

Frequently Asked Questions from the Community on COVID-19

To help you find what you are looking for, this document has been broken down into useful sections:

Section 1: Accessing Primary Care

Section 2: Community support

Section 3: Community pharmacies

Section 4: Emergency & urgent care

Section 5: Hospital care

Section 6: Mental health & wellbeing

Section 7: Shielding and People at the Highest Clinical Risk from COVID-19

Section 8: Myths and misinformation

Section 9: How to feedback to us

Section 10: Useful links and further information

1. Accessing Primary Care

1. Can I still have a GP appointment? How should I book my appointment with the GP Practice?

Yes, all patients registered at a GP Practice still have access to appointments with a Doctor, Nurse, Healthcare Assistant or Social Prescriber. A number of GP Surgeries are conducting appointments via telephone or video consultation so you should check their website in the first instance.

For certain groups of patients, such as the deaf community, people with learning disabilities, people whose first language is not English and people who do not have access to the telephone, GP Practices are making alternative arrangements to ensure these patients can access appointments. Please check with your individual GP Practice.

2. I have been asked to attend a face-to-face appointment at the GP Practice. What is my GP Practice doing to prevent the spread of coronavirus?

GP Practices are working really hard to prevent the spread of coronavirus but we need your help. We all have a responsibility to help limit the spread of COVID-19. If you start to experience symptoms and believe you could have coronavirus, do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital as you could pass the infection to others. Visit [NHS 111 online](#) or call [NHS 111](#) if you need to speak to someone.

Updated on 17th April 2020

If you do attend your GP Practice, you should follow any instructions given to you by staff at the practice which will include:

- Using hand sanitiser and frequently washing your hands.
- Avoiding touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Maintaining social distancing (making sure that there is at least a metre or two between you and another person).

3. Are clinics still running in GP Practices?

Yes, the majority of essential clinics such as blood taking, wound dressing and baby and child immunisations are still running but you should check with your GP Practice in the first instance.

4. I need to register as a patient at a GP Practice, can I still do this?

Yes, anyone can register at a GP Practice as long as:

- it has capacity to take on new patients
- you live within the practice boundary

Practices will continue to register all patients, including those with no fixed address, asylum seekers, refugees and those who do not have photo identification.

GP Practices are making arrangements so that those seeking to register with a practice do not have to go in physically. For example, you may be asked to send in an application via post or electronically. If a GP Practice conducts online registration, you may be asked to apply online. Please check with the individual GP Practice.

5. I use British Sign Language (BSL), how do I access care?

Where possible, interpreters will be sourced for GP appointments.

However, with the public now being asked to self-isolate where an immediate member of a household presents with symptoms, the pressure to source interpreters will increase, and interpreters themselves maybe unable to support face to face appointments.

To support d/Deaf patients the Clinical Commissioning Group is working to implement a Video Relay Service (VRS) for telephone appointments and Video Relay Interpretation (VRI) for face to face appointments in every Primary Care network.

An NHS 111 British Sign Language (BSL) Service is also available. This is a free service where a BSL interpreter telephones an NHS 111 adviser and relays their conversation with them. [Click here](#) for more information.

6. My GP Practice are only doing appointments via telephone, doesn't this go against the Equality Act (2010)?

Updated on 17th April 2020

A number of GP Practices are seeking to limit the booking of appointments to telephone only to reduce the spread of infection. This change affects a number of patient groups.

Practices have a legal responsibility not to discriminate and to provide appropriate methods of communication. GP Practices are being asked to ensure that they explain to patients how they can access appointments.

2. Community Support

1. I have suspected coronavirus symptoms, what support will I receive from the NHS?

People self-isolating with suspected coronavirus symptoms will also get regular check-ins from a new NHS 111 online messaging service launched on Saturday 4th April 2020. Once individuals have been through the online assessment, daily texts will be sent to those who have registered their Covid-19 symptoms and left contact details.

Depending on the duration of their isolation, the daily messages will check how people are and ensure that those who need help to get them through that period, receive it.

2. What is a Community Hub, and how can I request support for myself or on behalf of someone else?

Community Hubs have been launched in each Local Authority area across Sussex, and offer additional help in coping with coronavirus.

The Community Hubs will focus their help on people who do not have an extreme medical condition but may be vulnerable because they are isolated from help, too unwell to buy food or have other pressing difficulties because of coronavirus. Community Hubs also provide a place for people to find out about volunteering opportunities.

You request support yourself or on behalf of someone else using the details below:

Brighton and Hove Community Hubs

Contact details for the Community Support:

[Brighton and Hove Community Support Website](#)

Brighton and Hove Community Support Telephone: 01273 293117

East Sussex Community Hubs

Contact details for the Community Hubs in East Sussex are below:

Updated on 17th April 2020

[Eastbourne Community Hub Website](#)

Eastbourne Community Hub Telephone: 01323 679722

[Hastings Community Hub Website](#)

Hastings Community Hub Telephone: 01424 451019

[Lewes Community Hub Website](#)

Lewes Community Hub Telephone: 01273 099956

[Rother Community Hub Website](#)

Rother Community Hub Telephone: 01424 787000 (option 4)

[Wealden Community Hub Website](#)

Wealden Community Hub Telephone: 01323 443322

West Sussex Community Hubs

Contact the West Sussex Community Support Team:

[West Sussex Community Support Team Website](#)

West Sussex Support Team Telephone: 033 022 27980 (Lines are open 8.00am - 8.00pm)

3. How can I volunteer to support my community?

The NHS Volunteer Responders Programme has been set up to support the NHS and the care sector during the COVID-19 outbreak. NHS Volunteer Responders can be called on to do simple but vital tasks such as:

- delivering medicines from pharmacies;
- driving patients to appointments;
- bringing them home from hospital;
- or making regular phone calls to check on people isolating at home.

Members of the public can sign up quickly and easily at goodsamapp.org/NHS to become. You can read the NHS Volunteer Responders FAQs [online here](#).

ID checks will be carried out for all volunteers. Patient transport drivers will need an enhanced DBS check and will receive additional guidance. Volunteers will receive guidance, including on social distancing rules to ensure the group being asked to shield themselves is protected.

If you are a health professional, NHS England has produced guidance on how to make referrals for volunteer support. Click here to access the [information](#).

4. I have been asked to provide an isolation note, what is it and how do I get one?

Updated on 17th April 2020

An isolation note provides proof that you have Covid-19 or are advised to stay at home.

Isolation notes will provide employees with evidence for their employers that they have been advised to self-isolate due to coronavirus, either because they have symptoms or they live with someone who has symptoms, and so cannot work.

For the first seven days off work, employees can self-certify so they don't need any evidence for their employer. After that, employers may ask for evidence of sickness absence. Where this is related to having symptoms of coronavirus or living with someone who has symptoms, the isolation note can be used to provide evidence of the advice to self-isolate.

You request an isolation note by visiting [NHS 111 online, rather than visiting a doctor](#).

After answering a few questions, an isolation note will be emailed to the individual. If they don't have an email address, they can have the note sent to a trusted family member or friend, or directly to their employer. The service can also be used to generate an isolation note on behalf of someone else.

5. How do I provide a fit note (sick note) for symptoms not related to COVID-19?

A fit note must be signed by a doctor, but you do not always need to see a GP in person to get one.

It depends on:

- why you're off work sick
- whether a GP needs to assess you face to face
- if you have been in hospital

"Fit note" is the informal name for a Statement of Fitness for Work. [Find out more about when you need a fit note](#).

If you need a fit note, contact your GP practice. They will tell you whether you should make an appointment to see a GP or book a phone/online consultation.

A GP can give you a fit note on the day they assess you or at any time after the assessment, if appropriate.

6. Are there plans for unpaid carers to be issued with PPE?

Currently there are no national plans or directives for CCGs or other organisations to issue unpaid carers with PPE. The current national system for PPE distribution is for Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered providers and those organisations that would usually access supplies via the NHS Supply chain.

3. Community Pharmacies

1. Why do I have to queue outside the pharmacy? It looks very busy, are they coping?

A queue outside a pharmacy does not necessarily mean the pharmacy is struggling to cope.

Many pharmacies now have measures in place such as **one-in-one-out of the premises**, which is why you may see a queue of people outside, as social distancing and infection control measures have been put in place in pharmacies to protect staff and patients during these exceptional times.

Pharmacies do a lot more than dispense medicines. They offer health services that many of us aren't aware of, and as one of the few frontline NHS services still seeing and treating patients face-to-face, staff may be dealing with, and treating patients, who need medical help for non Covid-19 issues.

2. How do I get my repeat prescription?

Most pharmacies are still open and repeat prescriptions should be available as usual. It is important to only request your medicines when they are running low (e.g. one weeks supply left) as you usually would. Ordering medicines too early or ordering more than usual can lead to fewer medicines in the system and potentially, shortages for others.

Manufacturers, wholesalers and pharmacies are working hard to minimise medicine shortages as a result of COVID-19.

Patients are being encouraged to apply for repeat prescriptions online directly from their GP practice via the Electronic Prescription Service and electronic Repeat Dispensing service wherever possible, which is supported by national policy (both pre-Covid and during Covid policy), or using Prescription Ordering Direct (POD) phone service, if this is available with their GP practice. This will speed up the process for repeat prescriptions to be issued.

It can take between 5 and 7 days from ordering a repeat prescription from a GP to it being ready to collect at the pharmacy. We urge all patients to plan in advance so that they don't run out.

3. I am on the 'Shielded' list, how do I receive my prescription?

People who are on the shielded patient list (formerly known as the vulnerable patient list) have been identified by the NHS as being at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) because of an underlying health condition, and for their family, friends and carers.

Everyone on the shielded list should have already received a letter, and a text message for those who have provided their mobile details to the NHS, with details on

Updated on 17th April 2020

how to access support if needed. The letter is the important proof that the person is in the group who should practice social shielding.

Shielded patients should, in the first instance, ask friends, relatives, and neighbours to collect medicines for them. If this is not possible because friends, family and neighbours are vulnerable or isolating themselves, people should contact their local authority community hub to ask for a community volunteer to go to pharmacy to collect medicines for them (see the contact information for community hubs in Q4 below).

Patients who are being told they need to be shielded or believe they are at high risk should also [register themselves on the gov.uk website if they need extra help and support](#).

[Click here for more information if you are a shielded patient](#).

4. I'm not on the shielded list, but am still self-isolating / vulnerable so cannot get to a pharmacy to collect my prescription, what should I do?

If you are self-isolating or poorly and you are unable to leave your home, in the first instance, **please ask friends, relatives, and neighbours to collect/pick up your medicines for you**. If you are isolating, ask them to drop it off outside your door so that you can avoid close face-to-face contact.

However, if this is not possible because friends, family and neighbours are vulnerable or isolating themselves, you should contact your local authority community hub to ask for a community volunteer to go to pharmacy to collect/pick up medicines for you (see the list of contact information for the hubs below). Community pharmacies are extremely busy at the moment, so please contact your local council's community hub for support and avoid calling the pharmacy directly unless it's absolutely necessary.

If you have a repeat prescription and are registered with a medical condition that makes you extremely vulnerable to coronavirus, you can register yourself, or on behalf of someone to get support. [Click here for more information](#).

Please see below for information on the local authority Community Hubs:

Brighton and Hove Community Hubs

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5. I am volunteering to collect a prescription for a friend, family member or neighbour – how do I do this in a safe way?

Before you start collecting and dropping-off medicines to patients' homes, it is important to understand how to undertake your tasks safely and effectively. This is key to protecting patient safety and confidentiality.

Top Tips for safely collecting and picking up prescriptions for a friend, family member or neighbour are below, and you can download a helpful poster created by Healthwatch [here](#):

1. Only collect for **up to two patients** at a time
2. Go to **the right** pharmacy
3. **Know the name and address** of the person you are collecting for. It may also save time in the pharmacy if you **know what medicine(s) you are expecting**
4. Please **don't be offended** if the pharmacist asks for ID or cannot hand over certain medicines. Please ensure you have appropriate ID with you, such as your driving licence or your letter of authority/volunteer ID from the District & Borough Council.

5. **Ask the patient** if they pay for their prescription – it's £9.15 per prescription item (they may be able to pay for the medication over the phone if the pharmacy offers this service, though not all do). If the patient doesn't pay, ask them **which 'exemption' applies** to them
6. Medicine deliveries **must be completed on the same day** you collected them from the pharmacy, and within the opening hours of pharmacy. Any medicines that cannot be delivered must be returned to the pharmacy that day; **you must not store other peoples' medicines overnight in your own home or fridge.**
7. **Do not open** the prescription package. If medicine packages split, or there's a breakage, call the pharmacy team immediately for their advice. It is likely you will have to return to the pharmacy in this situation.
8. Do not deliver the medicines to anyone other than the patient without **patient consent**
9. Where possible, place the medication on the doorstep, ring the bell / knock on the door and stand back to wait for an answer. **REMEMBER: NEVER LEAVE MEDICATION UNATTENDED**
10. When the door is answered, explain that you have a prescription to deliver and ask the person to confirm the name and address of the patient, to **ensure you have the correct address and that the patient lives there**
11. If a patient does not answer the door, please **return the medicines back to the pharmacy; do not** leave the medicines outside the house, with a neighbour or post the medicines through the letter box.
12. To avoid the potential for confusion, you must also complete all deliveries from a single pharmacy **before** picking up further prescriptions for delivery from another pharmacy
13. Some patients **may have more than one package of medicines**, check with the pharmacy the number of packages for each patient on collection and ensure that all bags of medicines are delivered.
14. Sometimes the pharmacy may not have all the medicines needed or the full quantity ordered on the prescription. When this happens, the pharmacy will issue an *Owings Slip*. It is **important that you pass this Owings Slip onto the patient** and advise them that these items will be delivered when the pharmacy has the items back in stock.
15. If you have concerns for a patient's wellbeing call the pharmacy team for assistance and guidance. In emergency situations dial 999
16. Avoid pharmacies if you are **showing symptoms** of COVID-19
17. **Ask the pharmacist for advice** if you are not sure about anything

For further information on how to safely collect prescriptions on behalf of someone who is self-isolating and unable to visit a pharmacy to collect their own prescription, download this handy '[workbook](#)' that East Sussex County Council (ESCC) has developed for people volunteering to pick up medicines on behalf of friends, family and neighbours.

6. Can pharmacists prioritise processing the prescriptions of patients who are at a higher risk of catching COVID-19?

No, pharmacists are unable to do this. Community pharmacies are extremely busy at the moment and are trying their best to ensure **all** patients get the care they need.

4. Emergency & urgent care

1. Are Accident and Emergency (A&E) departments closed? What should I do if there is an emergency?

A&E departments are not closed and continue to be open to deal with genuine life-threatening emergencies, such as:

- [loss of consciousness](#)
- acute confused state and fits that are not stopping
- [chest pain](#)
- Broken bones
- [severe bleeding that cannot be stopped](#)
- severe [allergic reactions](#)
- severe burns or scalds
- [stroke](#)
- major trauma such as a road traffic accident

A&E is not an alternative to a GP appointment.

If you have a medical emergency and need an ambulance, you should continue to call 999. You can use the find nearest A&E [here](#).

2. What should I do for urgent non-coronavirus medical queries?

Less severe injuries can be treated in [urgent care centres or minor injuries units](#). Conditions that can be treated at an urgent treatment centre include:

- sprains and strains
- suspected broken limbs
- minor head injuries
- cuts and grazes
- bites and stings
- minor scalds and burns
- ear and throat infections

Updated on 17th April 2020

- skin infections and rashes
- eye problems
- coughs and colds
- feverish illness in adults
- feverish illness in children
- abdominal pain
- vomiting and diarrhoea
- emergency contraception

You can find your nearest urgent care centre or minor injuries unit [here](#). Please check for any local changes before accessing this service.

Alternatively you can go to 111.nhs.uk or call 111, which will direct you to the best local service.

NHS workers, clinicians and other medical staff are working around the clock to ensure that everyone gets the care they need. The coronavirus pandemic is unprecedented and unplanned for, meaning that many emergency measures are being taken. Please be as patient as you can with staff - they are doing their best at a very difficult time.

3. What do I do if I have a dental emergency?

For urgent dental treatment call your dentist or use the [111 online service](#) if you cannot contact your dentist or you do not have one.

5. Hospital care

1. What are the new hospital visiting restrictions?

The difficult, but essential, decision to restrict visiting throughout hospitals with immediate effect and until further notice has been made.

The only exceptional circumstances where one visitor – an immediate family member or carer – will be permitted to visit are listed below:

- The patient you wish to visit is receiving end-of-life care.
- You are the birthing partner accompanying a woman in labour.
- You are a parent or appropriate adult visiting your child.

Please contact the ward or department in advance to discuss appropriate arrangements.

Your health, safety and wellbeing, that of our patients, communities and individuals and teams across the organisation remain our absolute priority. Please find other ways of keeping in touch with your loved ones in hospital, like phone and video calls.

2. Will I still be referred to the hospital if my GP thinks I need it?

Yes, your GP will still refer you; however, many of the referrals will be held until the pressure on the NHS lessens. All referrals will be looked at by a clinician and reviewed for urgency. You should hear directly from the hospital about your appointment; you do not need to go back to your GP unless your condition deteriorates.

The exception to this our Musculo skeletal (bone and joint) services, who are not taking new referrals to the service, unless urgent; in this case patients may be offered a phone assessment as a first step.

3. If I am worried I might have cancer, would I still be referred to the hospital?

You should contact your GP with any worrying symptoms; if your GP is concerned, you will be referred to hospital, and should be seen within two weeks.

6. Mental Health and Wellbeing

1. I feel anxious, worried and lonely and want support with this, where should I access this support?

You might be worried about coronavirus (COVID-19) and how it could affect your life. Please see our Resources Section within these FAQs, which provides information about services in the local community.

Further information on services available can be found via the Sussex NHS Commissioners websites. Click the links below:

[NHS Brighton and Hove CCG](#)

[NHS East Sussex CCG](#)

[NHS West Sussex CCG](#)

2. Where can I get further support?

It is quite common to experience short-lived physical symptoms when your mood is low or anxious, for example:

- faster, irregular or more noticeable heartbeat
- feeling lightheaded and dizzy
- headaches
- chest pains or loss of appetite

It can be difficult to know what is causing these symptoms, but often people who experience them due to stress, anxiety or low mood find that they get worse when they focus on them. See advice from the NHS on [managing the physical symptoms](#).

Updated on 17th April 2020

If you are concerned about your physical symptoms, then do contact [NHS 111 online](#).

For advice on coronavirus (COVID-19) and any symptoms see the [NHS website](#). 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](#) also provides simple tips and advice to start taking better care of your mental health.

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

In a medical emergency [call 999](#). This is when someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk. A mental health emergency should be taken as seriously as a physical health emergency.

7. Shielding and People at the Highest Clinical Risk from COVID-19

1. What is shielding?

Shielding is a measure to protect people who are clinically extremely vulnerable by minimising all interaction between those who are extremely vulnerable and others.

The UK Government is strongly advising people with serious underlying health conditions (listed below), which put them at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19), to rigorously follow shielding measures in order to keep themselves safe:

1. Solid organ transplant recipients.
2. People 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 which 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
3. People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD.
4. People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell).
5. People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.
6. Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.

Updated on 17th April 2020

Shielding is for your personal protection. It is your choice to decide whether to follow the measures we advise. Individuals who have been given a prognosis of less than 6 months to live, and some others in special circumstances, could decide not to undertake shielding. This will be a deeply personal decision. We advise calling your GP or specialist to discuss this.

2. I think I should be considered as highest clinical risk, but I haven't received a letter. What should I do?

Most people that are within the highest clinical risk group have already received a letter through the post. However, we are aware that central records do not capture everybody in this group. The process for identifying additional people who meet the clinical criteria but have not been identified through the initial central process is continuing. People identified through this process will receive a letter shortly. This list is also being reviewed by GPs and hospital clinicians.

In the meantime, please continue to follow the [social distancing guidance](#).

3. I live with a person who is 'shielding', but I am unable to socially distance from others because of my work (i.e. NHS, social care worker, education or other key worker), or the size/ layout of my home doesn't allow me to live separately from the vulnerable person who is shielding. What do I do?

If you live with someone who has been identified as being at highest clinical risk, you should read and familiarize yourself with the 'shielding' guidance below, and strictly follow social distancing guidance.

The rest of the household should support the person shielding to stay safe and stringently follow guidance on social distancing, reducing their contact outside the home. In your home, you should:

- minimise the time spent in shared spaces (kitchen, bathroom and sitting areas) and keep shared spaces well ventilated;
- aim to keep 2 metres (3 steps) away from others and encourage them to sleep in a different bed where possible;
- use separate towels from other people in the house and, if possible, use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household, or clean the bathroom after every use;
- avoid using the kitchen when others are present, take your meals back to your room to eat where possible, and ensure all kitchenware is cleaned thoroughly.

If the rest of your household are able to follow this guidance, there is no need for them to take the full protective measures to keep you safe.

All people who have a letter and have been identified at highest clinical risk should register for government support at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable>. Even if you do not require support at this time, please register with the site.

Please note that government support is only available to the individual who is at the highest clinical risk and has received a letter confirming this.

3. I have received a letter to say that I am at highest clinical risk, does this mean I will be de-prioritised for ventilation if I contract COVID-19 and require hospital care?

You were sent this letter to inform you that your condition, or the treatment/ medication you are receiving, means that you are at the highest clinical risk from COVID-19. The purpose of the letter is to draw your attention to the guidance issued by Public Health England regarding 'shielding' in order to keep you safe during this COVID-19 outbreak.

If you fall ill from COVID-19, or any other condition, and require treatment in hospital, you will still be treated as normal and will not be denied any medical intervention because you are in the 'shielded' group.

4. I have received a text message telling me that I am at highest clinical risk. How do I know if this text is real or a scam?

NHS Business Services Authority have sent out a number of text messages from the 'NHS coronavirus service'. Daily text messages were sent from 23 to 29 March from the same number - 07307 810357. If your text does not come from this number, please ignore it.

The first text should have looked like the below:



5. I have more questions about people who are at the highest clinical risk from COVID-19?

NHS England has published guidance specifically relating to people defined by the United Kingdom's Chief Medical Officer as being extremely vulnerable to, or at the highest clinical risk from, COVID-19. You can read the information [here](#).

8. Myths and misinformation

1. There is a lot of misinformation about coronavirus, how do I know what is correct?

A new GOV.UK WhatsApp Coronavirus Information Service has now been launched to combat the spread of misinformation. To use the service, members of the public simply add +44 7860 064422 to their contacts and send a WhatsApp message saying “Hi”.

2. Are homemade face masks effective?

The use of homemade and fabric masks is not recommended. Inappropriate use of facemasks and use of non-conforming products can lead to a greater risk of self-inoculation.

An effective face mask for use in healthcare must conform to British Safety Standards:

- Carry the CE mark
- Be certified as fluid repellent:
 - **EN 14683 Type IIR performance ASTM F2100 level 2 or level 3 or equivalent;**
Fluid resistance at minimum 120 mmHg pressure based on ASTM F1862-07, ISO 22609, or equivalent
Breathability: MIL–M-36945C, EN 14683 annex C, or equivalent
Filtration efficiency: ASTM F2101, EN14683 annex B, or equivalent
https://www.who.int/medical_devices/ppe Ebola_24nov_en.pdf

Masks must be disposed of when soiled/damp (approximately 20minutes) and immediately following close contact with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

3. Can 5G mobile networks spread COVID-19?

No, viruses cannot travel on radio waves/mobile networks. COVID-19 is spreading in many countries that do not have 5G mobile networks.

COVID-19 is spread through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or speaks. People can also be infected by touching a contaminated surface and then their eyes, mouth or nose.

4. Now that we have warmer weather, are we protected from Covid-19?

You can catch COVID-19, no matter how sunny or hot the weather is. Countries with hot weather have reported cases of COVID-19. To protect yourself, make sure you

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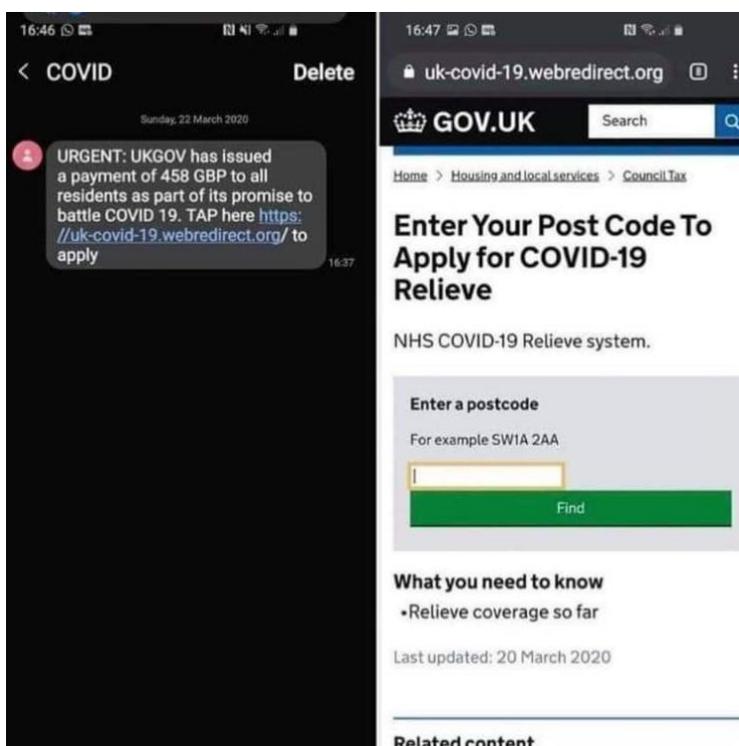
clean your hands frequently and thoroughly and avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.

5. Scam Texts – what to look out for

Scam texts often include links or attachments which can't be trusted. Don't click on them.

Here's an example of a scam text, claiming to be sent by the Government, offering a payment related to the coronavirus. On the left is the text; on the right is the web page you'll be taken to if you click on the link in the text.

However, look at the URL – it does not link to the UK Government website. It is a fake website which requires you to enter your personal details – it is a phishing scam.



9. Tell us about your experiences and let us know what you need!

1. Who should I contact if I have a question or want to give feedback about my experiences of health and care services?

The Sussex Covid-19 NHS Community Connectors Team ensure that our people and communities across Sussex can ask questions and give feedback about their experiences of health and care services at this difficult time.

Covid-19 Community Connectors Team are here to help make sure you, and the people you help and support, get the information and support needed. Please do contact the team using the contact details below:

Updated on 17th April 2020

Email: sxccg.involvement@nhs.net

Telephone: 012 73 238 725

Deaf British Sign Language (BSL) users can use a Video Relay Service (VRS) called SignLive (a free app which connects deaf people to a qualified British Sign Language Interpreter before connecting you to one of the Community Connectors Team).

Simply [download the SignLive app](#), register your details, and search for NHS Brighton and Hove in the Community Directory. An interpreter will join you on the call before the call is put through to the engagement team.

This service is currently available every **Thursday from 14:00-16:00**. Please contact the Community Connectors using the details above if this is not convenient.

2. I want to raise concerns about NHS and social care services to an independent body, who can I talk to?

You can also raise issues through Healthwatch, which is an independent body responsible for gathering people's views of health and social care services. Contact details are below:

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove:

Telephone: 01273 234 040

Email: info@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk

Website: <https://www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk/contact-us/>

Healthwatch East Sussex

Telephone: [0333 101 4007](tel:03331014007)

Email: enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk

Website: <https://healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk/contact/>

Healthwatch West Sussex

Telephone: 0300 012 0122

Email: helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk

Website: <https://www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk/contact-us>

10. Useful links and further information

1. Sussex (East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove)

MIND, the charity for better mental health has lots of information for people with existing Mental Health problems who may be finding it difficult to cope during the COVID-19 outbreak. The charity can provide [information and support](#).

Resources in British Sign Language:

Updated on 17th April 2020

- [Home isolation advice for those with symptoms](#)
- [Hand hygiene advice](#)

Survivors' Network, who support survivors of sexual violence and abuse in Sussex, have set up a new web/phone-based service for female survivors of sexual violence (aged 14+) plus supporters and professionals of all genders.

The helpline number is 01273 720110 and is open on Monday and Wednesday between 12pm – 2pm. You can also email for support at help@survivorsnetwork.org.uk. Emails are checked during helpline hours.

Macmillan have produced information for those with Cancer during the Coronavirus crisis: <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/coronavirus>

The Eve Appeal have developed a [cancer and coronavirus information hub](#) for people to get up to date and accurate information on gynaecological cancers. The information is reviewed regularly, and any changes added as they are announced.

Public Health England have published materials on Coronavirus in a range of languages including Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Polish, Romanian, Russian and Urdu. This includes posters and social media content all of which can be found online at <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/101/resources/4992>

The Health Innovation Network have produced a [booklet for people caring for someone with dementia](#). It includes dementia friendly activities which may be useful during this period of isolation.

Looking out for each other is a campaign to inform those **who are well and not at risk** on the things that they can do to help support their friends and neighbours who need to stay at home because of Coronavirus (COVID-19). [A range of materials](#) have been developed to help with this.

Healthwatch have designed a poster with guidance on [how to safely collect medicines](#) on behalf of someone.

2. Brighton and Hove

Community Hub

You can request additional support for vulnerable people here. <https://new.brighton-hove.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19>

Brighton and Hove Speak Out are continuing to offer support to people with learning disabilities during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The telephone helpline is open Monday-Friday from 9am - 5 pm on 01273 421921. **More information is on their website.**

Updated on 17th April 2020

Brighton and Hove Wellbeing Service is a free NHS service for anyone aged 4 years old and upwards with a postcode beginning BN1, BN2, BN3 or BN41 which offers a variety of support. You can be reached the service by phone on: 44 (0) 300 00 30 130 and (*for Brighton and Hove residents contact the Brighton and Hove Wellbeing service on 0300 002 0060)

Switchboard services are now being delivered remotely so we can continue to support our communities during the Covid-19 crisis.

Switchboard Helpline operating remotely Wednesdays & Thursdays 7- 9.30pm. We can also call people back at other times if you contact us on info@switchboard.org.uk

LGBTQ Disability Project running Zoom social and support meetings every Wednesday 2:30pm. Visit the Switchboard Facebook page for details on how to join.

LGBTQ Older People's Project offering support via phone: email helen.bashford@switchboard.org.uk - [we can help connect you with shopping deliveries or befriending as well as offering telephone support](#)

Grief Encounters bereavement group Zoom session on Self Care and Self Regulation Monday 27th April 7-9pm, email grief.encounters@switchboard.org.uk for [details](#)

Rainbow Cafe dementia project offering telephone support plus help accessing shopping services, befriending, etc. email rainbow.cafe@switchboard.org.uk

Trans & Non-Binary Link social prescribing service - contact translink@switchboard.org.uk, or 07928 830757, or use our online referral form: <https://www.switchboard.org.uk/projects/trans-support/trans-link/referral-form/>

3. East Sussex

Community Hubs

There are five hubs – one in each part of the county. They are usually open during working hours, 9am to 5pm, although this will vary slightly from hub to hub. Each one can be reached online or by phone. Further information can be found [here](#).

Telephone Befriending Service providing emotional support between people in isolation in the Hastings area, has been introduced. To sign up to receive calls people can phone 01424 444010 or [complete an online form](#).

East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board guidance about [identifying and reporting any safeguarding concerns](#) and areas of exploitation during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak.

POhWER Advocacy in East Sussex offers support to people with mental health issues, physical and sensory disabilities, learning disabilities and carers. You can contact POhWER in a number of ways:

Updated on 17th April 2020

Telephone: 0300 456 2370

Minicom: 0300 456 2364

Text: send the word 'pohwer' with your name and number to 81025

Email: pohwer@pohwer.net

Health in Mind is a free NHS service for anyone in East Sussex experiencing stress, anxiety and depression or other kinds of emotional or psychological difficulties. If you have access to the internet, there is no need to go through your GP, people can self-refer via the website <https://www.healthinmind.org.uk>

Out of hours crisis café support (evenings and weekend) - Staying Well Hastings and the new Staying Well Eastbourne - now operate as a telephone support service. Referrals can be made by professionals or as self-referrals. Phone 0800 023 6475 for queries or to discuss a referral
Email stayingwell.eastbourne@southdown.org
Email stayingwell.hastings@southdown.org
[Staying Well webpage](#)

i-rock offers advice and support on emotional and mental wellbeing for people aged 14 – 25 years. The service continues to offer an 11-6pm provision daily through virtual clinic software, telephone or email, the i-rock website, Facebook and Instagram pages have more information. Email irockhastings@gmail.com for more details.

Sussex Community Development Association (SCDA) offer support for people bereaved by suicide. Assessments are carried out over the telephone or by video calls wherever possible. Please [visit their website](#) or contact Rhian Gower on 07796869484 for more information.

Seaview (day centre to support the homeless and vulnerable in St Leonards) – a reduced service offer, with access limited to urgent appointments including St John's Hastings Homeless Service. Rough sleepers' hub remains open on Thursday mornings. Lunches in takeaway containers are being offered each weekday at 1pm. Food bank, showers, toiletries are offered on an urgent request basis. Clients are being offered telephone contact and advice on Covid-19. The service can be reached at admin@seaviewproject.org.uk or by calling 01424 717981.

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Employment Support - will continue to give telephone support for current caseloads, continuing to take referrals from SPFT. The service will also continue to work with clients in job retention and move to offering advice to keep people well while working from home and regarding coronavirus related absences. Referrals for this service is via clinical teams, [information and contact details are on the webpage](#).

Referrals to the **Wellbeing Centres and Peer Support services** will continue to be accepted, although referrers and clients should be aware of the temporarily reduced service offer. Wherever possible, new client assessments will be completed using the phone or video calling.

Updated on 17th April 2020

Community Connectors (Social Prescribing) – the face to face service is now closed however staff are working remotely to communicate with and support existing clients with their mental wellbeing. They will work through the waiting list and continue to promote the service and [accept new referrals](#) as part of the effort to offer mental health support at this time.

East Sussex County Council have produced a [useful guide for volunteers](#) who are collecting medicines on behalf of a friend, family member or neighbour.

4. West Sussex

Community Hubs (set up by West Sussex County Council) are working to make sure the most vulnerable people in our community get the support they need. Both public and professionals can contact the hub by calling 033 022 27980 between 8am – 8pm or by [visiting the dedicated page online](#).

Counselling as usual at Relate

Relate North and South West Sussex is offering telephone and video link counselling services. Charges are on a sliding scale and subsidies or a limited number of sessions free of charge may be available. Contact 01293 657055 or visit <https://www.relate.org.uk/sussex>

Pathfinder West Sussex can help find the right mental health support although not all services are working as they usually would. [Information on their website](#) is updated every Tuesday and includes [contact details for the local Pathfinder teams](#) in West Sussex

West Sussex Wellbeing have produced information for older people on general health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak. [Click here to read more](#).

Support Services for people living with Sight Loss at this time:

1. 4Sight Vision Support HQ

For patients requiring general information, advice, guidance and support, including help with daily living aids and low vision products, please contact us by phone or email:

Telephone: 01243 828555
Email: enquiries@4sight.org.uk

2. Sight Care Advisor service

Our Sight Care Advisors are available by phone to support patients from Southlands and St Richard's Hospital Eye Clinics who may have specific concerns about their eye health.

Annie Taylor: 07858 128312
Jan Wise: 07947 310651

Updated on 17th April 2020

3. West Sussex County Council

The WSCC Sensory Services ROVI Team (Rehabilitation Officers for the Visually Impaired) can be contacted on 01243 642121.

4. Referrals

Eye Clinic Staff can refer patients directly to us with the patient's permission, or the patient can contact us directly using the details above.

5. Urgent medical problems

If a patient's eye health deteriorates suddenly and they require urgent treatment, they can use the following helpline numbers:

Southlands Hospital: 01903 205111 ext 83111

St Richard's Hospital: 01243 788122 ext 33533

Sussex Eye Hospital: 01273 696955

Adur Community Grants

Adur District Council is proud to continue their small grants programme in 2020/21. Closing date for this round of funding is 30 April 2020 - **more information is available** on the Council website. **Please note:** The current main priority is to support not-for-profit groups who are helping residents during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership has a new webpage with [Resources relating to Safeguarding of Neglected and Abused Children](#)

Adur and Worthing Council have an **online form to request support** for you or someone you know who needs help as a result of the Coronavirus. <https://adur-worthing-eforms.onmats.com/w/webpage/community-support>

Age UK West Sussex are offering doorstep deliveries for older people who are housebound. They will deliver meals, groceries and essential medication to doorsteps as well as knitting kits, CDs/DVDs, books and jigsaws. Please call on 01903 731800 or email information@ageukwestsussex.org.uk

Mid Sussex District Council have a dedicated **Coronavirus Community Support** page on their website where you can find all the latest information. A helpline is also available 8am – 8pm 7 days a week by calling 033 022 27980.