



Press Release

Berkshire Youth partners with Greenham Trust to support young people through lockdown

19th May 2020 – Berkshire Youth and funding partner Greenham Trust have partnered to launch a youth support hub to assist young people, families and agencies through the COVID-19 lockdown. The **West Berkshire Youth Hub** will be a virtual and telephone-based support platform with resources and opportunities designed around connecting, listening to and providing solutions for young people as they grapple with the impact of the pandemic.

Whilst the young are least susceptible to COVID-19, concerns are rapidly growing around youth mental health, compounded by the lack of social engagement, the closing down of sports and social activities and the impact on their education and employment opportunities. In a [UCL study](#), the young reported the lowest levels of wellbeing and life satisfaction in lockdown, whilst almost 30 per cent have thought about death recently. [UK Youth and the National Youth Agency](#) have also voiced concerns that young people have not been identified as a specific group in need of support at this time.

Funded by Greenham Trust and established by Berkshire Youth, the West Berkshire Youth Hub online and telephone-based support service will be staffed from 9am to 5pm with access to out of hours support. Young people will be encouraged to get in touch, and will be informed about local activities, such as local youth groups sports clubs, drama, art groups and activity sessions that have gone online but may not be known to all. They will also be linked with appropriate, relevant and safe networks for the foreseeable future through lockdown and as restrictions are lifted.

While this service will not replace any other emergency service or out of hours team, where appropriate, young people will also be able to be referred to one of Berkshire Youth's youth workers and other specialist agencies for specific support, while any request of need identified for this level of intervention will be referred or reported to appropriate safeguarding teams.

The service will be piloted in West Berkshire with a goal of rolling it out across the county in June. Greenham Trust also plans to use its network, history and experience of running charitable funding campaigns in the local area to engage with other charities across the UK, aiming to develop a national network of services and resources for young people impacted by the lockdown.

"At times like this we need to remember to look after the most vulnerable, but in the meantime we must not forget the young people and children that are part of our community and families. The old saying that it takes a village to raise a child is so true, but we have removed the village and taken away that choice", commented David Seward, CEO of Berkshire Youth. "We need to find ways to encourage young people to still get together (virtually), to get good safe advice and support, to have fun, laugh and joke. For too long the voice of young people has been unheard, so let's share what resources we know about, and find support and kindness where we can. Our youth hub is not the solution for good quality face to face youth work, but is a collaboration of resources to get as close as we can."

"At a time when young people are experiencing unprecedented upheaval, anxiety and loss, many youth workers have been furloughed, whilst traditional youth projects are unable to continue within social distancing guidelines," said Chris Boulton, CEO of Greenham Trust. "We want to encourage organisations not to forget about the resources required to cultivate the mental health and wellbeing of young people. Our support for Berkshire Youth will not only provide funds towards running the Youth Hub, we are also pleased to be providing access to a wider network of funders and other key contacts across the local area, in order to reach as many young people as possible."



Find out more about the West Berkshire Youth Hub here <https://wbyh.co.uk>

Tel: 01635 889764

Donate to West Berkshire Youth's Coronavirus fundraising appeal on The Good Exchange here: <https://app.thegoodexchange.com/project/18148/berkshire-youth/west-berkshire-youth-hub-sharing-resources-supporting-young-people-through-the-covid-19-pandemic>

About Greenham Trust

Greenham Trust Ltd was founded in 1997 to purchase the former Greenham Common Airbase, and to create and manage the new 150-acre Greenham Business Park. The Trust's principal objective is to use income from commercial property to provide charitable funding for the benefit of the local communities in West Berkshire and North Hampshire. Since its inception, the Trust has supported over 1,000 local organisations, donating over £58 million over the last 20 years. Groups seeking funding can apply online at The Good Exchange:

www.thegoodexchange.com.

www.greenhamtrust.com

About Berkshire Youth

Berkshire Youth has been serving the young people of Berkshire, delivering excellent and efficient youth support services for over 75 years. Berkshire Youth supports clubs and groups in providing safe environments in which young people can explore new ideas, activities and opportunities. We do this by building on local agendas, responding to the needs of young people and local communities, offering support to local partners and direct provision as appropriate. We are proud of our track record and committed to building on it over the coming years to support young people make successful transitions to adulthood.

Here are five tips from Berkshire Youth on how to help young people through this period of uncertainty:

1. Despite being locked down, advocate for young people to have the courage to try and learn new things. The fear of stepping out of one's comfort zone may seem quite daunting, but with the right help and guidance to just try something once is the start to a changing mindset and improving mental health.
2. Encourage them to fill a jar with all the things they want to do. As restrictions ease, they can work their way through them. It's a good way to capture life and look forward to hope at the moment.
3. Try to help them keep a routine. Get up, washed, change out of pyjamas and carry out different tasks each day with goals and achievements. This could be small like school/college work, sorting the garden, helpful contribution to your household and others in it. At the minimum, try to have a structured sleeping pattern.
4. Young people's views are more important than ever, but they are only known if shared. We need to show that it's OK to not be OK – asking for help is not a weakness, it's a strength. Encourage them to speak to friends, family or a youth worker whatever they may be feeling.
5. Find ways to encourage young people to still get together (safely, virtually), to still have fun, laugh and joke with people their own age.

<https://www.berkshireyouth.co.uk/>

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