

# Report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services to the meeting of Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021

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**Subject:**

**EDUCATION COVID RECOVERY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME**

**Summary statement:**

This report provides an update on the work that forms part of the Education Covid Recovery Improvement Programme. It updates the status of work to date along with the approach to be taken for further development.

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Children's Services

## **1. SUMMARY**

1.1 This report provides an update on the work of the Education Covid Recovery Improvement Programme.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 During the period of school closure from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 to September 2020, schools were required to ensure that learning opportunities were provided for all children on their roll. This was done in a number of different ways and almost all schools were successful in engaging with the majority of their learners.

2.2 However, it is recognised that the impact of the closure of schools will have undoubtedly had a negative impact on the learning for many children, especially those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. It should also be noted, that non-disadvantaged children will also have also been negatively impacted by the closures. Therefore, whilst the post Covid funding will naturally focus on the impact for disadvantaged children, aspects of this recovery process will benefit a wider group of children.

2.3 All pupils were supported to return to school for face to face learning from September 2020. The introduction of a 2<sup>nd</sup> lockdown in November may result in schools adopting flexible methods of teaching, including face to face and remote learning dependent upon Covid outbreak levels of their schools

2.4 In June 2020, the Executive agreed for funding to be allocated to support the delivery of several strategies that would help to reduce the medium-term impact of the closures.

2.5 This included the creation of the Education Covid Recovery Improvement Programme which includes the following workstreams:

- Digital Inclusion
- Extended Summer Tuition Programme – Maths and English Year 11 GCSE;
- Supporting Mental Health for Learning.

### **2.6 Digital Inclusion**

2.6.1 The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for online access for communication, education and wellbeing in the district, making digital inclusion more imperative both in the response and the recovery for children, young people and families in the District.

2.6.2 In May 2020 the Government national roll out of devices to all children with a social worker and disadvantaged Y10 pupils did not match the need across the Bradford District. The total allocation was 2000 against just over 5000 children, including Care Leavers, who have a social worker. Therefore, it was recognised that there was a gap in the provision of devices to support remote learning for vulnerable children and young people.

2.6.3 The Education Covid Recovery Improvement Programme will be widening the provision of connectivity and digital devices to bridge this gap and support learning.

2.6.4 This will include the following:

- Our 2000 younger children under the age of 5 across the district access to an age appropriate device to support children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- Children who have since been allocated a social worker.
- Post 16 (Years 12 and 13) who need to access a device for college.
- Ongoing support and maintenance of the existing 4G connections provided in the DFE scheme, as well as the provision of additional connections for the extra devices. Ensuring that these are extended to the end of the current academic year in the first instance.

2.6.5 The Programme Manager is working with Education Strategic Leads; Social Workers; Early Help and Schools to identify the device requirements; software needs and associated priorities.

2.6.6 Schools can request devices directly from the DFE. However, recent criteria changes have meant that the number of devices allocated is significantly reduced. DFE will only provide devices to schools that have had to close due to Covid or have 15 or more children isolating. Devices can be provided for children who are shielding.

2.6.7 Given the introduction of lockdown and the DFE criteria change for Schools. The Programme Manager has worked with Innovation Services to identify how devices could be provided for those urgently in need. We have a limited number of Chromebooks ,iPads and WiFi devices available for distribution. Monitoring of the school covid reports enables us to identify schools where large numbers are noted as isolating and may need digital devices.

2.6.8 Lockdown notification has seen the demand for digital devices rise sharply and the ability to buy devices quickly is challenging. Innovation Services are working with the procurement team, to expand the purchasing frameworks we use, to maximise on our ability to access wider supply chains

2.6.9 The expansion of devices in addition to Chromebooks and iPads needs consideration. Discussions will be taking place aligned with the Digital Strategy to assess the options; how system build and user support can be provided. Safeguarding software will be a key consideration

## 2.7 Tuition Programme – Mathematics and English

2.7.1 To extend tuition for GCSE Mathematics and English, Bradford Council has committed £400k, in addition to Opportunity Area funding, to improve outcomes at Key Stage 4. This is a combined investment of £600,000

### 2.7.2 Mathematics Tuition

The focus of the Maths Tuition Programme is to improve attainment at Grade 4 or above in GCSE in 2021.

School selection for participation in the Mathematics project was based on low attainment in mathematics grade 4+ and with large cohort sizes to ensure maximum impact. 17 Schools received letters offering them places with 15 accepting. The number of tutoring places available is 800

Bradford University is leading on the provision of tutors. 34 have been appointed and their training has been completed. Tutoring sessions will be delivered in groups of 4 with a dedicated tutor assigned to each cohort

The Government lockdown from 5<sup>th</sup> November to the 2<sup>nd</sup> December resulted in a delay to the scheduled start date of the 5<sup>th</sup> December. This was due to the introduction of Covid testing for students aligned with government allocated travel dates for their return home for the Christmas Break.

Tutor sessions have been rescheduled to start on the 9<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Venues for tutor sessions have also been rescheduled and will take place in Community Centres across the District along with food provision for each group of attendees.

Plans are also in place for tutoring to be delivered online, if there is a further lockdown imposed due to rising Covid levels following the Christmas break. At the time of writing this report 80% of participating students had access to a digital device and the internet to support virtual learning. Data on the further 20% is being progressed with schools with the council offering digital devices and wifi connections.

It is noted that the committee requires further information on how outcomes will be measured including the effectiveness of tutors. This information is being collated and will be provided as part of the update given by the Education Covid Recovery Programme Manager

### 2.7.3 English Tuition

The Post Covid Education Recovery programme has also committed an equivalent sum of money to provide funding to develop a parallel system to support rapid improvements to prepare students for the Y11 GCSE English language examinations. Consideration is also being given to support Year 10 students

Focus will be on examination technique, question analysis and efficient and effective text analysis. Delivery of the English Language tuition project will be by suitably qualified staff who will be trained to deliver a programme to meet specific requirements.

The approach to the identification of tutor resource and associated delivery planning is in development . Experience from the Mathematics tuition process will be used to inform planning

## **2.8 Supporting Mental Health for Learning**

- 2.8.1 It is recognised that many children will have been impacted by the restrictions imposed during the lockdown period and sadly, some children may have experienced the death of family members during Covid-19.
- 2.8.2 It is well documented that children will often use schools and adults in school as “safe spaces” in which to explore their feelings. Therefore, specialist advice will need to be in place to support schools directly and indirectly to help children work through feelings. Disadvantaged children and families may need more targeted and specialist support.
- 2.8.3 Covid has highlighted the need to provide an Education led service offer that has a whole family approach. This will be aligned to Education Psychology services and will work with the child; school and family to identify the issues encountered in engaging with learning.
- 2.8.4 The Education Covid Recovery Improvement programme has appointed a team of 5 Education Therapeutic Officers (ETO) on 12 month contracts, to deliver this whole family therapeutic service. All 5 practitioners have now started their contracts and are undergoing induction and training
- 2.8.5 A referral process to the ETO team is in the final stages of development to support schools in accessing the service. In the first instance an ETO will make contact with schools in their locality to introduce themselves and outline the scope of the service offer including referral pathway. Full service delivery will commence January 2021
- 2.8.6 The education led service offer, provided by the ETO team, is not a replacement for other support currently available. Children will still be able to access existing services including CAMHS, school based services and the enhanced training that has been provided to schools with mental health champions
- 2.8.7 Communication around the ETO service has been shared with schools on BSO and via SENDCo Network and other communications with settings. Expressions of interest have already been received which is positive

## **3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 None.

## **4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL**

- 4.1 £1.2 Million additional Capital funding has been committed by the council to support post COVID recovery for the provision of digital devices. In addition, revenue funding of £715k has been identified to provide tuition programmes and the creation of a small team of Education Therapeutic Officers

## **5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

- 5.1 No issues arising.

## **6. LEGAL APPRAISAL**

6.1 All advice to schools given in line with National Government Guidance and the Education Act.

## **7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

Impacts on all children and young people of statutory school age. Specific focus on supporting vulnerable children to reengage with learning positively.

### **7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable.

### **7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS**

Not applicable.

### **7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable.

### **7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

All children have the right to an education.

### **7.6 TRADE UNION**

All establishments of posts have been done via the appropriate engagement with Trade Unions.

### **7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS**

All wards.

### **7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING**

Children Looked After are a specific cohort that will benefit from this work.

### **7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT**

Not applicable.

## **8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

8.1 None.

## **9. OPTIONS**

9.1 Not Applicable.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 As the work in progress for this programme is based on an academic year, significant progress and performance against outcomes cannot be provided on a monthly basis. The committee is asked to recommend what they would like to see from this report moving forwards

## **11. APPENDICES**

11.1 Appendix 1 - Education Covid Recovery Improvement Programme - Action Plan.

## **12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

12.1 None.

Education Covid Recovery Improvement Programme - Action Plan  
 Programme Manager: Sharon Sanders

Progress update: 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020

<b>RAG:</b>	
<b>R</b>	Off target
<b>A</b>	Started/ work in progress
<b>G</b>	Completed and signed off
	Not yet started

ACTION AREA		ACTION	OWNER	PROGRESS	R A G	SIGN-OFF
1	Digital Inclusion Workstream.					
1.0	Develop the detailed scope and associated implementation plan detail for this workstream	Review provision of devices and associated usage data under the DFE initial scheme	Programme Manager and Innovation and Improvement Lead	Usage data has been provided and has enabled devices to be redistributed. This is mainly as a result of children having access to devices at home  Schools have been contacted to assess why devices have not been used. These conversations have identified challenges with parents agreeing to device provision and further discussions highlighted wifi access as a barrier. Dongles have been made available to support with this	A	
		Review device types against DFE updated guidelines	Programme Manager Innovation and Improvement Lead	DFE device provision is primarily Chromebooks and Ipads. Innovation Services are able to support these devices.	G	

		Review Wi-Fi devices and assess utilisation and ongoing support and maintenance for current devices	Programme Manager Innovation and Strategy Lead	Wifi dongle requests have increased. Our current devices will be extended to the end of the academic year and discussions with DFE are in progress to enable this	
1.1	Agree under 5 cohort criteria for provision of devices. Including device type and associated software to be loaded onto the device	To identify the 2000 under 5's who will benefit from a device  To confirm the device type and software recommended based on practitioner expertise. This will support procurement requirements	Early Years Lead and Programme Manager	Meetings have been held with a number of stakeholders including Early Help colleagues; These meetings will help formulate an agreed outcome based approach for device provision of this cohort, with appropriate measures	
1.2	Identify new care leavers since initial DFE rollout	To identify the individuals requiring a device. To ensure appropriate device procurement and allocation	Programme Manager Virtual School	Following an increase in the devices provided work is in development to identify clear outcome measures. This will include qualitative and quantitative data	
1.3	Identify Post 16 Care Leavers	To identify the individuals requiring a device and the type of usage needed e.g. college work. To ensure appropriate device procurement and allocation	Programme Manager Childrens Services Children in Care Lead	Device request has now been automated via an online form. This will support with speed of response and improved data  Work is in development to identify clear outcome measures. This will include qualitative and quantitative data	

1.4	Engagement with wider digital initiatives across the District and nationally	To identify the digital inclusion work of other organisations across the District. Ensuring awareness of their roadmap and involvement for delivery of a joined up approach	Programme Manager	<p>Meetings held with a range of organisations including OA; Centre of Applied Education Research (CAER) Bradford Institute for Health Research; 50 things to do before you are 5</p> <p>Confirmed as a member of the Bradford and Craven Digital Programme Board and Bradford Council Digital Inclusion Group. Engagement with 100% Digital Leeds to benefit from the lessons learned and successes of their programme</p> <p>This activity will be ongoing to ensure that this programme benefits from a joined up delivery approach and associated expertise</p>		
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**2: Extended Summer School – Maths and English**

2.1	Recruitment and training of Tutors	<p>Bradford University to manage the recruitment of undergraduate tutors</p> <p>Training to be provided by Maths Hub</p>	Bradford University	34 Tutors recruited. Training completed which included safeguarding and first aid		
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2.2	Venue Booking	Book venues across the District	Bradford University	All venues have been rebooked to reflect the revised January start date. Community centres are hosting all sessions. Online tutoring is also planned as contingency.		Remains at amber until sessions start
2.3	School Selection	School selection criteria to be applied and letters issued to those schools	School Standards and Performance Bradford University	School criteria identified as low performing on attainment of grade 4 or above for Maths. This is 17 schools and 800 tutoring spaces  15 schools have confirmed participation		
2.4	English Tutoring Detailed Scoping	To define the English Tutoring project. Identification of tutors; pupil cohort; school selection; venues and timelines	Programme Manager School Standards and Performance	Meeting taking place in Dec with School Standards and Performance Team; Opportunity Area Project Lead and University to finalise outcome measures including Tutor effectiveness		
<b>3: Supporting Mental Health for Learning</b>						
3.1	Education Therapeutic Officers (ETO) Recruitment	Advertise vacancies for 5 ETO posts to include 1 Lead Practitioner.  Interview and appoint for a	Integrated Assessment and Psychology Team	ETO appointments have been made on 12 month contracts  All 5 practitioners have started their contracts and are undergoing		

		post October half term start		induction and essential training.	
3.2	Schools access to ETO provision	Agree a process that supports schools to access ETO provision	Integrated Assessment and Psychology Team	<p>An outline referral process to the ETO team has been developed and their service offer will start Jan 2021</p> <p>In the first instance ETO practitioners will make contact with schools in their locality to introduce themselves and outline the scope of the offer including referral pathway.</p> <p>Outcome measurements will form part of the discussion</p>	