

**Covid-19 CROYDON SEND Newsletter for Families**  
**Issue 1: May 2020**

*In order that parents and carers supporting CYP with SEND are kept up to date with national and local policy and initiatives and to signpost you to a range of services and information that may help you, we are producing a regular newsletter. We welcome any feedback about this and any items or topics that you would like to be included.*

**Decision making on school provision for children and young people with EHC plans.**

During the school closure all pupils with EHC plans can be offered a school place however, for some children the safest place to be is at home. Your school should be contacting you to discuss whether your child is safest at home or at school. If you decide that your child should stay at home, then these discussions will consider a range of factors, including any alternative arrangements that can be made to meet provision set out in the plan. This process is called risk assessment.

The Local Authority has updated the risk assessment guidance to ensure families are fully involved in this process and to make sure of the 'reasonable endeavours' that are in place to meet provision set out in plans during this period.

If you would like more information about process or if you don't feel you have been involved please contact your school or [sendenquiries@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:sendenquiries@croydon.gov.uk)

**Explaining Coronavirus?**



**Have you seen this social story to help explain the Coronavirus pandemic to your child?**

<https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-Coronavirus.pdf>

## Returning to school

Returning to school may well be causing you and your child some anxiety. Your child maybe looking forward to school or they might be feeling anxious and nervous. Schools will be focusing on welcoming your child and building and establishing relationships with them again in the first instance, as well as enabling them to settle and become used to the routine of the school day.

**Croydon Educational Psychologists Service** have produced a leaflet to support the return to school for all pupils including those with SEND. It has suggestions to support issues around anxiety.



The leaflet can be found on the Local Offer site or ask your school for a copy.

The service also offers a parental advice line:  
contact:

[edpsychology@octavopartnership.org](mailto:edpsychology@octavopartnership.org)

## Additional Funding to Support Children with Complex Needs.

The Government has announced that the Family Fund will receive funding of £37.3m in 2020-21. This includes £10m which has been allocated to help families in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. More details can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/37-million-to-support-children-with-complex-needs>

The family fund provides grants for low- income families with children that have serious illness, complex needs and/or disabilities. The funding should help to make living through the crisis easier while implementing social distancing measures. This includes funding for computers, specialist equipment and educational toys.

Please check eligibility criteria before applying for this funding and or speak to your school to help you

<https://www.familyfund.org.uk/FAQs/our-disability-criteria>

## SEND Strategy

We continue to keep the focus on our 5 priorities:

- Early Identification of Needs
- Better Graduated Responses
- Improved Joint Working
- Improved Post 16 outcomes and opportunities
- Workforce Development

Virtual meetings have been held for these delivery groups and each has identified specific priorities and actions.

The SEND Forum and SEND Strategic Board are focusing on Transitions for the Early Years and Years 6-7 and working with a range of Local Area colleagues including those from schools, to consider the challenges presented during this period of Covid-19.

Should you wish to make contact please email: [SENDtransformation@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:SENDtransformation@croydon.gov.uk)

Kathy Roberts - SEND Transformation Management Consultant

Monique Morgan – SEND Strategy Transformation and Improvement Manager

### Information on the Children with Disabilities (0-18) and Transitions (18-25) Service

The Children with Disabilities (0-18) and Transitions (18-25) Service provides care, short-breaks support and safeguarding to young people in Croydon with severe and profound disabilities. During the Covid-19 crisis it is offering advice and signposting for families of all young people with SEND, whether or not they would normally meet the service's eligibility criteria. The service can be contacted on:

[CWDDUTY@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:CWDDUTY@croydon.gov.uk) .

If you have concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child, contact should be made as usual via the Single Point of Contact: 02082552888 or [childreferrals@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:childreferrals@croydon.gov.uk) .

## Travelling to School Safely

### Croydon Transport Service

Croydon Transport is doing everything to minimise the risks for children, young people and adults in travelling to and from school/college. However, it is not possible to guarantee a COVID free environment or always offer strict social distancing. For this reason and in line with government advice, where possible all parents/carers will be encouraged to take their children to and from school either by walking or in their own vehicle. A personal budget will be available for eligible children to support the cost of this. Schools have been asked to confirm which children/young people will potentially be returning in June and Croydon Transport will contact all the families on an individual basis to discuss travel arrangements. Guidance when planning a journey can be found at:

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer travel guidance for passengers](#)

#### Families who still require transport

Government guidance will be followed in transporting pupils and students with special needs and/or disabilities to and from school and Public Health Guidance will be followed on the use of PPE for staff providing the transport

#### Complex needs

Due to the complexity of some children/young people/adults special needs, a risk assessment might deem it may not be possible to transport them at this time. However, these families will continue to be supported by the service in the best way possible.

If you have any queries relating to transport please contact [passenger.transport@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:passenger.transport@croydon.gov.uk)

## Health Services

### Special School Nursing

The special school nursing team based at [St Giles School](#) will continue to provide support to children and their families and carers by telephone to all children on their caseload.

Working closely with schools that remain open and Social Care, the nursing team will provide home visits or schools visits where it is deemed clinically necessary. The team continue to part take in video case conferences, core groups and children in need meetings.

Onsite nursing support will be in place across special school provisions and Rainbow Nursery as per children's normal risk assessed needs.

Provision has been altered to allow for support over the school holiday period and the Post Covid period, and additional support is being offered to schools and education staff. This is to make sure that staff are trained to support children where school personnel might have changed.

Schools and parents can contact their normal named school nurse in the Nursing Hub on 020 8680 4810, or email [mhn-tr.specialschools@nhs.net](mailto:mhn-tr.specialschools@nhs.net)

## Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)

Routine clinic-based appointments, home visits and new assessments for education needs have temporarily been paused.

In many cases, support for children speech, language and communication needs would have been provided by teaching staff, following the advice and guidance from the speech and language team.

### Contact with Therapists

- advice Clinics are being delivered over telephone. This is for school-aged children and parents whether or not they are already known to the service.  
You can find out when the next advice clinic and when your child's therapist is available is by calling 0208 714 2594 between 8:30am and 5pm. You can also email [CH-TR.SLTcroydonchildren@nhs.net](mailto:CH-TR.SLTcroydonchildren@nhs.net).
- if your child's Special School has an official Facebook page, look out for comments, tips and advice from Speech and Language Therapists. The team are uploading resources and providing advanced support for parents
- for some children and young people and their parents/carers who were receiving one to one support, if suitable, a new virtual appointment might be offered via tele-therapy. This offers a secure and private connection for video appointment
- therapists have made contact with families on their caseload

### Additional Support Offered

- support for Children with Eating and Drinking Difficulties (EDD) in the community is being provided via tele-therapy-or home visits, if urgently needed and appropriate
- support for children with EDD in Croydon University Hospital is being provided onsite at the hospital
- newly referred children with EDD are receiving telephone or tele-therapy support

### Children with Education and Health Care Plans

For those with Annual Reviews or assessments due for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), the service will continue to work with SEN Co-ordinators and the Designated Clinical Officer to provide advice where the child or young person is already known to the service.

### **Physiotherapy (Health Provision)**

The focus of physiotherapy services will be on children and young people who need urgent support, or to families who need:

- post-operative management and support
- newborn baby referrals
- urgent outpatient access

If you are already receiving physiotherapy support from Croydon Health Services, we have contacted you. If you have any urgent concerns during this period please email: [ch-tr.croydonchildrensphysio@nhs.net](mailto:ch-tr.croydonchildrensphysio@nhs.net).

If you can't email, telephone 020 8274 6853.

### **Occupational Therapy (Social Care and Health Provision)**

Routine clinic-based appointments for Occupational Therapy services have temporarily paused. Instead we are offering telephone advice and contact.

The service will keep providing the following:

- discharges from specialist hospitals for children needing equipment
- support for children with significant moving and handling needs requiring equipment
- urgent reviews of equipment

### **Children's Community Medical Services (Community Paediatricians)**

The service has reviewed which appointments can be carried out by telephone or video conference.

In some cases appointments will still be carried out face to face. The decision to carry out appointments face to face will be done on a child-by-child basis. If you have an existing appointment or are already known to the service, we will contact you if there is a change to your appointment.

Routine referrals and appointments may be delayed. Where new referrals are received by the service these are being triaged (we decide the order of treatment according to each case's circumstances and urgency).

If you need to contact the service, email us on [ch-tr.communitypaediatrics@nhs.net](mailto:ch-tr.communitypaediatrics@nhs.net). If you do not have access to email, please call 02084013982 option 1.

## Parents in Partnership (PiP)

### (PiP) Referrals and Support during Covid -19

During this time, Parents in Partnership is still operating a family support service. They have currently stopped providing face to face services for parents and carers but are offering support via phone and email. Please contact PiP by email and not by phone in the first instance at [office@pipcroydon.com](mailto:office@pipcroydon.com).

You will receive a call back.

We can also attend virtual meetings where possible - for example video meetings or phone meetings - to support parents and carers.

#### Making referrals

These can be made by email, including relevant contact details or by using the online form at [www.pipcroydon.com](http://www.pipcroydon.com). You'll find it under 'Contact Us'. Parents and carers can also refer themselves this way. A referral does not need to be made by a professional.

## Croydon SENDIAS Service

SENDIAS continues to operate during this period of Covid-19. During the school holiday we will have a lower staffing level however, we will look forward to continue to answer your queries during this unusual time. We will endeavour to respond to all your queries within two working days. The best way to contact us is by e-mail: [croydon@kids.org.uk](mailto:croydon@kids.org.uk) or leave a message on 07469155943.

We provide information and advice about SEND provision for your child including,

- SEND support available in early years, schools and post 16 provision settings
- Education, Health and Care plans
- Understanding professional reports
- Understand and applying the law and local policy related to SEND

Our Friday SEND Drop In's continue to support parents virtually term time only. To find more about them contact: [Aurelija.mulier@kids.org.uk](mailto:Aurelija.mulier@kids.org.uk)

We recognise that this letter contains a great deal of information but we thought it important you should have the information. If you have any queries please contact [marion.hampton@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:marion.hampton@croydon.gov.uk)

