



Guidance for Volunteers

Home-Start support from a distance



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A message to our volunteers

These last few weeks have been incredibly challenging and testing for us all and we hope that you and your family are as well as can be during this time. We are reaching out to all of our Home-Start volunteers to offer our continued gratitude and thanks for all that you have done and continue to do for families in our community.

We are keen to support you through this transition and have developed guidance on supporting families from a distance.

As a Home-Start volunteer, you already know the power of good communication skills; the ability to listen and respond appropriately in a non-judgemental approach is the heart of what we do. Our volunteers are core at providing that support for families and they need us now more than ever.





Practical tips

When calling the family you support;

- During this transition period, your coordinator will have spoken to the family in advance of you calling them to ensure that they wish to continue their support from a distance.
- Liaise with your coordinator to agree a time, date and duration for the first call. This maybe speaking with the family over lunch time or having a more private discussion free from distraction of other family members and children such as the evening.
- Before making the first call, be mindful of your surroundings, try and have a space in your own home which is calm and without distraction so that you can focus your attention.
- When making the call, we ask that phone numbers between yourself and families are not exchanged.
 - **From a landline** dial 141 and then dial the number
 - **For an Android** device go to the *phone*, press the vertical 3 dots for a drop-down menu and select *settings*, select *supplementary services*, select *showing caller ID*, click *hide my number*
 - **For an Apple device** go to *settings*, select *phone*, select *show my caller ID*, slide the circle to the left to hide number and back to right (*green*) to show number
 - Please note that you cannot withheld a number when using text messaging or WhattsApp
- You and the family you are supporting may wish to ‘see’ each other when calling, in which case you could use the following technology for free which doesn’t require to share your number with them ; **Zoom** –It requires both parties to sign up for free online <https://zoom.us/> or download the app straight to your phone. You can have unlimited calls 1to1.
- Please be mindful that your tone of voice becomes even more important over the phone.





- Listen carefully, consider what is being said between the lines, safeguarding issues are often more difficult to pick up over the phone. If you are concerned about a family, please raise it with coordinator immediately.
- Do not divert the conversation away from what they are talking about, do not interrupt but give them clarification that you are listening
- Ask questions, take an interest in what they are saying
- If you are asked a question by the family and you do not know the answer, please admit this Advice is changing rapidly and it's okay to not know the most recent guidance. You can offer to look into it and get back to them with the correct information, and your coordinator can help you with this.
- At the end of each call, check you have the right date, time and duration for the next call. You or the family may feel that more regular communication is important during this time, which is fine, please inform your coordinator of this. You may also wish to make notes of a few key points of discussion, this can assist you with your next phone call and continue to complete your volunteer diary sheets.





How you can help families during this time

We understand that it is an unsettling time for everyone, especially so for the families we support who were already experiencing heightened pressures in their life. You may be feeling overwhelmed yourself and feeling like you are not sure how best to help them, and that's ok.

What is important is to encourage families to find ways to relax, stay well and find enjoyable moments in their days, without putting themselves at risk.

- Promote having some structure to their day with their family. You may wish to suggest using the 'day planner template' in this pack, it is not uncommon for parents to feel overwhelmed about how to keep their children occupied during this time, we have developed some activities in this pack you can share with them.
- Promote turning off the news, it may lower stress levels to have a break from it.
- Remind the family that a calm, happy environment is the most important during this time. We have included activities that can help achieve this in this pack, but there are lots of mindfulness activities available online that would also benefit parents and children.
- In order to understand whether the family is coping ok, you may wish to use the following questions as a prompt
 - How are you coping?
 - How are the children coping?
 - Do you have enough food?
 - How does it make you feel- the situation in general
 - Do you have enough supply of your regular medication and how are you planning on getting more?
 - Is there anything else we can assist you with?

Please note if the family requires any assistance with accessing food, toys, baby milk etc, please report back to your coordinator.

Please note if there are any disclosures about arguments with the family, or any other safeguarding concerns, please raise this on your diary sheet and with your coordinator.





Volunteer FAQs

Will my supervision continue?

It is important that you maintain communication with your coordinator during this time. You may wish to schedule some time aside with them to share any concerns, questions or ideas you may have. It is also your opportunity to discuss how you are feeling during this pandemic. Self-isolating can have a negative effect on your mental health and those you are supporting. It is important to acknowledge how you feel when speaking to your coordinator.

What if I have concerns about the family I am supporting?

Any concerns you have about the family you are supporting must be reported immediately to your coordinator. If the family is struggling for supplies, let your coordinator know.

Can I continue to claim expenses?

At Home-Start we want to ensure that our volunteers are not out of pocket when providing support to families. Please talk to your coordinator about how you could claim expenses for calling the family. Please note that itemised bills and/or receipts will be required to show the added expense you have incurred on top of any inclusive call package you may already have.

Do I still have to complete my volunteer diary?

Yes, please continue to complete your volunteer diary as normal.

What if I get sick?

If you yourself fall ill, please inform your coordinator at the first opportunity. Though we understand you may feel tempted to power through and make phone calls from home while ill, this is not necessary. You must look after yourself. The family you are supporting will be kept up to date and asked their opinion on how best to proceed by the coordinator.

What if I want to do more?

Requests for support from families will undoubtedly escalate as people are forced to socially isolate and group activities stop during the pandemic. If you think you could provide more support, you could request an additional match. Speak to your coordinator about your availability and they will be able to guide you on what is available at your local Home-Start and how you can help.



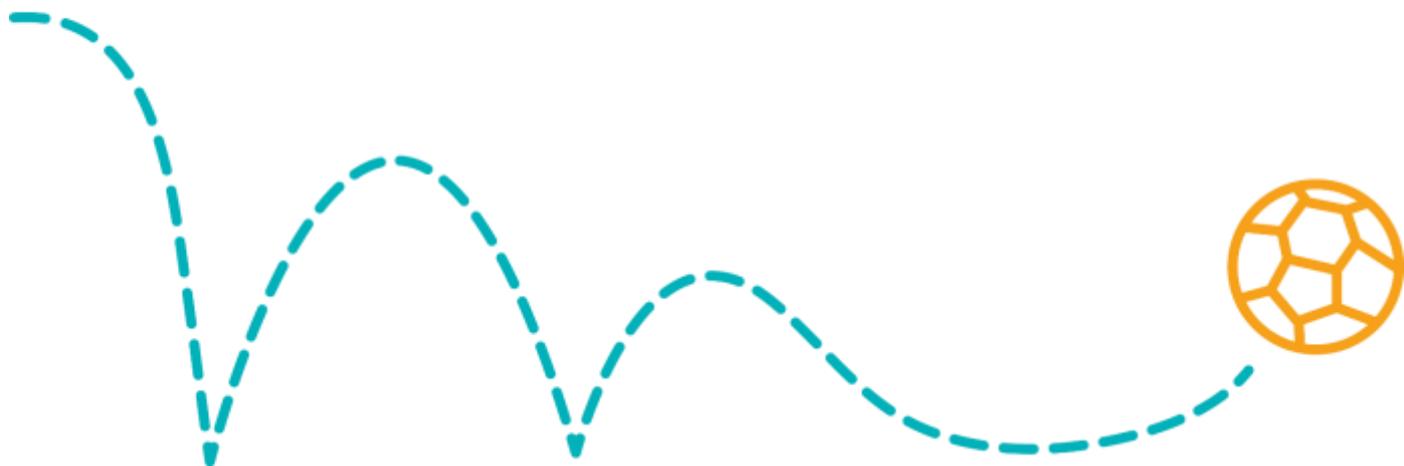


What If I feel I can't continue to volunteer during this time?

We acknowledge that this time is incredibly challenging for everyone and your health, both physically and mentally is of the utmost importance to us. If at any time you feel you can no longer volunteer please let your coordinator know that you would like to pause, we understand.

Any questions

If you have any questions please contact your coordinator. Please note that this time is extremely busy and challenging for everyone, so the response may be delayed.





Looking after my own wellbeing

How can I look after my own wellbeing during this time?

Like many of us, you may be stuck at home, practicing social distancing and self-isolation. It is important that we acknowledge how we are feeling during this time and talk to those close to us.

Here are some ideas for protecting your wellbeing;

1. Keep in touch with friends and family - phone, WhatsApp, Skype, emails
2. Limit time looking at the news/social media and ensure it is reliable Information and does not cause you too much stress
3. Establish a routine – you may wish to include some of the suggestions below:
 - **Exercise** – At the time of writing we are still permitted to go for exercise once a day outside, so long as you avoid social contact. There are also many online You Tube exercise classes you can participate in.
 - **Nature** – If you have a garden or outside area spend time looking after it and relaxing in it.
 - **Entertainment & Relaxation** – Books, jigsaws, TV, music (listening, playing and instrument or singing), write a poem or short story, crosswords, colouring, painting, scrapbooking, make cards, baking
 - **Do a focussed activity** – Tidy a wardrobe, paint the hallway, Sort through old photos, batch cook some of your favourite meals for the freezer
 - When things start to feel overwhelming, talk to someone!

Some useful links:

- <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>
- <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51873799>





Supporting families to add routine to life at home

Below is a planner that might help the family you are supporting consider routine and structure throughout the day. But the main thing to remember is that planners and schedules don't always go to plan and that's ok. With the right balance routine can help to prevent chaos in our life, but be flexible enough to allow for the unexpected.

You may wish to download a copy here

<https://www.home-start.org.uk/adding-routine-to-life-at-home>

Day-by-day routine for life at home

You can use this template to help guide your family day.
#AtHomeWithHomeStart

Time	Activity
Wake Up	
Breakfast	
Morning	
Mid-morning	
Late-morning	
Lunch	
Afternoon	
Mid-afternoon	
Late-afternoon	
Dinner	
Evening	
Bedtime	

You could add in:

- what to eat throughout the day
- activities to keep children occupied
- routine for bedtime





Activities for families

We've created a list of practical ideas, activities and resources for the family you are supporting to do with their children if they're self-isolating or practicing social distancing. It is an unsettling time for families, and especially for children - even if they don't understand what is happening. Trying to give children a 'new normal' can be hard.

Here is a list of websites full of activities and ideas that may be useful.

Indoor activities

BBC Tiny Happy People

This page has activity ideas to try at home with children from pre-birth to age 4-5. They are divided up into age ranges. There are also videos and transcripts for nursery rhymes and songs – perhaps you can learn a new one with your children and FaceTime family and friends to show them what you've learnt.

[Click here to discover BBC's Tiny Happy People](#)

The Literacy Trust

In response to school closures, The Literacy Trust have produced activities divided up into different age ranges to benefit children's writing, reading and language development.

[Click here to find The Literacy's Trust's activities](#)

The Imagination Tree's stay at home survival guide

A variety of different activities all requiring different levels of planning and resources. From writing to family and friends to designing a Lego contest, there is something here for everyone.

[Browse The Imagination Tree's activities](#)

BBC Bitesize

These resources are split into ages and then topics, and also nations, recognising our different curricula around the UK. There are educational online games too! This site is more about activities completed online, as opposed to things you can do together as a family, but it may be useful if a family is particularly concerned about schooling.

[Discover BBC Bitesize's educational games](#)





Chatter Pack

Chatter Pack is a resource list curated by an NHS children's therapist. There are significant numbers of links, in sections such as virtual tours, music, anxiety/mental health and loneliness, as well as more activity based 'online learning'.

[Visit the Chatter Pack resources here](#)

NASA

NASA's video, sound and image library is now free to search, view and download <https://images.nasa.gov/> Great for tying in with space topics started at school.

YOGA

Cosmic Kids Yoga on YouTube have a large number of mostly short yoga activity videos. I personally have chosen the longer '5 Mindfulness Exercises for Kids' and am using it for myself and my family!

[Visit Cosmic Yoga Channel on YouTube](#)

Outdoor Activities

Remember that self-isolation doesn't mean that families need to stay inside. Families must stay quarantined if they are showing symptoms of coronavirus. Otherwise, at the time of writing they can still go outside and enjoy the fresh air with one walk a day with other members of the same household while still maintaining social distancing

Wildlife Watch

Here, you'll find a long list of activity sheets that are free to download. The activities vary in difficulty and not all of them require you to have a garden.

[Download the activity sheets](#)

The Woodland Trust's Tree ID

The Woodland Trust have produced some printable ID guides to help children learn about trees. Use them to identify leaves, twigs, blossom and fruits throughout the year.

[Learn more about trees throughout the seasons](#)





Helping children to cope with stress

Below is guidance issued from the World Health Organisation in supporting parents to help their children cope with stress. This may be something you wish to share with families.

World Health Organization 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).





Useful contact numbers

In light of the Coronavirus pandemic, life can feel uncertain and the family you support may not know where to turn. You won't know all the answer to their questions and that's ok, below are links to useful organisations who may have some of the answers to their questions or provide further support. Please make sure you record on your diary sheet any organisations you recommend to them

- [Health](#)
- [Social Advice](#)
- [Mental Health](#)
- [Abuse \(child, sexual, domestic violence\)](#)
- [Addiction \(drugs, alcohol, gambling\)](#)
- [Bereavement](#)
- [Crime Victims](#)
- [Eating Disorders](#)
- [Learning Disabilities](#)
- [Food banks](#)

HEALTH

NHS

The NHS are there to help with medical queries, problems and emergencies. In light of the Coronavirus, it's best to call 111 first, or [visit the NHS website](#) before going to the GP.

If it's an emergency, always call 999.

SOCIAL ADVICE

Citizens Advice

You can [contact Citizens Advice](#) for information around benefits, work, money and debts, housing, immigration and information surrounding the Coronavirus. Simply type in your postcode for information from your local Citizens Advice.

Website: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>





MENTAL HEALTH

Anxiety UK

Charity providing support if you have been diagnosed with an anxiety condition.

Phone: 03444 775 774 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5.30pm)

Website: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Bipolar UK

A charity helping people living with manic depression or bipolar disorder.

Website: www.bipolaruk.org.uk

CALM

CALM is the Campaign Against Living Miserably, for men aged 15 to 35.

Phone: 0800 58 58 58 (daily, 5pm to midnight)

Website: www.thecalmzone.net

Men's Health Forum

24/7 stress support for men by text, chat and email.

Website: www.menshealthforum.org.uk

Mental Health Foundation

Provides information and support for anyone with mental health problems or learning disabilities.

Website: www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Mind

Promotes the views and needs of people with mental health problems.

Phone: 0300 123 3393 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm)

Website: www.mind.org.uk





No Panic

Voluntary charity offering support for sufferers of panic attacks and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). Offers a course to help overcome your phobia or OCD.

Phone: 0844 967 4848 (daily, 10am to 10pm). Calls cost 5p per minute plus your phone provider's Access Charge

Website: www.nopanic.org.uk

PAPYRUS

Young suicide prevention society.

Phone: HOPELINEUK 0800 068 4141 (Monday to Friday, 10am to 10pm, and 2pm to 10pm on weekends and bank holidays)

Website: www.papyrus-uk.org

Samaritans

Confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair.

Phone: 116 123 (free 24-hour helpline)

Website: www.samaritans.org.uk

SANE

Emotional support, information and guidance for people affected by mental illness, their families and carers.

SANEline: 0300 304 7000 (daily, 4.30pm to 10.30pm)

Textcare: comfort and care via text message, sent when the person needs it most:
www.sane.org.uk/textcare

Peer support forum: www.sane.org.uk/supportforum

Website: www.sane.org.uk/support





Shout

Shout is led by trained volunteers who can help you in a moment of chaos/crisis to find calm.

You can free text them 24/7 on 85258.

Website: www.giveusashout.org/

YoungMinds

Information on child and adolescent mental health. Services for parents and professionals.

Phone: Parents' helpline 0808 802 5544 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 4pm)

Website: www.youngminds.org.uk

ABUSE

NSPCC

Children's charity dedicated to ending child abuse and child cruelty.

Phone: 0800 1111 for Childline for children (24-hour helpline)

0808 800 5000 for adults concerned about a child (24-hour helpline)

Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

National Domestic Violence Helpline

If you are experiencing domestic abuse, you are not alone. You can call the 24-hour **National Domestic Abuse Helpline** for free.

Tel: 0808 2000 247

Website: www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk





Refuge

Advice on dealing with domestic violence.

Phone: 0808 2000 247 (24-hour helpline)

Website: www.refuge.org.uk

ADDICTION

Alcoholics Anonymous

Phone: 0800 917 7650 (24-hour helpline and online support)

Website: www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

National Gambling Helpline

Phone: 0808 8020 133 (daily, 8am to midnight)

Website: www.begambleaware.org

Narcotics Anonymous

Phone: 0300 999 1212 (daily, 10am to midnight, with online meetings)

Website: www.ukna.org

BEREAVEMENT

Cruse Bereavement Care

Phone: 0808 808 1677 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

Website: www.cruse.org.uk





CRIME VICTIMS

Rape Crisis

To find your local services phone: 0808 802 9999 (daily, 12pm to 2.30pm and 7pm to 9.30pm)

Website: www.rapecrisis.org.uk

Victim Support

Phone: 0808 168 9111 (24-hour helpline)

Website: www.victimsupport.org

EATING DISORDERS

Beat

A charity supporting people who are going through difficult times with eating disorders

Phone: 0808 801 0677 (adults) or 0808 801 0711 (for under-18s)

Website: www.b-eat.co.uk

LEARNING DISABILITY

Mencap

Charity working with people with a learning disability, their families and carers.

Phone: 0808 808 1111 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

Website: www.mencap.org.uk

FOOD BANKS

Trussell Trust

Charity helping provide families with food when they can't afford food

Website: <https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank/>

