

CASE STUDY – Early learning in School Outbreak and Risk Assessment

In June, we faced our first outbreak in a grammar school. This preceded the release of the PHE-LA shared public health advice through an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) on how to manage an outbreak in an educational setting. With national guidance being flushed out and PHE and the DfE still working on the detailed management of exposure and positive cases in the educational settings, this outbreak provided us with a challenge, especially around who should be undertaking which part of the response and the tool(s) at our disposition to facilitate this process.

The initial risk assessment tool developed nationally was in its infancy and was deemed by the school to be inadequate in supporting them to fulfil the required assessment. We initiated an incident management team meeting (bearing in mind it was on a Friday) to support the local response, minimise the risk and support the school's and system's decision-making processes. It was important to ensure that the relevant 'school bubble' (emerging new term) was contacted over the weekend to prevent them arriving onto the school premises the following day. This incident was successfully managed by the school, PHE and the Council's pandemic response team.

The learning from dealing with our response helped shaped the final risk assessment of the East of England's PHE-LA MOU and a more effective process was agreed.