



Bolton Parent Carers & Bolton Information Advisory Service

Working together for Bolton's SEND families

Joint Bulletin 5 - 17th April 2020

We will be keeping you up to date with the current situation and anything we feel may affect or be of interest to Bolton's SEND families - both locally and nationally. Bolton Parent Carers and Bolton Information Advisory Service are working together through this challenging time.

Bolton IAS Contact Details

www.iasbolton.com

Email: iasoutofhours@outlook.com

Text: 07467 943495

Bolton Parent Carers Contact Details

www.boltonparents.org.uk

Email: info@boltonparents.org.uk



This week we have been informed that the lockdown and social distancing measures have been extended for at least another three weeks. This obviously means for parents, a further three weeks at home with their children not in school. Make sure to utilise our care package support as detailed at the end of the bulletin.

This week has also seen the primary school allocations being sent out. We know you may have some questions about this too, and we have some information for you about this further in the bulletin.

Bolton Council Update on schooling for children who are 'vulnerable'

Schools are being urged to take seriously their responsibilities to children who are not in school, but who may be considered vulnerable, these are children who are subject to a child protection plan, or those who are on a child in need plan. During April and May, schools have been asked to identify children who may benefit from being back in school for some periods. This is in addition to the groups mentioned at the start of the outbreak, those with keyworker parents and some children with EHC plans who cannot safely be cared for at home. Schools are being encouraged to contact these parents to discuss what can be done to support them. However, if you are finding things difficult at home, we advise contacting your school for a chat, or indeed, ourselves, to talk about the options available for your own family circumstances.



An update from the CCG

Clinical Commissioning Group

A reminder that all assessments for Autism and ADHD have been put on hold until further notice. This includes BSCIP. We expect that when measures relax, these will reconvene, but as you might appreciate, we cannot give a date for this as yet.

Bolton CCG are keen to stress that **if you have a child who is unwell**, you **must** contact your GP, and, if necessary, you should attend the hospital. The fact that so few children are being seen indicates that there could be a number of children at home, who are unwell, and who are not getting the healthcare they need. There have been cases in Bolton where parents have not wanted to burden health professionals, and who have tried to manage children's illness at home, but by the time they did get to hospital, the child had become very poorly indeed. The message is to **please seek support and help as you normally would for your children if they are unwell at all**.

NHS and Bolton council have issued a joint newsletter detailing support available, and reassuring families that although we are all having to work differently, we are still very much open for business. <http://www.boltonft.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/children-and-young-people-coronavirus-update-pdf-1.pdf>

Update from Bolton Council Educational Psychology service (EPs)



You will remember last week we told you that Bolton council's educational psychology team were looking at the different ways that they can help support both families and schools at this difficult time. It was agreed that they would provide advice and guidance to schools and settings and also have a weekly featured piece in our bulletin for families, focusing on specific themes relevant to you all, with helpful hints and support.

The first of the featured pieces will be in next Friday's bulletin, and will focus on "Staying positive and mental health." Our EP service in Bolton is highly regarded, and we are excited to be able to share with you the team's expert advice and tips each week.

They have set up a helpline for families where you can get advice and guidance from the **educational psychologists**. The helpline numbers may need to change week commencing 4th May- so please do check back on the bulletin after this time for updated numbers.

On weeks beginning 20th April and 27th April the phone line will be open three times per week:

Monday 1.00pm - 5.00pm – 07768353621

Wednesday 9.00am - 12.30pm – 07580036439

Friday 9.00am - 12.30pm – 07789031347



Bolton Council Primary school allocations

We know that many of you will have received your primary school allocations this week. We have received a number of queries about this. Including:

- ? I wanted special school but I've only been told about my mainstream choice.
- ? Can I refuse a mainstream completely if I don't get special?
- ? When is panel for special school places?
- ? I'm unhappy with my mainstream choice.
- ? How can I appeal?
- ? What will happen with transition given COVID-19?
- ? What if I want to defer my child's start date into school because of COVID-19?
- ? My EHC plan isn't finished, what will happen?



To look at all of these points, and more, Cheryl and Nan are hosting an online workshop for early years parents whose children are expected to start primary school in September 2020, on **Wednesday 22nd April at 7.30pm** and **Friday 24th April at 11.30am**. There will be plenty of opportunities to ask questions on the session. For more information and booking, visit www.boltonparents.org.uk/early-years-webinar



Statutory duties and EHCP annual reviews

Department for Education

As we discuss with you on almost every bulletin at the moment, whilst the Children and Families Act 2014 is still active, we must be sensible in our expectations and requests, with regard to what can, and cannot be done.

After a discussion with the LA this week, we are advising that where it is possible to conduct an annual review, these must go ahead and within the statutory time scale. These can be done on a secure web hosting server, or by telephone, even by post as a paper exercise- whatever works, so long as it meets its purpose, to review the outcomes, support and progress, and it still must involve parent carers and children or young people as fully as possible.



Support for Early Years Families

Next week we will have information from Bolton Startwell for families with pre-school children. The team are working on support, advice and resources that families will be able to access to help them through this period. Resources will be specifically aimed at little ones with additional needs.



Reminder on support available to you now

Both the IAS and BPC websites have a wide range of resources and information to keep you up to date and busy throughout this time. You can find us at www.iasbolton.com and www.boltonparents.org.uk

IAS and BPC are holding coffee mornings by Zoom. At each one, a member of the parent carer forum, and an IAS officer will be there to help give information and advice. These are every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 11.30am until 12.30pm. For more information visit www.boltonparents.org.uk/join-in

Our IAS 'natter and listen' service is still here for anyone who needs it- whether you just need some adult conversation, need to let off some steam, want some advice or reassurance, or just someone to call a friend to talk about your day, we are here. Simply text 07467943495 and we will arrange a call back for you whenever you want to talk. Cheryl, Nan, Mike and Karen are happy to help wherever we can.

We will soon be delivering webinar workshops via Zoom. These are currently being developed, and, as soon as we have perfected them and tested them out on the new software, we shall send out the dates and booking links.

The usual IAS service- although we are all working from home, we can continue to offer telephone and email support, advice and guidance for anything SEND related- whether you've got EHC forms to complete, want to know about anything education, health or social care related, or to chat through your concerns for when the schools go back, get in touch using our 24 hour email address- iasoutofhours@outlook.com and we will call you back.



New baby? Claiming child benefit

Child Benefit

Parents of new-borns in Bolton will still be able to claim child benefit despite the outbreak of coronavirus. Even though the Register Office has suspended birth registrations, parents can still claim child benefit **without** having to register their child's birth first to ensure that they do not miss out. First time parents will need to fill in a child benefit claim, which can be accessed here <https://www.gov.uk/child-benefit/how-to-claim> If they haven't registered the birth because of coronavirus, they should add a note with their claim to let HMRC know.

On a final note

The following statement is attributed to Fiona Noden, Chief Executive, Bolton Foundation Trust

"It is with deep regret and huge sadness that I share with you the devastating news that we have lost a friend and colleague to the terrible Covid-19 virus. Lourdes Campbell, a Heath Care Assistant died a short time ago on our Critical Care Unit. Lourdes, known as Des to her colleagues, has worked with us for nearly 13 years. She was a well-liked and valued member of the team, known for working extremely hard. She was dedicated to patient care and her colleagues respected her quiet, diligent and compassionate approach".

We are sure you all join us in sending Lourdes' family our thoughts and prayers.

Our NHS are a phenomenal set of people, risking and sometimes sadly losing, their own lives- to help us live ours. We want to take this opportunity to thank them for their courage and bravery, and to reiterate the message, 'Stay home- Protect the NHS- Save lives'.



Support from Bolton Council



If you are struggling because you need to stay at home and have no family or friends to support you, with shopping or other help, help is available through the council's Response Hub, which has been set up by the council and partners.



Need support?

Our COVID 19 community response line is now open offering vital help to people who need food or essential items

01204 337221

8.30am – 5.30pm Mon – Fri and Sat 9am – 1.30pm

Bolton Council website has updated their homepage with all necessary links for residents during this time - whether it's bin collections, finance, health all the links are in the homepage www.bolton.gov.uk



We will be back in touch next Friday with a weekly update. If you would prefer not to receive this, please just let us know. In the meantime, please do make use of the joint IAS/BPC support package mentioned.

Stay well and look after each other, and most importantly, please stay at home.

Cheryl and the IAS team, and Nan and BPC