

Keep



Hampshire

SAFE

Key learning for education settings in Hampshire and Isle of Wight

November 2020

Introduction

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Children's Services

Hampshire County Council and Isle of Wight Council

Agenda

- Experience from the first half of the autumn term: Robert Pears, Consultant Public Health, Hampshire County Council (HCC) and Isle of Wight Council (IoW)
- Communications – Diana Leahy, Communications Team Leader, HCC (and on behalf of IoW Council)
- Next steps and PHE COVID-19 key messages: Eric Halton, County Education Manager, HCC & IoW

Experience from the first half of the autumn term

Robert Pears

Consultant - Public Health

Hampshire County Council & Isle of Wight Council

Learning experiences: Case examples

There are three themes-

A: Mitigating the impact upon the number of cases and isolation

B: Maintaining integrity of 'Bubbles'

C: Notifying the Local Authority

We are grateful to colleagues for sharing their experiences. We are all learning from the challenging situations they have had to face, without the support of hindsight!

CASE EXAMPLES

Factors increasing the impact upon the number of cases and isolations of staff

- HT notified that staff member tested positive without symptoms. PHE flowchart used to inform next actions. Contacts made during the previous 48 hrs identified. It was found that despite maintaining social distancing within the classroom, a number of staff members had socialised together. This meant that a significant number of staff members were required to self-isolate

Factors increasing the impact upon the number of cases and isolations of staff

- A member of staff has contact with multiple bubbles, throughout the educational setting day, and although each contact is brief – this accumulates causing additional isolations
- Staff members in 1 to 1 meetings with the same team leader at consecutive appointments throughout the day led to all these staff isolating
- Staff and bubbles identified to isolate because mobile phones were left in proximity and switched on or educational setting's records of movements and contacts were unclear

Learning- Mitigating risks and minimising cases and isolations

- Risk is increased where there are staff members moving between classes. This includes admin and support staff. **Aim to reduce to minimum necessary movements between bubbles**
- All staff must think about social distancing and **apply the 2 metre rule at ALL times**. This includes at break times, on training and when socialising out of work.
- Consider how **childcare and education settings' senior leaders and managers stringently maintain social distancing**, including from each other, to minimise impact upon the school/setting if they were to test positive. Presidents and Vice-Presidents don't share the same plane, what's the Covid-19 equivalent in educational settings?
- Test and Trace (T&T) app in educational settings- phones talk to each other whether or not the people are with their phones, and the app does not discriminate contacts outside of work. We suggest **switching off Bluetooth or the T&T app when at work if not keeping on your person**- use contact tracing and **ensure everyone can account for their movements and contacts** when at work. [DFE Guidance to use of app in educational settings](#)

Case Examples

Compromising integrity of bubbles used for infection prevention and control

- Reporting of the case to DFE (and OFSTED for Childcare and Early Years' Settings) - and then sometimes Health Protection Team - has been undertaken without the full details being known - risk of over escalation of isolations or under reporting and risk of infection spread
- When reporting a confirmed COVID-19 case to the DfE helpline, the transport used by the young person was not discussed. This meant a group of children who were in close contact during the journey were exposed to numerous bubbles within the setting
- Whilst maintaining secure bubbles during lessons, children were allowed to mix during break and lunch times

B: Learning- Maintaining integrity of ‘Bubbles’

- **Understand the full picture** (including transport) before making contact with DfE (and OFSTED -EY settings only) to enable full assessment and prompt action.
- **Use the checklist** for information to gather before reporting a case(s)
(See Appendix B, pp 55 and 56 in the PHE South East Educational Settings Working Group COVID-19 Resource Pack for Educational Settings)
- **Record actions in one place** so all those dealing with the situation are working together and from the same information

Learning- Maintaining integrity of ‘Bubbles’

- Be **confident that all staff have been rigorous** in following the setting’s risk assessment mitigation measures and hygiene protocols to the letter and vigilant in wiping down shared IT, office phones and other resources, using anti-bacterial/anti-viral wipes
- Identify all risks, as far as possible, **and have mitigations in place for those children and staff who are in more than one bubble/ setting over a week** – for example children who are educated at home but who have some alternative provision/outreach support in another setting during the week e.g. after school club, or home to educational setting transport

Case Examples

Notifying the Local Authority

- Educational setting staff and local authority becoming aware of a COVID-19 case in a setting via media/social media ahead of official channels. Parents' social media leads to misinformation being cascaded amongst other parents, carers and staff. Creates confusion - parents feel there are mixed messages.
- Several situations where communities have pressurised staff and used Facebook links to 'track down' who they think has tested positive for Covid-19 and then share. This has been a challenge to contain at times.
- Notifications of a positive case during the evening / weekends are more challenging than during working hours, for obvious reasons, leading to anxiety or inconsistency of actions taken/support accessed

Learning: Notifying the Local Authority

- Be mindful of GDPR and the need to **maintain confidentiality of staff and children** who are the positive cases
- Ensure stakeholders are **notified as quickly as possible and work systematically**
- Settings to use checklist for information to gather before reporting case(s)– allows for **efficient communication but also for review of practice** after the event
- **Academy and independent settings are expected to notify the Local Authority (LA)** of confirmed cases for awareness and to support the consistency of messaging
- Please use the LA contacts published for your sector **in addition** to any DfE notifications (or Ofsted for early years settings)

Notification strategy (Early Years Settings)

- Always contact Services for Young Children and advise:
 - Number of cases (children or staff) and year groups
 - Numbers and year groups of children in affected bubbles
 - What notification has already taken place and actions advised (update as appropriate)
- Our team will provide pastoral support and any support required around the guidance which has been given

Contacts:

- Hampshire Early Years Team - childcare@hants.gov.uk
- Isle of Wight Early Years Team - eyat@iow.gov.uk

Notification strategy (Schools)

- Always contact the Phase or District School Improvement Manager (SIM), the relevant County Education Manager (CEM) and the Leadership and Learning Partner (Primary only) and advise:
 - Number of cases (children or staff) and year groups
 - Numbers and year groups of children in affected bubbles
 - School transport implications
 - What notification has already taken place and actions advised (update as appropriate)
- Our team will alert local public health, county transport services and media team to support /expect contact from the school where appropriate (more from media team on next slides)

Contacts:

- **Secondary Schools**
david.hardcastle@hants.gov.uk (CEM)
jean.thorpe@hants.gov.uk (SIM)
- **Primary Schools**
eric.halton@hants.gov.uk (CEM)
+ district primary SIM/ IOW SIM and linked LLP
- Hampshire Local Authority Public Health team -
hcc.healthprotection@hants.gov.uk
- Isle of Wight Local Authority Public Health team - publichealth@iow.gov.uk

Special Schools, Independent Schools and Pupil Referral Units

Special Schools

Please contact **both**

karen.1.nye@hants.gov.uk

(County Education Manager)

and

naomi.carter@hants.gov.uk

**(School Improvement
Manager, Special Schools)**

Independent Schools and Pupil Referral Units

Please contact

karen.1.nye@hants.gov.uk

(County Education Manager)

Notification strategy (Post 16 Further Education and Training)

- Always contact the County Education Manager (CEM) and advise:
 - Number of cases (children or staff) and year groups
 - Numbers and year groups of children in affected bubbles
 - If a student, do they have SEND (with an EHCP) and/or are they known to be in the care of the local authority.
 - Any school transport implications
 - If the case is associated with on-campus boarding facilities
 - For colleges or providers with multiple sites, which site the case relates to
 - What notification has already taken place and actions advised (update as appropriate)
- Our team will alert local public health, county transport services and media team to support where appropriate (more from media team on next slides)

Contacts:

- **CEM Skills and Participation -**
Phillip.Walker@hants.gov.uk
- **IOW college and providers –**
School Improvement Manager
natalie.smith2@hants.gov.uk
- Hampshire Local Authority Public Health team -
hcc.healthprotection@hants.gov.uk
- Isle of Wight Local Authority Public Health team
publichealth@iow.gov.uk

Communications

Advice to education settings for COVID-19 communications to stakeholders

Diana Leahy

Communications Team Leader

Corporate Communications, Hampshire County Council
and presenting on behalf of Isle of Wight Council Communications Team

Communications with the key stakeholders (parents and carers) and media



Staff, Parents and Carers

- For confirmed cases Public Health England South East will provide two types of template letter for settings to send to all parents and carers – it is advised that these are shared with staff for their information
- There will be one template for the families of children who need to self-isolate (**close contacts**) and another for the families of all other children (**general**)
- When tailoring the templates for your school, it is important to keep the specific details of the case confidential so, no further details about the person/people should be provided

Staff, Parents and Carers

- It is recommended that use of the terms: ‘a child/children’ or ‘member(s) of staff’, are avoided in order to retain some anonymity around cases and maintain confidentiality
- Instead refer to an *individual(s)* or *member(s) of the educational setting community*

And ...

Staff, Parents and Carers

- Add the following content to the *What to do if ...* information (text is in red for the benefit of ease of reference):

What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID 19

- If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, they must not come to [school/educational setting name] and should remain at home for at least **10 days** from the date when their symptoms appeared. Anyone with **one or more of the most common** symptoms of COVID-19 will be eligible for testing and this can be arranged via <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119.

Please **do not** arrange for your child to be tested if **they do not have** the symptoms.

Media Enquiries

- First and foremost, “Don’t Panic” - there is a network of Local Authority professionals to support you
- Brief staff who answer telephones to take the name and contact details for journalist (inc. an email address) and to note the questions being asked and pass the enquiry to you, as the setting leader
- Most COVID-19 media enquiries can be answered simply by emailing the journalist a copy of the **general** (not close contacts) letter that has been sent to parents and carers

Media Enquiries

- In a covering email note you can confirm that educational setting remains open and, for schools, that any pupils self-isolating are continuing their education via remote learning
- If pressed for more details you should inform the journalist that you are not able to share the details of cases because this is confidential information (for your reference see *pg 34 – ‘Communications’ – of the Public Health England SE Resource Pack for Education Settings*)
- Media advice is available, should you need it, from the Corporate Communications Team either at Hampshire County Council or the Isle of Wight Council (contact details follow)

Corporate Communications Contacts

Support for setting leaders requiring advice relating to parent/carers communications or responding to media enquiries

- Hampshire educational settings – **corporate.communications@hants.gov.uk** Tel. 0370 779 3250
(Please be aware that there may be a charge for support given to settings which are not Hampshire County Council maintained settings)
- Isle of Wight educational settings – **media@iow.gov.uk** Tel. 01983 823793
- Academies' Communications Leads are asked to liaise with relevant Hampshire County or Isle of Wight Council Corporate Communication teams before external communications e.g. media, parent letters are issued.

Please note that the Corporate Communications Team at Hampshire County Council does not operate a 365/24/7 service. Out of hours communications support is restricted to emergency situations only.

At the Isle of Wight Council, the Media Team will monitor its in-box out of hours and respond as required.

Next steps and PHE COVID-19 key messages

Eric Halton

County Education Manager

Hampshire County Council and Isle of Wight Council

Key principles

- Know the notification process and checklist information requirements and use the PHE flowchart- managing suspected and confirmed Covid cases
- As disciplined as possible in bubbles, contacts and health protection measures, inside and beyond the settings
- Reverse engineer from any staff meetings, contacts or bubble arrangements- what are the consequences of a confirmed case on the numbers of staff and CYP isolating?
- **You are all doing a brilliant job** and we will continue to support

Next steps:

Facilitated discussions in autumn 2020 via MS TEAMS, to cover:

- How can the learning be used going forward?
- In what ways have educational settings been well prepared or unexpectedly shocked or surprised?
- What support has made the biggest difference, including from outside the educational setting?
- What could be done even better?
- Implications of Lockdown (national restrictions)

Thank you