

Peer Support Network round-up

20th June 2020

As lockdown measures are eased, families supporting loved-ones at home on the shielding list expressed some anxiety. Trying to comprehend what the 'new normal' should look like: some making the decision to continue isolating based on what's safest for them and their family.

In the same breath, in residential care settings, easing restrictions for the rest of society while keeping people with care and support needs locked down indefinitely is a growing concern. A move towards increased liberty of movement must be accompanied by ongoing person-centred risk assessments and Best Interest Meetings.

Peer Support survey – have your say

We are going to be pausing Peer Support Network meetings for a few weeks at this time of transition and change, taking time to reflect on the needs you have raised so far. We are awaiting announcements on several funding applications to support practical workshops and training. We hope to be in touch with further information very soon. In the meantime, we would like to hear from more families, individuals and support workers about your experience of lockdown and the challenges you are facing. We also want to know how you would like to engage with Peer Support Network events, workshops and opportunities going forward. This is especially important as our work increasingly becomes virtual and delivered online.

Please take the time to complete this short 3 minute survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PSNC19>

Below is a round-up of resources shared this week to support you:

UN Human Rights Statement on COVID-19 and the human rights of persons with disabilities

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25942&LangID=E>

Care Act Easement template letters

Following on from last week's Peer Support discussion regarding changes made to Adult Social Care packages during Covid-19, here are two useful template letters from VoiceAbility. Template letter 2 is to be used if you feel that actions have been taken by the Local Authority as if Care Act easements have been triggered when they shouldn't have been - so a change in care package, funding scaled back, hours of provision etc.

<https://www.voiceability.org/news/care-act-easements-template-letters>

ESCC have not triggered Care Act easements and we are looking to their website regularly for updates: <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/socialcare/providers/covid-19-asc/escc-updates/>

Infection Control Fund

Do you employ carers and PAs via Direct Payments of a Personal Health Budget? Are you buying more cleaning products and one-time use items like hand sanitiser and anti-bac wipes to protect you, your loved-one and care team? We want to hear from you.

The government announced a **£600m infection control fund** to combat Covid-19 in care homes. The allocation for East Sussex County Council is **£10,737,440 based on 8,332 registered care home beds in May 2020**. 75% of the initial funding received is to be passed straight to care homes within the local authority's geographical area. The remaining 25% must also be used for infection control measures, however local authorities are able to allocate based on need.

We have been asked to report back to East Sussex Country Council on those in need. Please contact esther@projectartworks.org

Grants to help disabled or seriously ill children during Coronavirus

Family Fund has received extra funding worth £10 million from the Department for Education to provide grants for families on low incomes raising disabled or seriously ill children in England this year. This emergency funding has been provided in response to the crisis presented by the coronavirus pandemic and will help more parents and carers to look after their children. Families can apply for grants to make their lives easier while implementing social distancing measures, including computers and tablets, outdoor play equipment and sensory toys. The grants are typically worth £400 to £500 per family, but vary depending on need.

<https://www.familyfund.org.uk/news/10-million-to-help-disabled-or-seriously-ill-children-in-england-during-coronavirus>

Public Inquiry: Unequal impact? Coronavirus, disability and access to services

The Women's and Equalities Committee are carrying out a public inquiry into the impact of Coronavirus and access to services, health care, mental health, social care and education. Share your views here: <https://committees.parliament.uk/call-for-evidence/168/unequal-impact-coronavirus-disability-and-access-to-services/>

The government announced that from 15th it will be compulsory to wear face coverings on public transport. Here are some resources to support you:

Coronavirus (COVID-19): People with severe learning disabilities and facemasks CBF information sheet

<https://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/learning-disability-assets/sldandppe.pdf>

Government guidance: How to wear and make a cloth face covering

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering>

Face covering exemption cards

Keep Safe have made some cut out cards for people to state why they may be exempt from wearing a face mask. These can be downloaded here: <https://www.keepsafe.org.uk/posters>

Help and Support services

Family Carer Support Service

Hft's Family Carer Support Service (FCSS) is a free national support service for parent carers and family carers who have a relative aged 16 or over with a learning disability, autism or both. Support is available to all family carers, whether or not their relative is supported by Hft.

<https://www.hft.org.uk/our-services/family-carer-support-service/contact-family-carer-support-service/>

Challenging Behaviour Foundation

The CBF continue to publish up-to-date guidance and template letters to support you and have helpline for family carers

<https://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/information/covid19information.html>