



Children and families coping with COVID-19 Isolation

We are all facing different challenges with the current health crisis. However, for many children and young people living on very low incomes, this crisis will amplify difficulties that already exist in their life and increase their isolation. For those just getting by, it may be what pulls them under.

A few young people and families who were working hard to get back on their feet have shared with us how this crisis is making difficult challenges, even harder.

“The kids are finding it hard indoors. I have COPD and bronchial asthma so have been categorised as extremely vulnerable and told not to leave the house for at least 12 weeks. The house is full of mould which is making us all very sick. The problem has been ongoing but we are noticing it even more now we can't leave the house. We have been into the shared garden twice for a picnic but all very scared of leaving the house. We have to rely on others to do our shopping.”

I took out a credit card which I have never done in my life and I already maxed it out on a chromebook to study on that my eldest says doesn't work for her things, so is useless. We couldn't afford anything other than the chromebook, they are £200 as it is! Also bought a printer to print lessons for the little ones but the ink ran out very quickly and is crazy expensive so we've stopped using that already.”



“We have four children that are so bored as they cannot go out and I have to stay at home for 12 weeks as I have underlying health issues and it is very depressing as I have lost my job as well and we are struggling.”



“I have not been able to attend college. I am staying in my room which is a very small room all the time. I have not been able to go to the gym. I am worried and anxious about catching the virus, this affects my mental health.”

The difference a Chances for Children grant can make

The assistance that many support workers see families needing over the coming months can largely be split into six main categories (with slight overlap): education, electronics, entertainment, direct financial support, home essentials and mental health support.

What young people and families tell us they are lacking at this time

"Books, fridge to store food, microwave, an activity indoors such as PlayStation as I find it hard to be locked in a room by myself and it's not good for my mental health"

"I would like to have access to a laptop and also internet access, so that I can keep in touch with people and be able to access my college work. I will be able to access Youtube both for fitness and entertainment, as well as learning."

"As silly as it sounds, like some gaming equipment (i.e. cheaper secondhand Xbox's)"

"A smart TV to be able to assist some kids channels, movies and news would be great as we are now at home everyday and my telly is no longer working."

"Things to help kids with boredom like garden toys, games and educational tools like tablets and stationary."

"My tumble dryer has broken, the children have nothing to do and are fighting all the time, I think anything at this moment [in time] would help."



Toys/games/activities for the children were most commonly reported as being needed for families to entertain the children, to provide educational stimulation, and to provide things that the family can do together.

Laptops/tablets and internet access were the other most commonly reported as being needed. These will allow children to access online educational resources and allow them to do home schooling, as well as providing entertainment for them outside of school hours and provide a way to maintain social contact with friends.

It was also noted that job losses, furloughing and increased time in the home meant that families are struggling to pay their utility bills. Additionally, families will be needing more white goods. Increased use of these items in the home mean that some are not fit for purpose or are breaking more frequently. At the same time, it has become much harder to obtain second-hand goods.

Sabrina is a bright girl, who in many homes would undoubtedly thrive. Her father passed away four years ago and this autumn, her mother had to have back surgery which put her out of work. Her younger sister Kathryn has her own health challenges and was recently admitted to hospital due to a heart condition.

The health struggles have put an additional burden on Sabrina especially. She tries to help out a lot around the home but is only 15 herself. Sabrina's mental health started to suffer and her performance at school was slipping. Luckily, the school caught on and has been providing extra support and her mother has been seeking help for her through local mental health services.

Things had been looking up for the family but now with the schools being closed things are hard. The family started strict isolation due to Kathryn's health conditions and they are all very much on their own. The computer is broken and both children struggle with lessons. Sabrina is also finding it very hard not being able to get a break from being a carer, which she was able to while at school.

Our Chances for Children grant can give Sabrina and Kathryn the help they need. We are replacing their laptop and printer so they can keep up with classes. We have also helped provide the family with phones and data so they can stay connected with friends and family while still protecting Kathryn's health. As they are trapped at home and somewhat limited by Kathryn's health challenges, we have also provided art supplies to keep them occupied and a games console, so the girls can have some fun together. Finally, the girls were in desperate need of some new clothes, and even if they are not able to go out, they will be much happier and feel better with a couple of new items.

How Chances for Children grants can help during this crisis

We can help children, families and young people with their wellbeing and to maintain their education during this crisis; and give them the foundation they will need to move forward once it has passed.

- **Educational activities and stimulus in the home:** providing educational books and toys, games for families and other things to keep children engaged and learning.
- **Additional assistance to IT and internet access:** ensuring children and young people can keep-up with school and course work.
- **Household essentials** to make homes safe and comfortable: a fridge to store food, a proper bed to sleep in, a dining room table to do homework at.
- **Other emergency essentials** we will listen to the specific needs of each family and make sure the grant covers the things they need to get them through this difficult time

As a result of the legacy of **Buttle UK's** founder **Frank Buttle**, the Charity can meet all of its administration costs – this means that **100% of the funds raised** go to providing our **Chances for Children** grants for some of the most vulnerable children and young people in the UK today.