



Department
for Education

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COVID-19 SitRep 09

Thursday 09 April 2020 (1100hrs)

(new reporting in red)

From: Paul Baker, Deputy Director DfE Covid-19 Response Departmental Operations Centre ('R-DOC')

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SECTOR UPDATE: Attendance Trends 2 of 2

Take-up

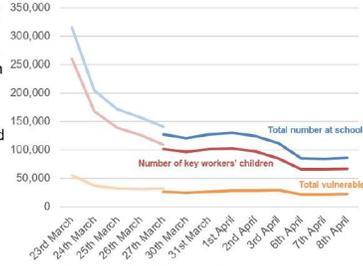
Only 4% of vulnerable children attended school on Wednesday. Vulnerable children's attendance rate has further decreased from last week, likely due to the Easter holidays.

Only 2% of key worker children attended school on Wednesday.

Key Questions:

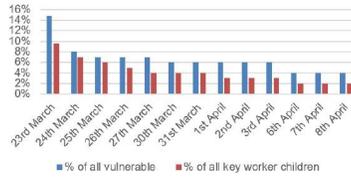
- Is the social care system under **too much strain**? Is it able to cope with more vulnerable children being at home all day?
- Are all **key workers who need childcare** able to access provision over the holidays? Will more services close over the holidays?
- Do **Local Authorities** have all they need to be able to cope with **increased costs and demand**? Especially if more parents lose their jobs and require support?

Who is going to school?



Are all eligible pupils going to school?

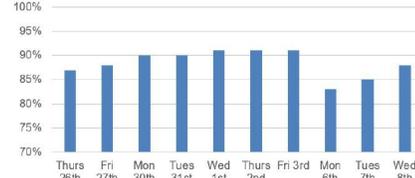
Proportion of eligible groups in school



FSM

88% of open schools had some FSM provision in place on Wednesday.

How many **open** schools are offering FSM?



67% of schools are offering **vouchers** to FSM children; this has overtaken meals-in-setting and lunchboxes to become the **most common type of FSM provision**.

Key Questions:

- Is this increase in the use of **vouchers temporary** because of increased school closures?
- Are providers being given enough **financial support** to provide FSM through the holidays?
- What **provision** are FSM pupils whose **schools are closed** receiving?
- Is this decrease telling of what could happen over the **summer holidays** if more schools close?

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All figures taken from grossed-up estimates based on 4pm data updates, 23/03/20 -08/04/20

SECTOR UPDATE: Children's Social Care 1 of 2

General update - we continue to discuss issues of concern with the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS). We understand that many LAs have moved, as far as possible, to home working for children's social care staff although this varies considerably between LAs. There are increasing calls for greater clarity about social work operations and for HM Govt. to address concerns re: availability of PPE and staff testing. Compounded by first reported death of a social worker.

The Secretary of State attended GPSMIG on 1 April to discuss support for vulnerable children. Key issues arising from that discussion focused on securing more finely grained data and improving clarity on messages around school attendance of vulnerable children.

On 2 April we launched, with Social Work England, LGA and DHSC **Social Work Together** to support the return of social workers to practice. **More than 600** social workers have already registered their interest and **459 have applied for a post as of 9 April**.

Minister Ford has been invited to a session of the Education Select Committee on 22 April to discuss COVID-19.

We are working on advice to Minister Ford on changes to regulations with an aim of laying an SI on 23 April.

On 8 April we received a pre-action protocol to judicial review about our guidance for children's social care claiming it is unlawful and seeking a response within 7 days rather than the usual 14, requesting that we withdraw the guidance. We have appointed counsel and are urgently reviewing our response.

Key issues:

- Ensuring the safety of our vulnerable children remains the DfE's top priority. There has now been an uptick in the number of **serious incidents** notified after an earlier decline, including for the first time cases which can be clearly related to COVID-19.
- We continue to work with LAs and Home Office on issues related to **unaccompanied asylum seeking children** and to explore options around securing suitable accommodation supported by a small group of LAs
- On 19 March £1.6 billion was announced for LAs to support service pressures, including in children's social care. On 24 March we submitted further information on possible cost pressures and will keep these under review to ensure that they are well evidenced.
- A more general concern relates to the reported low number of (vulnerable) children receiving social care support attending school and the degree to which this places them at a greater risk of harm which could be compounded if these numbers mean that there are further changes to the provision delivery model. Easter reset will be crucial.
- Emerging concerns (including from the police) about non-compliance with social distancing of children in residential care.

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