

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SKILLS**

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Please ask for: Bev Petch

Your Ref:

Our Ref: Elective Home Education Covid-19

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Home Educating families

We hope that you and your family are safe and well.

The Coronavirus pandemic has continued for a considerable time now. We are aware of the significant impact it will have had on us all, including you and your families. It is important now, more than ever, that we look after and support one another. We are therefore reaching out to share some information about how you can look after your own mental health and wellbeing, and that of your family.

Kooth.com is commissioned by the NHS, Local Authorities, charities and businesses to provide anonymous and personalised mental health support for children and young people. By registering an anonymous account, children and young people can gain access to a range of ways to seek help; they can speak on a live chat to a counsellor, read magazines, chat in a forum with other like-minded young people and more. It is moderated and confidential with safeguarding measures in place. Further detailed information is available on Solihull's Local offer website page <https://socialsolihull.org.uk/localoffer/> or at <https://www.kooth.com/>.

Solar is an emotional wellbeing and mental health service for children and young people in Solihull, provided by Birmingham and Solihull NHS Mental Health Trust. Solar is a team of professionals who work towards helping children to achieve good mental health through a number of different approaches which can include talking therapies, creative therapies, workshops and sometimes medication. Solar are currently accepting self-referrals from young people and parents/carers, who can complete and return the referral form online: <https://www.bsmhft.nhs.uk/our-services/solar-youth-services/>

If you need **emergency** mental health support for your child, the Solar crisis service is contactable via 0121 301 2750 (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm). Further information is on the website: <https://www.bsmhft.nhs.uk/our-services/solar-youth-services/i-need-help-now/>

For **all residents** (any age) in Birmingham and Solihull, the NHS has launched a one-stop mental health service - with partners Living Well UK and Birmingham Mind. The one-stop programme has a dedicated 24-hour phone line manned by experts who will provide bespoke assistance. If you would like to access this 24 hour service call 0121 262 3555. More information can be found at these websites: <https://livingwellconsortium.com/> and <https://www.birminghamandsolihullccg.nhs.uk/your-health/mental-health-support-offer>

The following websites contain some helpful information about ways we can look after our mental health, especially in this current climate.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/>

<https://mentalhealth-uk.org/coronavirus-information-support/>

We hope you are all able to take the time that you and your family need to look after your mental health and wellbeing, whether that be connecting safely with others (friends, family or one of the helplines above), engaging with mindfulness activities, being active or sitting down with a lovely cup of tea.

For parents of children where the intention is to take exams such as GCSEs this year, we understand that this may be a particularly stressful time for you. There remains a great deal of uncertainty about this. At this point, the Government have not yet provided any guidance on this in relation to home educated children. We are currently trying to contact the Department for Education to gain a greater understanding about how children outside of a school setting can be assessed and graded. We shall keep you informed as we know and learn more ourselves.

In the meantime, our team continues to work from home. We are available for any support or advice you may need. Please email [ehe@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:ehe@solihull.gov.uk) or telephone 0121 704 6959. We will respond to you as soon as we can.

Keep yourselves and your loved ones safe and well.

Best wishes,



Bev Petch  
Lead Officer for Elective Home Education