# **Post-Covid Recovery Planning – Partnerships**

# **Education & Skills**

The crisis presented by Covid-19 and the consequent lockdown have had a huge and long-lasting impact across services. As a city, Brighton & Hove has been particularly economically affected, as the local economy relies heavily on tourism and retail, as well as a significant night-time economy. Visitor economy accounts for 15% of jobs in the city, and other sectors, like retail (a further 15% of jobs), also rely heavily on visitors spending money. Potentially long-term impacts are likely to be felt through the negative impact on Council budget capacity.

Brighton & Hove City Council could face as much as a £50million deficit. There will also be considerable cost in maintaining a Covid-secure environment. Services and projects will clearly have to be prioritised, and difficult decisions may need to be taken. It is unlikely that much new funding will be allocated to anything not already considered, and all current budgetary commitments will need to be reviewed. Moving forward, the Council will seek to collaborate with partners to achieve the best recovery possible for the city, within the constraints of the difficult financial legacy of the pandemic.

# Scenario Planning

With collaboration in mind, we recently sent out a request to partners and stakeholders to feed back to us. This involved identifying implications of the pandemic and lockdown on different sectors, and planning around different potential scenarios (a ‘smooth’ exit, and a ‘bumpy’ exit from lockdown – one involving further outbreaks/lockdowns). We sought to understand the issues faced, and the thoughts and ideas of partners in planning recovery actions. The overall aim was to establish a coherent approach to the city’s recovery; taking into account the expert knowledge of partners in different sectors.

Contributors;

BHASVIC

BHCC Children & Young People

University of Brighton

University of Sussex

Sussex Council of Training Providers (contributions from SCTP members via SCTP)

CXK

# **Education**

# What we know

* All examinations were cancelled, including GCSE , A Levels , SATs etc (although there has been a recent announcement that re-sits will be possible).
* Other countries lifted lockdown on schools in advance of other sectors, and usually on an incremental basis i.e. different year groups.
* Schools admissions appeals likely to result in pressure for BHCC – total 200 appeals were due to be conducted at the point of lockdown.

# Identified concerns

The draft COVID-19 Impact Assessment carried out for the Greater Brighton Economic Board (Hatch – June 2020), notes the following potential impacts on the Education sector;

* **FE Sector:** significant opportunity as many people who have lost jobs in retail and other hard-hit sectors look to retrain. Chance to develop online programmes with particular focus on coding and data analysis; two of the region’s strengths.
* **HE Sector**: numbers of international students are likely to be decreased for academic year 2020. Some fears that domestic places will also be lower (although take-up could increase due to reduction in available jobs, and education being an alternative).
* **Private institutions**: Private language schools and those that target international students are likely to be hit with related GVA spending also reduced.
* **Apprenticeships**: Risk that apprenticeship opportunities will reduce with some apprentices losing placements months from achieving qualifications.

# Ongoing issues for schools include;

* Continued social (physical) distancing leading to pressure on classroom teaching, safe drop-off and pick-up arrangements, and school playground provision.
* Vulnerable students may be less likely to access facilities without reassurance / support.
* Disruption to teacher training may lead to skills shortage / lack of newly qualified teachers.
* Potential for increased safeguarding concerns due to impact of lockdown on families.

# Education Endowment Foundation

A rapid evidence assessment by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) charity examining potential impact of school closures on the attainment gap, has [concluded](https://sctp.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d9773f8f7482d6d647bc582f4&id=12a7328d24&e=f752ba265f) that school closures are likely to reverse progress made to close the gap in the last decade, and that sustained support will be needed to help disadvantaged pupils catch up.

The median estimate in the studies reviewed indicates that the gap would widen by 36%. There is uncertainty at this point, but plausible estimates range from the gap widening from 11% to 75%.

Supporting effective remote learning will mitigate the extent to which the gap widens. Pupils can learn through remote teaching as long as the elements of effective teaching are present. Clear explanations, scaffolding and feedback is more important than how or when lessons or support are provided. To increase access to teaching, it would also be valuable to test the feasibility of online tuition as a way to supplement the support provided by teachers to disadvantaged children.

Sustained support will be needed to help disadvantaged pupils catch up It is highly likely that the gap will have widened when pupils return to school, even if the strongest possible mitigatory steps are put in place. Catch-up provision, including assessment of lost learning and targeted support, will be essential. However, it is unlikely that a single catch-up strategy will be sufficient to compensate for lost learning due to school closures. There is a risk that high levels of absence after schools formally reopen poses a particular risk for disadvantaged pupils.

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/REA_-_Impact_of_school_closures_on_the_attainment_gap_summary.pdf>

# Feedback from Partners

**BHASVIC**

Scenario, risk and planning documents have been completed; these are BHASVIC specific. Planning has involved;

* Phased re-opening over June and early July
* Slowly increasing the number of students and staff on site.
* Estimated maximum classroom capacity for social distancing is 600 students – around one third of usual capacity.
* Timetabling from September is being re-thought, with options to upgrade/downgrade the face-to-face time depending on current guidelines around distancing

A lot of the students travel there on public transport. There is concern this may stop people attending, due to apprehension about using public transport. BHASVIC are considering ways in which they could limit the need to use it (bunching the days students are needed on site rather than spreading over the week).

A lot of BHASVIC students who were planning to go to University are now thinking of deferring for a year. Impacts of this to the city are not yet known. BHASVIC are working closely with other FE providers both in the city and local counties to keep each other informed.

**University of Sussex / Brighton University / GBMet**

The Universities of Brighton and Sussex, and Greater Brighton Metropolitan College (GBMet), are the largest providers of adult tertiary education in Brighton and Hove.

* Together, the Universities and GBMet earned over £575m in income for the 2018-19 financial year.
* The Universities and GBMet together educated around 52,000 students in 2018-19.
* The vast majority of GBMet’s 15,000 students are from local homes and families in the city, East Sussex and West Sussex.
* 22% of the Universities’ students come from outside of the UK making higher education a significant export economy for the city.
* Over 40% of graduates are employed in East Sussex and West Sussex.
* The University of Brighton and GBMet are the largest providers of apprenticeship training in Brighton and Hove, together accounting for almost one in three of all participants in the area in 2018-19.
* • Combined, the Universities and GBMet employ 7,700 staff, equivalent to over 5,600 full-time employees.

As anchor institutions, there would be a negative ripple effect if the city’s tertiary education providers were no longer in a position to maintain the full breadth of current provision;

* **Rented accommodation:** many students rent accommodation in the City and provide significant sources of income for landlords.
* **Transport:** Students at the University are significant users of public transport, both buses and trains.
* **Skills for the Local Job Market**
* **Spending in Local Businesses**
* **The Night Time Economy**: Students support much of the night time economy, spending money in clubs, pubs, bars, and music and other venues.

As the city responds to the Covid-19 pandemic, its further and higher education providers are positioned to contribute to the city’s recovery. The Universities and college responded rapidly to the challenge, pivoting to online learning in a matter of weeks, whilst meeting civic responsibilities by deploying students to work and volunteer in frontline services in the city, through academic and research expertise, and by repurposing estates to meet urgent needs.

Impact of the pandemic on higher education;

* Universities across the UK expect a sharp drop in overseas student numbers in 2020-21 and subsequent years. The Office for Budgetary Responsibility concluded that education, and higher education in particular, will be most impacted with a 90% drop in GVA contribution to the economy.
* The majority of the Universities’ income relies on student tuition fees. If there is a major decline in students’ appetite to enter higher education, or to study in the United Kingdom, both universities will experience significant reductions in income.
* For Sussex, overseas students represent a significant percentage of the student population A substantial decrease in international students would present challenges to the University.
* Similarly, for Brighton, admissions data points to a lower number of acceptances by students who applied to study in 2020-21. At this stage, and without mitigating actions, the impact of Covid-19 on 2020-21 financial year could be a potential loss of income across a range of between £11m and £40m.
* The potential loss of international students would negatively impact the regional economy. It is estimated that visitors to international students in 2015/16 spent £1.8m in the region.
* Covid-19 has already had a significant effect on the finances of both Universities, eroding surpluses held through measures taken to safeguard staff and students during the pandemic. Waiving rents for students who have moved back home, buying equipment and technology to enable home working and remote teaching, and writing off income from our usual summer activities have cost in the region of £22m combined between the University of Brighton and University of Sussex.

**Sussex Council of Training Providers’ members**

## Apprenticeships

## The Department of Education have issued updated Covid-19 guidance for apprenticeships, providing information on which to prioritise for face-to-face training.

## The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IFATE) have put in place a flexibility that expedites the qualification process.

* The DfE are keeping their guidance under review, relating to salary support for furloughed employees, which also applies to apprentices.
* On 3rd June, the Prime Minister said that due to a high risk of young people losing jobs and being out of work for a long time, that they “should be guaranteed an apprenticeship”. Further details about what this might mean have yet to be published.
* Ofsted plan to review students’ and apprentices’ online FE experience, to identify areas of strength and potential for improvement. This will support post-16 providers re-visiting their online education strategies.

Education

Classes could move online, with some face to face or small group work. This would require training for staff and communication to prospective students. Investment in tech resources would be needed. Minimum standards and expectations of tutors and students would need to be clear, as well as grounding our new approach in evidence-based theory in order to realise a highly effective pedagogy. Changes to quality management processes would involve management and staff.

Risk assessments for sites need to be in place for any face-to-face work. This would incorporate room capacities and protocols for entrance and exit from building for staff and students. There would also need to be creation of a risk assessment for vulnerable individuals such as those shielding.

Funding is at risk for many providers, who may need to increase provision later in year. Government need to confirm funding contracts will be paid in full, irrespective of actual student numbers for20/21 to preserve infrastructure necessary to support retraining needs post Covid-19. B&HCC may wish to reconsider decision to bring all adult learning in house and use some of their funding to support local providers who are best placed to deliver certain courses.

Programmes for the unemployed may serve to mitigate impact of job loss. Liaison and cooperation with JobcentrePlus is needed to determine what provision needs to be invented or scaled. Teaching locations and equipment would need to be carefully considered. These courses should not be funded at the cost of other courses – it needs an expanded pot of funding.

The Youth Futures Foundation has published details of their current Youth Futures funding opportunities. In response to Covid-19 they have developed an emergency funding response and have significantly increased funding available for development grants (up to £150,000) and impact grants (up to £1.2m) to rapidly increase youth employment provision. They are launching an emergency levelling up youth fund to support young people from the hardest hit communities. The grants programme is for young people aged 14-24 to help overcome barriers to finding meaningful work. They are looking for approaches that can be tested, evaluated and, where proven to be effective, expanded to more young people.

**CXK (an organisation dedicated to transforming the lives of young people and adults across the South)**

Conflicting messaging and inconsistency across education and skills landscape could undermine progress. Clear guidelines, information and signposting to all areas of support is needed; clarity on what provision should be available. This could involve the production of a guide/website that provides easy access to young people and adults requiring support. Supportive messaging and reassurance that direct people to local solutions is needed.

There is likely to be a significant increase in numbers of furloughed, unemployed and disadvantaged adults. We should seek to establish a good understanding of numbers, locations, sectors and age groups. Educational establishments should agree a protocol for data sharing to ensure a targeted approach. Joint working group to identify the scale and nature of the problem could be useful to organiser an action plan and agreed protocols.

**Children and Young People – BHCC**

CYP have requested the following data sets to assist with their planning;

* Youth unemployment / NEET figures
* Apprenticeships being offered in the city – (nationally and locally there has been a big dip)
* Data around housing – whether housing options have been impacted by this, especially for younger adults / those coming out of care system

There is much discussion on sharing data across agencies in new ways now – with the caveats it has to be legal, appropriate and with consent where necessary, and requests to group data in new ways.

There is concern about the impact of insecure housing for young people. There was a concern as family finances are hit harder in the coming months and years, young adults in the household may be more at risk of homelessness – especially if youth unemployment rates rise.

# Possible Actions (from feedback from partners)

An overarching issue is that of confidence to travel. This links to air travel and local public transport. There is scope to carry out reassurance work that it is safe to travel on public transport, and safe to come to the city to study, due to Covid-secure measures.

INVOLVED: BHCC, all education providers, transport providers.

There is much discussion in central Government to indicate thought is being given to young people, and providing opportunities such as apprenticeships. There may be funding available to bolster local provision. Opportunities to access central Government funding should be taken wherever possible. To maximise this, risk assessments etc. need to be robust, and local providers need to be in a position to take up the funding and offer suitable provision.

INVOLED: Local providers, BHCC

Online classes may remain part of provision for some time. Training for staff and investment in tech may be required.

INVOLVED: Education providers, and local tech providers (to consider educational software).

Funding is at risk for may providers, who may need to increase provision later in year. B&HCC may wish to reconsider decision to bring all adult learning in house and use some of their funding to support local providers who are best placed to deliver certain courses. Adult learning provision should be reviewed.

INVOLVED: BHCC, local providers

Programmes for the unemployed may serve to mitigate impact of job loss. Liaison and cooperation with JobcentrePlus is needed to determine what provision needs to be invented or scaled. This should be assessed in collaboration with partners.

INVOLVED: JobcentrePlus, BHCC, local providers

Conflicting messaging and inconsistency across education and skills landscape could undermine progress. Clear guidelines, information and signposting to all areas of support could avoid inconsistency; clarity on what provision should be available. This could involve the production of a guide/website that provides easy access to young people and adults requiring support.

INVOLVED: BHCC, education, training, and skills providers.

We should seek to establish a good understanding of numbers, locations, sectors and age groups of unemployed and disadvantaged adults. Educational establishments should agree a protocol for data sharing to ensure a targeted approach. A joint working group to identify the scale and nature of the problem could be useful to organiser an action plan and agreed protocols.

INVOLVED: DWP, National Careers Service, BHCC

The Youth Futures Foundation has published details of their current Youth Futures funding opportunities. They are looking for approaches that can be tested, evaluated and, where proven to be effective, expanded to more young people. Partners could explore funding potential projects in the city.

INVOLVED: All partners