



To: AI CS's staff

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Our Ref: GH/dh

Your Ref:

Date: 2 November 2020

Dear Colleagues

Re: Announcement of a Second Lock Down:

This is an all staff communication aimed at Children's Social Care and Early Help & Family Support Services staff who are delivering direct services with children, young people and their families in Gloucestershire. I am writing, having consulted with Andy Dempsey, to acknowledge the Prime Minister's announcement at the weekend regarding a second lock down starting from midnight Thursday 5 November 2020 this week until Wednesday 2 December 2020 at the earliest. You will also have received a corporate communication from the Chief Executive, Pete Bungard, this afternoon.

I met with the Children's Social Care Heads of Service this morning at 8:30am for our regular Monday morning catch up and we talked about how we all felt about this news. To be honest there was a mix of views and feelings, but first and foremost we were all agreed about the desire to express our sincere thanks and praise for how well staff have continued to deliver front line services over the past seven months since March 2020. By working together, we have already done so much to adapt to the challenges the global CV19 pandemic has brought and this is really impressive. These efforts did not go unnoticed by the Ofsted inspectors who were with us recently for our Focus Visit and I am confident that the published letter will reflect this position.

As we will no doubt all appreciate, the impact of the CV19 pandemic has been far reaching and has affected all of us in many different ways. Sadly, I am aware that for some staff CV19 has caused the death of relatives and friends and I would like to extend my heart-felt condolences. In whatever way you look at the pandemic it has meant lots of changes to the way we live our lives and go about our work. I appreciate that this has been a challenge and the prospect of another lock down may weigh heavy on many of us. We have however achieved so much already and I am confident that we can do so again. I am aware however that we all need to look after our own and each other's emotional wellbeing. Please reach out to all your colleagues and make sure that we all stay in touch and well connected. I think there's a lot to be said for a morning coffee or an afternoon team with colleagues so let's make sure we remember to keep in touch. I will be speaking with my senior leadership colleagues about another round of webinars. The previous ones were very well attended so this is probably a helpful thing to carry on repeating.

As we started to come out of the first lock down many other services started to plan for recovery - we have however largely remained in response mode and this is going to stand us in good stead for the second lock down. Many of our current working practices and arrangements will remain as they currently are and it is for this reason we will continue to be responsive and able to support local children, young people and families moving forward into this second lock down. We continue to support some of the most vulnerable in society and the prospect of a second lock down will be incredibly difficult for everyone who we are supporting - this

is why we will step up one more time and do what we do best. I know you are all committed to making a positive difference – this is truly commendable.

In summary, the key restrictions for the second lock down that were announced at the weekend are similar, but not identical to, the original lockdown and these include:

- Staying at home is to be encouraged except for education, work (if it's impossible to work from home), medical reasons, shopping for essentials, caring for others or exercise
- Nurseries, schools, colleges and universities will remain open
- A ban on the mixing of households, except for support or childcare reasons, and exercising with one person from outside your household is permitted
- A restriction on travel, including outbound international travel (except for work). Travel within the UK is also discouraged.
- All non-essential retail must close along with pubs, bars and restaurants, although food takeaways and deliveries will be permitted

The following link provides further details about the second lock down:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november>

When I met with the Heads of Service this morning we felt that our current arrangements can largely stay as they are as these are all dependent on appropriate risk assessments and safe working practices anyway. For clarity, I am summarising the key issues below:

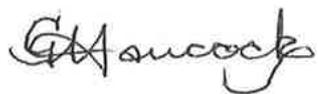
- Staff in offices (numbers should be restricted to duty and emergencies only and overseen by each relevant Head of Service at a local level to ensure social distancing, the use of face coverings and appropriate hygiene measures are in place)
- Use of the virtual family proceedings court rooms (to remain 'as is' and overseen by Julie M as per the agreed court schedule with the Judiciary, Cafcass, Legal Services and other relevant parties)
- Face to face visiting with children, young people and families (to remain 'as is' as per our existing CV19 Briefing Note. Wendy Williams and Commissioning colleagues are making sure sufficient PPE is in stock and available for all teams/services and any new member of staff who needs a hand hygiene kit can get one of these too)
- Travel (existing staff have already been issued with key worker letters and new staff should be issued with one too. I'm getting in touch with HR now to ask for the previous system and process to be set up as soon as possible)
- Conferences and reviews (these will remain remote and virtual 'as is')
- Education attendance and ICT computer packages (our CV19 risk assessments will continue 'as is' for children attending nurseries and schools. There is a presumption that children will continue to attend. Wendy Williams and our Commissioning colleagues are double checking vulnerable learners have got their ICT packages so they have a laptop to support on line learning)

I have asked the Heads of Service and the Social Work Academy to review support for our new starters who are in their first Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) and our three new overseas Social Workers from India. We are very aware that home working for our new ASYEs and overseas staff is less than ideal given the orientation and induction requirements they and as soon as I have an additional update about this I will make sure individuals are contacted directly.

I am meeting with senior leadership colleagues at the end of today and will endeavour to come back to you with any further information that we have to share with you over the coming days. If you have any questions please direct these to your immediate line manager in the first instance. I will continue to work closely with all Heads of Services and am aiming to make sure that there is a flow of information as necessary and appropriate using all of our tried and tested communication methods. From an Early Help and Family Support Services perspective, whilst Sarah Murphy's remains absent, Andy Dempsey and I will liaise with Karen Morgan, Emma Trigwell and Chris Gibson to make sure everyone is kept in the communication loop.

Thank you once again for the sterling job that you are all doing. I am forever grateful for everything that you have already done and for everything that I know you will achieve moving forward. Your hard work, dedication and commitment is very much appreciated.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Hancock', with a stylized, cursive script.

Gail Hancock

Interim Director for Children's Safeguarding and Care