

Update for foster carers – 23rd April 2020

I hope you and your families are all continuing to keep well and safe.

I am pleasantly surprised that we are in week four of the lockdown, which has passed remarkably quickly, only realising this last night when I thought it has been a while since I last drove my car! I am hearing very positive feedback from our fostering team managers as to how you have risen to the challenges faced with adapting to the current lockdown, which we now know will continue for at least a further three weeks.

I am hugely impressed with the resilience demonstrated by our staff and all our foster carers. I am grateful for your dedication, creativity and support you provide to our looked after children and young people.

Speech from Gavin Williamson Secretary of State for Education

On the 19th April, Gavin Williamson Secretary of State for Education gave an update on the response to the outbreak of coronavirus and support for disadvantaged pupils on remote learning, his speech can be found here; <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/gavin-williamson-speech-on-covid-19-response>

More detailed information will follow but good news, as for vulnerable people- schools, trusts and local authorities will be able to place online orders for devices for eligible pupils from Wednesday 22 April through a new DfE online portal.

Parents and pupils will not be able to order the devices themselves. Devices will be then loaned out to families. More details will follow, and I will update you accordingly.

Who is eligible to receive laptops and tablets?

Devices will be ordered for some disadvantaged children in England in the most vital stages of their education – disadvantaged pupils in year 10 (and sitting their GCSEs next year), those who receive support from a social worker and care leavers. These laptops and tablets are for families who do not already have access to one.

We have also published guidance on "[remote education during coronavirus](#)".

The following web-link may also be useful:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-technology-for-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Who is eligible to receive 4G routers?

4G routers will be available to disadvantaged secondary school pupils and care leavers to ensure they can access the internet – where those families do not already have mobile or broadband internet in the household.

Commons Education Committee has announced a Parliamentary Inquiry into the Effect of COVID-19 on Education and Children's Services

The Commons Education Committee has announced a Parliamentary Inquiry into the Effect of COVID-19 on Education and Children's Services. We have agreed that Nottingham Centre for Children, Young People and Families, based at Nottingham Trent University will respond on our behalf. Details of the Inquiry can be found here:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/work/202/the-impact-of-covid19-on-education-and-childrens-services/>

Available support

A reminder, that if your SSW is not in work, support is available through our duty arrangements and we have a duty team manager also available daily.

Fostering Fortnight - 11th - 24th May 2020

This year's fostering fortnight aims to celebrate the dedication of foster carers and the positive impact that they have on children's lives. We want to celebrate you, for all you do for our vulnerable children and would love to hear from you directly, and also via your supervising social workers, and can be emailed at our email address fostering@nottsc.gov.uk

We would like to hear your stories as to how you are coping with the children in your care and using the time at home to promote children's learning. Also, any new skills gained during this lockdown period and your time as a foster carer. It would be a pleasure to also see any drawings or painting that children are willing to share, some of which we can then share on our webpages and social media platforms.

Do make use of our foster carer website: <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/fanotts> for updates re; COVID-19 and where there is lots of good information and resources and our facebook page: <https://en-gb.facebook.com/fosternotts/>

Thank you for all you are doing and for your ongoing support to our looked after children and young people. I will keep you all updated of any changes to our working practices impacted by any further government guidance.

Ty Yousaf
Fostering Service Manager
23rd April 2020