

North Yorkshire

Additional Advice and Support to Children and Families who have a close family member receiving hospital care or incapacitated due to Covid-19

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Emergency Help:

If your situation is an emergency, please dial [999](tel:999). For other urgent situations you can contact North Yorkshire County Council's Customer Service Centre on [01609 780780](tel:01609780780).

Information for Children and Families:

In North Yorkshire we recognise the need for services who work with children, young people, and families to offer support to children and parents who have a close family member (parent, brother, sister, child) receiving hospital care for Covid-19 (Coronavirus).

Hospitals at the best of times can be strange and frightening places for children and parents. Given the unprecedented nature of Covid-19 illness and daily information (and misinformation) circulating about the pandemic in mainstream and social media, the feelings of distress and anxiety may be heightened further.

It is therefore important that our services who work with children and families have a coordinated offer of support for parents / carers and additional children within the family household to access should they require this.

Care for children when in hospital with Covid-19

If a family member, including a child, requires hospital treatment it is important to note the following:

- all hospitals have their own visiting policy and this will be explained
- however, in order to keep patients, visitors and staff safe, all hospitals have currently restricted their visiting to one parent / carer per child (and has to be the same visitor each time). This may change as the situation demands

Care for a child when a parent / carer is in hospital with Covid-19

If a parent(s) / carer(s) are incapacitated by Covid-19, and there is nobody else within the family household who can look after a child, a designated caregiver will need to be identified – please see guidance below regarding private fostering arrangements.

There is an increasing likelihood that if both parents / carers are sick, a child may also be infected. Given Covid-19 disproportionality affects older individuals, it is strongly advised grandparents are not used as designated caregivers. Where possible, it is advised parents / carers make a care plan at the earliest opportunity for their child(ren), taking into consideration of the following:

- Who is going to look after their child(ren) and pets
- Identify nearby friends or family members who can help who are not in a high-risk group
- Designated caregiver given contact information prominently so that emergency responders can find it
- If a parent / carer has nobody to ask, requests can be made for additional support to services in North Yorkshire who work with children and families

[Private Fostering Arrangements:](#)

Private fostering is when a child or young person under 16 years old (or 18 if they have a disability) is looked after for a period of 28 days or more by someone who is not a close relative, guardian or person with parental responsibility. Close relatives include parents, step-parents, aunts, uncles and grandparents. A parent may be unable to care for their own child on a short or long-term basis and a private fostering arrangement can be a positive response from friends and the local community to a family in need of support. However, any child separated from their parents is potentially vulnerable and the local authority has a responsibility to make sure the alternative care they receive is suitable.

By law, the local authority must be told about all private fostering situations. The child's parents, private foster carers and anyone else involved in the arrangement are legally required to inform the council immediately. Once informed, the council will work in partnership with the child, parents and private foster carer to make sure that the best possible arrangements are in place for the child. This includes:

- visiting the child and private foster carer
- helping to make sure that the child's racial, cultural, linguistic and religious needs are met
- offering advice and support to the child, their parents and private foster care

For further information on Private Fostering please view our [Private Fostering One Minute Guide](#).

[How to Request Support:](#)

If, as a parent / carer you feel that there is a need for additional support you can make contact with us to request this.

If you have health related concerns, questions or needs you should discuss this with the lead health professional who is dealing with you or your family member's illness.

You can make contact with North Yorkshire County Council's Customer Service Centre who can assist you to identify the most appropriate support depending on your needs. This may include Children's Social Care and Early Help Teams; Commissioned Services, Local Voluntary Groups for Community Support or NHS 11 Service.

You can contact North Yorkshire County Council Customer Service Centre on 01609 780 780 or via the [Universal Referral Form](#).

North Yorkshire County Council's Customer Service Centre opening times are:
Monday to Friday, 8am-5.30pm / Saturday, 9am-5pm (Children Social Care enquiries only).

[Additional Help and Support with Practical Issues:](#)

North Yorkshire County Council are working with community groups to put people in touch who need support with simple tasks such as getting food or collecting prescriptions during a period of self-isolation.

North Yorkshire County Council website provides additional advice regarding help and support that is available during the Covid-19 pandemic and covers things including practical advice relating to the below:

If you don't have anyone who can help you can contact North Yorkshire County Council's Customer Service Centre tel: [01609 780780](tel:01609780780) every day between 8.00am and 5:30pm and we will direct you to the right support.

NYCC are working closely with our borough and district council partners and have a network of community support organisations across the county that we can connect you with.

Help and support is available for you if you need it with a range of things and includes:

- Shopping deliveries of food or other essentials
- Collecting and delivering prescriptions
- Help for people who are "shielded"
- Mental health support
- Support for victims of domestic abuse

For full details please see the NYCC website:

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-and-information>

[For Further Advice and Guidance, the Following Links may be Useful:](#)

North Yorkshire Safeguarding Partnership website:

www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/coronavirus.

Guidance from the [Children's Commissioner when talking to children about Covid-19](#).

Information is available directly on the government website:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-

[supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak](#)