

Weekly update and Duty Rota for the week beginning 13 April 2020

Dear all,

Please find attached the finalised Duty Rota for the week commencing 13th April 2020. Those of you on the rota will also receive your Critical Worker letter from Kirsten Dawson or Jean Rolfe before the end of today. You are to please keep the letter and your ID with you when you are working. For those of you requiring a letter because you are needing to undertake a visit to a family, please agree with your Team Manager and Head of Service and they will then notify Kirsten and Jean. The letter can be shown on your phone. If you are required to undertake a visit to a family, following agreement from your Team Manager and Head of Service, please first attend Perceval House where you will be supplied with appropriate Personal Protection Equipment. These are precautionary measures to ensure your safety and you are therefore not to undertake any visits without this equipment. You will be issued with PPE in line with PHE guidance. As I explained last week, the guidance on PPE is reviewed regularly and I have attached the updated guidance for social workers.

You will recall that I attached guidance in my email last week to assist with the unusual amount of time many of you are now working from home. I am attaching some further information today that adds to that and aids with how you might plan your day. A reminder too of the Daily Mindfulness Sessions being run by Dr Alicia Fairhurst and her colleagues – more important now than ever.

As you would expect, we have been thinking about how we support the work we do with our clients in such unusual times. Working with all of our vulnerable adolescents in the current climate will bring a range of challenges as we try to encourage them to stay indoors and follow government guidelines. You will recall that the information I sent out two weeks ago included our COVID19 Youth Engagement offer as part of our efforts to safeguard our vulnerable adolescents during this period. We have also been talking with partners about how we can continue to support our young people in terms of their sexual health. With that in mind, I am attaching information about service provision available for young people in Ealing during the crisis.

In order to continue to support our new approach to some of our work, we have made some changes to Child Protection visits. CP visits remain fortnightly however what constitutes a visit has changed. Video phone calls are now accepted as a visit and can be entered as such on the CP visit episode. A child subject to a Child Protection Plan needs to be physically seen every four weeks. When recording the visit on Mosaic, you will be asked whether the visit was successful and then a supplementary question as to the method of the visit (physical or video). The Child Protection visit episode has been changed to reflect the different way we are currently working. If you indicate that the child has been seen it will ask you whether the child was seen in a physical visit or a video call. It no longer asks whether the visit has been successful as this allowed for the confusing combination of a visit being successful but the child not being seen. The measure of a visit being successful should be that the child has been seen. The amended form clarifies this. These changes are for the duration of this crisis and our normal procedure for child protection visits will resume when restrictions to movement are lifted.

As we move into week 3 of lockdown, I want to celebrate the success of four of our social workers, who, despite these very unusual times, have successfully passed their ASYE this month. Huge congratulations to Thelma Udott, Lois King, Ana Velasquez Valero and Grace Ailenagbon. Very well done to all of you.

I also want to acknowledge Miranda Adjei who came out of her home on Friday evening to move a child into a foster placement for a different team, and Jessica Harrington, Natalie Granger, Laura Farningham and Shontelle Harries for doing a sterling job this week ensuring support and a placement for 2 very young children whose father is ill with the virus. Two (of many I am sure) wonderful examples of how you are coming together to ensure the best support possible for our families during such challenging times.

Finally, and most importantly I want to pay tribute to two of our foster carers who we have tragically lost over the course of this week; Abida Sanni, who died on Friday 3rd April following a very short battle with cancer, and Christopher Bartlett who died on Monday 6th April following a battle with COVID19.

Abida and her husband Fazal, have been foster carers for 12 years, moving from an IFA to begin fostering for Ealing in 2015. A warm and caring lady, Abida has had a passion for looking after children since she was very young and was a teaching assistant prior to becoming a foster carer. She and her husband fostered 9 children in their time with Ealing and 2 of our young people remain there long term. She will be sadly missed and our thoughts are with her husband and their 2 children.

Christopher Bartlett and his wife Vivien having been Ealing foster carers for 4 years, looking after 11 children in that time. Christopher was an intelligent, passionate, larger than life character who cared deeply about people – he was also a substance misuse counsellor and a pastor as well as a foster carer. Our condolences go to Vivien and their 2 daughters.

Before we are through this crisis many of us may sadly be touched by loss and grief. Now more so than ever it is important that we give each other the space, empathy and compassion that is needed through the range of feelings that this can bring. It can be tempting to want to make it better for our colleagues, to look on the 'bright side' or suggest a helpline or formal support. Whilst there may be a time and place for those, we shouldn't lose sight of what many of us are able to offer our distressed colleagues in terms of support and acknowledgment of their loss. We may find ourselves having to bear our own and others distress at times, both that of the families we support, and our colleagues. Please ensure you make use of all of the forums to which you have access to support each other; daily check-in's, supervision, catch-ups with trusted colleagues and access additional support as and when needed. Our clinical psychologist's will be sending out some resources around bereavement and loss next Tuesday and I remind you of the support offer already in place.

As we head into what looks to be a beautifully sunny Easter long weekend, please make sure you all get some rest. You are all working incredibly hard to look ensure your children, young people and families are getting the support they need to

navigate the COVID19 Crisis, so it is important that you take the time over this weekend to look after yourselves too.

For those of you on duty next week, I look forward to seeing you on Tuesday.

Kind regards
Carolyn

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