



No Wrong Door partner circular.

11th June 2020

Issue No 10 during the Corona Virus lockdown

Now with 44 partner agencies signed up to a data sharing protocol and a collaborative way of working to support young people in Herefordshire

Well with the government telling us we are only at a mid-way stage in this epidemic and the schools still closed patience and self-control is having to come into play as we dig into a new normality of semi lockdown and a phase of partial opening up.

But what about all the school children that are still at home? The department of education has confirmed only 5% of children identified as vulnerable are attending school, the reasons for nonattendance are complex, however those already living marginalised and precarious lives and who are suffering and are likely to suffer the most. many of whom rely on state and/or charitable support to meet their basic needs.



As the overstretched safety nets of youth services, school, children's social care and charitable services shut down or struggle to maintain vital provision amid social distancing and with growing demand on diminishing resources, many vulnerable children are being left without the support they need to keep them safe.

My concern is that many vulnerable children will not be supported adequately or at all during this crisis and the gap between the haves and have nots will widen. Concerns now arise through to children being criminally and/or sexually exploited and where many children, home is not a place of stability and security this risk increases. New ways of working and a clear strategy is needed to respond to the anticipated spike in need from the aftermath of this crisis.

The big question is – How soon can we open our door to respond to the needs of Young People?

Issues and Concerns continued Page 3...

No Wrong Door Youth Reps Group

With the success of the groups work gathering the needs and issues of young people in Herefordshire and their presentation last week, the group would like to urge more young people between the ages of 15 to 25 to join the group especially those who can represent young people from the NWD partner groups or from a geographical perspective. Their aim is to gather the views and needs of young people and to represent them to influence change in policy and decision making.

Anyone interested then please contact me Will Edwards, contact details below.

No Wrong Door Partner Updates



The CLD Trust has been continuing to provide BACP accredited counselling in person to children and young people in Herefordshire throughout the lockdown via phone and video, supporting families with existing mental health needs and those cropping up as a result of the pandemic.

For some young people, this has worked really well and they have engaged happily and

found it just as useful as in person face-to-face. However, it's been interesting how many young people have asked to wait until they can come in and see a counsellor in person. We have accessed emergency funding to be able to meet the needs of all those choosing to defer as well as the spike in need that we anticipate after lockdown, especially from those we know have found lockdown a break from the anxieties of 'normal' life. In the next few weeks we will be resuming in-house counselling on a small scale so we can do so safely in terms of social distancing, and our Participation work through Strong Young Minds will resume too, although our SYM personal advisers have been busy throughout.

If you know of any young person needing mental health support, let them know that they can now get counselling by self-referring through the SYM website, as we know how tricky it can be to get to a GP for a referral. www.thesymproject.org;



IN2 programme is still open for business despite the current restrictions.

During the lockdown we are working with the young people on the programme on a one to one basis, mentoring via phone and email towards whatever the young person needs or wants. This could be that they want to find part time work, improve their confidence or just to keep busy doing something positive during the 'lockdown'. We also have an online learning platform with video and lesson resources on employability, health and wellbeing and improving confidence/coping mechanisms.

To give you an idea of how it's going, since lockdown in Herefordshire, we have managed to help 4 young people into work as 'key workers' and have set up 5 other young people onto external Level 2 courses ranging from Forklift truck driving to childcare all in and around Hereford, plus the others who are engaging with our online platform to keep up momentum towards their next steps after lockdown.

Please note the LANDAU Community Grants are still available! The application window for a community grant is getting smaller as the ability to apply closes in October. Several organisations in Herefordshire have already been successful. As a reminder, here is the important information for Community Grants.

- grants of between £5k - £20k are available
- there is a deadline for applications each month
- projects need to work with unemployed individuals 16 yrs and older
- applications close in October 2020 and
- all information can be found on www.landaugrants.co.uk



Solutions for Health: Gary Seaton – Sexual Health clinic is still delivering services and being very mindful of social distancing it is following strict guidance of what they can and cannot do with Urgent and Non-Urgent support. They are operating a triage service, waiting space inside is limited to 5 people at a time.

Important to note they are still providing a walk-in service for young people onto top of their Wednesday 2 – 4pm clinic. Young People can access any time during working hours, just buzzer the door. They have seen an increase in people access the service over the last 2 weeks now lockdown restrictions have been eased. They have however increased their capacity for people to ask for tests on-line.

Gary is keen to re-introduce the C card scheme for young people and would like to establish key delivery bases including at NWD. Training for practitioners would be provided.

A big concern is as there was after the last world war, there is likely to be a spike in STI's once the lockdown is opened up.



Leoni Linton: is now very keen to boost the content with a few more stories and poems from men and boys who have experienced mental ill-health or low mood. Leoni Gregson is keen to include local artwork ideally from people, male or female, who have had contact

with mental health support in some way. Has any of the young people that we work with, many we know are very creative and keen on art. Please contact Leoni at: FurtherBeyond <Further.beyond@outlook.com>



Clare Gilkes Schools Advisor: The DWP are now focussing very much on the Young People and how we can support them in these times moving back into work or training. They are just about to be launching a strategy which hopefully we can share with you soon. Some exciting things are being mentioned like 'Youth Hubs', so hopefully will know more soon.

I've attached an external link about how Covid 19 has effected the Young People.

<https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/young-workers-in-the-coronavirus-crisis/>

Good reading but a sad reflection on the current situation with added barriers our YP may face.

Unfortunately, our DWP systems don't support Yammer or Zoom, so to join in we only have Enhanced Skype or we can join into MS Teams by phone. Not sure if any of these platforms will be any good for us to join in. Although I am unable to join every group, we like representation from DWP to pick up and Network with other partners that support our YP as well. So, in the meantime the newsletters with the updates and contacts are great.

Surveys:

With essential services faces unprecedented challenges, it is vital that we get young people's views on what is working well, any issues and further information needed. Your feedback could really help services in the most effective way

Marches Counselling Services: Jnanamati Williams, Clinical Co-ordinator piloted a survey in February & March, with some small revisions this is now launched for circulation. They are asking for help to gauge the issues of the mental health needs of 18-30-year olds in the area. It's completely anonymous unless people are interested in helping with future consultations. We would be grateful if could forward this on to those who could help. The link to the survey is <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/BCPGHLX> About 50% of their clients have been able to adapt to working with their counsellors online. And we are still taking on new referrals. The lockdown has meant more time on the laptop & reviewing the work we do in light of changes brought about by CV-19 being long term.

Herefordshire.gov.uk

Deb Barnett Participation and Mentoring Officer has asked if we could please share the questionnaire link below with children and young people we are working with:

Worcestershire County Council, Worcestershire Children First, Herefordshire Council and Worcestershire Health & Care NHS Trust want to find out about your experiences of mental health and anxiety in children and young people during the Covid outbreak. The aim is to gather information that will help us to understand what worked well for children and young people and their families and to learn lessons and put measures in place to improve the mental health services for children and young adults in the future.

This questionnaire is aimed at children and young people and can also be filled in by parents and guardians on behalf of your child's experiences. Link: <https://wh1.snapsurveys.com/s.asp?k=158824230701>

Aftermath of COVID 19 - Concerns..

Online dangers: Staying at home means that for those children who do have access to it, many will be spending more time in the digital world, as learning, socialising and entertainment moves (even further) online. While internet access will be a lifeline for many, there are fears that excessive and/or unsupervised screen time could have a negative impact on mental health and expose children, who may not have the guidance or experience to safely navigate the web, to increased risks of child sexual exploitation, peer-on-peer abuse and youth-involved sexual imagery (or “sexting”).

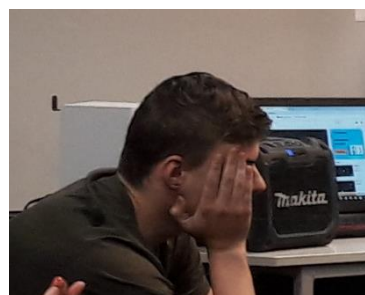


The National Crime Agency has warned that instances of child sexual abuse online could increase during the pandemic and has reported that offenders are already discussing opportunities over online chat forums to abuse children during the crisis

Abuse in the home There has already been a reported rise in domestic abuse incidents since the Coronavirus outbreak, and children risk becoming victims of or witnesses to violence in the home. Barnardo’s has warned that the risk to children living with domestic violence will increase as children and families face pressures of being confined at home, without external scrutiny or support. Those suffering familial child sexual abuse will face increased risk due to lockdown and the lack of contact with professionals at school or in the community; reporting by agencies is likely to reduce and there will be an increased reliance on reporting by the general public.

Mental and physical health: For vulnerable children already experiencing poor mental health, any number of risk factors – including, for example, fear and anxiety associated with coronavirus itself, and the pressures of isolation in homes that may be over-crowded and lack outdoor space – could have a severe impact on it, there will also be children who struggle with anxiety or who have poor mental health who may deteriorate during the crisis, and who may develop unidentified and unmet needs. Experts predict that cases of self-harm, eating disorders and suicide risk may increase.

Loosing Contact: We know that some vulnerable children who are not attending school, and/or continuing to engage with social care or support from other organisations, are “dropping off the radar” as some professionals and support workers struggle to maintain regular contact with them. Worse still, some are disappearing. Many vulnerable children attend groups and activities outside of school, including participating in sports and games. As these types of activities cannot move online, some face losing support, structure, and a safe space to socialise.



Impact on Jobs:

The coronavirus crisis is expected to hit workers hard, with evidence from previous crises indicating that the young are likely to be affected to a greater degree than most. Younger and older workers have experienced the brunt of the hit to jobs and pay, with the very youngest in the most challenging position. One-third of 18-24-year-old employees (excluding students) have lost jobs or been furloughed, compared to one-in-six prime-age adults, with these experiences also more common among employees in atypical jobs.

The Consequences: Vulnerable children of losing their support network could be severe. Lack of relational contact and care - critical for these children – as well as structure and supervision, could see more losing regular contact or going missing altogether, and potentially suffering intra-familial abuse in silence, and/or falling prey to criminal and/or sexual exploitation - for example, through involvement in gangs and county lines.

The risk of flight or becoming drawn into harmful and potentially criminal activities is a real concern, especially for older children. The change in behaviour of some vulnerable children due to the pressures on them and their parents and/or reduced protective factors, presenting further challenges for those working with them to provide the necessary support.

UK Youth report on the impact for young people “We are so worried for our young people. They are already a very marginalised and isolated group and now that has intensified greatly. Many exist in unhappy homes with little chance for escape or support. With the whole nation now being told to stay at home these young people are left trapped with the people they are desperate to escape from and even less able to be who they are.” -Mermaids charity.

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect the most vulnerable, the Government has put in place the biggest public health measures during peacetime. Without a doubt, whilst this has to be the priority, the impact this will have on young people is likely to be intense and long lasting, especially for the most vulnerable.

Feedback from the UK Youth Movement predicts that the impact on young people will include the following, ranked by order of importance (based on number of responses).

1. Increased mental health or wellbeing concerns
2. Increased loneliness and isolation
3. Lack of safe space – including not being able to access their youth club/ service and lack of safe spaces at home
4. Challenging family relationships
5. Lack of trusted relationships or someone to turn to
6. Increased social media or online pressure
7. Higher risk for engaging in gangs, substance misuse, carrying weapons or other harmful practices
8. Higher risk for sexual exploitation or grooming

<https://www.ukyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/UK-Youth-Covid-19-Impact-Report-External-Final-08.04.20.pdf>

Dealing with the aftermath: This is a time of increased risk and danger for many vulnerable children. When the crisis has subsided, the process of their reintegration into education and life post crisis will need careful attention. Some of those working with vulnerable children may not be aware of what they have been through during the pandemic, and the damage they may have experienced. Many vulnerable children may have difficult or potentially highly traumatic experiences to process, and may be suffering (for some, serious) deterioration in their mental and physical health.

“The likelihood if all of the above factors are taken into account is that organisations which work with vulnerable children are likely to see an increased demand when schools and services re-open. The provision of face to face support and outreach services will become crucial to help identify those children who have suffered harm and are in need of support. Organisations, as well as finding alternative solutions to offer support during the lock down, will also need to start to plan service delivery to respond to high levels of need when service delivery resumes.”

Julie Dugdale, Head of Business, Training and Consultancy, Barnardo’s

Challenges and opportunities:

Numerous challenges exist; however, so do opportunities, and now there is a vital necessity for schools, the statutory sector and organisations working with children to draw together in effective collaboration and partnership, and to share their resources, expertise and experience to ensure that vulnerable children are provided with appropriate support in the short, medium and longer-term.

Working together:

will become essential to ensure the neediest are supported.



With a planned step up and step-down process for children identified through community voluntary sectors to statutory agencies.

Meeting the needs of vulnerable children will require innovative approaches, effective collaboration and partnership, and refocussing (by some) of service provision. The resolve and dedication that will undoubtedly be required on the part of those who are in a position to be able to support them cannot be underestimated but we can all be greatly encouraged by the truly inspiring stories of resilience and determination which have emerged throughout this crisis.

Ref farrer.co.uk/news-and-insights/coronavirus-safeguarding-vulnerable-children/

The Children's Society welcome the coming together of politicians, professionals and communities to do everything it takes to respond to this crisis. The measures announced by the Treasury last week, to protect jobs and those facing financial insecurity through the course of the pandemic, are also a major step in the right direction. However, we know that there is much more to be done in coming weeks and months

“This is a critical time for the youth sector and particularly those who receive no core funding. If organisations close, it will be incredibly hard to pick up the pieces and vulnerable young people will not get the support they need and deserve. For those who have suffered trauma in their lives this could cause further trauma and lead them further into mental ill health, physical ill health and reduced life outcomes. The repercussions of this crisis are unthinkable. Supporting charities and the youth sector to stay afloat means that skilled workers, with existing trusted relationships, can support them to gain a level of understanding of the situation and mitigate some of the likely outcomes.” - UK Youth Movement member

This crisis has had huge impacted on both our professional and private lives and in a very complex and amalgamated way. There is now time for reflection to look at so many values and beliefs, my hope is that people will understand the huge opportunity we have for making real positive change.

With greater understanding, respect and positive working together we can achieve great things.

Kind regards, Keep safe and Well

Will

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