

YMCA DownsLink Group Urges Families to Seek Mediation During Covid-19 Crisis

[YMCA DownsLink Group](#) works to prevent youth homelessness across Sussex and Surrey, as well as providing counselling and advice services. The Youth Advice Centre (YMCA YAC) in Brighton & Hove works on behalf of the council to provide a single point of access for young people in housing need under the age of 25. Parental eviction due to family breakdown is still a primary cause of homelessness in young people and the organisation is concerned that the current COVID-19 crisis is already leading to increasing numbers of vulnerable young people facing homelessness.

The young people that contact [YAC](#) have diverse and complex needs including mental health issues, lack of money, drug and alcohol dependency and relationship issues. The measures that are necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19 such as isolating at home, social distancing, reducing our contacts and shielding the elderly and those with health conditions, is beginning to take its toll on what are already fragile relationships.

As a society we're all managing a lot of anxiety as we adjust to a new way of living and being together. Parents and young people are coming into conflict as tensions between siblings grow. Young people are not fully understanding the need to practise social distancing, still wanting to meet in groups to socialise as they normally would. Young people living with grandparents are not fully appreciating the spread of infection and therefore are being asked to find alternative accommodation, as well as young people who are currently sofa-surfing being asked to leave other households who want to exercise greater precautions.

Rachel Brett, Director of Children and Young People, at YMCA DownsLink Group is concerned about how COVID-19 is already having an effect on families and the potential increase in youth homelessness:

"This morning, we had nine young people present as homeless, with COVID-19 (Coronavirus) being cited as a cause. We expect this number to grow as we are likely to be asked to increasingly restrict our movements and remain at home over a longer period of time.

We are aware that our ability to find housing solutions for young people presenting as homeless has become seriously compromised. It's challenging to find relatives who are willing or able to take them and the supply of young people's supported accommodation is under pressure.

We are all now facing a national emergency. It's vital during this very difficult time that young people and parent carers are able to support the national effort by working together and supporting each other as best they can over the next few weeks of confinement. None of us wants to see more young people put at risk through potentially having to sleep rough because of family breakdowns"

Although the physical YMCA YAC buildings are closed, all of the services are still running, via telephone, email and video conferencing. For families needing support, the mediation

service is also still available and anyone concerned can contact them at YAC.FamilyMediation@ymcadlg.org or call [01273624432](tel:01273624432)

Below is link to other contacts and services that might be helpful.

YMCA YAC (Youth Advice Centre) Brighton & Hove

We will continue taking referrals both via telephone and online.

Housing advice & Support and Advice will continue via digital means and telephone support (in emergencies face-to-face).

Family mediation will continue via Zoom video conferencing and telephone support.

Floating support will continue via digital means and telephone support.

Telephone: [01273624432](tel:01273624432)

Emails for each service:

YAC Brighton Housing Advice - yacbrightonhousingadvice@ymcadlg.org

YAC Family Mediation - YAC.FamilyMediation@ymcadlg.org

YAC Brighton Support and Advice - yacbrightonservices@ymcadlg.org

YAC Social Media: [Facebook](#) / [Instagram](#)

Links to Additional Support Services:

- Brighton & Hove residents needing food - <https://bhfood.org.uk/how-to-hub/covid-19-hungry-isolated-or-cant-access-food/>
- Universal Credit support - <https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/coronavirus/>
- Facebook Group for parents & young people - [Raising Teens in Lockdown](#)
- Sexual Health Support - www.brightonsexualhealth.com/advice/youngpeople
- Free emergency contraception - brightonsexualhealth.com/advice/emergency-contraception
- Free condoms - brightonsexualhealth.com/advice/c-card-free-condoms

Mental Health & Wellbeing Services

- <https://www.brightonhealthandwellbeingcentre.co.uk/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/>
- <https://www.mindcharity.co.uk/>
- <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

