

## **An open Letter**

Dear Mr. Williamson,

The staff that work within PRUs and AP are dedicated to the work they do. We are here to help and support the country in exceptional circumstances. The majority of PRUs and APs had robust pandemic plans which are pupil and staff focussed. We understand the nuances of the children we work with and the communities we serve.

Unfortunately, the announcement yesterday was a broad brush approach which has taken attention away from meeting the needs of the children and wider issues, by insisting on an approach which puts staff and children at risks. Further, PRUsAP was not consulted or engaged with.

We are here, we are ready to help, we are ready to support. We have a range of strategies that can support the education system and wider society in challenging times.

However, we are writing to you with a range of concerns, these being;

- **Communication**

Announcements are being made without discussion, and without having a real understanding of the vulnerable young people that we serve. This means that we are not supporting the sector to make professional local decisions.

These announcements are coming at times which makes it difficult to plan for and are ambiguous in nature. The guidance is too grey and yet still does not allow for local decisions. There are attempts at shoring gaps in the wider system relating to social care in a sector which is already under resourced and funded.

- **Resources**

Many PRUs and AP are in accommodation which will not allow for two metres between young people and staff, increasing risks associated with infection control.

That we are providing food for our students but do not have access to our normal routes of provision. For example, many PRUs and AP may rely on online shopping but now find themselves without this route. We also do not have access to specific times at shopping centres, and even then restriction of food supplies to customers means we cannot buy the appropriate amount.

Many of the APs and PRUs that we have spoken to have informed us that social workers are not making home visits and are working from home, whilst PRUs and AP are then expected to do this.

Increased staffing ratios in AP and PRUs makes it even more difficult to be able to get the number of staff required to support these children. Whilst some Local Authorities have offered help, many of the children require significant support and time to develop relationships. We expect that many of our staff will be in a position where they have to self-isolate or become unwell which is going to have a fundamental impact on being able to resource this effectively.

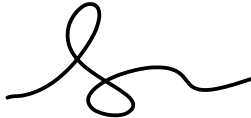
- **EHCPs**

Some PRUs and AP work with children that have an EHCP. We are concerned that some parents/carers with children that have EHCPs may initially decide to not send their children in, but then as things become more challenging in relation to isolation (and understandable so) that they will then ask schools to support with those children in attending. This will put on additional stresses on the system.

As an executive committee we would like our concerns above addressed and we ask for clarity around the following questions;

- Why did the guidance change and focus on PRUs and AP?
- Why wasn't the wider sector consulted?

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sarah Dove', with a stylized loop and a trailing line.

Sarah Dove MA NPQH FCCT

President of PRUsAP