

Message

**From:** [NR] [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=FFA6A7B9BC114806ADA0E09B59E1AFBA [NR]  
**Sent:** 22/07/2020 18:08:42  
**To:** PS, Ford [ford.ps@education.gov.uk]  
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**Subject:** RE: READOUT: Minister Ford's Children & Families Covid-19 Stocktake 22/7 - agenda

Hi [NR] all

**On early years** – [NR] and I will have a chat tomorrow about the bulk-buying point below as I'm not quite clear on that bit – but separately I wanted to come back on the highlighted action as I'm not sure what more is required here.

We issued a statement to media proactively on this very guidance, explicitly referencing the funding continuing until the end of the year. And the Minister gave an interview to Nursery World about it, following the visit on Tuesday.

We'll speak to [NR] about stakeholders supporting the announcement with their own comments and positive social media – as it's important to have more than just the government voice out there.

Is that what you think VF has in mind?

Obviously we'll continue using this language and reiterating that point in all possible comms, including the upcoming NELI one which we don't have a date for yet.

**On the mental health lines** – we may struggle to get those lines into the 1pm box but we can share something with you before COP tomorrow, if you're able to whatsapp it to her for comments on Friday. Spads will sign off the release, and there may be small amends to the quote subject to how things go with HMT but presumably VF knows and is fine with that!

Thanks

[NR]

[NR]  
Chief Media Officer  
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**Subject:** READOUT: Minister Ford's Children & Families Covid-19 Stocktake 22/7 - agenda

Hi all,

With thanks to [redacted] and [redacted] please see the readout below from today's stocktake. A couple of actions for teams to pick up before recess begins!

Thanks all,

[redacted]

## Minister Ford's weekly C&F Stocktake 22.07.20

VF thanked the team for all of their hard work so far and briefly mentioned her recess plans.

### Food update

- HW updated that orders for food have increased from schools, however, traffic on Edenred from parents continues. HW brought up the school food standards sub and VF suggested getting 15 mins in the dairy later today to discuss it.
- **STEER: VF was keen to make sure that we can deliver food to all who need it without having to rely on volunteers in case of a local lockdown.**
- **ALREADY ACTIONED [redacted]: to add in a 15-mins policy slot with HW to discuss school food standards sub.**

### Early Years updates

- MR updated that advice has gone to SoS on the 4 tiers of response to local lockdown, according to increasing severity. Closing education and childcare settings would be a last resort and primary and early years settings are now all aligned.
- MR updated that MNS note will be in box tonight.
- **STEER: VF has been pushing on seeing advice on this and will consider today before she leaves [redacted] to revert with comments). VF is keen to see stakeholder handling for how she can best engage MNS.**
- MR updated that SoS has now seen advice on NELI EY language catch up and is content with the recommendations.
- **ACTION [Marc/Comms – Matthew] – to revert with advice for when there should be an announcement.**
- MR updated that 10th iteration of the EY guidance has been published (VF saw and was content).
- **Guidance on Entitlements – VF is keen to do much more comms about support we are giving to the sector. She would like to use language of “bulk buying” and, without saying that we don't expect full attendance**

in the Autumn which is our policy, she would like to get across the message that we are paying the full average £1.2bn termly funding, even though attendance will likely be lower.

- **ACTION [Sarah, NR Matthew and Comms] – please can you revert with comms handling**

#### Mental Health update

- MH updated on the £8mil proposal which now has SoS agreement but is awaiting HMT approval. Press announcement in train with No.10, which will be linked with handling notification with bidders.
- **ACTION [Matthew/Comms]: VF would like to sign off pre-agreed lines before COP Friday so that she doesn't need to clear while on holiday.**
- MH flagged processes for LA updates in advance of press announcement. **VF confirmed she was content for officials to take this forward and didn't need to clear this.**
- VF fed back on meeting with Ofsted and her desire to see their LA SEND inspections have renewed focus on local commissioning. Ofsted flagged weaknesses in MH with the lack of earlier intervention and counselling services. **VF asked officials to work closely with SEND Review team to ensure CCGs locally had accountability for MH support.**

#### Vulnerable Children update

- GM confirmed that SoS would not be pursuing VC package in light of HMT negotiations and SR, that SR work is beginning around vulnerable children, and ongoing work on the return to school.
- Note coming up for the box on Summer Activities, including a letter to go to the PM jointly with HO.
- VF reiterated the idea of invest to save being the strongest way to make HMT bids, and desire to fund from future savings or creative mechanisms like this.
- **ACTION [Gillian] VF asked to see the full package that went to HMT to see what lessons could be learned for next time. Could you please send over for the box?**
- VF questioned whether repositioning VC within existing bids and programmes within the department instead of standalone package might have more success.

#### CSC update

- Discussion around preparations for the peak in referrals and children coming into care. VF wanted to know whether there was sufficient capacity and money in the system to deal with this. FO and GA confirmed LAs doing modelling and not yet reporting it as a concern.
- **STEER: VF was keen for this to include SR bids and suggested multiple bids based on different scenarios.**
- **VF reiterated that the Chancellor liked the Troubled Families programme.**
- FO gave quick updates on regs, unregulated, FJB and the Adoption Summit.
- Regs consultation is out, seeking views. VF was content with advice as planned.
- **ACTION [Fran, NR ] Could you please send over the readout from the Adoption summit for tomorrow's box?**
- VF concerned about court pressures, the number of private law cases and the likelihood of a stockpile of difficult cases.
- VF felt the amendment to DAB is really important and wanted to see the language in the CA on barring notices copied into the DAB.
- Discussion around UASC.
- **STEER: VF was content to say: 'At this time, we recommend the NTS should not be mandated but it should be reviewed again in X years' time if the NTS has not worked. Do you agree with this approach?**
- **VF would like FO to deputise for her at engagement events.**
- **ACTION [Fran, NR ] Over the summer, VF would like the team to work on how much LAs are spending on UASC care leavers**
- VF gave messages for August Adoption speech:
  - The importance of reinforcing support around the family (it's not just adoption and fostering, it's about keeping families together)
  - Lots of support and appreciation for foster carers and kinship carers
  - Some of the rhetoric from the US about 'finding a forever family'
  - If you come forward to support, we will support you and the ASF will be there

- Discussion about the need to write to CE of LAs. **VF confirmed she was content for the letter to come from her.** ACTION [NR] Grateful for a final draft by 10.30am tomorrow.

#### CSIIU Interventions and Improvements updates

- North Somerset – VF happy that intervening in RI LA and wants to write to local MPs.
- **Action [NR] – to get in touch with policy lead re draft letter to MPs, as VF wants to write to update.**
- Slough – Graham gave reassurance that we do need the bespoke positions for ADM Specialist and Director of Improvement, alongside legal advice. However, **VF wants to be clear that we are only putting in this extra if there is no request for anything further.**
- **Action [NR Graham] – to set out further conditionality around the funding we are providing, including how best to make VF expectations clear to the Council re further funding (whether this be at official level or a VF meet).**
- Redcar and Cleveland – Graham set out that don't think it has been lax in terms of security and they have had to do a lot of manual work around recovery. **VF concern is that DfE don't fund frontline social workers in normal times. She was firmer on this call than in her initial readout that not happy to provide this funding.**
- **Action [Graham/Matt Edwards] – to revert with advice with further detail on the numbers and a smaller amount suggested.**
- Social Worker Pay – Graham addressed VF concern that there hasn't been an uplift in pay – she is right to be concerned but won't necessarily be resolved quickly and this is determined by LAs. VF understands that this is LA pay – her main concern was being aware of this, rather than driving immediate change.

#### Serious Violence:

- CL updated on the C&J taskforce, and that all the key VF elements remained as discussed. The SR will be the funding vehicle for this.
- **ACTION [Charlie] to come back to VF to check narrative in the final bid.**
- Quick readout of prison school contract as raised by Anne Longfield.
- **ACTION [Fran and Charlie] to liaise around other potential bidders from hospital schools.**

#### AP and SEND updates:

- SL updated on live case and issues with September attendance with Milton Keynes case with letter from head about part time attendance in. SL queried strength of response for whether to be bullish now or in September.
- **[STEER] VF concerned about schools informally not letting 'difficult' children back.**
- **ACTION [Suzanne] use the following lines/approach as steered by VF 'We are expecting all to be open and don't want SEND behind. A transition plan to get back to full time education coproduced with parents should be in place. It is not acceptable to give a blanket policy about all children being back for X days. We've asked Ofsted to look at the situation.'**
- CL updated on Crime and Justice taskforce meeting and that VF priorities remain in the plan and key is to use SR for funding vehicle. VF queried whether same approach for Education Hubs as VSHs to show priority to OGDs. CL explained crime being agreed as a priority so package will be presented for Treasury
- **[STEER] VF keen to get ahead of these things and doesn't want it all to get busy in September.**
- CL met with Hospital School leaders yesterday and there's concern about capacity since health have taken over buildings
- **ACTION [Charlie] to send update note with scale of problem.**
- VF asked about prison school contracts which are about to expire and they are currently dire for outcomes - Anne Longfield thinks this is a potential opportunity to get better provider
- **ACTION [Charlie] to pick up with Fran.**
- Additional burden funding - CL expects straight-forward to fund and we have contained the funding that we thought could be problematic.
- CL updated expected publication of statistics 30th July for exclusions and prevailing trend that SEND and other vulnerable groups are disproportionately excluded. SL updated on particular pocket in Kent with Autism and higher rates of suicide
- **[STEER] VF wants cautious approach taken here**

- **ACTION [Suzanne] to pick up in meeting with DHSC on Autism strategy.**
- CL flagged risk of coerced home education and making sure Ofsted are aware of this risk.
- **[STEER] VF wants to have 'top-down' register and had follow up policy slot on this today.**

Thanks,

NR

NR

Diary Manager to Vicky Ford MP, Minister for Children and Families

Tel: I&S

See the [intranet](#) page for more information about VFPO, including box times.



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**Subject:** RE: Minister Ford's Children & Families Covid-19 Stocktake 22/7 - agenda

Hi all,

Apologies, the C&F stocktake has been moved to **13:15-14:30 today** due to a clash with SoS meeting. Please could you confirm if the below agenda order and leads still work for you?

1. Food – **Helen** to lead
2. Mental health – **NR** and **Matthew** to lead
3. Early years – **Mark** to lead as Jo and Susie on AL
4. Vulnerable children
  - a. AP – **Charlie** to lead



c. SEND

Thanks,

NR

NR

Diary Manager to Vicky Ford MP, Minister for Children and Families

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