

Mid-April 2020 Email Update

Dear Parents' Voice Supporter

How are you? Yes, we're not just being polite, we really want to know!

Parenting can be the hardest job any of us will ever do at the best of times, but the current Coronavirus situation brings a whole new level of challenges (parenting is also the most rewarding job most of us will do, but that's another story). We've been told we're all in this together - yes, we are, but our individual circumstances are all different. Some parents are working at home, others are going out to work because they *can't* work from home. Many are keyworkers and their children are still going to school or nursery; others are trying to provide school at home. Those with older children are unable to see them if they live away from the family home. Where parents have separated or divorced, decisions have to be made about whether children should visit the parent they are not living with most of the time. Adults may be worried about their own parents (and maybe supporting them with shopping etc) while children are missing their grandparents and friends. This is not an easy time for anyone!

So, having asked how you are my next question is, what can Parents' Voice do to help? We have no magic wands, but is there something which would help you now? Do you find the information we've been sharing useful? Please email us (info@parentsvoice.co.uk) and tell us how you are, what information is useful (or not) and what you'd like to see us do (if possible and practical).

We (Michele, Tracy and Sue) have talked about this and we have a few ideas already but we'd love to hear from you (if nothing else it will prove that some people are reading the emails!) :) Thank you for reading this and for any input or feedback you have - we appreciate it!

Without further ado, on to the main part of the email

You are welcome to share this email (or parts of it) with your friends or groups, but please mention that it came from [Parents' Voice](#) if you do, thanks.

- 1) Parents' Voice news
- 2) Coronavirus/Covid-19
- 3) Mental Health
- 4) Qualifications and careers
- 5) Young Children
- 6) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

1) Parents' Voice news

i) It's hard to keep up with the amount of potentially useful information coming out relating to Coronavirus/Covid-19. We are updating our site and as mentioned previously some of the external sites listed there are also updated, so you may want to check them regularly.

You can see the current list by visiting our [Useful Information page](#) and then scrolling down to click on the Coronavirus button or visit it directly with this link: <https://bit.ly/PBcovinfopest>.

If there's any information which you would particularly like (or something which you've found useful and think might be helpful for others), please contact us.

ii) We are preparing our Annual Report - please bear with us, we're all volunteers and at the moment reflecting on the past 12 months doesn't seem as important as dealing with the present! The good news is that in general terms we have continued to grow during the last year. The Coronavirus situation is affecting charities who are both providing services to people in need but also losing many of their usual opportunities to raise money. As you probably know, we're a nonprofit group; we do not attract regular funding and raise some money through small-scale efforts such as recycling ink cartridges (and Thank You to everyone who has sent their cartridges in for us). In the last couple of years we have been lucky enough to receive an anonymous financial donation and another anonymous donation of two pullup banners (and we are very grateful to both those anonymous donors, thank you). Everything we do is done at low-cost or, more usually, no-cost; in the current circumstances that seems to be an advantage! We are looking to the future to consider more activities and we welcome any suggestions you may have as well as any offers of help.

2) Coronavirus/Covid-19

New links to information since our last update will be on our website soon. These include:

[Digital safety and wellbeing kit](#), Children's Commissioner for England. It provides tips and guidance for parents and there is a safety guide to staying safe online for children/young people. Download both here: <https://bit.ly/CCEd1gsf>.

[Shielding advice for very high risk groups](#), Asthma UK.

[Covid-19 Resources for parents and carers](#), Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. This includes a poster with information about accessing help at this time (there is concern that people are avoiding hospitals when they need medical help because they do not want to put pressure on the NHS and/or want to avoid possible contact with anyone suffering Coronavirus).

[Parenting through Coronavirus](#), Institute of Health Visitors (includes things to do with your children while social distancing, plus lots of other links).

[In This Together](#), free downloadable audio book explaining Coronavirus

[Brainpop Coronavirus animation](#), explains Coronavirus to children/young people (American)

[Online educational resources](#), UK government site

[Art ideas during lockdown](#), Susan Birth (local artist)

3) Mental Health

This is a concern for many people while normal activities are restricted. The following are a few links to useful information:

<https://bit.ly/GOVmhcov>, Government advice on mental health and wellbeing

[Every Mind Matters](#), NHS

[Mental Wellbeing while at home](#), NHS

[Coronavirus Helpful Hub](#), Blurt Foundation

[Crisis Messenger service](#), Young Minds

[Kooth](#)

[What to do if you're anxious about Coronavirus](#), Young Minds

[Self-care for when the news is terrifying](#), Blurt Foundation

[Talking to your children about scary world news](#), Mental Health Foundation

4) Qualifications and careers

i) At the start of April Ofqual set out details of how students' GCSEs and A-Levels will be awarded this year (as the usual summer exams have been cancelled). You can read the basic information about this here: <https://bit.ly/GOVgcs3> with a later update here: <https://bit.ly/GOVv0ccov>. There is also guidance for parents/carers and students here: <https://bit.ly/GOVgcspar>.

ii) On 15th April Ofqual launched a short [consultation](#) about how to implement arrangements for awarding GCSE, AS and A Level grades. You can find the [consultation](#) here: <https://bit.ly/GOVqu4lcov>. It closes on 29th April.

iii) ASDAN has advised centres to postpone moderation until the next academic year where possible. You can find the latest information about this here: <https://bit.ly/ASDancov>.

iv) As mentioned in our last email, the Worcestershire Careers Helpline has been launched to help anyone aged 16 to 24 who's unsure what to do next in their education/work. The team of advisors can be contacted on 0300 666 3 666 or email them at [<careersworcs@worcestershire.gov.uk>](mailto:careersworcs@worcestershire.gov.uk). Find out more at <https://bit.ly/S4Wcar33r>.

5) Young Children

Being the parent of a baby or toddler during “lockdown” can be challenging. Babies can’t tell you what’s wrong (if anything) and toddlers may have a lot of energy - which can make things difficult if you can’t go out for too long, These links may be useful:

[Coronavirus and Pregnancy](#), Birth and Beyond, Best Beginnings

[Baby Buddy Crisis Messenger](#), Best Beginnings

[Preventing accidents](#), Child Accident Prevention Trust

[Coronavirus and pregnancy](#), short film with Dr Jo Mountfield, vice president of RCOG

[Baby Check App](#), Lullaby Trust

[Coronavirus tips \(& activities\) for families](#), Zero to Three

6) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

i) The SEND Information, Advice and Support Services (SENDIASS) in Herefordshire and Worcestershire have merged to create [SENDIASS Herefordshire and Worcestershire](#). The services remain the same but there’s a new [website](#) and the joint service has a new name on social media such as Twitter and Facebook. The office hours are 8.30am till 4pm and there are separate phone numbers for Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

You can find information about all this (plus links to lots of useful information) on the new website: <https://bit.ly/Send1assHW>.

ii) Worcestershire County Council’s SEND Local Offer site has SEND-specific information about Coronavirus: <https://bit.ly/WCCsendcov>.

iii) Some young people with SEND may be taking ASDAN qualifications - see the above section about how these have been affected.

That’s all for this update, thank you for reading it! Stay home and stay safe everyone.

You are welcome to share this email (or parts of it) with your friends or groups, but please mention that it came from [Parents' Voice](#) if you do, thanks.

Thank you for your continued support in 2020, we really do appreciate it :)

Sue and the Parents' Voice Committee

Parents' Voice - Worcestershire

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