**NASS Update (10.07.20)**

Dear colleagues,

We wanted to update you on a few bits and pieces. In some ways, it’s easier to start off with the things where we are still waiting for DfE to come back with a chapter and verse response:

1. Access to FSM and other additional funding for independent schools

2. Access to catch-up funding for all special schools - expected for academies, free schools and NMSS but not yet confirmed

3. Confirmation that LAs can’t withhold funding from September where placements are not offered in full. However, DfE did adapt funding guidance yesterday with stronger messages about the current position and with no indication of change from September: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care?utm_source=7e4c86f5-462d-4de5-9e95-09fa0caca828&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate> Keep quoting this for now if any LA suggests only paying for what is delivered.

4. Transport guidance - we expect to be asked to comment on a draft today

5. Testing for special schools - DfE is trying to make it possible for all children’s residential services to have access to routine testing for those without symptoms by September

For any of the items above, we have passed on the full extent of the information available to us. If we get updates on any of them, we will update you. If you haven’t heard from us, it means there is nothing further to add at this point!

Yesterday there were a couple of bits of guidance published that all schools ned to be aware of. There’s some clarifying guidance on teaching RHSE in all schools from September 2020 and the flexibility not to start teaching this until the Summer 2021 term: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education-faqs?utm_source=125e7fca-88a1-4c1c-900f-6c8d3c88c608&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate>

There has also been a minor refresh of behaviour and discipline guidance to include checklists for returning to school in September: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-and-discipline-in-schools?utm_source=41b495de-d732-4442-a2d1-6011f9d41d94&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate> This is actually somewhat more helpful and less draconian than I was expecting!

In the face of multiple surveys, I am now going to be partially responsible for adding another one to the mix! NASS is part of the National SEND Forum. The National SEND Forum (NSENDF) is a stakeholder group with representation from many of the leading organisations in the field. At a time when SEND provision is under the spotlight, we are looking to explore how provision is delivered and structured regionally and to explore the concept of 'Regional Centres of Expertise'.

The first step is to identify what already exists locally, regionally and nationally, by way of provision for children and young people (aged 0-25) who require the kind of specialist teaching and multi-professional support that is not always readily available in each locality. We believe that there is value in delivering some provision sub-regionally, regionally or even nationally and that there are already many great examples of this happening across the country. However, we also know we don't yet have a good enough sense of what is currently being delivered, or what gets in the way of expanding existing work. The more responses we get to this survey, the better position we will be in to start an informed debate with government about how best to support children and young people with 'low-incidence' or complex needs, their families and those who work with them. I think our members have a huge amount of expertise to signpost. I don’t want to put pressure on people to respond and we will keep the survey open for several months but you will have my huge gratitude if you can find time to fill it in. You can find the survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ST6PV8B>

Thanks to all of you who have attended one of our weekly ’Tea and Sympathy’ calls. It has been a real privilege to share this space with you and we have covered wide ranging topics - often with laughter and sometimes with tears! Next week will be the last scheduled weekly call for now. We have seen demand decrease as we have approached the end of term and we think it is right to pause over the summer. However, we are around over the summer and available for individual chats and to schedule another session at short notice if people want space to talk to others.

We wish you all a calm and peaceful weekend,

Claire, Kate, Jenny and Karen