



Bolton Parent Carers & Bolton Information Advisory Service

Working together for Bolton's SEND families

Joint Bulletin 7 - 1st May 2020

This week we entered week six of lockdown. Cabin fever has crept in a little bit for some of us! The sun has gone and the rain has certainly arrived! However, there's been a lot going on this week which has kept us busy whilst we stay home (and keep dry!).

We've another bumper edition for you this week. Our Educational Psychology Service have another great weekly newsletter at the end of the bulletin for you. We have a message from our Director of People, Bernie Brown, some stuff to get the kids and yourselves involved in from one of our wonderful local providers, and some rather important updates concerning SEND law. Grab a cuppa (or something stronger if that's your thing!), settle down, and have a read through this weeks news and updates.

Bolton Council A message from Bolton Council's Director of People

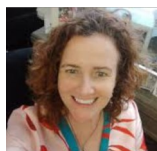
Dear fellow parents

I wanted to write to you to say thank you for doing a great job caring for your kids at this really difficult time.

I have 3 boys at home with me, 13 10 and 8 so this message doesn't come with any advice on what to do as I am struggling to stay sane whilst trying to work, home school, cook, clean (actually I have given up cleaning) so I can't begin to imagine how much harder it will be with a child or children with additional or complex needs.

Let's give ourselves a reality check. We are doing a great job, our children love us and we them, so don't put yourself under pressure to be perfect, just keep trying, and remember, keeping everyone safe and well is medal winning work.

Look after yourselves as well as your children, and remember that support is here for you, IAS and BPC are amazing, and if you need help don't be afraid to ask for it -we all need help sometimes.



Take care and I will see you at a catch up meeting again when life returns to the new normal.

Bernie



Changes to SEND law

As we predicted would need to happen, the government have made some changes to SEND law to support everyone as much as reasonably possible, throughout the COVID pandemic. This was released on 30th April. The guidance that has been released is supposed to be aimed at parents and carers as well as professionals to read, but it's not a particularly easy-read! Nationally, social media has been quite alive with reaction to this and some of the chatter makes it sound like the changes are vast and have huge implications for families, which isn't entirely accurate. Therefore we are breaking it down to what it means in it's simplest terms. In essence, it relates to two primary points;

The duty to secure special educational provision in EHC plans (in the new guidance)

The timescales applying to statutory functions (in the new Amendment Regs 2020)

There are NO changes to the usual SEND Code of Practice 2015 as the new legislation(s) are temporary.

Send Amendment Regs 2020

These new regulations state that where it is impracticable to meet usual timescales because of incidence/ transition of Coronavirus, the timescales can be disapplied, and instead, must happen '**as soon as reasonably practicable**'. One of the things this applies to is EHC timescales.

The new guidance and securing special educational provision

The guidance says that where the Local Authority before had a legal duty to secure the special educational provision in an EHC plan, now, they need to use 'reasonable endeavours' to look at what can be delivered in your individual child's circumstances. The Local Authority will be making plans to look at what is 'reasonable' and 'practicable' to deliver in an alternative way, given most of our children are not in school. It is likely to also differ from what is written into the plan.

Things that still remain UNCHANGED

- The duty to assess- parents, carers, young people and schools can still submit a request for an EHC Needs Assessment.
- LA's will still need to obtain all the information and advice needed to do a full and thorough EHC Needs Assessment (such as EP advice, Ladywood advice etc)
- Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014 still stands- so the views, wishes and feelings of the child and parents still remain paramount to everything that everyone does in relation to SEND
- No change to draft EHC plans and parents being able to make representations
- Schools still need to be consulted and named in EHC plans
- Final plans must be to the same legal standard as before COVID-19

Important note- this guidance was only issued yesterday. As such, although we wanted to communicate this to you as soon as possible so you are not out the loop, more detail will follow. The Local Authority wish to discuss the changes with BPC & IAS, next week to gather our thoughts as well as theirs. We will than all have a better idea of what this means for you and your child. We will obviously keep you posted!



Bolton Council Educational Psychology Service Helpline

Bolton Council

The EP helpline continues to operate. You can call them to discuss, for example, any concerns or questions you may have about your child and their education, or any matters regarding supporting them, meeting need, helping with emotional health in children. As mentioned previously, the helpline numbers have now changed.

This numbers and days for May 4th - 15th

Monday morning 07580036439

Wednesday afternoon 07919564919

Friday morning 077803293887

We also have this week's EP Newsletter for you at the end of the bulletin.



Your experiences...

As your local Parent Carer Forum, we are still working to gather parent views and experiences to share with leaders and professionals locally. We have put together a questionnaire to find out how families are managing and also if there's anything we could try and add to our joint support package we are offering with Bolton IAS. [Access the questionnaire by clicking here](#)



Reminder on support available to you now

Both the IAS and BPC websites have a wide range of resources and information to keep you up to date and busy throughout this time. You can find us at www.iasbolton.com and www.boltonparents.org.uk

IAS and BPC are holding coffee mornings by Zoom. Each one is usually hosted by Frankie from Bolton Parent Carers. These are every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 11.30am until 12.30pm. For more information visit www.boltonparents.org.uk/join-in

Our IAS 'natter and listen' service is still here for anyone who needs it- whether you just need some adult conversation, need to let off some steam, want some advice or reassurance, or just someone to call a friend to talk about your day, we are here. Simply text 07467943495 and we will arrange a call back for you whenever you want to talk. Cheryl, Nan, Mike and Karen are happy to help wherever we can.

The usual IAS service- although we are all working from home, we can continue to offer telephone and email support, advice and guidance for anything SEND related- whether you've got EHC forms to complete, want to know about anything education, health or social care related, or to chat through your concerns for when the schools go back, get in touch using our 24 hour email address- iasoutofhours@outlook.com and we will call you back.



Daytrippers

For obvious reasons, Daytrippers have had to suspend all their usual outings and social events. However, they've moved some of their activities online and wanted to share with you two particular things they are doing for children and parents.

Video dance classes twice per week- all welcome to join in!

WhatsApp group peer support chat- great for those who maybe don't access Facebook

Please visit their website www.daytrippersbolton.org.uk for contact details to be added to the group, or to access the dance classes.

Other updates

Bolton at Home

Bolton at Home support for EVERYONE, not just Bolton at home residents

Bolton at home are offering benefits advice to everyone in Bolton. The free service, which was previously only for Bolton at home residents, can help with benefit applications, medical assessments, challenging decisions and more. To access the free service, please get in touch with them on 01204 328091, or email welfarerights@boltonathome.org.uk



Safety advice for children- Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service have released a fire safety workbook for children aged 7 years to 11 years. The free booklet features activities designed to educate children on topics such as spotting hazards, making 999 calls and includes puzzles. It can be downloaded from safetycentre.manchesterfire.gov.uk

Bolton Library and Museum Services

Access library and museum resources at home during lockdown Public buildings may be closed due to the Covid-19 outbreak but you can still access free eBooks, eAudio books and eMagazines with the [At Home with Bolton Library and Museum Services](#). The service provides themed online activities with art, home and reading and there's images, videos, quizzes and interactive posts and resources to help with home-schooling, learning new skills and expanding your knowledge or just finding out the latest research and information.



Chat Health- Are you a young person aged between 11-19 needing bit more help and support during lockdown? Through Chat Health you can **text** a specialist nurse on 07507 331753 for confidential support and advice on a range of topics including emotional wellbeing, relationships, sexual health, alcohol and drugs and much more. Parents can **text** a specialist nurse on 07507 331751 with questions ranging from breastfeeding support and child development, to behavioural issues and general advice. For more info visit www.boltonft.nhs.uk



Reminder! The BBC has launched its new home learning tool, BBC Bitesize Daily Created in collaboration with 200 teachers and a host famous faces, BBC Bitesize Daily aims to teach the nation's children using the UK's national curriculum. It offers 14 weeks of free learning for children from Year 1 up to Year 10, with three new lessons every weekday with videos, activities and more. You can find it here- www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize



The Start Well EY SEND team have worked with a range of partners and collated some resources which might help parents and carers at home during the COVID-19 pandemic with young children who have SEND. We hope that they can be used to support and offer ideas at this very challenging time.

[FAQs by Parents of young children with SEND](#)

[SEND Live Sessions and Parent Support](#) - This is a collection of fun live sessions you can join in with your child. Suitable for young children and young children with SEND. It also provides links to various parent support materials.

[Sensory Home Learning](#) - A large collection of sensory, play and story ideas to use with young children and those with SEND.

[Sensory Diet](#) - A simple explanation about Sensory integration and a range of ideas that can be accessed at home to support a child who requires additional sensory stimulation.

[Click on this link to explore more resources including Corona Support and Strategies to support behaviour](#)

If your child's early years setting or school is closed you can access advice and guidance from the Start Well EY SEND Team directly, during the period of lockdown. To find out how, see the attached form at www.boltonstartwell.org.uk

facebook

Lots of our local organisation, setting and professionals are using Facebook in new and inventive ways! It might not be something you normally dip in to, but it's one of the easiest ways for local groups and settings to try and keep in contact, so do check out...

[Ladywood](#), [Greenfold](#), [Rumworth](#) and [Lifebridge](#) all have Facebook pages for families to follow with updates from staff to the children and lots more.

Check if your school is on Facebook or Twitter!

Bolton Speech & Language staff are signing along to books on the [Bolton AHP's](#) Facebook page.

If your children/young people normally access activities with Daytrippers, Kidz2gether, Breaking Barriers, AFC Master etc—make sure you check and see what they are offering online! There's lots going on in the virtual world!



We will be back in touch next Friday with a weekly update. If you would prefer not to receive this, please just let us know. In the meantime, please do make use of the joint IAS/BPC support package mentioned.

Stay well and look after each other, and most importantly, please stay at home.

Cheryl and the IAS team, and Nan and BPC



Talking to your children about the new Coronavirus

Introduction: Your child may be worried by what they have seen or heard in the news about coronavirus. They may ask questions and look to you for clues about how to react. Although you may feel you do not have all the answers, it is important to take time to listen and to talk with them about their concerns. The way you approach this will be different according to the age of your child. Below are some possible questions your child might have, tips on how to answer these, and visual prompts to support the understanding of younger children or those with additional needs.

Information for Parents

Explaining how every family is affected in some way

Children may believe that the overwhelming amount of coverage and talk about coronavirus means that they are certain to get the virus, or that those they love will definitely catch it. You can help your child by emphasising that:

- The virus has meant big changes to all our lives, and everyone is talking about but this doesn't mean everyone will catch it
- Although we are all affected, and we can't see the virus, there are lots of things we can do to reduce our chances of catching the virus

The Science

Give your child the very basics to help them understand. You can help your child by:

- Using clear and accurate language
- Giving just the amount of information needed to answer your child's question

Explaining Government restrictions

Lockdown means disrupted routines and missing out on social contact with special people. This can be upsetting for many children, especially if they don't understand why it is necessary. You can help your child by:

- Emphasising that by not visiting older relatives we are helping to keep them and others like them safe
- Sharing ideas about other ways to keep in touch with special people (e.g. drawing a picture and posting it; emailing; sending a letter; using video chat apps)
- Scheduling a regular time to make contact with grandparents and vulnerable relatives
- Emphasising that these restrictions will not last forever, and that the more we can stick to them, the sooner things will be able to get back to normal

Grief and loss

Like adults, children will react in different ways to the experience of grief and loss. Let them know you are available to listen if they want to talk (but that it's ok if they don't). You or your child may also wish to seek the support of external agencies (see information from 'Cruse' below)

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General tips: Try to stay calm and reassuring; be guided by your child; aim for 'just enough' information; be honest and accurate; use clear language that is appropriate for the age of your child; give practical tips for how children can reduce their risk of catching the virus; balance discussions focused on coronavirus with talking about more positive topics

Staying safe and supporting each other

As well as talking about the dangers of coronavirus, it is important to let children know that there are things they can do protect themselves and others. This can be helpful in giving children a sense of control, at a time when it might feel that there is so much that is out of their control. You can help your child by:

- Ensuring they know the steps they can take to protect themselves and others
- Emphasising that by sticking to the guidelines they are helping to make a big difference to the number of people who will get coronavirus
- Encouraging children to take daily exercise or spend time outdoors wherever possible

Children often want to know what comes next

Although, as adults, we know that the current changes to our daily lives are temporary, children (especially younger children or those with additional needs) may assume they are permanent. You can help your child by:

- Making it clear that the current situation will not last forever
- Emphasising that scientists are developing a vaccine and that politicians are making plans to help things get back to normal as quickly as possible, whilst keeping us safe

Explaining change

Change can be difficult to cope with, whatever our age. It can be especially hard when timescales for a 'return to normal' are shifting or unclear. Some children may be worried about going back to school. You can help your child by:

- Taking one day at a time
- Trying to encourage them to focus on the 'here and now'

A suggested text for children:

Why is everyone talking about coronavirus?

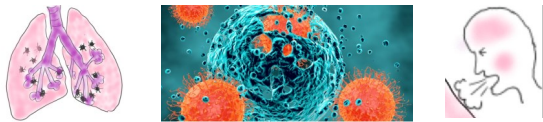
Adults are all talking about coronavirus because everyone is affected by it in some way. It's new so we don't yet know everything about it. Here are some things we do know:

- It's a tiny germ (something that lives in our bodies) that we can't see with our eyes because it's so small. It looks like a ball with spikes.



- Adults are worried that it makes some people sick and there is no medicine to stop us getting ill from it yet
- It's contagious or 'catching' meaning people can pass it to each other when they are close enough, without knowing

How does it make us unwell?



It sticks to other tiny bits inside our airways, called cells which normally help us to stay healthy. When the coronavirus sticks to them they can't work properly. It makes loads of copies of itself and spreads round inside our chest attacking the cells in our airways making us cough

Our own cells in our body try to fight coronavirus off which makes us feel hot and unwell. We might feel like this for a few days whilst our own 'army' tries to get rid of the coronavirus germs.

Why can't we go out or see grandparents?



The coronavirus germ gets into our body from another person's hands and from drops of water when someone coughs. We need to stay in our homes so that we can't pass it to anyone or catch it from someone

People over 70 can become very ill if they get it so we have to stay away and they have to stay indoors

Someone I know has died. Why?

Some people already have an illness which means their body can't fight off coronavirus as well as other people. Very sadly, some people are dying because their bodies can't fight it off.

More suggested text for children:

We know we have to wash our hands...What else should we do to help?

- Adults can take food to people over 70 and anyone who has another illness which might mean if they catch coronavirus they can't fight it off. This way people who might become very ill with coronavirus don't need to go out for shopping and be near others.
- We all need to keep a crocodile-length away from anyone who doesn't live with us so it doesn't pass on



- We can all keep in touch by calling and videoing.
- We can stay at home unless we are going for a walk, run or other exercise so that we aren't near others



- Some adults are key workers so they are helping by going to work in important jobs, like nursing, whilst being very careful.



When will it go away?

We don't know but scientists are working on a medicine to fight it off or stop us catching it. We think you can't catch it again once you've had it so some people may not need the medicine as they may have caught the virus already and not known because they felt fine.



Will things ever be the same as before?

Most things will go back to normal but it will take time. Eventually most people will go back to work and school and we can see our friends again.



www.cruse.org.uk/
helpline@cruse.org.uk
0808 808 1677

Educational Psychology Service
Schools ICT
Smithills Dean Road
Bolton
BL1 6JT
Telephone: 01204 338060

The Educational Psychology Service can help with additional information, references and suggestions. Please contact our service or speak to your school SENCo.



Need support?

Our COVID 19 community response line is now open offering vital help to people who need food or essential items

01204 337221

8.30am – 5.30pm Mon – Fri and Sat 9am – 1.30pm