

Vulnerable Children, Young People and Safeguarding (VCYPS) workstream
Phase 1: March 2020 – early September 2020

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1. Background

This paper provides a summary of phase 1 (March 2020 – early September 2020) of the Vulnerable Children, Young People and Safeguarding (VCYPS) workstream: the main issues it intended to address, the plan, the risks identified, the achievements and the lessons learnt.

a. Vulnerable Children, Young People and Safeguarding (VCYPS) workstream

In response to the covid-19 pandemic, the ensuing closure of schools (20th March 2020) and national lockdown (26th March 2020), the cross-governmental VCYPs workstream was established.

The VCYPs workstream includes policy leads from education, children and families, housing, communities, health and social services.

In addition, an external advisory group includes representatives from the Children's Commissioner, Inspectorates, third sector, Youth Board, National Safeguarding Board, Directors of Education, Directors of Social Services, the Police, Public Health Wales, the ACE Hub and Child and Adolescent Psychology. The purpose of this group is to share intelligence and to identify any risks and gaps, and to feed its output into the VCYPs workstream.

b. Phase 1 (March 2020 – early September 2020): ensure that vulnerable children and young people are 'safe, seen and heard'

During phase 1 (March 2020 – early September 2020), the VCYPs workstream's primary aim was to ensure that **vulnerable** children and young people were '**safe, seen and heard**' during the initial crisis.

For the purpose of provision in schools, hubs and/or registered childcare settings, vulnerable children were defined as *children with a social worker and children with statements of special educational needs who would most benefit from the provision*. Local authorities had the flexibility to also offer a place to those on the edge of care, if they were known to be vulnerable by the school or family support services.

Through mapping of departmental work and plans, and intensive communication and engagement, the VCYPs workstream facilitated consideration, prevention and mitigation of

the impact of the covid-19 pandemic and the ensuing restrictions on vulnerable children and young people.

c. Phase 2 (September 2020 – current): ensure that all children and young people are ‘safe, seen, heard, nurtured and developing’

As the covid-19 pandemic evolved and worsened again, and local (7th September 2020) and national (19th October 2020) lockdowns were introduced, it became clear that the crisis-recovery model was no longer appropriate to guide the work of the group.

It was recognised by the group that the covid-19 related restrictions make all children and young people potentially vulnerable in a wide range of areas, including physical and mental health, emotional wellbeing, educational development, job security, (parental) income and housing stability, both in the short and the long term. Additionally, children and young people are at risk of going repeatedly “out of sight” during consecutive closures of local facilities and services for outbreak control, periods of self-isolation and local and national lockdowns.

The primary aim of the VCYPs workstream was therefore extended to ensuring that **all** children and young people are ‘**safe, seen, heard, nurtured and developing**’.

The definition of vulnerability was also extended. The decision on vulnerability and related support is now made and regularly reviewed on a case by case, multi-agency basis. Professionals should take into account the impact of any restrictions on the child or young person’s emotional, mental and physical health and educational development, as well as the views of the child or young person and their parents and carers.

The work of VCYPs phase 2 is outside the scope of this report.

d. VCYPs phase 1 (March 2020 – early September 2020): context

It is important to read and interpret the content of this paper in its temporal context.

Table 1 presents a timeline of covid-19 in Wales and the period of time covered by phase 1. Events that had a major impact on children and young people have been highlighted in blue. The period covered by phase 1 has been marked in green.

VCYPs phase 1 covered the immediate crisis response to the covid-19 pandemic reaching Wales, the closing (20th March 2020) and reopening (29th June 2020) of schools, the national lockdown (26th March 2020), ‘Stay local’ rule (1st June 2020) and phased reopening (22nd

June 2020) and the 12 week shielding period for extremely vulnerable people (24th March 2020 – 16th August 2020).

During this time, a second covid-19 wave was a theoretical possibility in certain epidemiological models; further local, firebreak and national lockdowns were not yet on the horizon; mass vaccination was a distant hope; variants of concern had not yet been identified.

The general thinking was that, in line with the traditional response model to natural disasters, the response to the covid-19 pandemic would consist of a first – crisis – phase and a second – recovery – phase.

Strategy was therefore mainly focusing on combining crisis management with the development of frameworks for ‘how to operate in a covid-19 world’ as well as long-term impact mitigation.

It is therefore important to consider the issues, plan, risks, achievements and lessons learnt in this paper in the context of the collective knowledge, understanding and paradigm of March 2020 – early September 2020, recognising that these have shifted considerably since then. This especially applies to the lessons learnt, not all of which will still necessarily be valid today or remain valid in the future.

Table 1. Covid-19 timeline in Wales.

Events that had a major impact on children and young people have been highlighted in blue.

The period covered by phase 1 has been marked in green.

VCYPS phase 1	Date	Event	Source
	28.02.2020	Wales confirms first positive case of coronavirus (COVID-19)	https://gov.wales/wales-confirms-first-positive-case-coronavirus-covid-19
	16.03.2020	Chief Medical Officer for Wales announces death of first COVID-19 patient in Wales	https://gov.wales/chief-medical-officer-wales-announces-death-first-covid-19-patient-wales
	20.03.2020	Closure of schools, hospitality and leisure facilities	https://gov.wales/statement-minster-education-kirsty-williams-school-closures-wales https://gov.wales/statement-first-minister-additional-measures-announced-prime-minister
	23.03.2020	Closure of non-essential shops Ban on ceremonies	https://gov.wales/first-minister-of-wales-statement-on-new-coronavirus-measures
	24.03.2020	12 week shielding for extremely vulnerable people	https://gov.wales/further-action-protect-people-highest-risk-coronavirus
	26.03.2020	National lockdown: individuals are only allowed to leave their homes for limited purposes	https://gov.wales/new-powers-to-enforce-coronavirus-social-distancing-come-into-force-in-wales
	27.03.2020	Closure of popular beauty spots, visitor sites and public rights of way and access land.	https://gov.wales/full-list-public-path-and-car-park-closures-due-coronavirus-published
	07.04.2020	2 metre social distancing rule applies to any workplace, including homes and outdoor spaces	https://gov.wales/two-metre-rule-will-protect-workers-wales-coronavirus

11.04.2020	Covid symptom tracker app launched	https://gov.wales/new-app-launched-track-and-trace-coronavirus
16.04.2020	Lockdown extension for 3 weeks	https://gov.wales/first-minister-of-wales-statement-on-coronavirus-lockdown-extension
20.04.2020	Stay safe. Stay Learning strategy launched	https://gov.wales/new-guidance-will-help-wales-stay-safe-and-stay-learning-while-dealing-coronavirus-impact
08.05.2020	Lockdown extension for 3 weeks	https://gov.wales/wales-extends-coronavirus-lockdown
11.05.2020	Minor changes to regulations: people can exercise more often and garden centres can open	https://gov.wales/first-minister-wales-message-people-wales
13.05.2020	Test, Trace and Protect launched	https://gov.wales/new-plan-published-test-trace-and-protect-wales
20.05.2020	Resilience plan for post-16 learning launched	https://gov.wales/plan-launched-support-education-over-16s
01.06.2020	Shielding people can meet others and exercise outdoors	https://gov.wales/shielding-people-can-meet-others-and-exercise-outdoors
01.06.2020	Lockdown regulations are eased: Stay local (5 miles from home); 2 local households can meet outdoors	https://gov.wales/stay-local-to-keep-wales-safe
01.06.2020	Contact tracing rolled out	https://gov.wales/contact-tracing-system-wales-rolled-out
22.06.2020	Non-essential shops reopen Outdoors sport courts reopen	https://gov.wales/first-minister-announces-further-steps-to-unlock-wales
29.06.2020	Pupils return to school for check in, catch up sessions	https://gov.wales/check-catch-prepare-summer-and-september-all-schools-wales-enter-next-phase
06.07.2020	Introduction of extended households to include 2 separate households	https://gov.wales/extended-households-will-enable-families-be-re-united
06.07.2020	Stay local requirement lifted Outdoor visitor attractions open	https://gov.wales/first-minister-asks-people-visit-wales-safely
08.07.2020	Recruit, recover and raise standards plan announced	https://gov.wales/900-extra-teaching-staff-plan-recruit-recover-and-raise-standards-welsh-schools

11.07.2020	Self-contained holiday accommodations open	https://gov.wales/coronavirus-restrictions-relaxed-further-support-tourism-and-leisure-sectors-wales
13.07.2020	Hospitality sector opens outdoors Outdoor cinemas open Indoor visitor attractions open Places of worship open Hairdressers and barbers open Outdoors organised leisure activities with up to 30 people	https://gov.wales/timetable-phased-reopening-tourism-sector https://gov.wales/coronavirus-restrictions-relaxed-further-support-tourism-and-leisure-sectors-wales
20.07.2020	Playgrounds, community centres and outdoor gyms open	https://gov.wales/coronavirus-restrictions-relaxed-further-support-tourism-and-leisure-sectors-wales
27.07.2020	Close contact services open Indoor leisure open Tourist accommodation with shared facilities open Housing market opens	https://gov.wales/coronavirus-restrictions-relaxed-further-support-tourism-and-leisure-sectors-wales
27.07.2020	Face coverings compulsory on public transport	https://gov.wales/all-passengers-wear-face-coverings-public-transport-wales-monday-july-27
03.08.2020	Up to 30 people can meet outdoors Hospitality sector opens indoors Wedding ceremonies allowed Social distancing relaxed for children under 11	https://gov.wales/family-and-friends-at-the-heart-of-new-coronavirus-regulations
04.08.2020	Reopening of Childcare Offer announced	https://gov.wales/childcare-offer-wales-reopen
10.08.2020	Swimming pools, indoor play areas and indoor gyms open	https://gov.wales/gyms-and-swimming-pools-reopen
16.08.2020	End of shielding	https://gov.wales/statement-deputy-chief-medical-officer-wales-dr-chris-jones-coronavirus-shielding

17.08.2020	Essential travel restriction on public transport lifted	https://gov.wales/essential-travel-restriction-public-transport-be-lifted
18.08.2020	Coronavirus Control Plan published	https://gov.wales/future-planning-coronavirus-wales
22.08.2020	Extended households can include up to 4 households	https://gov.wales/written-statement-review-health-protection-coronavirus-restrictions-no-2-wales-regulations-2020-0
28.08.2020	Indoor visits to adult and children's care homes allowed	https://gov.wales/indoor-care-home-visits-resume-tomorrow
07.09.2020	Local lockdown in Caerphilly	https://gov.wales/local-lockdown-restrictions-imposed-control-caerphilly-outbreak
14.09.2020	Face coverings mandatory for people over 11 in indoor public places Maximum of 6 people from extended household to meet indoors (excl. children under 11)	https://gov.wales/further-constraints-meeting-socially-and-compulsory-face-coverings-help-prevent-new-coronavirus
17.09.2020	Local lockdown in Rhondda Cynon Taf	https://gov.wales/local-restrictions-imposed-control-rhondda-cynon-taf-outbreak
21.09.2020	Alert level moves from 3 to 4 Hospitality to close by 22.00	https://gov.wales/update-from-the-uk-chief-medical-officers-on-the-uk-alert-level
22.09.2020	Local lockdown in Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Newport	https://gov.wales/written-statement-local-coronavirus-restrictions-update
26.09.2020	Local lockdown in Llanelli	https://gov.wales/local-coronavirus-restrictions-introduced-control-outbreaks-south-wales
27.09.2020	Local lockdown in Swansea and Cardiff	https://gov.wales/local-coronavirus-restrictions-introduced-control-outbreaks-south-wales
28.09.2020	Local lockdown in Neath Port Talbot, Vale of Glamorgan and Torfaen	https://gov.wales/further-local-coronavirus-restrictions-introduced-control-rises-south-wales

01.10.2020	Local lockdown in Denbighshire, Flintshire, Conwy and Wrexham	https://gov.wales/local-coronavirus-restrictions-introduced-control-outbreaks-north-wales
03.10.2020	Extended households allowed for single people in lockdown areas	https://gov.wales/new-rules-for-people-living-alone-in-local-lockdown-areas
10.10.2020	Local lockdown in Bangor	https://gov.wales/local-coronavirus-restrictions-introduced-control-outbreak-bangor
16.10.2020	Introduction of travel restrictions	https://gov.wales/wales-introduces-travel-restrictions-prevent-spread-coronavirus
23.10.2020	Start firebreak lockdown Schools close	https://gov.wales/national-coronavirus-fire-break-to-be-introduced-in-wales-on-friday
09.11.2020	Firebreak lockdown ends and is replaced with set of national measures – alert level 3 Schools reopen Extended households to include max. 2 households Groups of max. 4 people to meet indoors (excl. children under 11)	https://gov.wales/firebreak-lockdown-in-wales-ends
04.12.2020	Introduction of travel restrictions	https://gov.wales/first-minister-announces-latest-coronavirus-travel-restrictions
04.12.2020	Hospitality to close by 18.00 and not allowed to serve alcohol. Indoor entertainment closed.	https://gov.wales/written-statement-review-health-protection-coronavirus-restrictions-no-4-wales-regulations-2020-0
08.12.2020	Start of covid-19 vaccine roll-out (Pfizer BioNTech)	https://gov.wales/covid-19-vaccine-roll-out-begins-wales
11.12.2020	Updated covid control plan published	https://gov.wales/updated-covid-control-plan-be-published
19.12.2020	Increase from alert level 3 to alert level 4 – start national lockdown	https://gov.wales/higher-level-restrictions-come-force-control-coronavirus

	<p>N501Y viral variant of increasing importance and appears significantly more transmissible</p> <p>People must stay at home</p> <p>Single people can form an extended household with one other household</p> <p>Non-essential retail, leisure, hospitality close</p> <p>Non-essential travel ban</p>	https://gov.wales/chief-medical-officer-statement-amendments-health-protection-coronavirus-restrictions-no-5
04.01.2020	<p>Start of second covid-19 vaccine roll-out (AstraZeneca)</p>	https://gov.wales/second-covid-19-vaccine-arrives-wales
04.01.2021	<p>Schools close</p>	https://gov.wales/written-statement-return-school-and-college-arrangements
11.01.2021	<p>Covid-19 vaccination strategy published</p>	https://gov.wales/new-covid-vaccination-strategy-published
18.01.2021	<p>Travel corridors suspended</p> <p>Mandatory testing travellers into Wales</p>	https://gov.wales/travel-corridors-be-suspended-new-virus-strains-emerge https://gov.wales/new-mandatory-coronavirus-testing-for-travellers-into-wales
29.01.2020	<p>Two people from different households can exercise outdoors together</p>	https://gov.wales/written-statement-review-health-protection-coronavirus-restriction-no5-wales-regulations-2020-0

2. Main issues

The main issues identified during VCYPs phase 1 were:

For services:

- Services pausing, reducing or moving online due to covid-19 restrictions.
- Frontline staff in children's community services, e.g. health visitors and school nurses, were redeployed to adult health services.
- Huge pressure on services that did remain open, with staff exhaustion.
- Self-isolation guidance had a big impact on staffing levels.
- Lower than expected attendance at childcare/school hubs during the first lockdown.
- Contrary to expectations, the referral rate for safeguarding and wellbeing concerns did not increase, and at times was even lower than normal. As this decrease in referrals to statutory services was associated with an increase in calls to third sector helplines, there is concern that safeguarding/wellbeing issues may currently go undetected.

For children and young people:

- Digital exclusion.
- Disproportionate effect of covid-19 restrictions on most vulnerable and most disadvantaged children, young people and families.
- Impact of covid-19 restrictions on physical and mental health and wellbeing.

3. Phase 1 plan

A phase 1 plan was developed and agreed with policy leads, Directors and Ministers.

The [attached slide deck](#) outlining this plan was shared with external stakeholders.

4. Deliverables

[Table 2](#) gives an overview of the deliverables planned at the start of VCYPs phase 1, and the outcomes.

Table 2. Overview of the deliverables planned at the start of VCYPs phase 1, and the outcomes.

Planned deliverables		Outcomes	Comments
1	<p>We will work with the Local Authorities in Wales to understand what outreach support they will be able to provide to children, young people and families while maintaining social distancing and responding to the latest scientific guidance.</p> <p>This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Online support / helplines b) Telephone calls/Skype 	Completed	<p>In response to COVID-19, we established a 'Children and Families Operating in a COVID World Working Group' comprising Welsh Government officials and local authority delivery partners. The core purpose of the group is to gain a better understanding of the impact of lockdown (including social distancing) and to ascertain how services are adapting to meet the needs of children and families during the pandemic and beyond.</p>

		c) Social media signposting to support d) Letters to specific households		
D2		We will consider whether some professionals, such as health visitors and family support workers, will need enhanced kit – iPhones etc to be able to FaceTime/Skype with families they feel to be most at risk	In progress	This deliverable has continued to be progressed beyond the scope of phase 1.
D3		We will issue guidance to providers of specific services – such as Children’s Social Services, Flying Start, Families First, Health Visitors, Youth Services, and teachers working online that: • Provides clarity of expectations		Guidance has been produced, as needed, each time restrictions have changed.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out how service provision should be monitored and reported Is based on the latest and most up to date information from Welsh Government and the CSO. 		
	A	Flying Start and Families First	Completed	https://documents.hf.wales.gov.uk/id:A32497783/document/versions/published Flying start and Families First Guidance available for all stages of lockdown. Guidance can be reactivated if we are required to move in and out of local lockdowns.
	B	HCWP and Flying Start	Completed	https://documents.hf.wales.gov.uk/id:A29493640/document/versions/published issued March 2020 (position now changed!)
	C	Special schools	Completed	https://gov.wales/guidance-supporting-vulnerable-and-disadvantaged-learners Guidance supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable learners, including learners with ALN, published on 17 August emphasised responsibilities for all SEN provision (not just for those in special schools).
	D	Youth work services	Completed	https://gov.wales/youth-work-services-guidance-coronavirus issued August 2020
	E	Children's social services	Completed	https://gov.wales/childrens-social-services-during-covid-19-pandemic-guidance-html (updated regularly, link stays the same)

D4		We will work with relevant partners to develop and issue information to parents on positive parenting, inter-parental conflict and signpost to resources they can use with children while in isolation (this is in addition to the work on continuity to learning)	Completed	<p>We have reviewed the advice and support available through the <i>Parenting. Give it Time</i> campaign, working closely with comms colleagues, using insight into what parents key concerns are currently, and expert advice and resources from our Parenting Expert Action Group and parenting network. Campaign directing parent to <i>Parenting. Give it time</i> website.</p> <p>https://gov.wales/parenting-give-it-time</p>
D5		We will work with partners to ensure there is online advice, support and counselling for CYP to support their mental health and wellbeing. This includes:		
	A	Additional funding for school and community-based counselling	Completed	<p>£1.252m for school counselling provision for 11-18 yo.</p> <p>Increased Tier 0/1 mental health support through increased NYAS, Action for Children – bouncing back, CALL, Childline, and BEAT helpline provision.</p>
	B	Creation of a Young Person's Mental Health Toolkit on Hwb which	Completed	<p>The Young Person's Mental Health Toolkit which links young people, aged 11 to 25, to websites, apps, helplines, and more to build resilience across six categories; anxiety, low</p>

		directs CYP to online self-help resources and helplines (e.g. CALL, Meic and Childline)		mood, keeping active and healthy, bereavement, coronavirus information, and crisis support.
	C	Extension of CAMHS school in-reach pilots	Completed	Almost £1m to continue the work of our CAMHS school in-reach pilots, which sees dedicated mental health practitioners provide consultation, liaison, advice and training to schools in six local authorities.
	D	CAMHS	Completed	CAMHS were defined as essential services and provided support to young people on a risk based system, primarily online or by telephone but in person when necessary.
	E	NHS provision	Completed	NHS Mental health services were defined as essential services and provided support to young people on a risk based system, primarily online or by telephone but in person when necessary. ND teams continued to undertake desk based aspects of assessments for young people during the lockdown period. School based aspects of assessments have recommenced at differing rates across Wales.
	F	Further Education Institutions and Work Based Learning providers	Completed	The <i>covid-19 resilience plan – strategic framework for learning delivery from September 2020</i> was published in July 2020. The guidance states: “Providers will ensure that the mental health needs of learners and staff are identified and supported, with clear communication of the support available”: https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-07/strategic-framework-learning-delivery-from-september-2020-post-16.pdf
	G	HE student support services via HEFCW/Universities Wales	Completed	HEFCW have contributed £ 190k to Student Space, a large-scale, OfS-led programme of mental health services developed by Student Minds to support higher education students during the COVID-19 pandemic. https://studentspace.org.uk

	H	Youth service (maintained and voluntary sector)	Completed	We have promoted the use of Hwb, MEIC and the NSPCC to our stakeholders/youth work practitioners to refer young people onto appropriate services including support with their mental health.
	I	Peer support	Completed	We invested £1.3m in supporting young people's mental health through expanding third sector provision and access which includes peer support, online chat and telephone helplines: https://gov.wales/ps13m-support-package-mental-health-services-all-wales
D6		We will maintain special school provision and provide guidance to ensure children, young people and those working with them are safe (links to the work on schools and settings)	Completed	https://gov.wales/guidance-supporting-vulnerable-and-disadvantaged-learners Guidance supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable learners, including learners with ALN, published on 17 August emphasised responsibilities for all SEN provision (not just for those in special schools).
D7		We will develop a communications strategy, as part of the wider Welsh Government strategy, to ensure messages about where to access help and support are broadcast widely.	Ongoing	Individual policy areas have ensured key messages have been communicated within the context of the wider Covid communications requirements, ensuring that public health messaging has been at the forefront.
D8		Safeguarding:		

VCYPS

Phase 1 closure report for external stakeholders

	A	We will work with local authorities, Colegau Cymru, HEFCW and Universities Wales to ensure there are clear processes in place to identify and respond to vulnerable children and young people.	Completed	
	B	We will also offer services and settings guidance about safeguarding under the new arrangements in settings, schools, colleges and hubs.	Completed	The statutory safeguarding guidance for education settings “Keeping Learners Safe” was published in October 2020: https://gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe . A poster and practitioner handout were circulated: https://gov.wales/education-safeguarding-guidance-coronavirus .

5. Achievements

Due to the nature of the covid-19 pandemic, the work done during VCYPs phase 1 developed organically over time, in response to newly identified issues and risks.

For example, in the first few weeks of the crisis, attendance of vulnerable children at the hubs was below expectation. In response, the Directors of Education and Social Services in Welsh Government issued a letter to all Directors of Education and Social Services in local authorities. The letter clarified expectations and asked for reassurance about the arrangements that were in place to keep in touch with vulnerable children.

[Table 3](#) gives an overview of VCYPs phase 1 achievements.

Table 3. Overview of VCYPs phase 1 achievements.

Policy area	Achievements during phase 1
Safeguarding	<p>School/emergency childcare hub places were opened to vulnerable children.</p> <p>We issued a poster and short guide on reporting safeguarding concerns on 30 March via an email which included links back to existing documents and to Safeguarding Board websites: https://gov.wales/education-safeguarding-guidance-coronavirus.</p> <p>Practitioners Guide on identifying abuse, reporting concerns and handling disclosures linked to Wales Safeguarding Procedures issued 6 July: https://gov.wales/keeping-children-and-young-people-safe-non-statutory-guide-practitioners.</p> <p>Commissioned NSPCC/Childline to develop online resource for children and young people to support disclosure:</p> <p>Over 12s Welsh - Over 12s English</p> <p>Under 12s Welsh - Under 12s English</p>

	<p>Public facing campaign to encourage public to report concerns about children and young people ran 6 July to 19 August.</p> <p>We have worked with safeguarding education leads in LA's to develop a national training pack for LA's to provide training for DSPs. This will enable training to be delivered online rather than the usual face to face training.</p> <p>Guidance issued for the operation of children's social services during the covid-19 pandemic: https://gov.wales/childrens-social-services-during-covid-19-pandemic-guidance-html (updated regularly).</p> <p>The statutory safeguarding guidance for education settings "Keeping Learners Safe" was published in October 2020: https://gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe. A poster and practitioner handout were circulated: https://gov.wales/education-safeguarding-guidance-coronavirus.</p>
VAWDASV	<p>We have provided additional funding to the VAWDASV Regional Partnerships in order for them to provide additional activity focused on supporting Children and Young people, this includes training for practitioners and trauma informed counselling for Children and Young People.</p>
Emotional wellbeing	<p>A wider package of £5m support incl.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1.252m for school counselling provision for 11-18 yo; • £600,000 to deliver school based universal and targeted mental health and wellbeing interventions for learners; • £450,000 to deliver school staff training on mental health and wellbeing; • £466,500 to provide age appropriate well-being support to below Year 6; • £450,000 to deliver wellbeing support for the school workforce; • Almost £1m to continue the work of our CAMHS school in-reach pilots, which sees dedicated mental health practitioners provide consultation, liaison, advice and training to schools in six local authorities. <p>School and community based counselling toolkit published with COVID specific FAQs</p>

	<p>Creation of the Young Person's Mental Health Toolkit on Hwb which links young people, aged 11 to 25, to websites, apps, helplines, and more to build resilience across six categories; anxiety, low mood, keeping active and healthy, bereavement, coronavirus information, and crisis support.</p> <p>HEFCW have contributed £190k to Student Space, a large-scale, OfS-led programme of mental health services developed by Student Minds to support higher education students during the COVID-19 pandemic: https://studentspace.org.uk.</p> <p>We invested £1.3m in supporting young people's mental health through expanding third sector provision and access which includes peer support, online chat and telephone helplines, through NYAS, Action for Children – bouncing back, CALL, Childline, and BEAT: https://gov.wales/ps13m-support-package-mental-health-services-all-wales.</p> <p>CAMHS were defined as essential services and provided support to young people on a risk based system, primarily online or by telephone but in person when necessary.</p> <p>NHS Mental health services were defined as essential services and provided support to young people on a risk based system, primarily online or by telephone but in person when necessary. ND teams continued to undertake desk based aspects of assessments for young people during the lockdown period. School based aspects of assessments have recommenced at differing rates across Wales.</p>
Digital resilience	<p><i>Stay safe. Stay Learning</i> campaign: £3m to support digitally excluded learners in maintained schools where there was no existing provision in place from their school or local authority.</p> <p>There have been 10,848 MiFi devices and 9,717 software licences allocated to local authorities.</p> <p>During the initial lockdown period in March 2020, we responded to quickly provide direct guidance for CYP, parents and carers, educational practitioners and professionals and settings through the <i>Keeping safe online</i> area of Hwb.</p> <p>Funding was also reallocated to provide parents and carers with a suite of guidance and resources covering a range of online safety and security issues with specific guidance on apps and websites (such as Instagram, Tik Tok and Facebook) to ensure CYP were safeguarded appropriately.</p>

	<p>Working with the National Crime Agency we translated and published 45 home learning activities for 4-5, 5-7, 8-10, 11-13 and 14 plus age ranges.</p> <p>We worked with the NSPCC to promote their Online safety webinars for parents and carers, pre-recorded versions of which will be available on Hwb during the Autumn term for any parents and carers who missed the live sessions.</p> <p>Live-streaming guidance was drafted and agreed with key stakeholders to support education settings with key safeguarding principles and practice considerations when conducting online lessons and confidential support sessions with vulnerable learners.</p>
Parenting	<p>We have commissioned a report on the potential to develop a supporting separating families alliance in Wales, including identifying what services are currently available to separating families in Wales.</p> <p>We have reviewed the advice and support available through the <i>Parenting. Give it Time</i> campaign, working closely with comms colleagues, using insight into what parents key concerns are currently, and expert advice and resources from our Parenting Expert Action Group and parenting network. Campaign directing parent to <i>Parenting. Give it time</i> website: https://gov.wales/parenting-give-it-time.</p>
Flying Start and Families First	<p>Flying start and Families First Guidance available for all stages of lockdown: https://documents.hf.wales.gov.uk/id:A32497783/document/versions/published</p> <p>In response to COVID-19, we established a 'Children and Families Operating in a COVID World Working Group' comprising Welsh Government officials and local authority delivery partners. The core purpose of the group is to gain a better understanding of the impact of lockdown (including social distancing) and to ascertain how services are adapting to meet the needs of children and families during the pandemic and beyond. The impact of Covid-19 on child development has been identified by the working group as a key area which needs to be addressed. Task and finish groups looking at FS Health Visiting, SLC, FF/TAF and FS childcare have all reported and actions are being taken forward. For example a campaign to help address separation anxiety for children returning to school and childcare settings</p>

	<p>We are establishing a child development fund as a means of supporting those children and families who are in greatest need and who have been impacted most by developmental delay because of lockdown.</p> <p>Guidance for Flying Start and generic Health Visitors issued March 2020: https://documents.hf.wales.gov.uk/id:A29493640/document/versions/published (position now changed).</p>
Childcare	<p>To ensure that the childcare under the Coronavirus - Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS) is inclusive to eligible pre-school aged (0-4 yo) vulnerable children, help has been made available by means of a separate funding stream called the Additional Support Grant. Local authorities can draw on this funding to remove any barriers that could mean that vulnerable children (and their parents) are able to benefit from the C-CAS in the same way as other eligible children without additional support needs. For the purposes of the C-CAS vulnerable children included all pre-school aged those who are having support from social services, young carers, disabled children and those with statements of special educational needs.</p> <p><i>Protective measures in childcare settings: Keep Childcare Safe</i>: published June 2020.</p>
Schools	<p>Operational guidance has been published, working closely with PHWs, the latest medical and scientific advice and key stakeholders to ensure the school environment is as safe and welcoming as possible so learners and staff feel confident to return: https://gov.wales/operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-autumn-term-covid-19. Published July 2020, updated regularly.</p> <p>Guidance on learning in schools and settings from the autumn term: https://gov.wales/guidance-learning-schools-and-settings-autumn-term-covid-19. Published July 2020, updated regularly.</p> <p>During the summer we have been undertaking the #KeepWalesLearning reassurance campaign: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTZvaU9CIF5u27UHyACS6AqdRTPlsJ7XO.</p> <p>We have worked with Estyn to develop models of practice from schools on the plans they are making for the autumn.</p>

Special schools / SEN	Guidance supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable learners, including learners with ALN, published on 17 August emphasised responsibilities for all SEN provision (not just for those in special schools): https://gov.wales/guidance-supporting-vulnerable-and-disadvantaged-learners .
Continuity of learning	<p>Through the <i>Stay Safe Stay Learning</i> campaign we issued a range of guidance to schools and parents covering continuity of learning through the most affected period: https://gov.wales/stay-safe-stay-learning-continuity-learning.</p> <p>We have now launched <i>Recruit, Recover, Raise standards: the accelerating learning programme</i> – a funded programme to enable schools to employ additional staff to support their most impacted learners. The total funding package is approximately £30 million, the massive majority of this going direct to schools to employ additional staff. https://gov.wales/recruit-recover-raise-standards-accelerating-learning-programme-html.</p>
Further education and apprenticeships	<p>We provided £50 p/w for all young apprentices who were unable to claim any other support from DWP.</p> <p>The <i>covid-19 resilience plan for the post-16 sector</i> was published in July 2020: https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-05/covid-19-resilience-plan-post-16-sector.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic framework for learning delivery: https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-07/strategic-framework-learning-delivery-from-september-2020-post-16.pdf • Guide for learners: https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-08/a-guide-for-learners.pdf • Advice for teachers and lecturers: https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-08/advice-for-teachers-and-lecturers.pdf • Transport guidance: https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-11/transport-guidance-further-education-institutions-covid-19-v1-1.pdf <p>The Estyn report: <i>Engagement work: post-16 sector update – autumn 2020</i> summarises the findings from engagement calls made to further education colleges, work-based learning training providers, adult learning in the community partnerships and learning in the justice sector provision between the end of September and early October 2020. The report, published on</p>

	<p>9 December 2020 states that overall, provider's report that they continue to focus on the wellbeing of learners and staff and leaders in further education colleges and describe how they have made a greater range of wellbeing resources available to learners. There have been increased wellbeing and safeguarding concerns in some colleges and work-based learning providers, although this is not the case in adult learning in the community partnerships.</p> <p>https://www.estyn.gov.wales/learning-support/engagement-work-post-16-sector-update-autumn-2020.</p> <p>We have issued guidance on the safe opening of colleges: https://gov.wales/guidance-safe-operation-post-16-learning-september-2020.</p> <p>A Learner & Staff Wellbeing and Engagement Work Stream has been developed as part of the Post-16 Covid-19 Resilience plan which brings together stakeholders from across the sector and Welsh Government to share best practice, guidance and programmes to support vulnerable learners to engage in learning.</p> <p>Additional funding has been secured to enable providers to support learners who are digitally excluded to ensure they are able to engage in on-line learning.</p> <p>Specific guidance has been drafted by Colleges Wales to support providers who have learners who have Additional Learning Needs (ALN) or who are engaged on Independent Living Skills (ILS) course and who may be particularly vulnerable at this time.</p>
Higher education	<p>£27m has been allocated to HEFCW to establish a Higher Education Investment and Recovery Fund to support HEIs deal with the impact of the pandemic.</p> <p>Keep Wales Safe – covid-19 guidance for higher education issued: https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-10/keep-wales-safe-COVID-19-guidance-higher-education-version-2-2.pdf.</p>
Youth work	<p>As part of the £29m additional funding being made available to schools to help <i>Recruit, Recover and Raise standards</i>, the guidance will emphasise that youth workers could be part of this recruitment to support young people on their return to school.</p>

	Guidance to support youth work settings to expand or re-open services has been published: https://gov.wales/youth-work-services-guidance-coronavirus .
Youth engagement	<p>Strengthening of digital outreach approaches by the youth work sector in Wales.</p> <p>Introducing new flexibilities into the Youth Support Grant in 2020-21, to recognise and support responses to Covid-19.</p> <p>Introduced flexibilities in the National Voluntary Youth Organisation Grant to support voluntary organisations to continue to support young people during this time.</p> <p>Increasing frequency of production of youth work bulletin to be able to directly message the sector.</p> <p>Working with the youth work sector to develop guidance to support the phased increase of youth services.</p> <p>Scoping work through communication with all LA engagement and progression co-ordinators to find out what is being done in each LA and identify challenges and barriers. This helped to share good practice, issues, and some solutions.</p>
Young carers	<p>SSID officials created a small Task and Finish working group, with three national carers' organisations and LA carers officers network, to obtain feedback on new pressures and issues affecting carers, including young carers.</p> <p>Worked with different work streams re food supplies, access to medicines, PPE etc to influence guidance being produced that would support carers.</p> <p>SSID promoted Carers Wales Coronavirus guidance for all ages of carers, when published.</p> <p>Produced Welsh Government carers' guidance on WG website.</p> <p>Worked with CTW and pharmacy sector to produce a WG endorsed ID letter for all carers known to LA services, to access and collect medication.</p>

	<p>Promoted national Carers Week in early June, with Written Statement, announcing additional £50k of funding awarded to Carers Wales to support wellbeing helpline support for carers. Both FM and DM HSS provided public pledges of support and participated in a Care for a Cuppa online meet and greet with carers.</p> <p>Have obtained funding from Digital Communities Wales for 400+ laptops and data packages for issue by LAs to known young carers aged 16 -18 to help address lack of digital access and support for caring role.</p> <p>Using pre-existing Young Carers national ID card project to help identify local LA initiatives supporting young carers / young adult carers during lockdown.</p> <p>New resources for schools, to raise awareness of young carer issues and right to a carers' needs assessment and advise school governors and teachers how to recognise and support young carers.</p>
Income poverty	<p>The DAF rules were relaxed to apply greater flexibility and discretion with regard to the number and frequency of emergency assistance payments that people may receive, initially between the 1 May and 31 July and more recently until the 30 March 2021.</p> <p>The Welsh Government has committed up to £52 million for free school meals (FSM) throughout the school summer holidays and to fund FSMs during school holidays for the whole of 2021/22.</p> <p>Covid-19 financial support for individuals leaflet: https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-07/financial-support-leaflet.pdf</p>
Food poverty	<p>£98,162.40 has been provided to FareShare to support interventions in North Wales. As FareShare Cymru operate food redistribution services mainly in South Wales, in the short-term provision of food to independent food banks and other third sector food redistribution organisations is being coordinated by FareShare Cymru but delivered by FareShare UK and FareShare Merseyside from their Speke depot. The funding is also supporting the development of a sustainable North Wales operation for the future.</p> <p>Officials have brokered direct links between Frame and FareShare Cymru to explore opportunities in West Wales.</p>

	<p>The £24m Third Sector Resilience Fund is managed by the WCVA and is providing cash flow support to voluntary organisations in Wales during the Covid-19 crisis. This funding has also supported the launch of a new Voluntary Services Emergency Fund grant scheme to enable voluntary organisations providing vital support during the coronavirus crisis to continue and expand their work. Funding of £1,034,742 has been approved so far under this grant scheme for projects related to food distribution to the vulnerable.</p>
<p>Care experienced children, including care leavers, adoption and fostering</p>	<p>We amended the St David's Day Fund guidance to focus on housing and household expenditures and IT devices and connectivity.</p> <p>We worked with Voices from Care to produce a video about compliance with physical distancing and about accessing the St David's Day Fund. We also worked with VfC to provide a package of Covid-19-specific support.</p> <p>Advice on family contact was published by a range of organisations including WG/PHW, the Judiciary and Third sector organisations. The issue was also included in the Recovery Framework we co-produced with statutory and Third sector partners.</p> <p>We introduced a self-declaration medical health assessment process for prospective foster carers who are unable to access face to face medical assessments with GPs.</p>
<p>Youth homelessness</p>	<p>Contact with LA Youth Homelessness Coordinators to find out what is being done in each LA and identify challenges and barriers.</p> <p>Introducing new flexibilities into the innovation fund to recognise and support responses to Covid-19.</p> <p>Re-launched hidden homelessness campaign signposting young people homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to Shelter Cymru for support.</p> <p>New funding made available to LAs for homelessness and housing – LA plans had to include an element specifically to support young people.</p>

	<p>Each LA homelessness team now has a WG relationship manager working closely with them on their plans. Also allows us to receive weekly feedback from LAs on any issues they are encountering.</p> <p>Data now collected on number of young people presenting to LA homelessness teams giving us a much better indication of any issues/ rise in numbers.</p>
Housing	<p>Guidance issued for local authorities, housing services and social landlords: https://gov.wales/local-authorities-housing-services-social-landlords-coronavirus.</p> <p>Coronavirus housing campaign: https://gov.wales/coronavirus-housing-advice-campaign-materials-housing-groups.</p>
Substance misuse	<p>In April the Welsh Government Substance Misuse Team sought assurance that support for children and families was still available during the crisis response.</p> <p>Where children and families were already in receipt of support this was maintained through phone and digital contact wherever possible.</p> <p>The Welsh Government made Opioid Substitution Therapy an essential service throughout the pandemic as this was critical for those in receipt of treatment.</p> <p>Welsh Government also supported the implementation of injectable buprenorphine which replaced the need for daily supervised consumption with a monthly injection, reducing the need for contact and supporting where necessary self-isolation.</p> <p>For those requiring further support and crisis help outreach services have been maintained.</p> <p>Recovery Planning Guidance has been issued for all Area Planning Boards.</p>
Youth justice	<p>Adaptation to digital communication, including the expansion of the use of social media and video based technology.</p> <p>Increased frequency of YOT Managers Cymru meeting.</p>

	<p>Establishment of weekly meetings between the Youth Custody Service and stakeholders to provide a weekly update of young people residing in Hillside Secure Children's Home.</p> <p>Increased flexibility introduced to the Children and Communities Grant, Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People at risk of offending element provides funding to YOTs, and delivery of services have been adapted.</p> <p>Guidance provided to all Youth Offending Team by the Youth Justice Board on distance working and responsibilities.</p> <p>Triage of most serious cases and socially distanced in person contact established and facilitated.</p> <p>Youth Offending Teams have been required to submit individual recovery plans to the Youth Justice Board.</p> <p>Summary of good practice developed by the Youth Justice Board.</p>
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6. Products

Table 4 gives an overview of products that were created during VCYPs phase 1, and that can be reused/replicated/revised/updated in case of new covid-19 restrictions or a serious disruption of services.

Table 4. Overview of VCYPs phase 1 products.

Policy area	Phase 1 products (up to early September 2020)	Link
Safeguarding	We issued a poster and short guide on reporting safeguarding concerns on 30 March via an email which included links back to existing documents and to Safeguarding Board websites.	https://documents.hf.wales.gov.uk/id:A29525457/document/versions/published
	Practitioners Guide on identifying abuse, reporting concerns and handling disclosures linked to Wales Safeguarding Procedures issued 6 July.	https://gov.wales/keeping-children-and-young-people-safe-non-statutory-guide-practitioners
	Commissioned NSPCC/Childline to develop online resource for children and young people to support disclosure.	Over 12s Welsh - Over 12s English Under 12s Welsh - Under 12s English
	Public facing campaign to encourage public to report concerns about children and young people.	
	We have worked with safeguarding education leads in LA's to develop a national training pack for LA's to provide training for DSPs. This will enable training to be delivered online rather than the usual face to face training.	Circulated to LA leads via the Safeguarding Education Group; copies available on iShare (internal use only)

	Guidance issued for the operation of children's social services during the covid-19 pandemic.	https://gov.wales/childrens-social-services-during-covid-19-pandemic-guidance.html (updated regularly).
	The statutory safeguarding guidance for education settings "Keeping Learners Safe" was published in October 2020.	https://gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe
	A poster and practitioner handout were circulated.	https://gov.wales/education-safeguarding-guidance-coronavirus
Emotional wellbeing	School and community based counselling toolkit published with COVID specific FAQs.	https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-06/school-and-community-based-counselling-operating-toolkit.pdf
	Creation of the Young Person's Mental Health Toolkit on Hwb which links young people, aged 11 to 25, to websites, apps, helplines, and more to build resilience across six categories; anxiety, low mood, keeping active and healthy, bereavement, coronavirus information, and crisis support.	https://hwb.gov.wales/repository/resource/e53adf44-76cb-4635-b6c2-62116bb63a9a/en
	HEFCW have contributed £190k to Student Space, a large-scale, OfS-led programme of mental health services developed by Student Minds to support higher education students during the COVID-19 pandemic.	https://studentspace.org.uk
	Support your mental wellbeing leaflet distributed to all households previously on the shielding list.	support mental wellbeing leaflet.pdf
Digital resilience	During the initial lockdown period in March 2020, we responded to quickly provide direct guidance for CYP, parents and carers, educational practitioners and professionals and settings through the <i>Keeping safe online</i> area of Hwb.	https://hwb.gov.wales/zones/keeping-safe-online

	Funding was also reallocated to provide parents and carers with a suite of guidance and resources covering a range of online safety and security issues with specific guidance on apps and websites (such as Instagram, Tik Tok and Facebook) to ensure CYP were safeguarded appropriately.	https://hwb.gov.wales/zones/keeping-safe-online/parents-and-carers
	Working with the National Crime Agency we translated and published 45 home learning activities for 4-5, 5-7, 8-10, 11-13 and 14+ age ranges.	https://hwb.gov.wales/news/articles/b8862e72-5d6a-4022-938d-8f37977dc34c
	Live-streaming guidance was drafted and agreed with key stakeholders to support education settings with key safeguarding principles and practice considerations when conducting online lessons and confidential support sessions with vulnerable learners.	https://hwb.gov.wales/zones/keeping-safe-online/live-streaming-and-video-conferencing-safeguarding-principles-and-practice
Parenting	We have reviewed the advice and support available through the <i>Parenting. Give it Time</i> campaign, working closely with comms colleagues, using insight into what parents key concerns are currently, and expert advice and resources from our Parenting Expert Action Group and parenting network. Campaign directing parent to <i>Parenting. Give it time</i> website.	https://gov.wales/parenting-give-it-time
Flying Start and Families First	Flying start and Families First Guidance available for all stages of lockdown.	https://documents.hf.wales.gov.uk/id:A32497783/document/versions/published
	Guidance for Flying Start and generic Health Visitors issued March 2020.	https://documents.hf.wales.gov.uk/id:A29493640/document/versions/published (position now changed)
Childcare	<i>Protective measures in childcare settings: Keep Childcare Safe</i> : published June 2020.	https://gov.wales/protective-measures-childcare-settings-keep-childcare-safe-html

Schools	Operational guidance has been published, working closely with PHWs, the latest medical and scientific advice and key stakeholders to ensure the school environment is as safe and welcoming as possible so learners and staff feel confident to return. Published July 2020.	https://gov.wales/operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-autumn-term-covid-19 (updated regularly)
	Guidance on learning in schools and settings from the autumn term. Published July 2020.	https://gov.wales/guidance-learning-schools-and-settings-autumn-term-covid-19
	We have been running the #KeepWalesLearning reassurance campaign	https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTZvaU9CIF5u27UHyACS6AqdRTPIsJ7XO
Special schools / SEN	Guidance supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable learners, including learners with ALN, published on 17 August emphasised responsibilities for all SEN provision (not just for those in special schools).	https://gov.wales/guidance-supporting-vulnerable-and-disadvantaged-learners
Continuity of learning	Through the <i>Stay Safe Stay Learning</i> campaign we issued a range of guidance to schools and parents covering continuity of learning through the most affected period.	https://gov.wales/stay-safe-stay-learning-continuity-learning
Further education and apprenticeships	<p>The <i>covid-19 resilience plan for the post-16 sector</i> was published in July 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic framework for learning delivery • Guide for learners • Advice for teachers and lecturers • Transport guidance 	<p>https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-05/covid-19-resilience-plan-post-16-sector.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-07/strategic-framework-learning-delivery-from-september-2020-post-16.pdf • https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-08/a-guide-for-learners.pdf

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-08/advice-for-teachers-and-lecturers.pdf • https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-11/transport-guidance-further-education-institutions-covid-19-v1-1.pdf
	We have issued operational guidance on the safe opening of colleges.	https://gov.wales/guidance-safe-operation-post-16-learning-september-2020
	Specific guidance has been drafted by Colleges Wales to support providers who have learners who have Additional Learning Needs (ALN) or who are engaged on Independent Living Skills (ILS) course and who may be particularly vulnerable at this time.	There is no published version of this guidance, it was sent directly from CC to practitioners and not published on their website.
Higher education	Keep Wales Safe – covid-19 guidance for higher education issued	https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-10/keep-wales-safe-COVID-19-guidance-higher-education-version-2-2.pdf (current version)
Youth work	Guidance to support youth work settings to expand or re-open services has been published.	https://gov.wales/youth-work-services-guidance-coronavirus
Care experienced children, including care leavers,	We worked with Voices from Care to produce a video about compliance with physical distancing and about accessing the St David's Day Fund.	https://vimeo.com/455464477 https://vimeo.com/455464965
	We worked with Voices from Care to provide a package of Covid-19-specific support.	http://vfcc.org.uk/coronavirus/

adoption and fostering	Advice on family contact was published by a range of organisations including WG/PHW, the Judiciary and Third sector organisations. The issue was also included in the Recovery Framework we co-produced with statutory and Third sector partners.	https://www.judiciary.uk/announcements/coronavirus-crisis-guidance-on-compliance-with-family-court-child-arrangement-orders/
	We introduced a self-declaration medical health assessment process for prospective foster carers who are unable to access face to face medical assessments with GPs.	https://gov.wales/annex-2-adult-fostering-medical-assessments-and-reports-during-covid-19-crisis
	We ensured foster carers receive ID cards as 'essential workers'.	https://socialcare.wales/service-improvement/social-care-worker-card-faqs
	We supported Association for Fostering and Adoption Cymru to develop guidance for foster carers.	https://www.afacymru.org.uk/supporting-effective9-functioning-during-covid-19/
	We produced FAQs for Children's Residential Homes to support implementation of PHW's Guidance on Infection Prevention and Control for Residential Settings.	https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/information-for-healthcare-workers-in-wales/childrens-residential-care-homes-faqs/
	We published information for care leavers on the Children's Commissioner for Wales website.	https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/coronavirus/
Housing and homelessness	Hidden homelessness campaign signposting young people homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to Shelter Cymru for support.	https://gov.wales/hidden-homelessness-campaign-material
	Guidance issued for local authorities, housing services and social landlords	https://gov.wales/local-authorities-housing-services-social-landlords-coronavirus
	Coronavirus housing campaign	https://gov.wales/coronavirus-housing-advice-campaign-materials-housing-groups
Poverty	Covid-19 financial support for individuals leaflet	https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-07/financial-support-leaflet.pdf

VCYPS

Phase 1 closure report for external stakeholders

Substance misuse	Recovery Planning Guidance has been issued for all Area Planning Boards.	https://documents.hf.wales.gov.uk/id:A30065357/document/versions/published
Youth justice	Guidance provided to all Youth Offending Team by the Youth Justice Board on distance working and responsibilities.	Internally available to the Youth Justice team
	Summary of good practice developed by the Youth Justice Board.	Internally available to the Youth Justice team

7. Lessons and conclusions

Lessons learnt from VCYPs phase 1 were considered during the course of August and September 2020. The main lessons and conclusions from VCYPs phase 1 are:

a. Children and young people

- The pandemic and the ensuing restrictions make all children and young people potentially vulnerable in a wide range of areas, including physical and mental health, emotional wellbeing, educational development, job security, (parental) income and housing stability, both in the short and the long term.

Decisions on covid-19 restrictions should take into account children and young people's short and long term health, wellbeing and development, supported by children's rights.

- As prepubescent children are less likely to catch the virus, less likely to become seriously ill and less likely to spread it, the risk of poor life attainment due to missing out on play, education and development is higher and more harmful than the risk of covid-19 in this age group¹.

A different approach is needed for different age groups, taking into account the different infection and transmission risk within these age groups.

b. Service provision

- As services close, reduce or move online, the safety net for vulnerable children and young people consists of childcare, schools, social services and local authorities. Children and young people who fall outside these services (e.g. pre-school children who do not attend childcare, children and young people in elective home education, further and higher education) may be less visible.

The priority for children and young people should be to keep childcare and educational settings open.

c. Workforce

- Frontline staff in children's services (e.g. health visitors, school nurses) should not be denied access to children and facilities.

¹ As understood in September 2020

- Frontline staff in children's services (e.g. health visitors, school nurses) should not be redeployed to adult services.