

09 December 2020

Via Email to: Chief AHPs

Dear Colleagues,

Winter Planning: Support to Children, Young People and their Families

Thank you for all you have done and are doing to continue to deliver vital services in our NHS in the wake of winter and the challenge of rising COVID-19 cases.

I am writing to provide advice in respect of management of services to children, young people and families. The unfortunate reality is that the indirect impact of COVID-19 has been significant for pregnant women, children, young people and families.

On 7 August 2020, NHS England published guidance on implementing phase 3 of the NHS response to the COVID-19 outbreak, which emphasised that the restoration of community health services needed to be prioritised and, furthermore, that focus should be given to improving and addressing health inequalities through service delivery, responding to the needs of the most vulnerable, including children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The restoration of children's services is imperative for identifying, mitigating and preventing short- and long-term harms including sustaining wider support to families and carers.

I am therefore advising that **Allied Health Professionals supporting children, young people and families, and specifically children with SEND, should not be redeployed to other services and should prioritise the provision of children's services (0-19) and services to the most vulnerable families.**

Where AHPs have specific skills and experience that is required locally (for example, training in critical care) then individual discussions should take place, and if these individuals are redeployed this should be for shortest possible time.

Thank you once again for your dedication and commitment to ensuring our next generation receive the care and support they need from the NHS to reach their potential and lead happy lives.

Yours sincerely

Suzanne Rastrick OBE

**Chief Allied Health Professions Officer
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**NHS England & NHS Improvement,
Health Education England and the
Department of Health & Social Care**

