual School for Looked after Children;

First Week w/c 7 <sup>th</sup> Sept	79%
Second Week w/c 14 <sup>th</sup> Sept	87%
Third week w/c 21 <sup>st</sup> Sept	91%

## Access to technology and Government Laptops

11. In June 2020 we reported that the DfE announced that it would be providing laptops for the most vulnerable young people, including those known to social care and children currently in Year 10. The City of London ordered 16 laptops which were then distributed to the children who needed them. This was in addition to equipment purchased locally using the COV-19 budget.
12. During lockdown it also became clear that there was a need to provide our young people with internet access. In response to this concern, the children's social Care, Early Help and Short Breaks Service distributed a number of dongles. A further request was made to the DfE for nine 4G wireless routers, which arrived in July 2020 and were then distributed.

13. Over the next academic year (2020/21) in addition to the IT equipment that the government provided during lockdown, schools will also be given the opportunity to order digital devices for children requiring access to remote education due to shielding or local coronavirus restrictions.

### **Education Welfare Work**

14. During the summer term 2020, the EEY Service continued to maintain close relationships with all City schools. The Education Welfare Consultant (EWC) was in regular contact with all schools to offer support and guidance on the reintegration of children back to school including attendance processes as well as acting as a lead professional on managing difficult cases.
15. During the first two weeks of term, the EWC held virtual meetings with all City schools to assist with any concerns that the schools may have with individual cases and general advice following the return to school. Very few issues were identified and great efforts have been made by all schools to encourage families to return to school. The EWC will continue to keep in regular contact with all schools during the autumn term 2020.

### **COVID-19 Case Reporting**

16. Since the beginning of the autumn term 2020, City schools have established processes to cope with the prospect of Covid-19 cases in school. Guidance has been developed by Public Health England and the Department for Education and local Standard Operating Procedures have been established so that schools are clear about what to do and who to contact in the event that there are cases.
17. The EEY Service has requested that all confirmed cases are reported to the team, in addition to notifications to the DfE and the test and trace email address.

### **Future Priorities**

18. Our main priorities during the autumn term 2020 will be:
  - a. to continue to regularly maintain our vulnerable children and young people list and to ensure collaborative working between the EEY Service and the Children's Social Care, Early Help and Short Breaks Service
  - b. to support our schools in the best way that we can; for the EWC to continue to act in a support and challenge role and as the lead professional for any difficult cases relating to non-attendance
  - c. to regularly monitor attendance of vulnerable children at school
  - d. to act as a point of contact for all City schools in relation to any Covid-19 cases that may arise

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

19. This work supports priorities 1 and 2 in the Children and Young People's Plan 2018–21:

- Our children and young people are safe and feel safe
- Our children and young people have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and are well prepared to achieve in adulthood.

## **Conclusion**

20. Over the past couple of months, our key priority in the EEY Service has been to ensure the safeguarding and wellbeing of City-resident children accessing education, to offer educational welfare support to our City schools and to anticipate what challenges families may have in transitioning back to school in the autumn term to ensure optimal attendance.

## **Appendices**

- None

### **Kirstie Hilton**

Lead Advisor, Universal Education Services

T: 07803437510

E: [kirstie.hilton@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:kirstie.hilton@cityoflondon.gov.uk)