

Date: 14 April 2020

Dear



We are writing to you because you use Direct Payments to buy care for your young person.



We want to give you some information about how the **Covid-19 Outbreak** might affect you.

Covid-19 is also called **Coronavirus**.

A virus is a type of illness.

Coronavirus is a new virus. People first had it in China.



There are now a number of people in the UK who have got this virus.



We know that this can be worrying for people who need care and support.



We want you to think about what you would do if your young person's carers became ill with the virus.



We would like you to think about the help you could get from

- Your family
- Friends
- Neighbours
- Your community



Schools are now closed.



This might mean your young person's support will have to stay home to look after their children.

They may not be able to come to work and support your young person.



You should talk to your young person's support worker or agency now to see how this will affect you and your family.



The government has said that school should still be available for children who have a:

- social worker



- Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)



- Child in Need or Child Protection Plan



We think it would be a good idea to plan what you would do if your young person's carer became ill with the virus or has to **self isolate**.

Self isolate means that you have to stay at home and avoid being near other people.



You need to plan what to do just in case this happens.

You should talk to your young person's support worker or agency now to see how this will affect you and your family.



You can also buy your young person's care and support from other carers or businesses if you need to.



If you need to buy more support, you can use your **contingency fund**.

A **contingency fund** is an amount of money saved in case of an emergency.



You can get advice about your role as an employer from We Are Purple.

Website: <https://wearepurple.org.uk/direct-payment-support/managing-your-personal-budget/>

Email: essex@wearepurple.org.uk

Telephone: 01245 392 300



Your young person's carer might ask if they will still be paid if they cannot work because they are ill or are self isolating.



We are waiting for advice from the government about sick pay.

We will tell you when we have received this.



You might need to buy protective equipment like face masks, gloves or aprons for your young person's support workers.



You only need to buy protective equipment for your young person's support worker if you employ them directly.

If the support worker is employed by an agency, the agency will provide their protective equipment.



The NHS will help to supply protective equipment soon.



At the moment we do not know when exactly that will happen.



Standard support at home is lower risk.

Standard safety practices should be OK until face masks arrive.



What are Essex County Council doing to help?

We are talking to care and support providers.



We want to know about how many staff they have at the moment.

We are asking how they might be affected by school closures and staff sickness.



Who else might help?

Your neighbours or other people in your community might help. This may be things like getting your shopping dropped off to you.



They can also chat to you online.

Many groups are being set up on Facebook.

This group it will help you find neighbours and local volunteers who can help you.

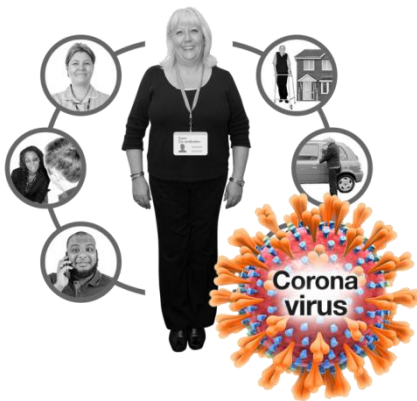


www.facebook.com/groups/essexcoronavirusesupport/



We want you to know that we will make sure your young person is not left without support.

This is a very difficult time and we must look after those who need us the most first.



If your young person's support worker or agency cannot help you because of the coronavirus then please call Children's Social Care.

They will help to find what support is available.

Telephone: 0345 603 7630

Textphone: 0345 758 5592



For out of hours queries contact the Emergency Duty Service.

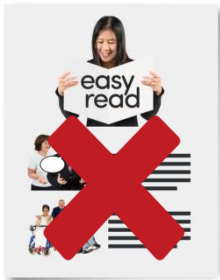
Telephone: 0345 606 1212



More information about Coronavirus

The following websites provide more information

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>



Please note this information is **not** in EasyRead.



<https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/Information%20about%20Coronavirus%20ER%20SS2.pdf>

This information **is** in EasyRead.

Yours sincerely

Russel Breyer
Director for Local Delivery