

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

Portfolio holder for Education - Cllr Phyl Davies

12th May 2020

REPORT TITLE: Emergency childcare hubs

REPORT FOR: Information – Cabinet.

Emergency Childcare hubs

On Friday 20th March 2020, all schools across Wales were closed and the Easter holiday was brought forward for learners due to the Covid virus outbreak. Schools were repurposed to become childcare hubs for key workers' children and vulnerable learners. Over the period of a week Powys had set up 15 childcare hubs for school age pupils across the authority, two of which were for special schools and PRU. Emergency Childcare hubs were set up and commenced in Powys on 27th March 2020.

Our general principles when setting the hubs up were:

- 1.1 *The primary purpose of a hub is not to provide education. The primary purpose of the hub is to provide childcare within a carefully managed setting.*
- 1.2 *It is important to recognise that the hubs need to provide a safe environment for all users*
- 1.3 *It must be recognised that children (and staff) will be finding the current situation confusing and emerging events may be having a detrimental effect on a user's mental health. As professionals, we have a duty to support children and each other to ensure physical and mental wellbeing are supported.*
- 1.4 *Where possible, we will seek to have bilingual staff at all hubs*

Hubs in Powys operate from 8am – 6pm seven days a week including bank holiday weekends. Staff, including headteachers, teachers, support staff, catering staff, cleaning staff, sports development officers and officers from the local authority schools service, work in the childcare hubs on a rota basis throughout school holidays and weekends. This work has been commendable and our thanks goes to all the staff involved who have had to adapt and change working patterns very rapidly.

Hubs are located in the following areas:

Cluster	Hub location	Hub Lead
Brecon	Priory C in W School	Lynsey McCrohon
Bro Hyddgen	Ysgol Bro Hyddgen – Primary campus	Dafydd Jones
Calon Cymru – Builth Wells	Newbridge-on-Wye C. in W. School	Helen Nixon
Calon Cymru – Llandrindod Wells	Cefnlllys C.P. School	Karen Jenkins
Crickhowell	Crickhowell C.P. School	Mark Wakeley
Gwernyfed	Archdeacon Griffiths C. in W. School	Louise Simms
Llanidloes	Llanidloes C.P. School	Elen Chennetier
Llanfair Caereinion	Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	Phil Jones
Llanfyllin	Llanfyllin C.P. School	Dewi Owen
Maesydderwen	Ysgol Gymraeg Dyffryn y Glowyr	Emma Rofe
Newtown	Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd	Siân Davies
Presteigne	Presteigne Primary School	Ros Beck
Welshpool	Welshpool C in W Primary School (Howell Drive site)	Justine Baldwin
Penmaes/ PRU south	Penmaes	Karen Gittins

Cedewain/ PRU north	Cedewain	Russell Cadwallader
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Numbers of children attending the hubs ranges from 145 up to 245 across the LA. Numbers in the hubs have been increasing of late as a result of the intentional joint work between schools and children's services to ensure that more vulnerable learners are accessing the hubs.

The Schools Service has been working closely with Children's Services and health professionals to identify vulnerable learners, and to ensure that those learners are tracked and supported. Schools and Schools Service staff are maintaining regular contact with those learners they believe to be vulnerable. Whilst it isn't possible to categorise all of these learners by particular labels, it includes (but is not limited to):

- Children/families supported by TAF;
- Children/families supported at the level of Care and Support;
- Children on the Child Protection register;
- Children Looked After;
- Children with disabilities;
- Children with Statements of SEN, or with lower levels of ALN/SEN;
- Children with Hearing or Visual Impairments (Sensory Support Service are maintaining regular contact);
- Children who are Young Carers;
- Children with other wellbeing needs;
- Children with Statements of SEN who are on roll at a maintained special school;
- Children on roll at the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).

Bespoke safeguarding policies for both Emergency Childcare Hubs (ECHs) and Emergency Childcare Specialist Hubs (ECSHs) have been created. The senior challenge advisor and acting senior ALN manager have established a 'Team Around the Hub' to provide support for staff and pupils in each hub. This includes a challenge adviser, ALN manager, foundation phase advisory teacher, Xenzone counsellor, Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) and a member of the social services team.

Designated and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads for Emergency Childcare Hubs and Emergency Childcare Specialist Hubs have been identified. These have overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within their hub. Each hub also identifies a nominated lead person for safeguarding to be on site during each shift. In addition, every school has Designated and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads. They have also nominated additional contacts, with contact details for each person whether they're in school or at home. This database has been shared with Children's Services.

Children's Services and the Schools Service are aware of which learners are Children Looked After (CLA), and those who are on the Child Protection (CP) Register. Each hub has been provided with the list of children who are within their hub's 'catchment' who are CLA or CP. This is being checked and updated if necessary on a weekly basis by the Schools Service and re-distributed to Hubs.

Where schools are making contact with children/families, guidance has been issued on how this should be undertaken and logged.

For those learners on roll at either a special school or the PRU, provision in the ECSHs has been organised on a rota system, to ensure that all learners can access the ECSH, and to ensure that the correct staff with the requisite training are available on site to meet each learner's individual needs.

Three meals are available throughout the day which include breakfast, lunch and tea. Pupils attending the hubs who are eligible for free school meals have meals provided in the hubs. Social distancing is adhered to throughout the day including at meal times. A cleaner is on site throughout the day to ensure surfaces, door handles etc are wiped and disinfected throughout the day. Handwashing routines are regular and managed well.

Parents book their children into the hubs through an online booking system which is working effectively. Transport is provided for those children who are eligible.

PPE is available in all the childcare hubs. In the 13 mainstream hubs, PPE is available for dealing with pupils who are displaying symptoms and need to be isolated with a member of staff until they are collected by their parents. In the special childcare hub and early years' hubs, PPE is available for feeding and/or intimate care as well. Long distance thermometers have also been purchased for use in the hubs. Tests are available for all staff who may be displaying symptoms.

The set-up of the emergency childcare hubs has been very successful across Powys and is an excellent example of joint working across schools, across different service areas in the local authority and with the Trade Unions. Thanks to all our staff who have shown commitment, professionalism and care for our families and children in Powys.