

WELLBEING & SUPPORT DURING COVID-19

Primary Schools



Created by Ealing Mental Health Support Team
Adapted by Hounslow Mental Health Support Team

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Accessing the links

In this booklet there are a range of different resources on each page. There are blue links that are underlined as well as coloured boxes that say 'go to resource'. Depending on what device you have you can click on the link, and it will either take you to a webpage or automatically download a pdf file. On some computers you will have to hover over the link and click **Ctrl** and the link.

Any issues with the resources

There is a great deal of information out there regarding COVID-19 and wellbeing. We have included in this booklet what we consider to be the best resources that have been made by other services or organisations. We apologise if you come across any issues with using the resources or any errors within them, however since we did not make them we could not make any changes. Please feel free to contact the relevant organisation with any comments about individual resources.

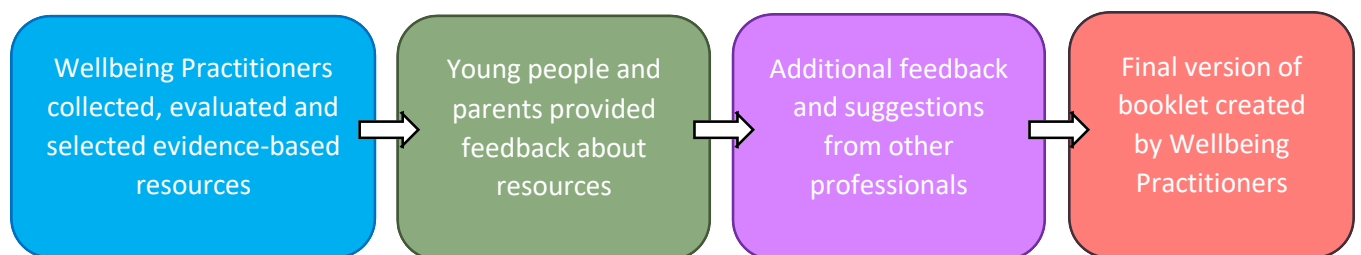
Introduction

This booklet was originally created in April 2020 by the Ealing Mental Health Support Team (MHST) in response to the current Covid-19 situation, and has been adapted for families living in Hounslow. Hounslow MHST is a new service designed to support the wellbeing of children and young people in education settings, aiming to provide evidence-based support at the earliest signs of difficulties and promote life-long positive mental health.

In the current pandemic our usual 'normal' life has been disrupted and we all find we need to adapt - as we are doing this we will all experience a range of feelings. Children and adults alike might feel bored, frustrated, lonely, low, worried or experience a multitude of other emotions. It is important to remember that it is OK to feel this way and everyone reacts differently.

This booklet includes evidence-based resources for parents and carers to support their children during the current situation while also making sure that they are taking care of their own wellbeing. The booklet was created with the help of young people and parents in Ealing, who provided valuable feedback on which resources are most useful to them.

This is how helpful, evidence-based resources were included in the booklet:



A range of further support services are listed at the end of this booklet. We hope you will find some helpful resources on the pages that follow.

Hounslow Mental Health Support Team

Top tips to support your wellbeing

Exercise

Physical activity has a huge potential to enhance our wellbeing. Even a short brisk walk can increase our mental alertness, energy and positive mood. Participation in regular physical activity can also increase self-esteem, and reduce stress and anxiety.



Find out more: [How to use exercise](#)
[Home work outs](#)
[Yoga](#)

Diet

What we eat and drink affects our physical and mental health. Having a balanced diet can have a positive impact on your energy levels, it can also help you to think more clearly and improve your mood and overall wellbeing.



Find out more: [What a healthy balanced diet looks like](#)
[Tips on healthy food swaps](#)

Sleep

It is important to develop and stick to a healthy sleep routine - even during this time when we have been asked to stay at home as much as possible. Good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how we feel mentally and physically. For example, it helps us cope with any worries surrounding the coronavirus and boosts our immune system's ability to fight infections.



Find out more: [Top tips for better sleep](#)
[Maintaining good sleep during the coronavirus pandemic](#)
[Sleep tips for young people](#)

Stay connected

Maintaining healthy relationships with people you trust is important for your mental wellbeing. Think about how you can stay in touch with friends and family while you are all staying at home – by phone, messaging, video calls or social media – whether it's people you usually see often, or connecting with old friends.



Find out more: [10 apps to stay in touch](#)

Routine



Think about how you can adapt and create new routines that will help to keep you grounded during times of uncertainty. Try to keep as much of your usual routine as possible, for example you can wake up and get ready at the same time, structure work/study time and meaningful activities into your day.

Find out more: [Organise your day](#)
[Working from home](#)

Limit media coverage



Constant exposure to news about the outbreak can make us feel overwhelmed, stressed and anxious. Try to limit the amount of time you spend reading, watching or listening to news coverage to one or two times a day.

Make sure you use trustworthy sources, such as [gov.uk](#) and the [NHS website](#).

Relaxation and mindfulness



School closures and self-isolation and other factors you might have going on at home can lead to stress and anxiety. Relaxation techniques such as deep breathing and meditation can really help your wellbeing. If you are able to practice these regularly then you will feel the greatest benefits, so see if you can set aside even a little time every day.

Find out more: [Relaxation Techniques](#)
[What is mindfulness?](#)
[Mindful Breathing Exercise](#)

Looking for positives



In these scary and uncertain times, it is important to continue to stay positive. One way you can stay positive is to keep a gratitude journal, where every day you write down one or two things you are grateful for that day (no matter how small). You could use social media to follow accounts dedicated to spreading positive stories. You could consider with your family how you can help the people in your community, as helping others can be good for our own mental health and wellbeing.

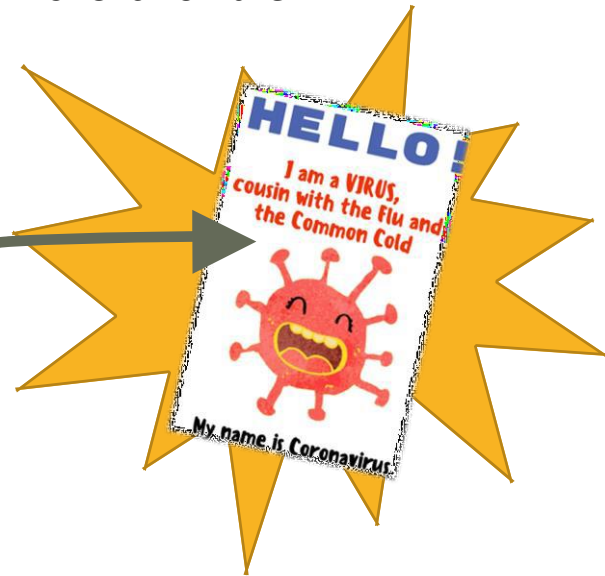
Find out more: [The Happy Newspaper](#)
[Hope in a time of crisis](#)
[Coronavirus: How to help safely](#)

Explaining Coronavirus to primary aged children

Below are links to different stories which can be read with children explaining the Coronavirus in child friendly terms. Click on the pictures

[Story for under 7s](#) (this story is available in many different languages)

Click on image



[Story for over 7s](#)

Click on image

[Time Capsule](#)

A nice idea is to make a time capsule with your child regarding the Coronavirus. Below is a resource suggested by a fellow parent.

Click on image



How to talk to primary aged children about Coronavirus

Below are pages from the World Health Organisation giving some tips on how to talk about Coronavirus with children.





Helping children cope with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak



Children may respond to stress in different ways such as being more clingy, anxious, withdrawing, angry or agitated, bedwetting etc.

Respond to your child's reactions in a supportive way, listen to their concerns and give them extra love and attention.

Children need adults' love and attention during difficult times. Give them extra time and attention.

Remember to listen to your children, speak kindly and reassure them.

If possible, make opportunities for the child to play and relax.



Try and keep children close to their parents and family and avoid separating children and their caregivers to the extent possible. If separation occurs (e.g. hospitalization) ensure regular contact (e.g. via phone) and re-assurance.

Keep to regular routines and schedules as much as possible, or help create new ones in a new environment, including school/learning as well as time for safely playing and relaxing.



Provide facts about what has happened, explain what is going on now and give them clear information about how to reduce their risk of being infected by the disease in words that they can understand depending on their age.

This also includes providing information about what could happen in a re-assuring way (e.g. a family member and/or the child may start not feeling well and may have to go to the hospital for some time so doctors can help them feel better).

Below is a resource from University of Reading and University of Oxford which gives advice for parents, carers and people who work with children and young people.

It also gives useful;

- [Websites for both adults and children](#)
- [Tips about learning from home](#)
- [Self-isolation activities](#)
- [Tips about managing anxieties](#)
- [Resources for children with specific needs](#)

https://www.healthwatchslough.co.uk/sites/healthwatchslough.co.uk/files/COVID19_advice-for-parents-and-carers_20.3_%20%282%29.pdf

Cruse also offer the following advice:

Children and young people will be hugely affected by what is going on around them at this difficult time. Their lives are changing and they will have picked up worries and fears about the virus and the possibility that they or someone they love and depend on may get ill. They may be particularly worried that grandparents, older relatives and family members with health conditions or disabilities might die. They will also pick up on other worries parents and carers may have about the situation.

It is normal for tempers to fray when families are thrown together for long periods, sometimes in close quarters. As schools close this will put even more in this situation.

How you can help:

Talk honestly with your children about both facts and emotions. Ask what they know – they may be getting information which is incorrect or distorted from friends or social media. With a younger child you may need to give information in small chunks. Talking about the situation and about the possibility of death and dying is an ongoing conversation. It's OK to let them know if you don't know the answers to some of their questions.

Don't make promises ('Grandma will be fine') but reassure them that they are loved and supported. Let them know about any plans for what might happen if one of the family gets ill. For more information:

<https://www.cruse.org.uk/coronavirus/children-and-young-people>

Keeping home life healthy

Below is some advice from Sheffield's NHS Children's Trust about keeping a healthy mind during COVID-19.

Healthy Minds

Sheffield Children's NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

Healthy Minds Covid-19 advice


Structure

Try to maintain routines as much as possible. If you find yourself at home more than usual then try and imitate a structure similar to your child's usual day (get up, get dressed, do work in a specific place, have lunch at a similar time). Write it down put it on display.


If you aren't happy with your current routine, this might be a chance to do things differently.

Be mindful of how you engage with news. Rather than constantly checking, get updates at one or two points in the day. Avoid constant news feeds. Monitor the effect that news has on your mood and worry. Remember that news creates a focusing illusion and there are a huge number of positive stories out there that are not reported.

Think about how to replace the things you normally do with 'socially distancing' equivalents.



Attunement



Talk to children in an age-appropriate way. Give clear and simple messages and expect to repeat these when children ask again.

Identify and name the difficulty that uncertainty brings. Acknowledge and normalise concerns and worry.

Respond in an open and supportive way; children are likely to need extra love and attention during this time.


Emotional regulation

Children are sensitive to emotion and will often reflect the emotions of adults—have calm conversations and be mindful of your own stress levels.

Do things that help relax. Be aware of your breathing and bodily tension; use deep breathing and muscle relaxation to help lower stress. Change your focus and immerse yourself in a favourite activity.

Maintain healthy sleep patterns. Keep up exercise in your day and try to get outdoors, in line with local guidance about social contact.

Stay connected to people—use technology to help stay in touch with friends and family.



Below are some tips from Save the Children on how to help children cope with extended school closures.

For more information: www.savethechildren.org/coronavirus

6 TIPS YOU CAN TRUST

How to help kids cope with extended school closures

You're not alone. As the world's leading expert on childhood, we're providing parents, schools and communities with trusted resources about coronavirus (COVID-19) and the children we know and love. Here's top tips on helping prevent learning loss by making the most of children's time at home from school.

- 1 Set the stage.** Give children age-appropriate information, so they know what's happening and how it will affect them.
- 2 Stay on schedule.** Keeping wake time, bedtime and meal time consistent helps children maintain their daily rhythm and comforting routines.
- 3 Co-create plans.** Give children a sense of control by involving them in daily decision-making, like choosing an activity or what they'd like for lunch.
- 4 Get moving.** Counter inactivity by incorporating movement and physical exercise into your at-home time – designate outside time or have a dance party in the living room!
- 5 Eat well.** Spending a lot of time at home can lead to boredom and unhealthy eating habits, so pay attention to food quality and involve kids in healthy snack and meal preparation.
- 6 Prioritize learning.** Did you know you are your child's first and best teacher? Use school resources, books and educational websites and apps. Get creative by turning everyday moments into brain-building opportunities. Most importantly, have fun learning together!

savethechildren.org/coronavirus



Sheffield Children NHS Trust has a large amount of resources aimed at supporting children and their families during Coronavirus.

[Self-Care Kit](#)

This resource (found on the above link) speaks about self-care during the Coronavirus for you and your child and offers activity ideas, relaxation activities, work sheets, colouring sheets etc. This was created by Dr Kathryn Holden, Principal Clinical Psychologist at Sheffield Children's Hospital.

[Sleep Hygiene](#)

Below is a visual document which speaks about keeping good sleep hygiene. Aspects of this may be useful to show a child as there are some good worksheets for children. Some pages may not be relevant as they speak about reducing nicotine and alcohol intake.

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/133724_6942228618894d6bb067b537732e0448.pdf



Parents mental health during Coronavirus

The World Health Organisation have put together some helpful information for parents during the Coronavirus:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/healthy-parenting>

Place2Be have also put some information together on how to look after your family's mental health whilst staying at home:

<https://www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/2020/march/coronavirus-advice-for-families-staying-at-home/>

If you feel that you may need help from Psychological Services during this difficult period, you can find what services are available in your area here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-psychological-therapies-service/find-your-gp> (you will need to enter your GP to view available services)

Below is a poster on how to “survive” isolation from Sheffield Children’s NHS Trust

COVID-19: Surviving Isolation

Sheffield Children’s **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

This information is for anyone who is currently self-isolating due to the Coronavirus. We understand that staying at home in what can be tight spaces can be challenging for all families. This page gives some tips and information to help us all make the experience as rich and peaceful as it can be.

Nutrition: Do your best to eat well with a healthy diet and regular meals. Getting the exact food that we want can be a challenge, if this is the case, why not try a new recipe or meal with what is available?

Routine / Structure: Maintain as much of a routine as possible. If two parents are at home, split tasks and ensure you have breaks in-between you. If this isn’t possible throughout the day then plan in some “down time” where you can spend time doing something peaceful.

Fun in normality: Remember to keep things as normal as possible and try to add in opportunities for fun and laughter together.

Communication is key: Be truthful but age appropriate about the current situation. Invite questions where you are able to (possibly set a time aside each day for this). Make a plan between parents about what to say, how to say things, and who will say it. If appropriate involve older children too.

Connection: Encourage connection in whatever way you can with people who aren’t at home with you. Include peer messages, pen pals, Whatsapp etc

Filter: Consider what feels like too much in the news / social media and oversee your child’s contact where you can so that messages remain supportive and not unhelpful.

Space: Be mindful of giving each other space. Do things separately. Encourage respect for space emotionally and physically when needed. Children might enjoy making a quiet zone in their room to retreat to—adults might enjoy the same!

Fresh air / Nature: Go outside and use what space you can to safely get some perspective. Look at nature, open windows and go on walks when possible

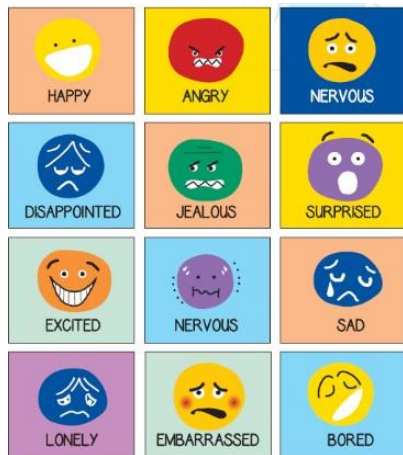
Pace: Slow down, switch off and make the most of having less demands on the family

Parenting: Remember what you know...pick your battles, soothe and comfort, talk about feelings and normalise big feelings / reactions. Manage screen time, consider others, keep boundaries, support each other.

Find Projects: Set tasks, build a garden / plant seeds, set challenges, learn new skills, try something creative, cook together. Set future hopes and goals. Map it, draw it and display it.



Helpful Resources

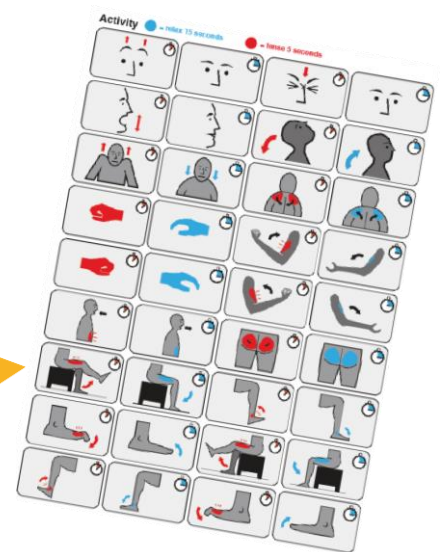


Partnership for Children have created some Feelings Activities that you may find helpful to work through with a child. It includes a feelings chart and worksheets.



Visual Progressive Muscle Relaxation – a relaxation activity to try for both adults and children

Written by Michael Safranek and Illustrated by Mark Bennett



School Timetable to print and fill in whilst at home to keep a structure to the day

There are many child-friendly school timetables on Google images which you can print off and put up in your home. There are a few examples below.

If you do not have a printer, it can be a nice activity to create a timetable with your child



Additional Information for children with SEND

Social Stories

A Social Story is a social learning tool that supports the meaningful exchange of information between parents/carers or professionals and children with SEND. They provide concrete, visual cues that are more digestible for children who find it difficult to conceptualize an image when given written or verbal explanations of what to do or what to expect. They were designed for children with autism but can also be useful for children with sensory needs or literacy, attention/behavioural difficulties.

They can serve to:

- reduce anxiety before or during new activity/routine
- clearly communicate what the expectations are
- help the child understand what is coming soon or what is happening now
- increase overall independence and reduce inappropriate behaviours

Below are some links to social stories that can be used to help explain the coronavirus and related situations.

Younger Children

[Coronavirus Booklet](#) *

[What is Coronavirus?](#)

[I Miss My Friends and Family](#)

Older Children

[Coronavirus](#)

[Coronavirus Comics](#)

[Coping During the Pandemic Interactive Guide](#)

* = *document most helpful when printed*

Activities, Ideas and Tips for Self-Isolating with SEND

All children and young adults require support from caregivers during times of stress and uncertainty, such as those we are facing now with the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). Children and young people with SEND may face additional challenges related to comprehension, communication, difficulty understanding abstract language, an insistence on sameness, and a greater likelihood of anxiety - all of which may be exacerbated during this stressful period. (UNC Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute Autism Team)

Self-Isolation Activities and Tips

[Online Interactive Coronavirus Learning Guide](#)

[Home School Routine Toolkit](#) *

[Sensory Self-Isolation Activities](#)

[Printable Visual Time Capsule Workbook](#) *

[Hand Washing for Sensory Needs](#)



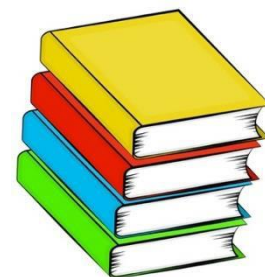
Self-Isolation Handbooks

[Supporting Neurodiverse Children - Video](#)

[Supporting Individuals with ASD Through Coronavirus](#) *

[Supporting Children with LD/ASD](#)

[BBC Bitesize Parent's Toolkit](#)



* = document most helpful when printed

Additional Information on Bereavement

Due to the global coronavirus pandemic many families will face bereavement, often under very difficult circumstances. Families may also be cut off from members of their usual support network making them unable to grieve in the usual way. As a result, we have collated some resources to support families who have to face grief and bereavement in these challenging times.

Websites for Parents/Carers

[Grief Encounter](#)

[Winston's Wish](#)

[Cruse Bereavement](#)



Videos for Parents/Carers

[Supporting children through difficult times](#)

[When you can't visit someone who is ill](#)

[Supporting bereaved children](#)

[Supporting a bereaved child with ASD](#)



Websites for Young People

[Help 2 Make Sense](#)

[Hope Again](#)



Where can I find further support?

General support services

Age UK - <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/>

Information on coronavirus, including updates on how you can look after yourself and loved ones, comments from Age UK, and ways you can support older people.

- » Call 0800 678 1602 (available 8am-7pm, every day)

Anxiety UK - <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/>

Information, resources and support for helping you understand how to deal with your anxiety during these difficult times.

- » Call 03444 775774 (available 9:30am-10pm Monday-Friday, 10am-8pm weekends)

BEAT - <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/>

Beat is the UK's eating disorder charity. We exist to end the pain and suffering caused by eating disorders.

- » Call 0808 801 0677 (available 12pm-8m every day, 4pm-8pm weekends)

Childline - <https://www.childline.org.uk/>

A free and confidential support service for children. Childline is here to help anyone under 19 in the UK with any issue they're going through.

- » Call 0800 1111 (available 9am – midnight, every day)
- » Chat online to a counsellor (available 9am – midnight, every day)

Frank - www.talktofrank.com

Confidential advice and information about drugs.

- » Call 0300 123 6600 (available 24 hours a day, every day)
- » Text 82111 with a question
- » Chat online (available 2pm-6pm, every day)

Good Thinking - <https://www.good-thinking.uk/>

A free, NHS-supported service to support individuals in managing their own mental health and building resilience so they can perform at their best.

Kooth - www.kooth.com

Free, safe and anonymous online counselling for young people.

- » Chat online to a trained counsellor (until 10pm, every day)

MIND - <https://www.mind.org.uk/>

Call, text or email for signposting to mental health support in your area.

- » Call 0300 123 3393
- » Text 86464
- » Email info@mind.org.uk

The Mix - www.themix.org.uk

Online guide to life for 16-25 year-olds in the UK. Emotional support is available 24 hours a day. On the website, you can chat about anything you like on their moderated discussion boards and live chat room.

- » Call 0808 8080 4994 (4pm-11pm, every day)
- » Chat online to trained supporter (4pm-11pm, every day)
- » Crisis messenger text service (24 hours a day, every day)

NSPCC – <https://www.nspcc.org.uk>

The NSPCC is the UK's leading children's charity, preventing abuse and helping those affected to recover

- » Call 0808 800 5000
- » Email help@nspcc.org.uk
- » If you would like support about **online safety**, go to:
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/talking-child-online-safety/>

Refuge (National Domestic Abuse Helpline) - <https://www.refuge.org.uk/>

The National Domestic Abuse Helpline is a freephone 24-hour helpline which provides advice and support to women and can refer them to emergency accommodation.

- » Call 0808 200 0247

PAPYRUS (Suicide Prevention Charity) - www.papyrus-uk.org

Confidential help and advice to young people and anyone worried about a young person.

- » Call 0800 068 4141 (10am-10pm Monday-Friday, 2pm-10pm weekends)
- » Text 07786 209 697 (10am-10pm Monday-Friday, 2pm-10pm weekends)
- » Email pat@papyrus-uk.org

Samaritans - <https://www.samaritans.org/>

A 24-hour service offering confidential emotional support to anyone who is in crisis.

- » Call 116 123 (24 hours a day, every day)
- » Email jo@samaritans.org

Shout Crisis Textline - <https://www.giveusashout.org/>

Shout is the UK's first 24/7 text service, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. It's a place to go if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help.

- » Text Shout to 85258 (24 hours a day, every day)

Switchboard (LGBT+ helpline) - <https://switchboard.lgbt/>

A safe space for anyone to discuss anything, including sexuality, gender identity, sexual health and emotional wellbeing.

- » Call 0300 330 0630 (10am-10pm, every day)
- » Chat online
- » Email chris@switchboard.lgbt

Young Minds - www.youngminds.org.uk

Information for young people about emotions and mental health.

- » Young people - text 85258 (24 hours a day, every day)
- » Parents - call the parents helpline 0808 802 5544

Local support services

Hounslow Citizens Advice Bureau Service - <http://www.hounslowcabs.org.uk/>

The service provides free, advice and assistance in social welfare.

» Call 0300 330 1185

Hounslow Council - <https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/coronavirus>

You will find links that will take you to regularly updated pages with the latest council service information, and links to finding COVID-19 related support.

Hounslow Family Information Service - <https://fsd.hounslow.gov.uk/>

The Family Information Service offers an information and signposting service on aspects of family life for parents of children and young people aged 0-19.

» Call 020 8583 3470

» Email: fis@hounslow.gov.uk

Hounslow Families Service Directory – <https://fsd.hounslow.gov.uk/>

An online services directory and information resource for children, young people and families living in the London Borough of Hounslow.

For information about **Food Banks** in Hounslow:

<https://fsd.hounslow.gov.uk/kb5/hounslow/fsd/service.page?id=21cDAbSWacE>

Hounslow Hub – <http://www.hounslowhub.org.uk/>

Hounslow Hub brings together all of Hounslow's volunteering services and provides information on how to receive and give COVID-19 support.

Hounslow Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) –

<https://www.westlondon.nhs.uk/services/gp-information/cahms>

CAMHS offers assessment and treatment for children and young people under 18 years old who have emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties. A duty worker is available to discuss

Potential referrals:

» Call 020 8483 2050 (9am-5pm, Monday-Friday).

Young Hounslow – <https://fsd.hounslow.gov.uk/kb5/hounslow/fsd/>

Young Hounslow provides general and COVID-19 information for young people.

Hounslow Wellbeing Network - <https://www.wellbeing-network.org/>

The Hounslow Wellbeing Network provides a telephone and email service to adults feeling isolated and worried about the coronavirus.

» Email hello@wellbeing-network.org

» Call 07710 760687 (10 am–4 pm, Monday-Friday)

Hounslow services for SEND

Hounslow Local Offer - www.Hounslowlocaloffer.org.uk

Information on services and support for children and young people ages 0-25 with SEND.

Family Matters - <https://www.ruils.co.uk/services/family-matters/>

Family Matters is a project led by the charity, Rulis. Parent Support Workers provide practical support, advice and information to families caring for children and young people aged 0-25, with any disability or additional need.

» Email alkatripathi@ruils.co.uk

» Call 07376 354 638/ 020 8831 6083

SEND Information, Advice and Support (SENDIASS) Hounslow –

<https://fsd.hounslow.gov.uk/kb5/hounslow/fsd/advice.page?id=MS95wI7aoLU>

SENDIASS provide information, advice and support across all areas of SEN and Disability (0-25) for parents, and for young people aged 16 to 25.

» Call 020 8583 2607

» Email SENDIASS@hounslow.gov.uk

Hounslow.gov.uk – <https://fsd.hounslow.gov.uk/>

This website provides COVID-19 SEND information and provides resources for learning and physical disabilities.

Thank you to the young people, parents, NHS practitioners, teachers and members of Ealing Council who have provided valuable feedback, suggestions and additional resources to include in the booklets.



West London
NHS Trust

**Promoting hope
and wellbeing
together**