

Report to:	EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD
Date:	20 October 2020
Executive Member / Reporting Officer:	Councillor Leanne Feeley – Executive Member for Lifelong Learning, Equalities, Culture and Heritage Tim Bowman – Assistant Director, Education
Subject:	EDUCATION RECOVERY PRIORITIES
Report Summary:	<p>The report outlines the work that has been undertaken by all in Tameside to ensure that schools open to their pupils in a safe and sensible way. The approach has always been inclusive and collaborative with some key pieces of work such as our “Back to School – Tameside Loves School” campaign held up as national good practice. The range of measures in place and guidance that has been assimilated has been significant and the new year will undoubtedly bring additional challenges. However, the approach taken so far will stand the borough in good stead to meet any challenges going forward.</p> <p>The report also outlines the recovery priorities within Education Services, the challenges we have in delivering them and how these challenges will be met.</p>
Recommendations:	It is recommended that the Board note the content of the report.
Corporate Plan:	The proposals contained in this report support most aspects of the corporate plan by ensuring that schools are able to open to pupils in September 2020 and continue to provide for children throughout the academic year.
Policy Implications:	The report sets out the position in line with Council policies and the statutory framework.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)	<p>It is estimated that Tameside schools and Academies will receive £2.9m of grant funding in COVID catch-up premium for the academic year 2020/21 to support students to catch up from lost teaching time. Confirmed values are expected by December 2020. It is unknown at this stage if the funding is sufficient to pay for the support needed.</p> <p>A grant has been allocated from the DfE to support Wellbeing on a return to Education of £35k. It is unclear at this stage the level of support that will be necessary on return.</p>
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	Members and Officers all need to be aware that when navigating the effects of the COVID pandemic on the delivery of education for both pupils and staff that risk and equality impact assessments are both critical tools for ensuring that decisions are made on a well-informed basis having regard to both risk and impact to ensure that responses are both reasonable and proportionate.
Risk Management:	The whole school risk assessments completed by schools alongside all guidance from the Department for Education should have been used to enable each school to assess the level of risk and how it can be mitigated in order to ensure schools can open

and operate safely

Background Information: The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Tim Bowman, Assistant Director, Education:



Telephone: 0161 342 2050



e-mail: tim.bowman@tameside.gov.uk

COVID RECOVERY IN SCHOOLS IN TAMESIDE

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Schools were closed to all but our most vulnerable children and the children of our key workers from mid-March. Primary schools opened more widely to Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils after Whit half terms and our secondary schools opened to Year 10 pupils.
- 1.2 The wider opening was carefully planned by schools and followed government guidance and was supported by the colleagues across the Council, particularly from the Health and Safety and Public Health teams. All of the wider opening was done taking a safe and sensible approach, with local trade union and staff representatives being fully involved at all planning stages.
- 1.3 Support for schools and colleges throughout the pandemic has always been available to all schools, whatever type they may be and whatever phase or sector they are in. This has helped to maintain a borough-wide approach to identifying collective processes which support local decisions.
- 1.4 Tameside maintained schools and academies were open throughout the pandemic.
- 1.5 All Tameside schools opened in September to all pupils, a credit to the hard work and commitment of Tameside headteachers.
- 1.6 Although all children have had their education disrupted, it is likely that disadvantaged and vulnerable groups will have been hardest hit.
- 1.7 Headteachers and school leaders in Tameside have worked tirelessly throughout the COVID period supporting children and their families, acting as leaders in their communities, supporting and reassuring their staff and working effectively in a high-stakes, high-stress context, many without taking a day off since February half term. Special school leaders had to go to significant additional lengths to ensure that students and staff were safe.
- 1.8 Risk Assessment measures in place in schools have been successful, despite a number of positive cases of COVID affecting schools. Instances of transmission within schools and settings have been incredibly rare. However, a number of schools have been affected by more than one positive COVID case.

2. LOCKDOWN: WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO SUPPORT SCHOOLS AND OUR FAMILIES

Digital Devices

- 2.1 Each local authority was allocated a number of digital devices for vulnerable children who didn't have access to the technology needed to access an online curriculum. In Tameside, we received 964 laptops and 124 4G routers. These were distributed to children with social workers through schools, colleges and social workers in accordance with the criteria determined by the DfE, this included support information to ensure that children could access appropriate activity through the devices. In addition, the DfE supplied a number of laptops directly to our secondary schools specifically for disadvantaged Year 10 children without digital access.

Risk Assessments

- 2.2 Risk assessment guidance was developed to assist schools to plan for their September opening. The documents were shared with all schools and the approach taken was

intended to be supportive and to help achieve the consistency needed whilst retaining the flexibility for local decisions.

Webinars

- 2.3 Webinars on the latest guidance and local response were organised by Health and Safety and Public Health and made available to all schools and education providers in the borough. The sessions were recorded and made available on the schools and colleges intranet for reference when formulating risk assessments.

Planning and Communication

- 2.4 At the start of lockdown, the Council quickly implemented daily phone calls to all schools and early years providers through Link Officers drawn from a range of teams within Education and Early Help Services. These phone calls have been invaluable in providing a good quality and consistent two-way communication channel and have proved to be beneficial to everyone involved. The following was received by one of the School Link Officers from a headteacher at the end of the summer term:

"I want to just pause a moment and take time to thank you for the brilliant support that you have afforded me during the Lockdown period. A time we will never forget and a bond between us that will always remain for future great work together! I want you to know that you are a part of the success that we have had as a school during the past few months, because you are the person that has kept me going and encouraged me with your words and actions."

- 2.5 There has been regular scenario planning group meetings with representatives from schools, colleges, trade union/professional associations and local authority colleagues. This group has been crucial in developing and communicating local guidance.
- 2.6 There was an at least weekly email from the Assistant Director, Education to update schools and providers on the latest national and local guidance.
- 2.7 The schools and colleges intranet was launched during this period and has been used as a platform to host all the information that has been provided to schools.
- 2.8 Regularly updated FAQs for the workforce were distributed on a weekly basis to advise school leaders and staff of the latest information and guidance available for staff, including advice on health, safety and wellbeing at work.

Free School Meals

- 2.9 Schools continued to provide free school meals to eligible children during the COVID period. There were increasing numbers of parents and carers experiencing financial hardship who became eligible for free school meals. Free school meals were provided in a variety of ways by schools including the provision of vouchers, daily lunch packs taken to homes and within schools themselves. Many schools also contributed to local foodbanks.
- 2.10 The provision of free school meals continued throughout the summer holidays, mostly through the use of vouchers.

Support for Transition

- 2.11 A series of protocols and documents were developed with PVI, schools, and colleges to support transition from early years to primary school, from primary school to secondary school, and from secondary school to post-16 provision as many of the usual events were unable to take place. These were shared with all schools and early years' providers.

3. COVID RECOVERY: WHAT WILL BE DONE TO SUPPORT SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES?

COVID Catch-up Premium

- 3.1 Government has announced £1 billion of funding to support children and young people to catch up. This includes a one-off universal £650m catch up premium for the 2020-21 academic year. Schools' allocations will be calculated on a per pupil basis, providing each mainstream school with a total of £80 for each pupil in years reception through to year 11. Special Schools will be provided with £240 for each pupil.
- 3.2 The Government has launched a £350 million National Tutoring Programme to provide additional, targeted support for disadvantaged children. This will be accessible in the second half of the autumn term. As part of this offer, schools have been encouraged to apply for funded training and resources for early language intervention (NELI) which has previously been offered to Tameside schools where there is the lowest GLD. The Council will support schools taking advantage of this training by establishing support networks to embed practice.

Education Partnerships: Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)

- 3.3 EEF partnership is focused on catch up for disadvantaged pupils and teacher and headteacher CPD has been adjusted to reflect the catch-up needs for this group of pupils, including a continuing focus on early language development, early literacy, and making a difference for disadvantaged pupils.

Education Partnerships: The Ogden Trust

- 3.4 Tameside has attracted funding and support from The Ogden Trust, a physics endowment fund aiming to develop standards in physics starting in the early years right through to post-16. Working with the Trust, which has appointed a local co-ordinator and physics specialist, drawn from our schools, we have shared the partnership details with primary and secondary headteachers and established a stakeholder steering group including headteachers, post-16, and local business. This is a long-term investment in Tameside by the Ogden Trust and over time, we would expect to see raised achievement and attainment in science subjects overall, especially physics outcomes.

Education Partnerships: GMCA Year 1 Recovery Curriculum

- 3.5 Early Years Leaders from across Greater Manchester have developed a series of research-focused seminars aimed at supporting primary school head teachers and leaders to understand what kind of curriculum children need in Year 1 as a result of time lost due to COVID. The sessions have had very positive feedback and reflect on the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on shortening the EYFS offer for pupils and the different approaches that can support a positive return to learning in Year 1. They are language-focused and the approach, a virtual research meeting, has had significant reach across Greater Manchester, establishing school-level collaborations across the authorities.

Social Care Partnerships: Social Workers in Schools and DSL Supervision RCTs

- 3.6 Colleagues in Social Care have secured funding and participation in two important research programmes to support secondary-age children, their families and schools. Social Workers in Schools is a one-year project which funds a social worker post based in the secondary schools and aims to improve the relationships between social workers, schools and families to support early intervention with hard to reach students and families. Designated Safeguarding Leads Professional Supervision provides much needed supervision for school DSLs who deal with complex and significant caseloads and rarely receive

supervisory support. Both of these research programmes are randomised control trials meaning 50% of schools will be able to participate.

Key Stage Four National Exams

- 3.7 It is becoming increasingly clear that children in Year 11 will receive a significantly disrupted year of learning due to the impact of COVID-19. The level of disruption is likely to be much greater for children in the North West than in other areas of the country due to the high levels of COVID-19. With a system calibrated to produce continuity, comparable outcomes, this disadvantage will be disproportionately greater for children in Tameside and the North West. Schools, students, parents and education colleagues are increasingly concerned about the impact on our students in this key year group.

Task and Finish Groups

- 3.8 Inclusion and School Improvement Task and Finish groups have been established to develop an enquiry-based approach to the challenges faced by school leaders. The Task and Finish Groups are also responsible for curating and sharing school-level resources through the new Schools Intranet set up during lockdown. Discussions are focused on:

- Support for the most vulnerable
- Tameside Loves Reading
- Digital Learning
- Attendance
- Support for the most vulnerable

Specialist Pupil Support

- 3.9 All Specialist outreach Pupils Support services for children with additional educational needs are back in full operation, providing guidance and support for children with social, emotional, mental health Needs (SEMH), communication and interaction needs, autism, cognition and learning needs, visual, hearing and multi-sensory impairment. In addition to outreach support, specialist pupil support services for children with SEMH have now opened their off-site intervention facility at Discovery Academy for key stage 1 pupils. This facility provides temporary bespoke specialist intervention for key stage 1 pupils, struggling to cope in their mainstream school environment.

Children / Young People with AGPs

- 3.10 In Tameside we have a very small number of young people with highly complex physical needs, requiring them to have regular Aerosol Generated Procedures (AGPs). AGPs include procedures such as: Intubation, Extubation, Manual Ventilation & Open Suctioning, Tracheotomy / Tracheostomy procedures (insertion/open suctioning/removal), Bronchoscopy, Non-invasive ventilation (NIV), High-Frequency Oscillating Ventilation (HFOV), High Flow Nasal Oxygen (HFNO), also called High Flow Nasal Cannula and Induction of sputum. In order for these procedures to be carried out safely in schools and settings, very particular and precise arrangements and protocols must be adhered to. In the current context of COVID-19, any AGP is considered a high risk procedure, and it is imperative for the safety of both staff and the children themselves that the correct processes are in place and strictly adhered to. AGPs must be carried out in a designated room, well ventilated with a window that can be opened and with minimal amount of equipment in the room, and no soft furnishings/ carpet. Staff undertaking aerosol generating procedures must always wear a disposable fluid resistant gown, disposable gloves, an FFP3 mask and eye/face protection. For this "high grade personal protective equipment, staff must be Fit Test trained and only those who have been Fit Test trained can perform AGPs. The SEND team and schools have been working closely with colleagues from Public Health England, the School Nursing team and the Infection Control

team since before the summer break to prepare the relevant settings to receive this small cohort of children back to school in the autumn term. The challenges created by the COVID-19 epidemic have put considerable strain on the services carrying out the necessary training and FIT testing creating some unavoidable delays in staff accessing the training. All training and FIT testing has now been completed and settings are in receipt of the correct PPE, allowing the young people to return to education over the next two weeks. Whilst settings have been preparing to welcome these learners back, regular outreach support and educational opportunities have been provided to the children/ young people and their families.

Vulnerable Students Self-Isolating

- 3.11 As community transmission rates of COVID have risen in Tameside, a growing number of students have been required to self-isolate at home, either because they are symptomatic or due to being identified as a contact of a confirmed positive case. In certain cases, these students have additional special educational needs, an underlying health condition and/or involvement from Children's Social Care. For a small number of these vulnerable students, the self-isolation period creates risk for the learner and/ or their family due to them being at home for a two week period, without access to their usual support networks, respite opportunities, therapies and school/college. In some of these cases, the students are known to multiple agencies. Responding to the rising rate of vulnerable students self-isolating, representatives from SEND, Children's Social Care, the CCG and Healthy Young Minds have come together to design and implement a multi-agency response process to ensure that these young people and their families are accessing appropriate support during the period of isolation as early as possible. To date the process has been used to support 4 families, allowing young people to benefit from enhanced multi-agency support and intervention during the period of self-isolation and consequently mitigating the previously identified risks.

Tameside Loves Reading – All Age Plan

- 3.12 Tameside Loves Reading has developed an all age plan (**Appendix 3**) which is a commitment from the Council to bring together services, projects, initiatives and strategies being delivered to children, young people and adults across the borough, harnessing a love and enjoyment of reading and improving literacy skills. The All Age Plan is being implemented across the borough to aid the COVID recovery process and to improve literacy outcomes for all. As part of the All Age Plan a snap shot of projects taking place, are listed below:

- The Ripple Project - An intergenerational cultural project using film, theatre, social media, online/digital platforms to gather and tell lockdown stories and shape a positive vision for a world beyond it.
- Public Health Intergen Project - Engagement of individuals aged 50+ to link with local schools for a befriending project. Sharing skills to improve lives.
- Words for All GM partnership around developing vocabulary and reading in secondary age children.
- WELL-COM language identification and intervention tool in the early years.
- Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) targeted language development in the early years.
- Virtual Reading Volunteers - A 30-minute 1:1 reading session per week currently streamed through a secure online platform. The session can be repeated with a number of children.
- Bookstart and family learning - Further development of Bookstart across Tameside including training for practitioners and the implementation of Bookstart corner with family support groups
- Home Library Service prescription service - supporting those who are socially isolated and working with social care teams to refer individuals

- Making it Real (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy) - A programme that works with practitioners to support children's early literacy and development.

Remote Learning

- 3.13 A significant part of recovery support for schools centres around a strong remote learning strategy. All schools are expected to have a plan in place by the end of September but it will be particularly important for secondary schools to have a strong and clear remote offer. We are working with our research school and local EdTech Demonstrator School, as well as key school leaders, to support schools develop their offers.

Attendance Campaign

- 3.14 Our "Back to School – Tameside Loves School" campaign consisted of the following:
- Reassurance poster. This has been shared on social media on a regular basis over the summer holidays. Hard copies have been sent to all schools and are displayed in children's centres, supermarkets and clinics.
 - Banners have been devised and have been put up in each town in Tameside.
 - Tameside Radio and the Reporter have been involved in filming children and the headteacher at Silver Springs Academy on the benefits of attending school. This article appeared in the Reporter and has been on the radio and website.
 - New notice boards are being prepared within each children's centre that is open.
 - A compendium of age appropriate resources has been gathered for schools to use with pupils on their return to school.
 - A 100% attendance campaign is being devised for the first half term with certificates available to schools.
 - A message of congratulations is being recorded by one of the elected members / mayor to be played in school assemblies etc.
 - Advice notes are being prepared for schools, social workers, to give one page reminders on the following topics: supporting the education of pupils with medical conditions, children missing education, elective home education, flexi schooling, the use of penalty notices and register codes

Free School Meals

- 3.15 Schools are required to continue to provide food parcels for eligible families who are unable to attend if they are:
- are self-isolating
 - have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves
 - are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)
 - are not attending as a result of local lockdown arrangements.
- 3.16 The Council has negotiated with Robertson to organise food parcels for children in receipt of benefit-related Free School Meals meeting the above criteria.

Wellbeing in Schools

- 3.17 Student wellbeing: 'Wellbeing for Education Return' will better equip schools and colleges to promote children and young people's wellbeing, resilience, and recovery in response to COVID-19. As well as strengthening and building wellbeing and resilience, this aims to prevent the onset of mental health problems and ensure those with pre-existing or emerging difficulties access the right support. Tameside has been allocated £35,462 by DfE and Department of Health and Social Care and a multi-agency plan is being developed to implement the scheme in the borough.

- 3.18 Staff wellbeing: headteachers have reported the introduction of a number of activities in school to support their staff wellbeing. This includes some schools setting up their own wellbeing champions and senior leaders holding confidential wellbeing discussions with staff on a one to one basis. The Council is committed to developing other packages of physical and mental wellbeing support for school-based staff, similar to those available to council based staff during the pandemic.
- 3.19 Headteacher wellbeing: the Council is concerned about headteacher wellbeing and has committed to making a package of support available to headteachers. The Scenario Planning Group have discussed this with key stakeholders and is responsible for agreeing the right support.

The Contain Framework

- 3.20 The Government has produced a framework that sets out how national and local partners will work with the public at a local level to prevent, contain and manage outbreaks. On 28 August 2020, the Government announced additional guidance on tiers of national restriction for education and childcare settings.
- 3.21 In local areas where restrictions have been implemented (from national direction), the Government anticipates that education and childcare will usually remain fully open to all.
- 3.22 There may be exceptional circumstances in which some level of restriction to education or childcare is required in a local area. In those situations, restrictions will be implemented in a phased manner. These 'tiers of restriction' will ensure that extensive limitations on education and childcare are a last resort, and that priority is given to vulnerable children and children of critical workers for education provision in all cases.
- 3.23 The tiers of restriction are as follows:
- 3.24 **Tier 1:** The default position for areas in national government intervention is that education and childcare settings will remain open. In education settings where pupils in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, where social distancing cannot easily be maintained.
- 3.25 **Tier 2:** Early years settings, primary schools and alternative provision (AP) providers, special schools and other specialist settings remain open. Secondary schools move to a rota model, combining on-site provision with remote education. They continue to allow full-time attendance on site to vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers. Further education (FE) providers should adopt similar principles with discretion to decide on a model that limits numbers on site but works for each individual setting.
- 3.26 School leaders, unions and Council colleagues have worked together to create a Tier 2 Contingency Plan for Schools (**Appendix 1**).
- 3.27 **Tier 3:** Childcare, nurseries, primary schools, AP, special schools and other specialist settings remain open. Secondary schools, FE colleges and other educational establishments would allow full-time on-site provision only to vulnerable children, the children of critical workers and selected year groups (to be identified by Department for Education). Other pupils should not attend on site. Remote education to be provided for all other pupils.
- 3.28 **Tier 4:** All nurseries, childminders, mainstream schools, colleges and other educational establishments allow full-time attendance on site only to our priority groups: vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. All other pupils should not attend on site. AP,

special schools and other specialist settings will allow for full-time on-site attendance of all pupils. Remote education to be provided for all other pupils.

3.29 Currently, schools nationally and in Tameside are Tier 1.

4. COVID RECOVERY: OTHER SERVICE CHALLENGES

The Access Services

- Maintaining attendance of cared for children in schools where possible and providing digital learning opportunities and equipment to access the curriculum if they are required to self-isolate
- Ensuring that all cared for children have an up to date PEP for this term and aim for 100% of children to have a PEP as last term.
- Implementing a new funding model for Early Years provision for this term. We will fund settings on the basis of participation for the Autumn 2020 Term, however if this is lower than Autumn 2019 overall participation for settings who are open and have continued to provide early years provision, we will fund at that Autumn 2019 position. This ensures that settings are being funded as a minimum at their overall participation levels at autumn 2019.
- Providing an effective service to increased numbers of parents who have elected to provide home education for their children. There have been 55 new notifications just in September 2020, the previous highest month over the last three years was 15 and an average of six per month. This is a surge in demand experienced across England.
- Maintaining an effective statutory school admissions service in light of staff leaving the service and unprecedented levels of applications for in year school transfers
- Responding to requests from schools to support with good attendance practices in light of the pandemic and self-isolation issues in schools whilst maintaining levels of traded service
- Maintaining a level of music tuition in schools in a safe and sensible manner.

4.1 Challenges for the service due to COVID in meeting the priorities:

- Only carrying out home visits when essential. This is a particular issue where parents are home educating as the service usually carries out a home visit within a short space of time of being notified of the intention to home educate. Each visit will be risk assessed and carried out virtually if possible and with parental consent.
- PEP meetings will be carried out virtually unless there are specific reasons for needing a face to face meeting and then only after a specific risk assessment has been completed.
- Scheduling a large number of home education home visits with a static staff team. Visits are unlikely to happen within usual timescales but will still be within statutory timescales.
- Music tutors will follow school risk assessments and where teaching in schools is not possible, tuition will be provided digitally.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Much collaboration and hard work has been undertaken by all in Tameside to ensure that schools have been open to their pupils in a safe and sensible way. The approach has always been inclusive and collaborative with some key pieces of work such as our “Back to School – Tameside Loves School” campaign held up as national good practice. The range of measures in place and guidance that has been assimilated has been significant and the new academic year will undoubtedly bring additional challenges. The approach taken so

far continues to stand the borough in good stead to meet ongoing challenges and disadvantage.

- 5.2 Headteacher wellbeing is an area for further support and this will be developed throughout the first half of the autumn in consultation with schools leaders.
- 5.3 Many children in Tameside will be particularly disadvantaged by the impact of COVID-19. Disadvantaged learners, in particular and those entering end of key stage 4 national exams. The Council must advocate for these children and their future life-chances.
- 5.4 There are additional challenges for education services working to deliver statutory and safeguarding services as well as traded services, such as Access Services and SEND Services.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 As set out at the front of the report.