SUPPORT FOR PARENTS

There are lots of different ways you can get help if you are worried about yourself or your family:

Your baby

As well as the joy a new baby brings to a family, it can also bring many challenges. During lockdown, these challenges can feel even more overwhelming. See below for help and advice on the most common issues:

Crying: Babies cry for a variety of reasons, and tend to cry more between 2-8 weeks of age. Infant crying is normal, but it can be particularly upsetting or frustrating. For information and guidance on coping with crying, contact your midwife or health visitor or visit ICON at icon.org.

Safe sleep: The safest place for your baby to sleep is on their back in a cot or Moses basket in the same room as parents/carers for the first 6 months. For further information on safe sleep and coronavirus, visit The Lullaby Trust www.lullabytrust.org.uk or call 0808 802 6869.

Support for new mums: For information and advice and to connect with others mums, download the 'MUSH' app at letsmush.com.

Support for new dads: For essential information and advice on parenting, download the 'DadPad' app at thedadpad.co.uk.

If your baby or child is unwell

Children can still be seriously unwell from illnesses other than COVID-19. If you are concerned for your child, contact your GP or call NHS 111.

For information about common childhood illnesses and what to do if you are worried about your child, visit Wessex Healthier Together

Older children

Home schooling: If you are struggling with home schooling, StarLine is available to parents and carers of pupils from all schools nationwide. Free, confidential advice is available six days a week. Call 0330 313 9162 or visit www.starline.org.uk.

Mental health and Wellbeing: Young-Minds has lots of useful information and advice on how to support your child during the coronavirus pandemic. Visit youngminds.org.uk or call the Parents Helpline on 0808 802 5544.

If you are concerned about your child's mental health, speak to your child's GP or call NHS 111.

Challenging behaviour: Children may exhibit particularly challenging behaviour during lockdown. If you are worried or finding it difficult to cope contact Family Lives on 0808 800 2222 or visit www.familylives.org.uk.

For further advice see 'Domestic abuse support' on page 2.

Online safety: To keep your child(ren) safe online visit Thinkuknow at www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents.

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Private fostering

If you have made an arrangement for someone to after your child(ren) and they are not immediate family members, then you will need to inform your local Children's Services Department if:

- your child is under 16 (or 18, if disabled), and;
- the are for 28 days or more.

This is called a 'Private Fostering' arrangement. Children's Services role is to check that your child is safe, healthy and happy and can offer support, if needed, to both you and the private foster carers.

Call Children's Services on:

Hampshire: 0300 555 1384
IOW: 0300 300 0117
Southampton: 023 8083 3336
Portsmouth: 023 9268 8793

Domestic abuse support

Domestic abuse includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse in couple relationships or between family members. It can happen to anyone and more so while in lockdown, when tensions can run high.

Services continue to be available both for victims and perpetrators of abuse. For help see below:

Aurora New Dawn 24-hour domestic abuse COVID helpline: 02394 216816

Hampshire Domestic Abuse Service (Stop Domestic Abuse): 0330 0165112

Victim Care Service: 0808 1781641 (or 0808 1689111 for out of hours)

Hampton Trust (help for perpetrators): 02380 009898

In an emergency dial 999. If you are unable to speak - dial 999 and then enter 55. This will transfer your call for assistance without you having to speak.

Single parents

It can be tough being a single parent, and even more so during the lockdown, when usual support networks can be limited. For coronavirus updates and advice tailored to single parents, including co-parenting and child contact arrangements see:

Gingerbread: Single Parent Helpline on 0808 802 0925 or visit www.gingerbread.org.uk

CAFCASS: www.cafcass.gov.uk

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Mental health and wellbeing

It is more important than ever to look after your own wellbeing during this difficult time, so that you are able to look after your child(ren). Take time to rest, exercise and to keep in touch with friends and family. If you need extra support, there are a variety of organisations offering lots of useful resources on looking after yourself and your family:

Every Mind Matters: www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters

NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk or call 0808 800 5000

Barnardo's: www.barnardos.org.uk

Listening support: If you need someone to talk to, the Samaritans offer free 24 hour listening support. Contact them on 116 123 or visit www.samaritans.org.

If you would prefer to text, Shout offers free confidential 24/7 crisis text support. Text "SHOUT" to 85258 or visit www.giveusashout.org.

Urgent support: Contact your GP or NHS 111. In a life-threatening emergency, dial 999 and ask for an ambulance.

Finances

If you are struggling to pay your bills, rent or mortgage, it is important you speak directly with who you owe money too, as they may be able to help. For further advice and support call Citizens Advice on 03444 111 444 or visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk.

Citizens Advice can also help with work-related issues and provide information on benefits that you might be entitled too. If you are struggling to buy food, they can also provide details of food banks in your local area.

Coronavirus helpline for urgent assistance

If you are unable to rely on family and friends and need urgent help with essential food, household supplies and collection of medication, you can call your Local Authority coronavirus helpline for assistance:

Hampshire Helpline – Hantshelp4vulnerable: Tel: 0333 370 4000

IOW helpline: 01983 823 600

Southampton Community Hub helpline: 02380834800