



# **Mental health and wellbeing support for children and young people in the Wakefield district during the coronavirus pandemic**

Developed in partnership with:  
The Wakefield Mental Health Provider Alliance  
South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

## Introduction

This guide has been created to help you, whether you're a parent, carer or family member, to support children and young people in the Wakefield district with their mental health and wellbeing during the coronavirus pandemic.

It's important you know that health and wellbeing services, whether for physical or mental health, are still available as usual for those people that need them.

Services may be working in different ways in line with government guidance around social distancing. For example; a telephone or video consultation may be provided, rather than face-to-face support or treatment.

We've already had some really positive feedback from many families and young people who have had support in these different ways.

If you or your family use health services, you can always contact your key worker or the service directly for support and more information. You may have already received a letter or call to update you about any changes to the service you use too.

This guide will give you:

- Information to help children and young people understand what is happening with coronavirus
- Updates on:
  - » School services
  - » Wakefield youth work team (YWT)
  - » Children First Hubs
  - » Kooth – online support and counselling
  - » Talking therapies
  - » Wakefield child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Top tips from local health and care professionals
- Information on Wakefield's voluntary and community response:
  - » #Wakefield cares – community hubs
  - » Community navigators
- Contact list of local and national organisations that are available to help



# Helping children and young people understand what is happening

Children and young people may understandably be concerned or worried by what they see, read or hear in the news, online or through friends regarding coronavirus. There are ways in which you can support them to understand what is currently happening, to help ease their worries:

- Public Health England have produced [guidance for parents and carers](#) on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing during the outbreak
- Young Minds have shared [10 top tips](#) from their parent's helpline, alongside [a blog](#) for young people
- [The Mental Health Foundation](#) has produced top tips for parents and carers when talking to your children about coronavirus
- The [British Psychological Society](#) has shared how it is vital to talk openly to children and reassure them about the changes they are seeing around them due to coronavirus.

Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust have also produced materials for children and young people which they can read or watch themselves, to help them understand the current situation. This includes a [coronavirus fact sheet for kids](#) and a [short animated film](#).

## Schools

Although most children and young people are not in school, schools are still keeping in touch regularly with students and their families.

### Support for children and young people

Schools have identified those children, young people and families that may need more support, and are making extra welfare telephone calls and home visits, to support them with their mental health and wellbeing.

Schools have been promoting mental health and wellbeing by encouraging daily routines and ways to access regular exercise such as 'PE with Joe Wicks'. Learning and achievements of children and young people have been celebrated through digital learning platforms and social media, to help them feel recognised for their hard work.

Where schools have been worried about the mental health and wellbeing of particular children or young people, they have offered those children and young people a physical place in school to make sure they are receiving daily contact and support in person. This is being provided in a safe way, in line with government guidance around social distancing.

Schools will continue to work with other health and care organisations to ensure that students are kept safe and supported.

## **Information and support for parents or carers of children and young people**

Most schools remain in touch with parents and carers through regular communications and are there to provide advice. This aims to help parents and carers to keep the sense of community support; which is important to their mental health and wellbeing too. Those schools with parent support advisors will be continuing to do just that; and will be available to provide support and guidance to parents and carers.

The Department of Education has released guidance for parents and carers to help look after the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people during this time. This includes:

- Top tips to help children cope with stress
- Information on how different children of different ages may react to current changes
- Easy read information for children with special educational needs and disabilities
- Lots more information for/on:
  - » Children with physical health issues
  - » Young carers
  - » Bullying
  - » Money worries

Schools will continue to promote and share this specific coronavirus mental health and wellbeing resource, alongside others, through their usual communication channels i.e. websites, social media, newsletters to parents/carers and young people.

## **Primary intervention team support**

The primary intervention team, which are part of Wakefield children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) provide in-reach mental and emotional health and wellbeing support in schools for those children and young people who need this. Due to many schools being closed, the business as usual work of the team within schools is currently paused at this time.

The primary intervention team have been in contact with school staff before schools closed and remain in contact with schools where possible. This means that school staff can contact the team at any time to discuss concerns about a young person, or for any advice and support around mental health and wellbeing.

Consultations for school staff, which were pre-booked before school closures, are being provided by telephone. Families that also had pre-booked parental consultations are being contacted and offered this via telephone too.

Some children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are still attending school so the team remain in close communication, sending resources and offering advice and support over the phone too. This is also in place for the pupil referral units (PRUs).

Local colleges are able to make contact with the primary intervention team and they also have links with Turning Point who provide talking therapies in Wakefield.

## Wakefield youth work team

The Wakefield youth work team work with, and for, young people to fully prepare them for adulthood, equipping them with the personal and social skills to be valued and engaged as citizens, capable of making positive choices and accessing opportunities.

The team look to achieve this through coordinating and delivering a high quality youth work which includes opportunities for young people's voices to be heard:

- Street based detached youth work where young people are identified as being involved in risky behaviours
- Targeted youth club groups for SEND, LGBTQ+ and young carers in the Wakefield area
- National youth work programmes, such a Duke of Edinburgh's Award, UK Youth Parliament and British Youth Council
- Support to the voluntary community sector to increase youth work capacity and quality of provision available to young people in the district
- Activity to ensure sufficient offer of positive youth activities is available to young people and publicised across the district.

During this time, the team continues to provide information and support to young people already working with team, whilst being open and accessible to new young people from across the district.

Existing youth groups continue (e.g. - Stripes, SEND and young carers), but the groups are just being run virtually over a range of media platforms. You can refer a young person into in these groups by emailing [youthwork@wakefield.gov.uk](mailto:youthwork@wakefield.gov.uk).

The team also have specific groups to support the voices of young people, including; an emotional wellbeing group, anti-bullying group and Build Our Futures. If you know someone who is interested in these areas of work specifically, then please email: [BuildOurFutures@wakefield.gov.uk](mailto:BuildOurFutures@wakefield.gov.uk).

The Wakefield youth work team's website ([www.wfyouth.co.uk](http://www.wfyouth.co.uk)) provides advice, guidance and a place where the team shares activities for young people. There is a chat facility on the website where young people can speak to a member of staff online. This is currently between 9am – 4pm, with some evening sessions are being trialled too.



## Children First Hubs

The Children First Hubs continue to provide early help support to families who have been given a children first practitioner, as well as to those who have been referred and are awaiting support.

Each family has an individual early help plan in place, describing the support required and how this will be provided during this period from different health and care professionals. In line with government guidance on social distancing, the majority of this support will be provided virtually, either by phone or video calls, with resources being distributed to families to support this work too.

Children First Hub practitioners are carrying out doorstep visits to the homes of all families with a worker to check in with the family. They are making sure that all children and young people are seen at least every three weeks, with many families being seen more frequently than this. Home visits are also taking place to carry out work with families where it is appropriate and safe to do so. Practitioners will contact families in advance and will ensure guidelines around social distancing and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) are followed.

Referrals into the Children First Hub are still being received and processed in the normal way, through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Families can contact the Children First Hubs directly for early help advice and guidance by calling 01977 722215. This will either be put through to a children first worker or a message can be taken and someone will return the call.

There is a named worker from the Children First Hubs for all schools also. This worker can be contacted directly by school staff too to discuss early help concerns and contact details have been circulated to schools.

For information and advice families can visit the [Early Help website](#).



# Kooth

## Kooth online

Kooth online provides free, safe and confidential information for young people (between the ages of 11 – 25).

Kooth online continues to be available to support the wellbeing and resilience of young people during the coronavirus pandemic.

Young people can continue to book regular online counselling sessions as needed. Kooth is also offering young people the opportunity to have a “drop-in” text-based conversation with a qualified counsellor. Counsellors are available from **12pm to 10pm on weekdays and 6pm to 10pm at weekends, every day of the year.**

Outside of counselling hours, young people can message the team and get support by the next day.

Support is provided by Kooth not only through counselling but from articles, forums and discussion boards. All content is age appropriate, clinically approved and fully moderated.

Watch this [short video](#) to find out more about or visit [www.Kooth.com](http://www.Kooth.com) to access support and information.

## Kooth face to face counselling

Kooth also provides face to face counselling for young people through schools in Wakefield.

In line with government guidance around social distancing, counsellors who currently provide these face to face counselling sessions will now instead offer the young people they support a booked chat session appointment on Kooth.com.

During this time, Kooth will also continue to accept referrals from schools for counselling sessions.



## Turning Point talking therapies (IAPT)

Turning Point delivers talking therapy services, sometimes known as IAPT, in Wakefield. They are available for young people aged 16 and above who are registered with a GP surgery in the district.

Young people can self-refer online into talking therapies for a range of support around:

- Anxiety
- Low mood and depression
- Stress
- Sleep
- Low self-esteem

During the coronavirus pandemic, Turning Point are committed to continuing to be available for those requiring support. They are adapting how they provide their services in line with the government advice, to protect both people that use their services alongside their staff.

All groups and workshops have been postponed for the foreseeable future and current face to face support, where possible, will be replaced by telephone calls.

Turning Point is contacting all people directly who are affected by this change.

New referrals to the service will continue to be accepted. However where possible, these referrals need to be made online via the Turning Point website, as phone lines are currently very busy.

Turning Point have developed a new program in conjunction with their online service at My Turning Point, called 'Space from COVID 19'. This is available for young people to access, alongside a range of self-help materials, with more digital resources, including webinars, currently being produced.

Visit the [Turning Point talking therapies](#) website and find out more.





# Wakefield child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)

The Wakefield child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) provides assessment, therapies, treatment and support to children, young people and their families who are suffering from significant mental health or behavioural difficulties.

This covers a range of issues, such as:

- Depression
- Self-harm
- Severe anxiety (including obsessive compulsive disorder)
- Eating disorders (such as anorexia nervosa or bulimia)
- Psychosis (in those aged under 14)
- Bipolar affective disorder
- Severe emotional problems
- Attachment difficulties
- Severe behavioural problems
- Tic disorders
- Autistic spectrum conditions (in those aged over 14)
- Significant family communication problems.

CAMHS are reassuring young people and families that they are still here to help during the coronavirus pandemic.

Providing support and treatment in Barnsley, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield, CAMHS services continue for those children, young people and families that use their services; but will be delivered in different ways.

Over the last few weeks CAMHS teams have transformed the way they deliver services to limit the spread of the virus, using technology, such as video calls, to help to continue to deliver services whilst keeping everyone safe.

CAMHS teams are still taking new referrals. Referrals can be made as usual by a range of health and care professionals including;

- GPs
- Hospital staff
- Schools
- Social care staff (Wakefield Council)
- Police and courts
- Youth services
- Drug and alcohol services
- Voluntary services such as local charities
- Other NHS organisations.

## **Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)**

CAMHS ASD assessments have been temporarily paused in line with government recommendations.

Families on the waiting list will be contacted and given support they can access at this time.

Families will not have to re-refer in the future for an assessment, and will be contacted as soon as services can resume.

## **CAMHS urgent help and support**

Wakefield CAMHS continues to provide urgent help and support, alongside home based treatments and therapies through the CAMHS REACH team (previously CAMHS crisis team).

The service has recently increased and expanded the offer of crisis/urgent support to children, young people and families.

This means that the service now operates from 9am - 8pm every day, with urgent assessments taking place too between 8pm and 9am for those who need support outside of these hours.

This service can be contacted through the usual CAMHS referral routes, as listed above.

## **Top tips**

Wakefield CAMHS have the following advice for parents and carers of children and young people who may be struggling with their mental health and wellbeing during lockdown:

- Stick to routines the best you can, for example keep usual bed and wake up times
- Don't worry about the small stuff; there will be things you have to negotiate on
- Make time to have fun together and find fun and creative ways to get things done from school work to house chores
- Support children and young people to stay connected; through video calls or even writing letters to friends or family
- Keep a balanced diet and usual meal times
- Spend as much time outdoors whilst following government guidance and have daily exercise
- Use mindfulness and relaxation techniques
- Take advantage of the situation and spend time together as a family
- Seek help early, if you think there is a mental health concern. You can do this by contacting your GP, talking to your child's school, through talking therapies (for young people age 16 and over) and local or national charities, or by speaking with a health or social care worker that may support your family.

It's important to remember too that mental health is everyone's responsibility, and there are little things we all can do to positively support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.

# Voluntary and community response – other support for your family

## #WakefieldCares – community hubs

Across communities and neighbourhoods, local voluntary and community groups alongside faith groups, schools and local businesses are identifying how they can work together to ensure that people are supported during these difficult times.

Building on local initiatives, Nova Wakefield District and its members, Wakefield Council and local NHS have together created a joint response to the challenges which our communities face – this is #WakefieldCares.

As part of this community response, 14 community hubs across the district have been set up. The hubs have volunteers and a range of support to help you.

Visit the [Volunteer Wakefield website](#) or [Nova website](#) for more information and hub contact details.

You can also find out more about the support available in your community on the [Wakefield Council website](#).

## Community navigators

Community navigators work with children and young people aged 0-19 years, as part of the [Future in Mind](#) programme. This is Wakefield District's collective response to the national government's call to improve approaches and services for children and young people's mental health and well-being by developing a transformation plan.

Provided by the voluntary and community sector, community navigators work across the different areas of Wakefield. During term time much of their work is in schools, however during holidays, evenings and the current situation, their work is within community settings.

The community navigators:

- Provide group work to mainstream schools
- Develop risk and resilience tools
- Deliver the "Luggage for Life programme" which focuses on building skills surrounding emotional health and wellbeing
- Provide transition support for children finishing primary school and entering high school
- Connect children, young people and families to activities in their community.

Community navigators are also supporting children and youth workers, alongside Young Lives Consortium, Public Health, local NHS, and Wakefield Council to develop a new website ([www.wf-i-can.co.uk](http://www.wf-i-can.co.uk)) too.

This goes live on 6 May 2020 and has been created for children and young people to help share resources and ideas around mental and emotional health and wellbeing.

During this time, the community navigators continue to deliver support to children, young people and families via community organisations where they can. They are also supporting some of the community hubs, to help distribute food and support activities in communities online and via telephone.

To find out more please get in contact with Emily Castle at Young Lives Consortium on: [emcastleylc@gmail.com](mailto:emcastleylc@gmail.com) or by telephone/text on 07835817480 (9.30am – 4.00pm Monday – Friday).

## Mental health and wellbeing service directory for children and young people

### Local support

**Change Grow Live (CGL)** - CGL offer a confidential drug and alcohol service for young people

**Website:** [www.changegrowlive.org](http://www.changegrowlive.org)

**Telephone:** 0808 169 8711

**Email:** [wakefieldservicereferral@cgl.org.uk](mailto:wakefieldservicereferral@cgl.org.uk)

**Star Bereavement** - supporting local children and young people who have been bereaved and are in need of support

**Website:** [www.starwakefield.org.uk](http://www.starwakefield.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 01924 787384

**Talking Therapies** - for young people aged 16 years or older who are registered with a GP surgery in the Wakefield District

**Website:** <https://talking.turning-point.co.uk/wakefield>

**Telephone:** 01924 234860

**Email:** [Wakefield.talking@turning-point.co.uk](mailto:Wakefield.talking@turning-point.co.uk)

**Well Women Centre** – online support for young women aged 16 years or older

**Website:** [www.wellwomenwakefield.org.uk](http://www.wellwomenwakefield.org.uk)

**WF I-Can** - coming soon; a Wakefield District website which aims to connect children and young people to activities and support to develop resilience and managing life events and changes

**Website:** <https://wf-i-can.co.uk>

**Email:** [emcastleylc@gmail.com](mailto:emcastleylc@gmail.com) for more information

**WFYouth** - advice, guidance and activities from the Wakefield youth work team

**Website:** [www.wfyouth.co.uk](http://www.wfyouth.co.uk)

**Email:** [youthwork@wakefield.gov.uk](mailto:youthwork@wakefield.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 01924 302665

## National support

**CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably)** - help and support online

Website: [www.thecalmzone.net](http://www.thecalmzone.net)

Telephone: 0800 585858 (note: this is a helpline for men aged 15 – 35 only)

**ChildLine** - free, anytime, day or night for help with any worry (under 19's)

Website: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) (Online 1-2-1 counsellor chat available)

Telephone: 0800 1111

**Combined Minds** – app-based support to help families and friends support young people with their mental health

Download: <https://combinedminds.co.uk> or at an app store

**Cruse Bereavement Care** - support to those needing help after the death of someone close

Website: [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

**Doc Ready** - helps people to prepare to talk to somebody about mental health, including a doctor

Website: [www.docready.org](http://www.docready.org)

**Elefriends** - a safe place to listen, share and be heard

Website: [www.elefriends.org.uk](http://www.elefriends.org.uk)

**Heads Above the Waves** - online advice, support and coping strategies for young people suffering from depression and self-harm

Website: [www.hatw.co.uk](http://www.hatw.co.uk)

**Kooth** - free, safe and anonymous online support for 11 to 19 year olds

Website: [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

**Meetwo** - offers a safe and secure forum for teenagers to discuss any issues that are affecting their lives

Website: [www.meetwo.co.uk](http://www.meetwo.co.uk)

**Mindout** - online instant message service that is confidential and anonymous to support and improve the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTQ communities

Website: [www.mindout.org.uk](http://www.mindout.org.uk)

**Papyrus** - online text or phone support to young people

Website: <https://papyrus-uk.org>

Telephone: 0800 0684141 or text 07860039967

**Samaritans** – free, anytime support, providing a listening ear and emotional support

Telephone: 116 123

Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

**SelfharmUK** – peer-to-peer communications for young people aged 14-19. A space for them to share their encouraging experiences through the use of blogs, stories, poetry and art

Website: [www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk)

**Shout** - available for anyone of any age, who is a resident in the UK needing support in a crisis

**Website:** [www.giveusashout.org](http://www.giveusashout.org)

**Telephone:** Text Shout to 85258

**Stay Alive** - App for those at risk of suicide or those worried about someone

**Website:** available from [www.prevent-suicide.org.uk](http://www.prevent-suicide.org.uk)

**Victim Support** - emotional and practical support to anyone under 18 who has been affected by a crime

**Website:** [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0300 303 1971

**Winstons Wish** - giving hope to grieving children and supporting families

**Website:** [www.winstonswish.org](http://www.winstonswish.org)

**Telephone:** 08088 020021

**Young Minds** - resources for children and young people, parents and professionals about looking mental health and wellbeing

**Website:** <https://youngminds.org.uk>



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POINT**  
inspired by possibility



**Nova**

**wakefieldcouncil**  
working for you