



Issues for parents during the Coronavirus outbreak

General issues

- Huge expectations being placed on parents – it's a tricky balance at the best of times but now 24/7 at home is really hard
- Some of the messaging still feels unclear to many parents – especially around how many trips out a day, staying at home and vulnerable groups (particular concerns for families whose households include people who have existing health conditions and vulnerabilities)
- Accessibility of information remains an issue – BSL signing welcome but language needs to be kept simple, easy read versions necessary
- Still some confusion about contact for separated parents – the message is clear that where parents are separated children can move between homes but frequency of doing so is unclear to some
- Parents are very concerned/confused about the expectations around combining work and children at home (how much home schooling they should be doing). We think the message needs to be 'cut yourself some slack and do what you need to do to get through'. Also needs a plea to employers to be flexible and understanding at this time that parents working from home may not be able to be as productive as usual
- Parents are worried about keeping in touch with/supporting family members and friends who don't live in the same household
- Many parents are getting their information via social media rather than traditional news media.

Digital inclusion

- Digital inclusion remains a big issue for many families. Those with smartphones/ other devices are comfortable with digital delivery
- A sizeable proportion of families do not have smartphones - they may have basic mobiles and be reliant on PAYG cards
- This is a major issue for many of the families PAS partner organisations work with who do not have broadband at home and are on pay as you go phones with limited data packages. One big concern is the expectation that families have the digital resource to access the learning resources schools are placing online.

Economic issues

Parents are very worried about money for themselves or a partner (where they have one) losing their livelihood and having to rely on benefits.

Short case study from our website replies:

“It has been had as I work for a company delivering SVQs in childcare so we are still working. Luckily, I can work from home, but doing that and having to home school and run a house is tiring. My husband is a bus driver who still has to work but they have cut his wages and his hours so that’s a worry as we do not qualify for any benefits.”

Significant worries being raised by families who have lost jobs/hours about being able to access universal credit with many unable to hang on to long waits on the phone and having to give up. Lots of concerns about rent arrears and council tax payments.

One Parent Families Scotland has an ‘ask our advisers a question’ facility on its website. It has a useful list of questions they’re getting asked.

<https://opfs.org.uk/talk-to-us/ask-a-question/>

Fuel poverty

Because their children are at home all day families need to have the heating set higher, or have it on, when it might normally be off. Electricity usage has also soared as we are all at home using devices, TVs and electrical equipment.