

YMCA DownsLink Group: Transforming Young Lives

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Isolation isn't new for everyone...

YMCA DownsLink Group Launches Fundraising Appeal #Here4U



YMCA DownsLink Group have launched an ['Emergency Isolation Pack'](#) fundraising appeal in response to pressures created by the COVID-19 crisis. Every year, the charity (one of the biggest providers of youth services in the South East) provides a safe home for around 1,400 vulnerable young people in Sussex and Surrey. The charity is asking for donations to ensure young people in supported housing have access to day to day essentials like food during the lockdown.

Speaking about the campaign, Chas Walker, CEO YMCA DownsLink Group said:

"The young people we house, and support are being directly affected by this crisis. Many of them are losing their jobs in the Gig/zero hours economy, when they are already on low wages without savings or parents who can support them financially. They are also experiencing significant delays in accessing universal credit, so are without any funds to support themselves. Our young people are also being infected by the virus with over 7% self-isolating in our housing schemes. Without family support they are more reliant on us than ever to support and care for them at this difficult time.

Our dedicated frontline staff are working 24 hours a day to support them through the COVID-19 crisis. But, some are struggling with their mental health and now feel particularly scared and anxious. They are worried about running out of food and other essentials, and many feel lonely and forgotten.

We're providing our young people with 'emergency isolation packs' to ensure they have the food and essentials they need, particularly if they find themselves without any money or are self-isolating without family to support them."

As part of the campaign, the charity is also encouraging their supporters to show their support by leaving messages on their social media using the hashtag #Here4U and tagging @ymcadlg.

Chas Walker explains:

"For those that are financially able to, donations will make a huge difference to the young people we look after. However, we understand that some people won't be able to do this, and we would encourage them to show these young people that they aren't alone and leave messages of support for them on our social media channels by tagging @YMCADLG. We want to show them that they have not been forgotten by their community; that we are all in this together."

Coronavirus has also meant that the charity has had to adapt its advice and counselling services to ensure that the vulnerable young people they work with can continue to access the help they need. The pressures on families and young people, with self-isolation and social distancing is having an impact. Already, YMCA Youth Advice Centre (YAC) has seen an increase in young people presenting as homeless with COVID-19 being cited as the reason that they've had to leave home.

To donate or find out more visit <https://www.ymcadlg.org/get-involved/covid-emergency-packs-appeal-web>.

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For further information or images (Dropbox link for images <http://bit.ly/YMCADLG>) please contact Ruth Cobb, Head of Marketing & Communications ruth.cobb@ymcadlg.org 01273 222583

Notes to editors:

YMCA Downslink Group is a registered charity working across Sussex and Surrey providing a range of services to children, young people and families. It is one of the biggest providers of youth services in the South East and is committed to transforming the lives of vulnerable young people so that they can truly belong, contribute and thrive.

The charity's work covers a wide range of areas including accommodation, mental health, housing advice, counselling, sexual exploitation, mentoring, education, training and apprenticeships. Each year the charity supports over 10,000 young people operating from centres in Brighton & Hove, Guildford, Horsham, Crawley, Worthing, Eastbourne and Hastings. To find out more please visit www.ymcadlg.org