

Richmond Council statement on Coronavirus (COVID-19)

14th April 2020

Richmond Council's Director of Public Health, Shannon Katiyo, said:

News about the Coronavirus pandemic is dominating all the headlines. With schools closed and many people tuned into social media, it's no doubt that children and young people are also exposed to a relentless stream on the subject as well as the impacts.

The impact on children and young people is varied and children will be experiencing some of the issues that adults are also encountering. This may include a lack of mental stimulation, lack of physical activity, access to healthy food, social isolation and loneliness and in some cases, children may experience issues around neglect or abuse.

School closures will mean that children will not be seen daily by teachers or other people who play an important role in their lives. Equally, many children and young people who depend on the stability and relative safety of school are now at home. Finally, we know many families are being impacted by economic hardship, as a result of parents not being able to work, and the accompanied pressures and stresses that this brings.

There are some things that we can do to try and support children and young people through this time.

As a parent or carer, it's good to talk to your children honestly but calmly about what is happening, and to not ignore or shield them from what is going on in the world. Children look to us for comfort when they are distressed and will take a lead on how to view things from you. Some of the things you could do [include](#):

- Listen and acknowledge their concerns
- Provide clear information about the situation using age appropriate words and explanations
- Be aware of your own reactions
- Connect regularly and develop a routine
- Limit exposure to media and talk about what your children have seen and heard

Money worries

You may be worried about supporting your family if you have to stay home – this can have a big impact on your mental health. For guidance on what your rights are at

work, what benefits you are entitled and what further support is available please see our guidance for [employees](#) or advice from [citizens advice](#) or the [National Debt line](#).

For support as a parent or carer

Young Minds for Parents and Carers provides advice about mental health and behaviour problems in children and young people up to the age of 25. You can call the parents' and carers' helpline on 0808 802 5544. Please be aware Young Minds do not provide any direct psychological services and cannot make referrals to the NHS or Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS).

Helplines and websites for your child and or young person

If your child or young person would like to speak to someone anonymously, they could try calling a helpline or visiting websites such as [ChildLine](#) and [The Mix](#). [Shout](#) provides free, confidential support, 24/7 via text for anyone at crisis anytime, anywhere.

The Government website has a lot of information about [support that is available](#).

Young minds is a charity that also has a lot of [available guidance](#).

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[ChildLine](#) provides a confidential telephone counselling service for any child with a problem. It comforts, advises and protects.

[The Mix](#) provides a free confidential telephone helpline and online service that aims to find young people the best help, whatever the problem.

Remember – you and your family are not alone. If you need help – it is there.