

COVID-19: Guidance for Carers

**Guidance published by the
Public Health Division,
Lincolnshire County Council**

Originally published 31.03.20
(Updated 12.11.20)

Contents

GUIDANCE FOR CARERS	4
PROTECTING THOSE YOU CARE FOR.....	4
Q. How do I protect myself and my loved ones from Coronavirus?.....	4
Q. I care for someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, how will the new restrictions affect them, and me?	5
Q. How does NHS Test and Trace work and how do I download the NHS app?	5
Q. What to do if you or someone you care for has symptoms of coronavirus.....	6
Q. What to do if you are contacted by NHS Test and Trace because you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus.....	6
Q. How do I know it is a genuine call/text from the Test and Trace Service?	7
Q. What information will I be asked to provide to the Test and Trace call handler/ service if I test positive for COVID-19?.....	8
Q. Is the person I care for at particular risk from Coronavirus (COVID-19)?	8
Q. What is the advice for protecting those who are 'clinically extremely vulnerable'?	9
Q. If someone I provide care for is in the 'clinically extremely vulnerable' category will they receive a letter from the NHS/GP surgery and be asked to 'shield' again?	10
Q. What has changed for those in a support bubble?	11
Q. I am not in a support bubble with my elderly parent (because my sister is) can I still pop in on her to help look after her?	11
Q. Can I visit a loved one in a residential care home after the national restrictions are in place? What advice do I need to follow?	12
Q. I am a carer living with a vulnerable adult/child and I (or they) have been advised to self-isolate at home – what should I do?.....	12
Q. How will I get food, medication and essentials if I am self-isolating?.....	13
Q. What should I do if we don't get our usual home care visit?	16
Q. What should I do if I can no longer provide care and/or my family/ friends can no longer provide help and support to me?	16
Q. What is the guidance with regards to end of life care and support?.....	16
Q The person I care for is unable to access their usual recreational activities as these are closed – can their Personal Budget be used in another way?	17
Q. I employ personal assistant support by direct payment – where can I find advice if they are unable to continue providing care due to ill-health or needing to self-isolate?	18
Q. What Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should my PA be using?	18
Q. What about family members, will they need PPE if they are providing care and support?	19
Q. Our paid carer uses personal protective equipment such as gloves and aprons – as an informal carer providing essential personal care do I need to use PPE?.....	20
Q. What if the person/s I care for lives in residential care, supported living or receives home care?.....	20
Q. How do I support someone I care for at this difficult and challenging time?	21

Q. I care for my child who has Special Educational Needs/Disability (SEND): is school a safe environment for them?.....	21
Q. The person I care for has Dementia; how can I support them through the additional challenges that the Coronavirus outbreak brings?	22
Q. The person I care for already has poor mental health; how can I support them through the additional challenges that the Coronavirus outbreak brings?	22
Q. The person I care for has a learning disability; how can I support them through the additional challenges that the Coronavirus outbreak brings?	23
Q. I care for an older person who has sight loss and/or hearing loss; how can I support them through the additional challenges that the Coronavirus outbreak brings?	23
Q. What information do I need to include in an Emergency Plan?	24
LOOK AFTER YOURSELF TOO – YOU MATTER!	24
Q. I am providing informal (unpaid) care for the first time due to Coronavirus, where can I find support?	24
Q. I am a young person helping to look after a sick or vulnerable family member for the first time because of Coronavirus, where can I find support?	25
Q. I am recently bereaved, what support is available?.....	25
Looking after your own Health and Wellbeing	27
Some simple things you may want to try.....	27
Keeping physically active	27
Protecting your mental and emotional wellbeing – some suggestions.....	28
If you need further support with your mental or emotional wellbeing	29
Q I have health problems myself, how do I keep well during the current Coronavirus pandemic?	29
BE PREPARED	30
Creating a Contingency Plan	30
Let your GP know you are a carer	30
Creating an Emergency Plan	30
The 'Red Bag' Scheme	31
Priority Services Register	31
GETTING SUPPORT IN WORK	31
Q. What support is available if I am an employee with caring responsibilities?	31
Q. What are the arrangements for employee carers needing to time off from work due to Coronavirus and will I be paid?.....	32
Q. What if I have lost my job, had my hours reduced or have been asked to take unpaid leave - can I claim benefits?	32
Q. What am I required to do if I have to take off work to self-isolate?.....	32
Q. I live with someone who is Clinically Extremely Vulnerable – is it safe for me to go to work?33	
Q. Can I take time off to look after someone I care for if they have been affected by Coronavirus?	33

Q. Do I have to go into work if my GP advises that the person/ child I care for must self-isolate and I am their only source of care?	33
Q. Can my employer furlough me if my caring role increases because other services are not available?	34
Q. Can the NHS put its staff on furlough due to caring commitments?	35
SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND SUPPORT	35
Local Sources of Support.....	35
National support for carers.....	35
Support – if you already have a mental health problem	36
Benefit Advice	36
Q I look after my mother and get Carer's Allowance, however I have had to self-isolate due to having symptoms of coronavirus and so have not been able to provide care. Will I lose my Carer's Allowance?.....	36
Q. I am a working carer and receive Tax Credits, will they change if my income has dropped due to the coronavirus situation?	37
Support with Finances	37
Q. I have heard that there is national funding available to support children with complex needs – what is it for and how can I access it to support my child who has disabilities?.....	37
Q. I have 'money worries' and need advice. What help is available?.....	38
Q How do I, or someone I care for, avoid COVID-19 related scams?	39

GUIDANCE FOR CARERS

As someone with caring responsibilities we understand that this is a difficult and uncertain time and there will no doubt be questions and concerns that you have with regards to the continuing impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) on you and your loved ones.

Given the recent announcement regarding the [New National Restrictions from 5th November](#), the Public Health team at Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) has updated their Guidance for Carers publication (COVID-19), providing a wealth of information, links and advice to support you in your caring role. It can be found as a download [here](#) on the Lincolnshire County Council Young Carers website.

If you wish to register as a carer, please contact the Lincolnshire Carers Service via the Customer Service Centre on 01522 782224. The Carers Service offers information, advice and support to carers across Lincolnshire.

We know that finding the right information when you need it can be overwhelming at times, but we are here to support you. We hope you find this updated Carer Guidance useful.

To reduce the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) new national (Lockdown) measures are in place from Thursday 5th November 2020 until Wednesday 2nd December 2020. The Government is taking the following action.

1. Requiring people to stay at home, except for specific purposes.
2. Preventing gathering with people you do not live with, except for specific purposes.
3. Closing certain businesses and venues.

General advice from the Government can be found [here](#), it is updated regularly. At the end of the 'lockdown' period, the government has stated that it will look to return to a regional approach, based on the latest data.

Please remember that whilst these are challenging times, you are not alone and support is available should you need it.

PROTECTING THOSE YOU CARE FOR

Q. How do I protect myself and my loved ones from Coronavirus?

Get the latest NHS information and advice about coronavirus on the [NHS website](#). It details what action you should take and when, including tips on staying at home, how to get a COVID test and a link to download the [NHS COVID-19 app](#).

You should minimise time spent outside your home and when around other people, ensuring that you are two metres apart from anyone not in your household or [support bubble](#). Remember - '[Hands. Face. Space](#)'. When providing care to a person with a disability or health condition who is not in your household or support bubble, it may not always be possible or practicable to maintain social distancing. You should still limit close contact as much as possible when providing care, and follow good hand and [respiratory hygiene](#) (covering mouth and nose with a tissue while coughing or sneezing, throwing tissue away, then cleaning your hands) and ensure regular cleaning, especially of frequently touched surfaces.

If you are worried that you, or someone you look after, have coronavirus symptoms:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste, then

[Get a free NHS test](#) and stay at home. If you have online access [find out about coronavirus testing](#) or if not, please ring 119. Let them know you are a carer.

Q. I care for someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, how will the new restrictions affect them, and me?

Government guidance on [How to protect clinically extremely vulnerable people](#) outlines the measures needed to protect people who have been identified as clinically extremely vulnerable. It sets out measures to protect those who are at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) from coming into contact with the virus. Whilst the guidance is not compulsory, people who are considered clinically extremely vulnerable are strongly advised to follow these extra precautionary measures to help keep themselves safe.

Those who are clinically extremely vulnerable are advised to stay at home as much as possible, except to go outdoors for exercise or to attend essential health appointments. They can meet up with one other person from outside their household or support bubble, for example, to exercise in an outdoor public place, but are advised to keep all contact with others to a minimum and avoid busy areas. They are advised to avoid shops, with arrangements in place for getting food, medicines and other essentials.

Further information on what this means in practical terms, including what assistance is available to get food, medication or other essential items, please see the [government guidance here](#) and information in the section below.

If you are clinically extremely vulnerable, or care for someone who is, or are a parent with a child who has been identified as clinically extremely vulnerable, you will receive a letter from the government. This advises the named person to work from home, and advises that clinically extremely vulnerable children and young people do not attend school or college. Your child's school will be able to make arrangements for them to be able to continue schooling at home.

Your letter is a formal notification, which you can use as evidence for your employer or the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) that you should not work outside of your home for the period stated.

Q. How does NHS Test and Trace work and how do I download the NHS app?

NHS Test and Trace:

- ensures that anyone who develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can quickly be tested to find out if they have the virus, and also includes targeted asymptomatic testing of NHS and social care staff and care home residents;
- helps trace close recent contacts of anyone who tests positive for coronavirus and, if necessary, notifies them that they must self-isolate at home to help stop the spread of the virus.

The service will allow the government to trace the spread of the virus and isolate new infections and provide an early warning if the virus is increasing again, locally or nationally. Read [how test and trace helps fight the virus](#).

People who have tested positive will receive a text, email or phone call requesting that they log into the NHS Test and Trace website to create a confidential account where they can record details about their recent close contacts.

If a person does not have access to the web, then they will be phoned by a contact tracer working for the NHS Test and Trace service. The information provided will be handled in strict confidence and will enable the NHS Test and Trace service to contact those people you have been in contact with, providing them with advice on whether they should go into self-isolation. The people contacted will not be told your identity.

See the question below regarding how you can be certain that it is a genuine communication from the Test and Trace service.

The aim of the NHS test and trace service is to control the rate of reproduction (R), reduce the spread of the infection and save lives.

The [NHS COVID-19 app](#), is available to download for free in England and Wales and is the fastest way to see if you're at risk from coronavirus. The faster you know, the quicker you can alert and protect your loved ones and the wider community.

The app has a number of tools to protect you, including contact tracing, local area alerts and venue check-in. It uses proven technology from Apple and Google, designed to protect every user's privacy.

Q. What to do if you or someone you care for has symptoms of coronavirus

1. **Isolate:** as soon as you experience coronavirus symptoms, medical advice is clear: you must self-isolate for at least 10 days. Anyone else in your household must self-isolate for 14 days from when you started having symptoms
2. **Test:** [get a free NHS test immediately to check if you have coronavirus](#) or call 119 if you have no internet access
3. **Results:** if your test is positive, you must complete the remainder of your 10-day self-isolation. Anyone in your household must also complete self-isolation for 14 days from when you started having symptoms. Failure to self-isolate for the full time-period can result in a fine, starting from £1,000. If your test is negative you will no longer be required to self-isolate, though you may wish to do so if you still feel unwell and have symptoms similar to coronavirus. If your test is negative, other household members no longer need to self-isolate.
4. **Share contacts:** if you test positive for coronavirus, NHS Test and Trace will send you a text or email alert or call you with instructions of how to share details of people with whom you have had close, recent contact and places you have visited. It is important that you respond quickly and accurately so that they can give appropriate advice to those who need it. You will be told to do this online via a secure website or you will be called by a contract tracer. If NHS Test and Trace contact tracers are unable to contact you for 24 hours, they may pass your case to your local authority to follow up by phone or in person.

Q. What to do if you are contacted by NHS Test and Trace because you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus

1. **Alert:** you will be alerted by NHS Test and Trace if you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus. The alert will usually come by text, email or phone call. You should then log on to the NHS Test and Trace website,

which is normally the easiest way for you and the service to communicate with each other – but, if not, a trained call handler will talk you through what you must do. Under-18s will get a phone call and a parent or guardian will be asked to give permission for the call to continue

2. **Isolate:** you will be told to begin self-isolation for 14 days from your last contact with the person who has tested positive. It's really important to do this even if you don't feel unwell because, if you have been infected, you could become infectious to others at any point up to 14 days. Failure to self-isolate for the full time-period can result in a fine, starting from £1,000. Your household doesn't need to self-isolate with you, if you do not have symptoms, but they must take extra care to follow the guidance on social distancing and handwashing and avoid contact with you at home
3. **Test if needed:** if you develop symptoms of coronavirus, other members of your household must self-isolate immediately at home for 14 days and you must [get a test to check if you have coronavirus](#) or call 119 if you have no internet access. If your test is positive, you must continue to stay at home for at least 10 days and Track and Trace will get in touch to ask about your contacts since they must self-isolate. If your test is negative, you must still complete your 14-day self-isolation period because the virus may not be detectable yet – this is crucial to avoid unknowingly spreading the virus.

There is additional advice for unpaid carers who are contacts of cases of coronavirus. If you are an unpaid carer notified by the NHS Test and Trace that you are a contact of a person who has tested positive for coronavirus:

- you must self-isolate for 14 days
- follow the advice in [this guidance \(NHS\)](#)
- do not provide any further care for those who are clinically extremely vulnerable and inform them, and their GP or hospital doctor, that you are a contact of a confirmed coronavirus case.

Q. How do I know it is a genuine call/text from the Test and Trace Service?

If the NHS Test and Trace service contacts you, the service will use text messages, email or phone. All texts or emails will ask you to sign into the [NHS test and trace contact-tracing website](#).

If NHS Test and Trace calls you by phone, the service will be using a single phone number to make it easy to identify it is a genuine call. The number is 0300 013 5000.

All information you provide to the NHS Test and Trace service is held in strict confidence and will only be kept and used in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Contact tracers will:

- call you from 0300 013 5000
- send you text messages from 'NHStracing'
- ask you to sign into the [NHS test and trace contact-tracing website](#)
- ask for your full name and date of birth to confirm your identity, and postcode to offer support while self-isolating
- ask about the coronavirus symptoms you have been experiencing
- ask you to provide the name, telephone number and/or email address of anyone you have had close contact with in the 2 days prior to your symptoms starting
- ask if anyone you have been in contact with is under 18 or lives outside of England

Contact tracers will never:

- ask you to dial a premium rate number to speak to them (for example, those starting 09 or 087)
- ask you to make any form of payment or purchase a product or any kind
- ask for any details about your bank account
- ask for your social media identities or login details, or those of your contacts
- ask you for any passwords or PINs, or ask you to set up any passwords or PINs over the phone
- disclose any of your personal or medical information to your contacts
- provide medical advice on the treatment of any potential coronavirus symptoms
- ask you to download any software to your PC or ask you to hand over control of your PC, smartphone or tablet to anyone else
- ask you to access any website that does not belong to the government or NHS

Q. What information will I be asked to provide to the Test and Trace call handler/ service if I test positive for COVID-19?

They will ask you:

- if you have family members or other household members living with you. If you have, then in line with medical advice they must remain in self-isolation for the rest of the 14-day period from when your symptoms began
- if you have had any close contact with anyone other than members of your household. This includes the 48 hours before you developed symptoms and the time since you developed symptoms. Close contact means:
 - having face-to-face contact with someone (less than 1 metre away)
 - spending more than 15 minutes within 2 metres of someone
 - travelling in a car or other small vehicle with someone (even on a short journey) or close to them on a plane
 - if you work in – or have recently visited – a setting with other people (for example, a GP surgery, a school or a workplace)

You will be asked to provide, where possible, the names and contact details (for example, email address, telephone number) for the people you have had close contact with. As with your own details, these will be held in strict confidence and will be kept and used only in line with data protection laws.

Q. Is the person I care for at particular risk from Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus can make anyone seriously ill. But for some people, the risk is higher. There are 2 levels of higher risk:

- high risk ('clinically extremely vulnerable')
- moderate risk ('clinically vulnerable')

The government has issued guidance about who is at increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) which can be found [here](#).

You need to be particularly careful about staying away from others if they (or you) are 70 or older (with or without medical conditions) or if they (or you) are younger than 70 and have underlying health conditions, including long-term respiratory diseases and a number of listed

chronic conditions, including a weakened immune system. See the guidance for further details.

Government guidance on [How to protect clinically extremely vulnerable people](#) outlines the measures needed to protect people who have been identified as clinically extremely vulnerable. It sets out measures to protect those who are at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) from coming into contact with the virus. All those in the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable category will receive a personal letter setting out the advice. Whilst this is not a return to the very restrictive shielding guidance in place earlier in the year, those who are extremely clinically vulnerable are strongly advised to follow the extra precautionary shielding measures set out in the guidance to help keep themselves safe.

Further information on what this means in practical terms, including what support is available please see [here](#).

There is specific government guidance if you live in a house with a vulnerable person, see the [household guidance](#)

Both of these guidance documents are intended for use in situations where people are living in their own homes, with or without additional support from friends, family and carers.

If the person you care for lives in a Residential Care setting or in Supported Living separate [government guidance is available](#). If they require (paid) Home Care Support, see the [updated government guidance](#) (more information can be found below).

Q. What is the advice for protecting those who are 'clinically extremely vulnerable'?

Government guidance on '[How to protect clinically extremely vulnerable people](#)' outlines the measures needed to protect people who have been identified as clinically extremely vulnerable.

People who are defined as clinically extremely vulnerable are at very high risk of severe illness from COVID-19. There are 2 ways you may be identified as clinically extremely vulnerable:

1. You have one or more of the conditions listed below, or
2. Your hospital clinician or GP has added you to the Shielded patients list because, based on their clinical judgement, they deem you to be at higher risk of serious illness if you catch the virus.

All those in the clinically extremely vulnerable category will receive a personal letter setting out government advice. Whilst this is not a return to the very restrictive shielding guidance in place earlier in the year, those who are extremely clinically vulnerable are strongly advised to follow the extra precautionary shielding measures set out in the guidance to help keep themselves safe.

If you think there are good clinical reasons why you should be added to the Shielded patients list but have not received a letter, discuss your concerns with your GP or hospital clinician.

Adults with the following conditions are automatically deemed clinically extremely vulnerable:

- solid organ transplant recipients
- those with specific cancers:

- people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy
- people with lung cancer who are undergoing radical radiotherapy
- people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- people having other targeted cancer treatments that can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- those with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- those with rare diseases that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID), homozygous sickle cell disease)
- those on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection
- adults with Down's syndrome
- adults on dialysis or with chronic kidney disease (stage 5)
- pregnant women with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired
- other people who have also been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable, based on clinical judgement and an assessment of their needs. GPs and hospital clinicians have been provided with guidance to support these decisions

Note that adults with Downs Syndrome and those with chronic kidney disease have recently been added to the 'clinically extremely vulnerable' list. Everyone added to the list will get a letter from the government advising them of the support available to them.

The guidance explains what additional precautions to take if the person you care for is [clinically extremely vulnerable](#). It includes practical advice for informal carers, including added measures to protect them when socialising inside and outside the home. Advice for formal (paid) carers is included in the guidance on [Supported Living Services](#) and [Provision of Home Care](#).

Q. If someone I provide care for is in the 'clinically extremely vulnerable' category will they receive a letter from the NHS/GP surgery and be asked to 'shield' again?

Government guidance on [How to protect clinically extremely vulnerable people](#) outlines the measures needed to protect people who have been identified as clinically extremely vulnerable.

All those in the clinically extremely vulnerable category will receive a personal letter setting out government advice. Whilst this is not a return to the very restrictive shielding guidance in place earlier in the year, those who are extremely clinically vulnerable are strongly advised to follow the extra precautionary shielding measures set out in the guidance to help keep themselves safe.

If they have not been informed that they are on the Shielded patients list, they should follow the [New National Restrictions from 5th November](#).

If you think there are good clinical reasons why they should be added to the Shielded patients list but have not received a letter, discuss your concerns with their GP or hospital clinician.

The advice is for clinically extremely vulnerable people to stay at home as much as possible, except to go outdoors for exercise or to attend essential health appointments. They can

meet up with one other person from outside their household or support bubble, for example, to exercise in an outdoor public place, but must do so as safely as possible, by keeping all contact with others to a minimum, avoiding busy areas and maintaining strict social distancing.

The government letter will set out how they can access support if needed in order to follow advice, for example, support to access food, medicines deliveries, advice or any additional wellbeing or practical support that may need. Only if they receive a letter are they required to do so.

Q. What has changed for those in a support bubble?

A [support bubble](#) is where a household with one adult joins with another household. Households in that support bubble can still visit each other, stay overnight, and visit outdoor public places together. Those in a support bubble will be able to continue acting as if they live in the same household, although support bubbles should still be exclusive - meaning you should not switch the household you are in a bubble with, or connect with multiple households.

You can exercise or visit outdoor public places with the people you live with, your support bubble, or 1 person from another household (children under school age, as well as those dependent on round-the-clock care, such as those with severe disabilities, who are with their parents **will not count towards the limit on two people meeting outside**).

Outdoor public places include:

- parks, beaches, countryside,
- public gardens (whether or not you pay to enter them), allotments
- playgrounds

You cannot meet in a private garden.

Q. I am not in a support bubble with my elderly parent (because my sister is) can I still pop in on her to help look after her?

Given your sister and mum have formed a [support bubble](#) they can have close contact and think of themselves as being in a single household. Once you make a support bubble, you cannot change who is in your bubble, however if your elderly mum requires caring support, in addition to that provided by your sister, under the guidance you are allowed to visit her to provide care.

Remember - '[Hands. Face. Space](#)'. When providing care to a person with a disability or health condition who is not in your household or support bubble, it may not always be possible or practicable to maintain [social distancing](#) but you should still limit close contact as much as possible when providing care, and follow good hand and [respiratory hygiene](#) (covering mouth and nose with a tissue while coughing or sneezing, throwing tissue away, then cleaning your hands) and ensure regular cleaning, especially of frequently touched surfaces.

This is critical to keeping you, your mum and wider family as safe as possible.

The guidance explains what additional precautions to take if your mum is [clinically extremely vulnerable](#).

Q. Can I visit a loved one in a residential care home after the national restrictions are in place? What advice do I need to follow?

Since March, all residential care homes will have taken steps to restrict or prevent visits to minimise the risk of Coronavirus transmission. For many, this has meant severely limiting access or no visiting allowed at all, preventing infections in care homes and protecting staff and residents. Updated government guidance (4th November) sets out how care homes can allow families and visitors to visit residents while national restrictions are in place. [See the guidance on visiting care homes while national restrictions are in place here.](#) It recognises that maintaining some opportunities for visiting to take place is critical for supporting the health and wellbeing of residents and their relationships with friends and family.

The guidance recognises that each care home is unique in its physical layout, surrounding environment and facilities and that residents vary in their needs, health and current wellbeing. For that reason, providers are seen to be best placed to decide how to deliver visits in their own setting in a way that meets the needs of their residents individually and collectively, with government support available to facilitate this.

The guidance sets out measures that can be put in place to provide COVID-secure opportunities for families to meet using visiting arrangements such as substantial screens, visiting pods, and window visits.

The particular challenges that these visiting restrictions pose for people with dementia, people with learning disabilities and autistic adults, amongst others, as well as for their loved ones are recognised. It is understandable that you feel concerned about how you can continue to support another whilst protecting both yourself and them from infection.

If you are unable to visit someone you usually care for, consider how technology might help you keep in touch and connect with them. Perhaps explore Facetime or Skype as a way to talk face to face, though at a distance.

There are apps and devices that are specifically designed with carers' needs in mind. [Jointly](#) is an innovative mobile and online app (web, iOS, Android) developed by Carers UK that is designed by carers for carers. It is designed to make caring easier, less stressful and more organised by making communication and coordination between those who share the care as easy as a text message. There is also technology that can help with particular tasks, in case you can't be around, such as managing taking medication. [Read more about different types of remote technology that is available to help](#) on the Carers UK website.

Q. I am a carer living with a vulnerable adult/child and I (or they) have been advised to self-isolate at home – what should I do?

Please follow the [PHE Stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection.](#) In short, if you have been advised to self-isolate at home, you should not care for individuals until it is safe to do so. If you have a contingency plan in place hopefully this will assist you in making alternative arrangements which may include making cover arrangements with trusted neighbours, friends or family members. If you haven't yet made a plan see Carer's UK Advice on [creating a contingency plan](#)

The Government's [Stay at home guidance](#) states that if you live with others and you are the first in the household to have symptoms of coronavirus, then you must stay at home for 10 days, but all other household members who remain well must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.

Those living with vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) are advised where possible to move them out of the home to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period. If you cannot do this, advice is to:

- Minimise as much as possible the time any vulnerable family members spend in shared spaces such as kitchens, bathrooms and sitting areas, and keep shared spaces well ventilated.
- Aim to keep 2 metres (3 steps) away from vulnerable people you live with and encourage them to sleep in a different bed where possible. If they can, they should use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household. Make sure they use separate towels from the other people in your house, both for drying themselves after bathing or showering and for hand-hygiene purposes.
- If you do share a toilet and bathroom with a vulnerable person, it is important that you clean them every time you use them (for example, wiping surfaces you have come into contact with). Another tip is to consider drawing up a rota for bathing, with the vulnerable person using the facilities first.
- If you share a kitchen with a vulnerable person, avoid using it while they are present. If they can, they should take their meals back to their room to eat. If you have one, use a dishwasher to clean and dry the family's used crockery and cutlery. If this is not possible, wash them using your usual washing up liquid and warm water and dry them thoroughly. If the vulnerable person is using their own utensils, remember to use a separate tea towel for drying these.

(Taken from [Guidance for households with grandparents, parents and children living together where someone is at increased risk or has possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#))

Q. How will I get food, medication and essentials if I am self-isolating?

If someone that you care for is Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and requires support, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-shielding-support> to register and identify the support required. This includes help with getting food, shopping deliveries, collecting medications and any additional care needed.

Those who are clinically extremely vulnerable can register themselves, or you can do it on their behalf to:

- Request priority access to supermarket delivery slots (if you have already got priority supermarket deliveries, you'll keep them).
- Tell your council if you need support in order to follow this guidance that cannot be provided by friends, family or other support networks.
- Update your details, for example, your address.

You'll be asked for your NHS number. You can find it on any letter the NHS has sent you, or on a prescription.

If you need to register your needs by phone, or have an urgent need, you should contact the Lincolnshire County Council Covid helpline on 01522 782189.

Lincolnshire County Council has a Community Help webpage where you can identify what support you require whilst you are self-isolating. Support may include shopping, dog walking

or simply a friendly chat. Use the online form [Coronavirus support - request community help](#) or alternatively, call the Lincolnshire County Council Covid helpline on 01522 782189.

Your request for support will be matched with local volunteers and community groups who are ready and willing to help.

NHS Volunteer Responders are available to support vulnerable people, including those self-isolating and carers. You can self-refer to get help with shopping, collecting prescriptions or a friendly chat – more information can be found [here](#) or call them on 0808 196 3646 (8am to 8pm, 7 days a week). Alternatively, please consider the following options if you have hearing loss:

- Their Support Team is set up to accept and utilise the [Relay UK](#) service
- [BSL Health Access](#) can connect a British Sign Language (BSL) user to support you.

Agencies such as the NHS, Local Authority, Pharmacy and Third Sector staff can also refer people who are vulnerable and require support [here](#)

Whilst Lincolnshire County Council's Community Help webpage is an excellent first point of call for those requiring support, there are a number of additional community based organisations offering practical help these include:

- Networks of **community-based support groups**

There are a number of local community-based support groups who may be able to help those who are self-isolating. [Connect 2 Support](#) has lots of information about local groups that can support you. It provides an online, telephone, email and live chat service and has a [dedicated Coronavirus Support webpage](#). Or contact them on 0300 303 8789.

In addition, search for local support at [Covid-19 Mutual Aid UK](#).

Support for shopping

If you're struggling to get your shopping due to self-isolation and are looking for a way to receive help without handing cash to volunteers, these supermarkets now have schemes in place which allow you to purchase vouchers (this can be done online)

- [Tesco](#)
- [Marks and Spencer](#)
- [Asda](#)
- [Lincolnshire Co-op](#)

For useful advice and additional suggestions on how to pay for your shopping safely, please see the [shopping schemes and access to food webpage](#) on Connect to Support.

Food Deliveries (ordered online)

Morrison's Food Boxes (all areas)

Morrison's offer a Food Box delivery of essential food and household items delivered to your door. A meat-eater and vegetarian option are available. See the webpage [Morrison Food Box webpage](#) for more information and to place an order.

Morrisons and Deliveroo

[Morrisons](#) and Deliveroo are announcing a partnership to enable customers to order from 70 essential household items from Morrisons stores for on-demand delivery.

Currently the service is available from more than 130 stores nationwide, including the Lincoln store in Lincolnshire and customers are able to order on the Deliveroo app.

Aldi food parcels

Aldi are offering a food parcel filled with 22 food and household items and even a few treats. See the webpage [Aldi food parcels](#) for more information and to place an order.

Online stores like Amazon or eBay offer food and essentials if you cannot get them delivered from the supermarket. Check the quantities and delivery dates first as there may be delays. [eBay food and drink](#)

[AmazonFresh](#) is available for Amazon Prime members to order fresh food and essentials from local shops and supermarkets. You can also find other food items, such as tea or canned goods through the main website if you're not an Amazon Prime member.

Milk & More offers a local delivery service where you can buy milk and other grocery items. [Register your interest as a new customer for Milk & More deliveries](#)

Supermarkets

The main supermarkets are looking to support vulnerable and older people by offering protected shopping time, see below for the current arrangements (as of early November):

Tesco: Elderly/vulnerable customers will be prioritised between 9am-10am every Wednesday and Sunday (browsing only). NHS and emergency services staff are allowed to go to the front of the queue at all times.

Morrison's: Have introduced an NHS hour at all of its stores Monday to Saturday from 6am-7am and between 9am-9.30am on Sundays. Many of their stores provide individual in-store support to elderly/vulnerable customers (using volunteers).

Sainsbury: The elderly, disabled and carers can shop between 8am-9am on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. NHS and social care workers will be able to shop 30 minutes before supermarkets open, from 7.30am-8am, Monday to Saturday.

Marks and Spencer: Elderly/vulnerable people can shop for the first hour of the day once doors are open on Mondays and Thursdays. Opening times of stores vary so check at www.marksandspencer.com/stores. For NHS and emergency workers, it is Tuesday and Friday (but only if there is a queue).

Waitrose: The first opening hour on Monday, Wednesday and Friday will be prioritised for elderly and vulnerable shoppers (this may vary by store). See [opening hours here](#). NHS staff and social care workers have priority at all other times.

Asda: NHS workers have priority queuing on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8am-9am and priority entry for browsing on a Sunday from 9am-10am.

Aldi: Elderly and vulnerable customers get access 30mins before opening Monday - Saturday. To find your local store opening times please visit the [Store Finder](#) page. NHS and emergency workers get priority in queues and also 30mins early access before tills open on Sunday.

Co-op: Elderly and vulnerable customers and key workers get prioritised shopping Monday - Saturday 8am-9am and Sunday 10am-11am.

Lidl: The webpage [here](#) details measures in-store that will support vulnerable shoppers/ carers including if there is a queue at the entrance of the store and you have difficulty queuing, you can make yourself known to the security guard or member of the team at the front who will give you priority entry.

Many home delivery and 'click and collect' deliveries are now booked weeks ahead, however many of the major supermarkets are taking action to continue to prioritise online deliveries for elderly and vulnerable customers. This includes contacting those customers who have

previously identified themselves as elderly or vulnerable, as well as supporting those on the 'clinically extremely vulnerable' list that the government shared with retailers earlier this year (those who required 'shielding').

For additional, up-to-date information on additional sources of support, please visit Lincolnshire County Council's [Community Help and Volunteering webpage](#).

Prescriptions

Consider alternative ways of getting prescriptions to the person you care for. You could sign up to a repeat prescription delivery service if the person you care for is reliant on regular prescription medication. For further information and to check if your GP surgery uses this service see [Free online prescription service \(NHS\)](#)

Q. What should I do if we don't get our usual home care visit?

In the first instance, please contact the care provider to make them aware that your usual home care arrangements have been disrupted so they can try and resolve the situation. If they are unable to help, please contact your named Adult Care key worker, as relevant. If after following this advice the situation remains unresolved, please contact the Adult Care advice line on 01522 782155. If this is not possible, please ask friends and family for help or consider contacting community/voluntary groups.

Q. What should I do if I can no longer provide care and/or my family/ friends can no longer provide help and support to me?

If you are unable to continue providing care, either as a result of your own physical ill-health or needing to self-isolate, or caring for another is adversely affecting your own health and wellbeing, please be reassured that support is available. If you can no longer provide care, please refer to your contingency plan, which may include asking friends and family for informal help, for example, if you are self-isolating.

If you are unable to do this, please contact the Adult Care team advice line on 01522 782155 for advice.

You may already have signed up to the [Lincolnshire Carers Emergency Response Service \(CERS\)](#) which supports you if an unplanned situation occurs that prevents you from carrying out your caring role – if so, in the event of an emergency (such as you being admitted into hospital), please see the information and 24-hour contact details provided on your personalised CERS card and keyring. Your card will have a unique identity number that links to your emergency plan. To activate the service, call the phone number on the card and quote the identity number. For further information about this service please see <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/support-carers/create-emergency-response-plan>

Q. What is the guidance with regards to end of life care and support?

The government published [Coronavirus Action Plan for Adult Social Care](#) recognising that people in care homes and their families should be involved, as much as possible, in decisions about their health and care, including end of life care. Anyone nearing the end of their life should be offered the opportunity and supported, if they wish, to develop advance care planning that make their wishes clear, and to make arrangements, such as lasting power of attorney for health and social care decisions, to put their affairs in order. [This must always be a personalised process](#).

While most care homes and hospices currently do not allow visitors, the guidance makes clear that visits at the end of life are important both for the individual and their loved ones and should continue. The [guidance has set out steps care homes should take to ensure appropriate infection control](#) during these visits.

Please discuss with the care home or hospice any concerns or worries that you may have and how and in what circumstances you will be able to visit your loved one, if they are receiving end of life care. You may want to look at [Marie Curie's guidance on End of Life care during Coronavirus](#).

If you are supporting a loved one with end of life care at home, Hospice UK is the national charity for hospice and palliative care and can provide advice and support to you at this really difficult time. There is valuable and useful advice about [caring for someone dying at home](#) on the Hospice UK website, as well as guidance written specifically to support people who are caring for someone who is dying at home from Coronavirus [here](#).

[Read the Hospice UK guidance](#) which includes detailed practical tips for home care with links to other information and useful websites.

[Cruse Bereavement Care](#) offer support, advice and information when someone dies. They have lots of resources to help deal with grief and bereavement including coping with grieving in isolation, dealing with your own and others emotions and more practical advice around funerals and planning.

Q The person I care for is unable to access their usual recreational activities as these are closed – can their Personal Budget be used in another way?

In April 2020, Lincolnshire County Council wrote to all individuals in receipt of a Personal Budgets via Direct Payment to advise on what you can do if the usual support, including day care/recreational activities, etc. are not presently available.

Everybody who receives their care and support as a direct payment should have an up to date contingency plan, which sets out how/where support might come from should normal care and support not be available. It is reassuring to have a plan in place that is reviewed and updated regularly, so that in these types of situations a person's care and support needs can continue to be met.

A contingency plan should include:

- **Staffing** – identify options for alternative arrangements if the person/s employed via a direct payment cannot work in their usual way. For Personal Assistants, longer shift patterns and less frequent handovers could also be considered- taking into account any additional pressures this may place on the individual.
- **Alternative provision** – when elements of the care and support are unable to be delivered, the use of other avenues should be explored
- **Alternative networks of support** –details of extended family and/or friends and/or volunteers may need to be considered as part of any emergency contingency plan to keep safe and avoid acute admission, so that people can stay at home. Be mindful that information, advice and training may be needed.

- **Upskilling of existing staff** – identify what possible additional training or support there is for existing staff members. This does not necessarily have to be through face to face training- it could be through peer learning or e-learning.

If support is required in developing the contingency plan, please contact the allocated worker in the first instance or if there is no named worker, please contact LCC's Customer Service Centre on 01522 782155 for advice.

Those usually using their Personal Budget to pay for recreational/leisure activities, might be supported to use it creatively in alternative ways to meet their needs, examples might include

- purchasing a tablet to watch online relaxation/exercise classes whilst the leisure centre is closed
- Paying for membership of a music or film streaming service (like Spotify or Amazon) that enables you to access music/films whilst you are unable to go to concerts or the cinema

If you have queries relating to the use of personal budgets and there is an allocated worker, please contact them in the first instance or if you don't have an allocated worker, you can contact LCC's Direct Payment support line on 01522 555027.

Q. I employ personal assistant support by direct payment – where can I find advice if they are unable to continue providing care due to ill-health or needing to self-isolate?

Personal assistants, like everyone else, must follow the guidance to stay home and self-isolate if they, or members of their family, have symptoms of Coronavirus or if they are in the shielded group. This means that there may be a significant increase in staff absences rates, creating workforce shortages, meaning that the continuity of care usually provided is adversely affected. If this happens and you receive direct payments and have a personal assistant, you should contact your named Adult Care key worker contact in the first instance for advice.

Alternatively, if you employ someone to provide care/support and they are unable to continue to carry out this work due to ill-health/needing to self-isolate, you can contact the Penderels Trust for advice on 01526 833803, including accessing support via their Personal Assistant finder.

You should refer to your contingency plan and if you are receiving Direct Payment Support remember you can be flexible with your Direct Payment to buy alternative agency/personal assistant support. This may include, in some circumstances, paying for a relative or trusted neighbour/friend to provide support.

Alternatively, it may be that you can ask friends and family for informal help.

If you don't have a named contact and the situation is unresolved, please contact the Adult Care team advice line on 01522 782155.

Q. What Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should my PA be using?

The following information presumes that care is taking place in a household setting. If you are receiving Personal Assistant (PA) support in another setting please find the relevant guidance at [COVID-19: infection prevention and control \(IPC\)](#).

PA's should use the guidance from Public Health England (PHE) when determining what PPE is appropriate to wear. See the [guidance for domiciliary \(homecare\)](#) which provides information on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in a home care setting. This includes paid care workers and providers delivering care to in the following settings:

- visiting homecare
- extra care housing
- live-in homecare

The guidance clearly sets out what PPE equipment is required in what situations and applies to all providing domiciliary care, whatever their role (Personal Assistant, Cleaner, Support/Care Worker, etc.)

Note that PPE is only effective when worn properly, put on and taken off safely and combined with hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene and following standard infection prevention and control precautions ([see NICE guidance here](#)).

In addition, there is separate guidance for those [providing support to people with learning disabilities or autistic people in domiciliary care \(homecare\)](#) as well as [case scenarios for care workers delivering homecare](#).

Q. What about family members, will they need PPE if they are providing care and support?

As an informal carer *if neither of you is symptomatic of Coronavirus*, then no personal protective equipment is required above and beyond the good hygiene practices detailed on the [NHS website](#). The [Stay at home guidance](#) provides information on washing your hands, cleaning and disposing of waste, and cleaning laundry, as well as other information for those living with a vulnerable person.

If you or the person you care for display symptoms of Coronavirus, see the government advice for carers [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): providing unpaid care](#) for detailed advice of what actions and protective measures you should be taking. In short, it encourages all unpaid carers and family members looking after loved ones to continue to follow the general hygiene guidance provided by the government, including washing their hands and cleaning frequently used surfaces.

It includes advice on:

- Caring for someone who is clinically 'extremely vulnerable';
- What to do if you, or the person you care for, has symptoms and you are not in a clinically 'vulnerable group' or clinically 'extremely vulnerable group';
- What to do if the person you care for has symptoms and you are in a clinically 'vulnerable group';

- What to do if the person you care for has symptoms and you are in a clinically 'extremely vulnerable group';
- If you are a carer and you have symptoms.

Please see the guidance [here](#) and familiarise yourself with the [Stay at home guidance](#).

Q. Our paid carer uses personal protective equipment such as gloves and aprons – as an informal carer providing essential personal care do I need to use PPE?

Care home providers routinely use personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, face masks and aprons as part of COVID infection control protocols. Adult social care providers are being provided with PPE to support compliance with government advice.

As an informal carer *if neither of you is symptomatic of Coronavirus*, then no personal protective equipment is required above and beyond the good hygiene practices detailed on the [NHS website](#). The [Stay at home guidance](#) provides information on washing your hands, cleaning and disposing of waste, and cleaning laundry, with [separate guidance for those living with a vulnerable person](#) who is at increased risk of, or has possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

If you or the person you care for display symptoms of Coronavirus, see the government advice for carers [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): providing unpaid care](#) for detailed advice of what actions and protective measures you should be taking.

It includes advice on:

- Caring for someone who is clinically 'extremely vulnerable';
- What to do if you, or the person you care for, has symptoms and you are not in a clinically 'vulnerable group' or clinically 'extremely vulnerable group';
- What to do if the person you care for has symptoms and you are in a clinically 'vulnerable group';
- What to do if the person you care for has symptoms and you are in a clinically 'extremely vulnerable group';
- If you are a carer and you have symptoms.

Please see the guidance [here](#).

Q. What if the person/s I care for lives in residential care, supported living or receives home care?

The Government has published guidance on [Supported Living Services](#) and [Provision of Home Care](#).

The [Supported Living](#) guidance sets out:

- key messages to assist with planning and preparation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic so that local procedures can be put in place to minimise risk and provide the best possible support to people in supported living settings
- safe systems of working including, social distancing, respiratory and hand hygiene and enhanced cleaning

- how infection prevention and control (IPC) and personal protective equipment (PPE) applies to supported living settings

The [Provision of Home Care](#) guidance brings together guidance for social care staff, registered providers, local authorities and commissioners who support and deliver care to people in their own homes in England.

It covers:

- personal protective equipment
- clinically extremely vulnerable people and care groups
- hospital discharge and testing
- government support for social care
- information collection and governance

Both documents set out the measures being taken to maintain delivery of care for those receiving paid-for or lived-in care, detailing a range of measures in place that support care providers to reduce the transmission of Coronavirus.

Q. How do I support someone I care for at this difficult and challenging time?

Ensure that you are familiar with the government advice which is regularly updated and added to. General government advice is [here](#). Guidance for carers can be found here [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): providing unpaid care](#). The carers guidance was last updated in August and is "*for anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who, due to a lifelong condition, illness, disability, serious injury, a mental health condition or an addiction, cannot cope without their support*".

Government guidance on [How to protect clinically extremely vulnerable people](#) outlines the measures needed to protect people who have been identified as clinically extremely vulnerable. It sets out measures to protect those who are at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) from coming into contact with the virus. Whilst the guidance is not compulsory, people who are considered clinically extremely vulnerable are strongly advised to follow these extra precautionary measures to help keep themselves safe.

Any paid care workers, cleaners or other helpers coming into the home of the person you care for will need to ensure that they are following stringent hygiene and infection control measures as set out by the NHS. If they are employed through an agency and you have any doubts, contact the agency to ask them about what protective measures they are taking.

If you are the only carer then support and guidance is available should you have specific questions or queries. Contact details of organisations that can help are provided in the section below.

Q. I care for my child who has Special Educational Needs/Disability (SEND): is school a safe environment for them?

[Guidance for full opening: schools](#) applies to primary, secondary (including sixth forms), post-16 academies and school-based nurseries. The guidance also covers expectations for children with special educational needs and disability (SEND), including those with education, health and care plans, in mainstream schools.

Separate government guidance is available for [special schools and other specialist settings](#).

Both sets of guidance are due to be reviewed; updated guidance is imminent.

It is advised that children and young people with existing health conditions have a very low risk of becoming very unwell from COVID-19. If your child has previously been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable, you are advised to speak to your child's specialist doctor or GP if you have not already done so, to understand whether your child should still be included in this category.

Those children whose doctors have confirmed they are still clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend school whilst this advice is in place. You will receive a letter from the government addressed personally to you. The letter advises that they do not attend school or college. Your child's school will be able to make arrangements for them to be able to continue schooling at home.

Your letter is a formal notification, which you can use as evidence for your employer or the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) that you are advised to follow shielding guidance and should not work outside of your home for the period stated.

Government advice is that children who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves, should still attend school.

Q. The person I care for has Dementia; how can I support them through the additional challenges that the Coronavirus outbreak brings?

If you support someone living with Dementia (either in the same household or from a distance) you may be finding the Coronavirus outbreak particularly challenging. Government advice on [Guidance on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of Coronavirus](#) provides useful information and contact numbers.

Advice and practical tips from the [Alzheimer's Society](#) can be found in the links below:

- [Coronavirus: Supporting a person with dementia at home](#)
- [Coronavirus: Activity ideas for people living with dementia](#)
- [Coronavirus: Support for a person with dementia living alone](#)
- [Coronavirus: Supporting a person with dementia from a distance](#)
- [Coronavirus: Frequently asked questions \(FAQs\)](#)
- [Coronavirus: Other useful organisations and information](#)

If you'd like to connect and talk with other people affected by dementia, you can visit the Alzheimer's Society online community [Talking Point](#). If you are still feeling worried and want 1:1 support you can call the [Alzheimer's Society Helpline](#) on 0333 150 3456.

You can also speak to a dementia specialist Admiral Nurse on [Dementia UK's Helpline](#) on 0800 888 6678 or email helpline@dementiauk.org. The Helpline is open seven days a week, 9am-9pm Monday to Friday and 9am-5pm on weekends.

Q. The person I care for already has poor mental health; how can I support them through the additional challenges that the Coronavirus outbreak brings?

[COVID-19: guidance for the public on mental health and wellbeing](#) provides advice and information on how to look after your mental health and wellbeing during the coronavirus

outbreak. It includes additional advice for groups with specific mental health needs, including anxiety and dementia.

If you support someone who has an existing mental health problem, then they may be finding the Coronavirus outbreak particularly challenging. MIND has published [comprehensive guidance](#) to support you. Rethink has also created an [online hub](#) to provide practical support and information that is useful for people living with or supporting people with mental illness. Please also see contact details for a range of national and local support organisations in the 'Additional Support' section below.

Q. The person I care for has a learning disability; how can I support them through the additional challenges that the Coronavirus outbreak brings?

The person you support may be finding the Coronavirus outbreak stressful. They may be worried about changes that might happen because of it, including having to stay at home, or may be worried about themselves, you or wider family members getting ill.

Public Health England has published [easy read guidance](#) on Coronavirus which it might be a good idea to talk through. There is also other information available about Coronavirus from [Mencap](#) as well as helpful advice from Skills for Health on how to [manage and talk about difficult feelings](#), such as anxiety, frustration or stress.

See government advice on [Guidance on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of Coronavirus](#) which has additional information to support those with a learning disability, including Autism. In addition, it recently updated its [COVID-19: providing unpaid care to adults with learning disabilities and autistic adults](#) guidance.

Q. I care for an older person who has sight loss and/or hearing loss; how can I support them through the additional challenges that the Coronavirus outbreak brings?

People with sight loss, hearing loss, or both (Dual Sensory Impairment - DSI) may struggle to communicate including difficulties using the telephone, reading, watching TV, listening to a radio or using the internet. Older people living in their own homes, who usually enjoy the support of family, friends or carers, may find that the usual support they have had has masked or softened the impact of such problems. Coronavirus can mean that normal safety nets, and the support from others, have been taken away. For many older people, they may now realise the impacts of this on their daily lives. This means that they may not be able to easily access information, updates and guidance about COVID-19 from the Government or local authority. They may struggle to maintain two-way communication such as asking for help or to arrange services.

You can contact the [Lincolnshire Carers Service](#) who will be able to provide compassionate and understanding support. You can contact them 01522 782224 or email them at carerservice@lincolnshire.gov.uk or click on the link above to find out further information.

[Hi-VisUK](#) provides information and resources designed to help those supporting or caring for an older person with Dual Sensory Impairment (DSI) during the Coronavirus outbreak. The information includes guides and free online learning that will help you quickly understand the impacts of DSI and the extra challenges brought about by Coronavirus. Please see the [free guides here](#).

Q. What information do I need to include in an Emergency Plan?

All carers are advised to create an emergency plan with the person they care for, to use in circumstances where help from other people to deliver care may be needed. Depending on the circumstances, this could be help from family or friends, or a care provider.

In order to create an emergency plan that fits the needs of the person you care for, you will need to set out:

- the name and address and any other contact details of the person you look after
- who you and the person you look after would like to be contacted in an emergency
- details of any medication the person you look after is taking
- details of any ongoing treatment they need
- details of any medical appointments they need to keep

You should also ensure that it is in a format that can be easily shared with other people who will need to discuss the plan with the person you care for. Further information can be found at [Carers UK](#).

You may be able to arrange help and support from family and friends, but it can be reassuring to have the involvement of your local authority or healthcare provider in case informal arrangements fall through.

[Lincolnshire Carers Emergency Response Service](#) (CERS) can help if you are suddenly unable to provide care for someone. It is a free service. If an emergency occurs, it will provide emergency (time-limited) social care services for you loved one. The service can also help you to prepare an emergency care plan if you are unable to care for them. See [here](#) for website information or email carersservice@lincolnshire.gov.uk or, alternatively, call them on 01522 782224.

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF TOO – YOU MATTER!

The Coronavirus outbreak is having a considerable impact on everyone's daily lives, but it can be particularly difficult for those with caring responsibilities. Whilst supporting and caring for others can be rewarding, it can also at times be isolating, overwhelming and physically and emotionally tiring. We hope you will find the information and links below useful. Please remember these are difficult and challenging times, you are not alone and support is available if you need it.

Q. I am providing informal (unpaid) care for the first time due to Coronavirus, where can I find support?

It is recognised that that the COVID-19 pandemic means that family members and/or those close to them are, perhaps for the first time, taking on unpaid caring roles. In addition, social distancing requirements mean that many unpaid carers are providing higher levels of support than they normally would and, at the same time, access to respite care is limited.

The government has published [guidance to support unpaid carers](#) which provides advice on limiting the risk of COVID-19 infection, and what to do if it occurs.

Carers FIRST deliver the **Lincolnshire Carers Service** in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council's Customer Service Centre, supporting people who look after a relative or friend who due to ill health, physical or mental illness, disability, frailty, or addiction cannot manage without their support.

They provide information, advice, guidance, emotional support, training and activities, giving carers an opportunity to have a break from their caring role and help them to get the support they need.

To make a **new carer referral** contact Lincolnshire Customer Service Centre on 01522 782224.

Find local peer support at the [Carers FIRST online forum](#).

If you are a Young Carer (that is, you are up to 25 years old and provide unpaid care to a family member living with long-term illness or disability), see the separate section below for resources tailored to support you.

Other useful links to sources of local and national information and support include:

- Carers pages on [LCC Connects](#)
- Carers pages on [Connect to Support](#)
- [Digital Resource for Carers](#)
- Link to national resources and support at [Carer's UK Help and Advice](#)
- Find UK wide peer support at the [Carers UK national online forum](#)

Q. I am a young person helping to look after a sick or vulnerable family member for the first time because of Coronavirus, where can I find support?

It is recognised that that the Coronavirus outbreak means that family members, including young people, are perhaps for the first time having to care and support other family members, especially those who are ill, vulnerable or having to self-isolate.

This support might include practical help with cooking, housework, shopping or collecting prescriptions, but it might include providing emotional support for those family members with mental health conditions who are finding the current situation difficult and stressful. Whatever support you are providing, remember that you are not alone and support is available if you need it.

If you are a Young Carer (that is, you are up to 25 years old and are providing unpaid care to a family member living with long-term illness or disability), you may want to look at Lincolnshire County Council's [Young Carer support webpage](#). It provides a range of information, links and resources that you may find useful and is regularly updated. You can also call the Young Carers service on 01522 553275 or email them at youngcarers@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Government guidance for Unpaid Carers provides information and advice relevant to carers of all ages and can be found [here](#).

Q. I am recently bereaved, what support is available?

Whenever the loss of a friend or loved one happens, it can be an extremely difficult and challenging time. This is likely to be even more so for those experiencing bereavement and grief during the COVID-19 pandemic. You may struggle with the shock, not just of the bereavement but that the social distancing measures mean that you aren't able to say

goodbye in the way that you would have wanted. This can be particularly hard if you are isolating alone, making it harder to connect with your usual support networks.

[Cruse Bereavement Care](#) offer support, advice and information when someone dies. They have lots of resources to help deal with grief and bereavement including coping with grieving in isolation, dealing with your own and others emotions and more practical advice around funerals and planning.

The government has published guidance for those who have lost someone during the COVID-19 pandemic. The information is applicable to both COVID-19 deaths and deaths from other causes. The [Support for the Bereaved Guidance](#) complements the information on ['What to do when someone dies'](#).

This guidance provides detailed information to support bereaved families, friends or next of kin in making decisions and arrangements in this unprecedented time. It covers some of the different situations and emotions bereaved people may have to deal with and guides you to the help and support that is available.

To stop the spread of coronavirus, current [government advice on safe funerals](#) says only close family members and people who lived with the person who died should go to their funeral. The current restrictions mean that many people are unable to attend funerals, cremations and wakes. This can be very distressing and for many people, maybe yourself, they are unable to say goodbye in the way they would like. Support and advice is available, remember you are not alone, please consider contacting one of the bereavement support organisations who are there to help and support you.

Bereavement Helpline Support (free helplines)

- At a local level, please call [St Barnabas Bereavement Counsellors](#) on a special helpline for those isolating and dealing with the death of a loved one. Contact them on 0300 303 1897. It is open five days a week from 9am to 5pm and two evenings a week (not specified)
- Call the national [NHS Bereavement helpline](#) on 0800 2600 400. It is open every day from 8am to 8pm.
- [Cruse Bereavement Care](#) has a national freephone Helpline call 0808 808 1677. Opening hours are Monday-Friday 9.30-5pm (excluding bank holidays), with extended hours until 8pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings.
- [The Compassionate Friends](#) offer support to families after the death of a child of any age and from any cause. Call the helpline on 0345 123 2304. Open every day of the year from 10am-4pm and from 7pm-10pm.

For online sources of bereavement advice and support see:

- [St Barnabas webpage for bereavement support](#)
- [NHS information and support on bereavement](#)
- [Government step-by-step guidance after a bereavement](#)
- [Cruse Bereavement Care](#) has resources on how bereavement and grief may be affected by this pandemic and [how to support children through the outbreak](#).

- [At a Loss](#) provides signposting and services across the UK, as well as online counselling services.
- [The Good Grief Trust](#) is a national charity 'run by the bereaved for the bereaved'.
- [The Compassionate Friends](#) offer support to families after the death of a child of any age and from any cause.
- [Childhood Bereavement Network](#) has information and links to national and local support organisations.
- LGBT specific support (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) is available from:
 - [Switchboard](#) - a listening service for LGBT people on the phone, by email and through instant messaging
 - [MindOut](#) - advocacy and online support services for improving the mental health and wellbeing of LGBT communities
 - [LGBT Foundation](#) - offers counselling and befriending, as well as a helpline
- Mencap guide for dealing with bereavement [available for download here.](#)
- 'A Guide for Carers: Bereavement and Learning Disabilities', written by Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS [available for download here.](#)
- Developed by Beyond Words – an illustrated resource, aimed at family and carers, on 'How to respond when somebody dies from Coronavirus'. [Available for download here.](#)

Looking after your own Health and Wellbeing

Having responsibility for the welfare of others during this time of uncertainty brings added pressure and worry and it's easy to forget your own health and wellbeing. Keeping yourself physically well and supporting your mental and emotional wellbeing is not only important for you, but it also helps the person you look after too.

Remember that you can still speak to your own GP if you have health issues or concern, don't put off contacting them, they are there to support you. Most GP practices have stopped or restricted access to seeing a GP in person, to reduce infection spread and risk. However, this does not mean that accessing advice or expert care will be compromised, just that the consultation is likely to be done differently. Most appointments with a GP, nurse or other healthcare professional will now be via phone call, or by a video call using your smartphone, tablet or computer if they need to see you.

If you have not had a video call before or are unsure how it works, it is an easy process and you can read about GP online consultations [on the NHS website here](#), or watch the video to find out how it works.

[COVID-19: guidance for the public on mental health and wellbeing](#) provides advice and information on how to look after your mental health and wellbeing during the coronavirus outbreak. An [Easy Read Guide](#) is also available.

Some simple things you may want to try

There are simple things you can do that will help you to stay mentally and physically active during this time (even if you are having to self-isolate) such as:

Keeping physically active

Finding the time, money or energy to get active can be hard at the best of times. Now it feels more important than ever to look after yourself – self-care is essential, not a luxury!

In a [recent Care UK report](#), many carers said that it is not always easy to do physical activity but that they would like to do more. If you are one of them, support is at hand. There are lots of simple and free ways to become more active and these activities can be fitted into your day, as and when you get the chance, alongside your caring. Don't feel guilty if you don't have much time to dedicate to yourself at the moment or if you're not able to follow your usual activity routine. Every minute counts - doing some physical activity is good, but if you can do more that's even better!

[One You Lincolnshire](#) is a good place to start in supporting you to become fitter and healthier. Whether it's losing weight or improving your overall fitness, there's a range of free virtual group sessions now available. All support and services are delivered supportively and confidentially. Sign up at <https://www.oneyoulincolnshire.org.uk/lincolnshire-residents> .

[Carers UK](#) offer easy to follow tips and advice for keeping active and well. See [here](#) for full details, including [six ideas for getting active whilst staying at home or nearby](#).

You might want to try the free, easy [10 minute work outs](#) from Public Health England or other exercise videos to try at home on the [NHS Fitness Studio](#). Sport England also has [good tips for keeping active at home](#).

Remember, whilst the [new restrictions](#) mean that you can't meet in a private garden from 5th November, you can still exercise or visit outdoor public places with the people you live with, your support bubble, or 1 person from another household (children under school age, as well as those dependent on round-the-clock care, such as those with severe disabilities, who are with their parents will not count towards the limit on two people meeting outside).

Outdoor public places include:

- parks, beaches, countryside,
- public gardens (whether or not you pay to enter them) and allotments
- playgrounds

The Ordnance Survey and Natural England have published [Getting Outside during Covid-19 website](#) to bring together current advice from government, councils and other outdoor organisations, to help you enjoy the outdoors safely. You can search by activity and location to help you decide where to go and what to do.

Protecting your mental and emotional wellbeing – some suggestions

[Carers UK](#) suggests creating a wellbeing action plan to help both you and those you care for look after yourselves and protect your mental wellbeing. It might include:

- Combat any rising anxiety levels by setting a strict time limit on how much you read about coronavirus on social media and in the news. Only follow the advice of trusted sources such as the [Gov.UK](#) and [NHS](#) websites. If you are looking for general COVID help and advice, you can visit [Lincolnshire County Council's Coronavirus support and services](#). In addition, please take a look at the resources and information on the dedicated Lincolnshire County Council [Carers webpage](#).
- Try to stay connected and keep in touch with your friends and family, by telephone, email or social media. There are people you can speak to via [NHS recommended helplines](#) if you feel you need emotional support, or you could find local, online or national support groups to connect with. See our Support section below for more details.

- Allocate a time slot in your day for an activity you enjoy – it might be reading, cooking, knitting, crafts or listening to the radio or watching TV programmes.
- Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water, exercise regularly, and try to avoid smoking, alcohol and drugs.
- Try to find moments for yourself – exercising mindfulness, even just by listening to music, is a great way to find calmness and peace of mind.
- Try to get outside for a walk and breathe of fresh air. If you have to stay inside, keep your windows open to let in fresh air, or just stepping outside the door for a few minutes can be beneficial. Spending time in green spaces can benefit both your mental and physical wellbeing.
- Look after your sleep: feeling anxious or worried can make it harder to get a good night's sleep. Good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how you feel mentally and physically, so try to maintain regular sleeping patterns and keep good sleep hygiene practices – like avoiding screens before bed, cutting back on caffeine and creating a restful environment. The [Every Mind Matters sleep page](#) provides practical advice on how to improve your sleep.

If you need further support with your mental or emotional wellbeing

Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (LPFT) has set up a new helpline providing free and confidential emotional support across Lincolnshire. The helpline is available 24/7 to provide emotional support, advice and guidance if you are feeling low, anxious or stressed and think you might benefit from speaking to someone - Call 0800 001 4331

You can contact [Lincolnshire Carers Service \(Carers FIRST\)](#) who will be able to provide compassionate and understanding support. You can contact them 01522 782224 or email them at carerservice@lincolnshire.gov.uk or click on the link above to find out further information. Please do not be afraid to ask for help or support, they are there to support you and you will not be judged.

If you are experiencing stress, feelings of anxiety or low mood, you can use the [NHS mental health and wellbeing advice website](#) for self-assessment, audio guides and practical tools. [Every Mind Matters](#) provides simple tips and advice to start taking better care of your mental health. In addition, the [Mental Health Foundation](#) has published a useful guide on how to look after your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak. Click [here](#) to access their resources and factsheets.

If you are still struggling after several weeks and it is affecting your daily life, please contact [NHS 111 online](#). If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111.

Q I have health problems myself, how do I keep well during the current Coronavirus pandemic?

It is important to remember that the [NHS](#) remains open during COVID-19 and is there to treat you if you need it.

Remember, you can still phone your GP's surgery but DO NOT go to the surgery unless requested by your doctor.

For urgent medical help use the [NHS 111](#) web site, or call 111 if you can't use the online service. For life threatening emergencies – call 999

If you are advised to go to hospital, including attending appointments/scans it's important to go (unless you have coronavirus symptoms). Infection control procedures will be being strictly adhered to so don't let the fear of catching Coronavirus make you miss essential appointments. There may be changes to the way that your appointment takes place, including the use of video chats/phone calls. It might feel unfamiliar to you but be reassured that your care won't be compromised.

If you want advice on self-managing your long term conditions during Coronavirus, your GP surgery is there to give you advice. In addition, there is also excellent advice online including:

- [NHS](#) (includes an A-Z guide of medical conditions, symptoms and treatments, including advice on what to do and when to get help)
- [10 tips if you are worried about Coronavirus](#) (NHS advice)
- [British Heart Foundation](#) (if you have a heart or circulatory condition, or you care for someone who does, and would like to speak to someone about Coronavirus, you can call their Heart Helpline on 0300 330 3300, or email them hearthelpline@bhf.org.uk)
- [Diabetes UK](#) or call the [Diabetes UK Helpline](#) on 0345 123 2399 (Mon-Friday from 9am to 6pm) for specialist information and advice with regards to living with diabetes.
- [Stroke Association](#)
- [Alzheimer's Society](#)
- [Macmillan Cancer Support](#)
- [Arthritis Action](#)

It is more important than ever to get your flu jab this year. You can help protect the NHS, yourself and those you care for by getting the flu vaccine – the single most effective way to prevent getting the flu and protect those close to you Those receiving carer's allowance, or who are the main carer for an older or disabled person are eligible for a no-charge flu vaccination. See NHS.UK [for full information](#).

BE PREPARED

Creating a Contingency Plan

Make sure that you have an up-to-date contingency plan in place in case you are unable to carry out your caring responsibilities and, if you can, make cover arrangements with trusted neighbours, friends or family members. See Carer's UK Advice on [creating a contingency plan](#)

Let your GP know you are a carer

Make sure your GP/medical professionals know that you are a carer or that the person you look after has a carer. Ask for this to be added to your GP's 'Carers Register'. For information on how to do this, please see Carer First's guidance on their [Let your GP know](#) webpage.

Creating an Emergency Plan

[Lincolnshire Carers Emergency Response Service](#) aims to provide reassurance to carers if an unplanned situation occurs which means you cannot fulfil your caring role.

An emergency plan puts in place a contingency that will detail what you and the person you care for want to happen in the event that you are unexpectedly unable to continue in your caring role.

Further information about the Carers Emergency Response Service, including how to set it up, is available on the Lincolnshire County Council [Carers website](#).

The 'Red Bag' Scheme

For those living in residential care homes, the “Red Bag” initiative supports quick and effective transfer and treatment when being taken to and from hospital. The red bag contains general health information, including any existing medical conditions; medication information and personal belongings (such as clothes for day of discharge, glasses, hearing aid and dentures). The scheme supports patient centred care and improves efficiency in the admission and discharge process. Ask if the care provider has signed up to the scheme.

For those living at home, it is useful to prepare a single hospital bag for the person you look after. This should include their emergency contact, a list of the types of medication they take (including dose and frequency), any details of planned care appointments and things you would need for an overnight stay (snacks, pyjamas, toothbrush, medication etc.). If they have an advanced care plan, please include that. You could also prepare one for yourself if you feel that you are [at higher risk from coronavirus](#)

Priority Services Register

Ensure to let your energy supplier know, if you haven't already, if the person you care for is vulnerable, of pensionable age, has a disability or long-term medical condition. Each energy supplier keeps a [Priority Services Register](#) of people who may need additional assistance and it's free to be added to the list. Gas and electricity suppliers have agreed an emergency package of measures to ensure vulnerable people do not get cut off amid a Coronavirus virus outbreak.

For those self-isolating from Coronavirus due to an age or an underlying health condition, or if you are identified as being in one of the high risk groups, Anglian Water encourage you to join their [Priority Services Register](#) part of their WaterCare services. See <http://www.anglianwater.co.uk/coronavirus> for further information.

GETTING SUPPORT IN WORK

If you are a working carer, consider speaking with your line manager (if you haven't already) so s/he has a better understanding of the present demands on you and can support and advise you if you need to take off from work. See the section below for support as a working carer. See government [Guidance for employees](#) which sets out what your rights are at work, what benefits you are entitled to and what further support is available. Further information regarding your rights as a working carer and the support available to you can be found in the links below.

Q. What support is available if I am an employee with caring responsibilities?

Your employer will be keen to support those with caring responsibilities, both to protect your health and those you care for. Following government advice, home working is advised for all those that can work from home. It is recognised that for many employees this is not possible or feasible due to their work role, but please speak with your employer regarding your caring responsibilities and any additional support or flexibility you may need at the present time.

Guidance for working carers is available from both local and national Carer organisations, see below for contact details.

Q. What are the arrangements for employee carers needing to time off from work due to Coronavirus and will I be paid?

For employment and benefit advice, please see the Employment and Financial Support section of the [government advice on Coronavirus found here](#). They have published [Guidance for employees](#) which sets out what your rights are at work, what benefits you are entitled to and what further support is available.

See latest government guidance on [what to do if you're employed and cannot work due to coronavirus](#) to find out what to do:

- If your employer has less or no work for you because of coronavirus (you've been put on furlough)
- Regular payments if your workplace is closed or you have reduced hours
- If you're off work because you have coronavirus symptoms, or are self-isolating or shielding

In addition, there is also useful guidance on your rights as a working carer in the [Employers for Carers](#) digital resource, run by Carers UK. Carers UK have recently updated the website and now when you log on, you will see a 'COVID-19 Guidance' tab on the right-hand side toolbar. When you click on this link, it will take you through to various information, as well as [the government's latest guidance for employees](#). You will also find a useful frequently asked questions page, as well as a 'Wellbeing Action Plan' that Carers UK have created, with some tailored tips on keeping a positive frame of mind both for yourself as a carer and those you care for. To access the resources for free, simply log on to [carersdigital.org](#) and create an account, using Access Code DGTL1946.

Q. What if I have lost my job, had my hours reduced or have been asked to take unpaid leave - can I claim benefits?

Your employer can ask you to stay at home or take unpaid leave if there's not enough work for you. The government published [guidance to employers about furloughing through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#), which makes clear that employees who are unable to work because they have caring responsibilities resulting from COVID-19 can be furloughed (temporarily laid off work).

You might be able to get [Universal Credit](#) or ['new style' Jobseeker's Allowance](#) (or both) while you're laid off or on short-time. See [the government's latest guidance for employees](#) for up-to-date government guidance for employees.

Q. What am I required to do if I have to take off work to self-isolate?

If you have been advised to 'self-isolate' by NHS 111 or a medical professional, you must tell your employer as soon as possible. This does not need to be in writing. Employers should support workers who are told to self-isolate and must not ask them to attend work. See the [guidance on the NHS Test and Trace service for employers, businesses and workers](#)

If you feel well, speak to your employer to discuss if you can work from home or what other options are available during your period of isolation.

Workers in self-isolation are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) for every day they are in isolation, as long as they meet the eligibility conditions. Guidance has been produced for [employees that are unable to work because they are self-isolating](#).

NHS Test and Trace will provide evidence that someone has been told to self-isolate. This evidence can be shared with an employer or education provider. [Get an isolation note](#) if you need evidence that you've been told to self-isolate.

District Councils across Lincolnshire are delivering a [nation-wide scheme to support people on low incomes](#) who have to self-isolate if they test positive for coronavirus and cannot work from home. Eligibility criteria apply. The scheme, offering £500 support payments to help workers on low income, will begin on 28th September and will run until 31st January 2021.

The Test and Trace Support Payment has been introduced by the government in response to feedback from local authorities and directors of public health that some residents are struggling to self-isolate due to financial constraints.

The support payment will help ensure that people on low incomes are able to stay at home and self-isolate when they are instructed to do so by the NHS Test and Trace.

It will also encourage more people to get tested without the added pressure of losing income. It is hoped the scheme will help lead to a reduction in the transmissions of COVID-19. Further information can be found on LCC's webpage [here](#).

Q. I live with someone who is Clinically Extremely Vulnerable – is it safe for me to go to work?

[The government's latest guidance for employees](#) advises everyone to work from home where they can. Where it is not possible to work from home, household members who themselves are not classified as clinically extremely vulnerable can still go to work if they cannot work from home.

Household members who live with those who are clinically extremely vulnerable should take extra care to follow the public health guidance on hand washing, social distancing, and complying with any Covid secure workplace guidance.

Q. Can I take time off to look after someone I care for if they have been affected by Coronavirus?

As an employee, you also have a statutory right to take a 'reasonable' amount of time off from work to see to an emergency or unforeseen matter involving your partner, child, parent, grandchild, or someone who relies on you for care. There is no fixed amount of time you can take off. The time off is unpaid unless your employer is willing to give paid time off as a contractual right. Also check your work policy on care leave.

See also government [Guidance for employees](#) which sets out what your rights are at work, what benefits you are entitled to and what further support is available.

See also the advice and information below (if you or they are self-isolating).

Q. Do I have to go into work if my GP advises that the person/ child I care for must self-isolate and I am their only source of care?

Government guidance is clear; if you can work from home, you should work from home. Speak to your employer in the first instance to see if you can work flexibly from home, if this is your preference and it is possible. The exceptional circumstances due to COVID have meant many employers are exercising common sense and flexibility to allow employees to reduce or vary their working hours or pattern to enable them to work around caring needs. If you think this is an option in your role, then you should raise it with your employer. Explain how the pattern could work for you and them.

The government guidance on furlough makes clear that employees can be furloughed if they are unable to work due to caring commitments or because someone in their household is shielding. Please see [the government's latest guidance for employees](#) which states: If you are:

- unable to work because you are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (or need to stay at home to care for someone who is Clinically Extremely Vulnerable)
- unable to work because you are an employee with caring responsibilities resulting from coronavirus (COVID-19), and need to look after your child

your employer is able to furlough you as long as they previously placed you (the employee) on furlough before 30th June and submitted a claim for you by 31st July.

If you were previously furloughed and have returned to work, you can ask your employer to put you back on furlough if you can no longer continue working because of childcare or caring commitments.

Q. Can my employer furlough me if my caring role increases because other services are not available?

You can ask your employer to be furloughed if you are unable to work because of your caring responsibilities. However, if you look after someone whose care arrangements have fallen through because of coronavirus and there is nobody else to help for the time being, and you want to remain in work, the first step would be to talk to your employer and explain your situation. A solution may be flexible working where you are able to work from home or reduce your hours. If you think you may need a medium to long-term adjustment to your working pattern, you could consider putting in a [request for flexible working](#). The Working Families charity has created a [template letter to request flexible working during coronavirus](#) that you might want to use.

Government guidance regarding [which employees you can put on furlough to use the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) states that:

If an employee is:

- unable to work because they are clinically extremely vulnerable (or need to stay at home with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable)
- unable to work because they have caring responsibilities resulting from coronavirus (COVID-19), including employees that need to look after children

They can be furloughed as long as the employer previously placed you (the employee) on furlough before 30th June and submitted a claim for them by 31st July.

See government [guidance to employers about furloughing through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#), which makes clear that employees who are unable to work because they have caring responsibilities resulting from COVID-19 can be furloughed (temporarily laid off work). The [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is being extended](#) until 31 March 2021.

Note that in [almost all cases](#) you can only be furloughed if you were already furloughed on before 30 June 2020 and your employer submitted a claim for this by 31 July 2020.

Q. Can the NHS put its staff on furlough due to caring commitments?

Government [guidance to employers about furloughing through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#), makes clear that if an employer has staff costs that are publicly funded, the employer should use that money to continue paying their staff, and not furlough them.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Both local and national organisations are responding proactively to the challenges that Coronavirus continues to bring, including issuing health-specific information, providing general wellbeing resources as well as 1:1 online and telephone/webchat support.

Local Sources of Support

If you require general COVID help and advice, please call the Lincolnshire Coronavirus Helpline on 01522 782189 (Mon-Fri) or visit [Lincolnshire County Council's Coronavirus support and services](#). In addition, please take a look at the resources and information on the dedicated Lincolnshire County Council [Carers webpage](#).

At a local level, Carers FIRST delivers the Lincolnshire Carers Service in partnership with the Lincolnshire County Council's Customer Service Centre and together they offer a wide range of services to carers across the county – they can be contacted [here](#).

In addition, Lincolnshire County Council has set up a Community Help webpage where you can identify what support you require whilst you are self-isolating. Support may include shopping, dog walking or simply a friendly chat. Use the online form [Coronavirus support - request community help](#) or alternatively, call 01522 782189. Your request for support will be matched with local volunteers and community groups who are ready and willing to help.

Lincolnshire County Council has teamed up with [Carers UK](#) to support Lincolnshire carers by bringing together Carers UK's online resources and digital products with local information and support for carers within a single webpage. To create an account and get free access to all the products and support resources visit [Carers Digital](#) and create a new account by using your free access code DGTL1946.

[Connect to Support Lincolnshire](#) is an online information and advice library, community directory and marketplace for adults in Lincolnshire. This website is intended for adults who want to find out about local groups, activities and services within the community; it also hosts the [Digital Resource for Carers](#) detailed above.

Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (LPFT) has set up a dedicated helpline providing free and confidential emotional support across Lincolnshire. The helpline is available 24/7 to provide emotional support, advice and guidance if you are feeling low, anxious or stressed and think you might benefit from speaking to someone - Call 0800 001 4331

National support for carers

Nationally, [Carers UK](#) provides carers expert advice, information and support. They have put together some really useful frequently asked questions about Coronavirus [see here](#) as well as general information on Coronavirus found [here](#).

[NHS](#) has a list of all national telephone support and helplines for carers.

[Carers' Trust](#) is a charity working to improve support, services and recognition for anyone with carer responsibilities.

[Carers Direct \(NHS\)](#) can give information and advice on your caring role. You can talk to them about what options are available to you [using webchat](#) or [by email](#). You can also call them on their free helpline on 0300 123 1053.

[Every Mind Matters](#) has released expert advice and top tips on how to look after your mental wellbeing if you need to stay at home during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. It also includes guidance if you're feeling worried or anxious about the outbreak.

If you are in a low mood which continues for a couple of weeks and it is having a detrimental impact on your daily life, consider speaking to your GP or access free NHS psychological services (IAPT). [Find an IAPT service](#)

Support – if you already have a mental health problem

If you already have a mental health problem, you may find that the added stress of the current situation worsens your mental health - [comprehensive guidance provided by Mind](#) is available but your first point of contact should be your named mental health support worker/CPN.

If you are experiencing great emotional distress or anxiety, feel that you cannot cope with day-to-day life or work or are thinking about self-harm, you should get immediate expert assessment and advice to identify the best course of action:

- if you have already been given a Crisis Line number from a health professional, please call it;
- if you are under the care of a mental health team and have a specific care plan that states who to contact when you need urgent care, follow this plan;
- Mind also provides information about [how to plan for a crisis](#).
- Samaritans has a free to call service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, if you want to talk to someone in confidence. Call them on 116 123. Visit their webpage at www.samaritans.org/
- you can contact NHS 111 if you need urgent care but it's not life-threatening

Further advice from the NHS on dealing with a mental health crisis can be found [here](#).

Benefit Advice

Q I look after my mother and get Carer's Allowance, however I have had to self-isolate due to having symptoms of coronavirus and so have not been able to provide care. Will I lose my Carer's Allowance?

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the government introduced two temporary measures (introduced from 30th March) to help those getting Carer's Allowance.

Firstly, if you get Carer's Allowance but cannot care for the person you normally look after because either one of you are affected by coronavirus (so if either of you have it, or are following guidance to self-isolate because of it), your entitlement to Carer's Allowance won't end.

Secondly, providing emotional support will count towards the 35 hours of care per week required to be entitled to Carer's Allowance. This can include providing care remotely during the coronavirus outbreak such as giving emotional support over the phone or online.

For further information please see www.gov.uk/carers-allowance

Q. I am a working carer and receive Tax Credits, will they change if my income has dropped due to the coronavirus situation?

The government has confirmed that Working Tax Credits can continue for people who are working reduced hours because of coronavirus and for people who have been furloughed because of coronavirus, as long as they are still considered to be employed or self-employed. You'll be treated as if you're working your normal hours until the [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) closes.

In terms of the amount of Working Tax Credits, if your income during the tax year 2020/2021 will be at least £2,500 less than it was in the tax year 2019/2020, you should let the Tax Credit Office know as it might increase your Tax Credit amount. In addition, the government has increased Working Tax Credit rates which could mean an increase of up to £20 per week (depending on your circumstances), for up to a year.

You must still tell HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) about other [changes to your circumstances](#). This includes if you or your partner lose your job, are made redundant or you are self-employed and cease trading.

For all benefit related advice, please see the government (DWP) advice [Getting financial help and staying safe at work](#) found in the Work and Financial Support section at www.gov.uk/coronavirus. For specific advice relating to Working Tax credit see www.gov.uk/changes-affect-tax-credits.

Support with Finances

Q. I have heard that there is national funding available to support children with complex needs – what is it for and how can I access it to support my child who has disabilities?

Children with special educational needs and disabilities in England will benefit from [£37.3 million of direct support in 2020-21](#). £10 million of the total has been committed specifically in response to the unique difficulties presented by the coronavirus pandemic, helping parents educate and look after disabled or critically ill children who are staying at home more than usual.

The multi-million-pound settlement for [Family Fund](#), will help low-income families with seriously ill or disabled children with the cost of equipment, goods or services – from washing machines and fridges to sensory and educational equipment that they might not otherwise be able to afford.

Sheridan Dodsworth, LCC head of service for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) explains: "Families of children and young people who are critically ill or disabled do face additional pressures particularly during lockdown as their vulnerabilities mean they aren't always able to access the support they usually receive, for example, through Short Breaks or support in the home. Our Children with Disabilities Team is already raising awareness of the fund with families open to them and are happy to support families in making applications to the Family Fund."

If your family is eligible for this support, please contact the Family Fund direct at <https://www.familyfund.org.uk/Pages/FAQs/Category/contact-us> or speak to your child's social worker.

Q. I have 'money worries' and need advice. What help is available?

The current climate has meant that many people are experiencing money concerns, whether due to additional living costs, reduced income or other reasons related to the changes that have recently arisen in our day-to-day lives.

Remember you are not alone and help and support is available.

If you have money concerns and require advice, including debt advice and/or benefit advice regarding entitlement, queries, etc. here are a number of organisations that can support and advise you including:

National Support:

- [Citizens Advice](#) (Coronavirus benefit advice and links is available [here](#))
- [Turn2Us](#) have an advice section for carers (see [here](#)) providing information on benefits, grants or other financial support that may be available to you.
- [Money Advice Trust](#) is a charity providing free advice and support to help people deal with their debts. It runs a free [National telephone Debtline](#). Call them on 0808 808 4000. (Monday to Friday 9am – 8pm). They also provide webchat/email advice.
- [My Money Steps](#) is a free personalised advice tool from [Money Advice Trust](#) which provides online budget management and debt advice in minutes.
- [Money Advice Service](#) providing free and impartial money advice, set up by government. It includes free printed guides, webchats and a telephone advice.
- [StepChange](#) is a debt charity providing free, impartial debt advice including telephone advice. Call them free on 0800 138 1111 (Monday-Friday 8am-8pm, Saturday 8am-4pm). They also provide online advice.

Local Support:

- You can contact the [Lincolnshire Carers Service](#) who will be able to provide compassionate and understanding support, including benefit advice. You can contact them via Lincolnshire Customer Service Centre on 01522 782224 or email them at carerservice@lincolnshire.gov.uk.
If you are already supported by Carers FIRST, you can contact them directly on 0300 303 1555. You can find Carers FIRST on Facebook and Twitter.
- If you are a Young Carer (that is, you are up to 25 years old and are providing unpaid care to a family member living with long-term illness or disability), you may want to look at Lincolnshire County Council's [Young Carer support webpage](#). It provides a range of information, links and resources that you may find useful and is regularly updated. You can also call the Young Carers service on 01522 553275 or email youngcarers@lincolnshire.gov.uk
- Lincolnshire County Council has teamed up with [Carers UK](#) to support Lincolnshire carers by bringing together Carers UK's online resources and digital products with local information and support for carers onto a single webpage. It includes financial advice and benefit support. To create an account and get free access to all the products and support resources visit [Carers Digital](#) and create a new account by using your free access code DGTL1946.
- [Connect to Support Lincolnshire](#) is an online information and advice library, community directory and marketplace for adults in Lincolnshire. It provides

information on [Money and Legal matters](#), including signposting you to advice and support services. It also hosts the [Digital Resource for Carers](#) detailed above. See their [dedicated Coronavirus support page here](#).

- If you are finding that your money worries are causing you stress or anxiety, [Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust \(LPFT\)](#) has set up a helpline providing free and confidential emotional support across Lincolnshire. The helpline is available 24/7 to provide emotional support, advice and guidance if you are feeling low, anxious or stressed and think you might benefit from speaking to someone - Call 0800 001 4331
- [Lincolnshire Credit Union](#) is a not-for-profit business and can provide affordable loans and offers basic saving accounts. Anyone living, working or studying in Lincolnshire can join the credit union. Call them on 01522 873550 (Weekdays between 10.30am-2pm).

Q How do I, or someone I care for, avoid COVID-19 related scams?

National Trading Standards is warning people to remain vigilant following a rise in coronavirus-related scams that seek to take advantage of the public's concern and uncertainty over COVID-19. Scams to look out for include:

- advertising face masks or medical equipment at high prices
- emails or texts pretending to be from the government
- emails offering life insurance against coronavirus
- people knocking at your door and asking for money for charity
- people offering to help you with shopping, taking money from you and not returning

For more information on the types of scams and how to avoid them, please visit the following websites:

- [Citizens Advice](#) (consumer scam information)
- [Friends Against Scams](#)
- [Age UK](#)

To report a scam, Lincolnshire County Council advises in the first instance that you contact Citizens Advice Consumer Service [here](#) to report it; they will then refer all relevant reports to LCC's Trading Standards team. See the [LCC webpage here](#) for more information.

If you are someone you care for has been the victim of a scam, you're not alone. Scams are increasingly common and many people are caught out - from all walks of life. If you have fallen victim to a scam, [visit the Action Fraud website for advice](#).

In addition, Age UK has plenty of useful advice to follow, click the links below for further information:

- [Who can I talk to if I've been scammed?](#)
- [What are the signs that a relative or friend has been scammed?](#)
- [How can I help a relative or friend if they've been scammed?](#)
- [Further information](#)

We hope you have found this Carer (COVID) Guidance useful.

Please remember, these are difficult and challenging times, you are not alone and support is available if you need it.