

# Coronavirus and mental wellbeing

For people who are shielding

The need to follow the latest guidance on ‘staying alert and safe (social distancing)’ means that we are all living and working in unusual ways, without certainty and often without our support networks at work or home through families and friends. This can create feelings of stress and anxiety. This may include feelings of fear, irritability, insecurity or being unsettled, feeling a lack of control, trouble sleeping or eating, and excessively checking for symptoms.

You may also be isolating if you or someone in your household are considered as someone at the greatest risk of severe illness from Covid-19, i.e. who is ‘clinically extremely vulnerable’ and need to follow the [shielding guidance](#). This includes clinically extremely

vulnerable people living in long-term care facilities for the elderly or people with special needs. If you are shielding from others this can possibly make you feel bored, frustrated or lonely, which can heighten feelings of stress and anxiety further.

# This guide

People who are shielding remain vulnerable and should continue to take precautions but can now leave their home if they wish, as long as they are able to maintain and follow the strict social distancing guidance.

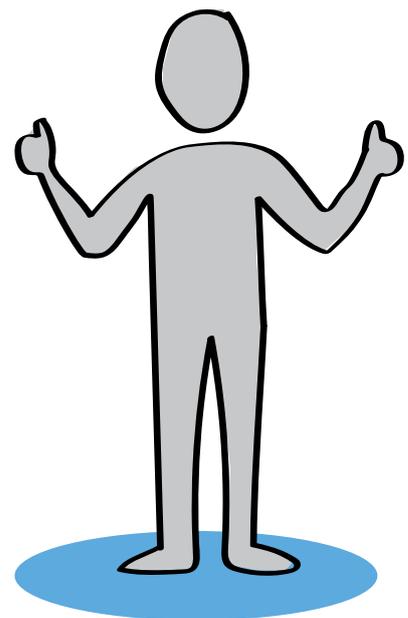
This guide aims to summarise Public Health England [shielding guidance](#) and offer some further information on how to maintain and protect your mental wellbeing. The following guidance aims to help support you if you fall within the shielding group and need to stay at home with or without additional support. This means that you have either received a letter or have spoken to your GP who confirmed that you are considered 'clinically extremely vulnerable'.

This guide has been designed to support children, young people and adults considered as extremely vulnerable, as well as for family, friends and carers. If you're still concerned, you should discuss your concerns with your GP or hospital clinician.

## Handwashing and respiratory hygiene

There are general principles you should follow to help prevent the spread of airway and chest infections caused by respiratory viruses, including:

- wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use a hand sanitiser. Do this after you blow your nose, sneeze or cough, and before you eat or handle food
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid close contact with people who have symptoms
- cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a bin
- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in the home



## Help with food and medicines if you're shielding

Ask family, friends and neighbours to support you and use online services where possible. Maintaining social distancing guidance, family, friends and neighbours may be able to help you with picking up essentials from your local shop or health centre. Please also check with your local shops to find out whether they are providing a service for those on the shielding list.

Volunteer Cornwall volunteers can do anything you might reasonably expect from a good neighbour. That might include: Checking that someone is getting the help and support they need via carers or the NHS, picking up essentials from the shop such as milk and bread, collecting prescriptions or short term telephone befriending. Call them on **01872 266993** or email [requestforhelp@volunteercornwall.org.uk](mailto:requestforhelp@volunteercornwall.org.uk)

If you cannot get the help you need, the government can help by delivering essential groceries and support. Register for [support online](#) or call **0800 028 8327**. Have your NHS number with you when you register. This will be at the top of the letter you have received letting you know you are clinically extremely vulnerable or on any prescriptions.

## Plan how you will access medication

If you are caring for someone who needs medication, you might be able to order repeat prescriptions by phone, or you may be able to do this online using an app or website, if your doctor's surgery offers this. Ask your pharmacy about getting medication delivered or think about who you could ask to collect it for you. The NHS website has more information about [getting prescriptions for someone else](#) and [checking if you have to pay for prescriptions](#).

Continue to order repeat prescriptions in your usual timeframe. There is no need to order for a longer duration or larger quantities.

You might also want to make arrangements for anyone you care for if you become unwell, for example making sure a partner, friend, family member or neighbour is aware of important information including their care plan, medications and emergency numbers.

## Visits from essential carers

You can still continue to have visits from any essential carers or visitors who support you with your everyday needs unless they have any of the symptoms of coronavirus. Everyone coming to your home should follow the latest guidance to keep you safe, which includes washing their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds on arrival to your house and often while they are there.

## Hospital and GP appointments if you're shielding

Everyone should access medical assistance online or by phone wherever possible. However, if you have a scheduled hospital or other medical appointment during this period, talk to your GP or specialist to ensure you continue to receive the care you need and determine which of these appointments are absolutely essential.

Your hospital may need to cancel or postpone some clinics and appointments. You should contact your hospital or clinic to confirm appointments.

## Looking after your mental wellbeing

While we all may react differently to the need to shield from others, being worried at this time and needing a bit of extra help with your mental wellbeing is normal. There are some simple things you can do to maintain your mental wellbeing. This includes following the [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#) and connecting with others, being active, keeping learning, giving or supporting others and taking notice of your environment. It is also important to take the time to relax, eat well, stay hydrated and maintain healthy and active lifestyles that include good quality regular sleeping patterns (e.g. see [Every Mind Matters](#) sleep page).

There is a lot of information about the Coronavirus (Covid-19) on our web pages ([www.cornwall.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/coronavirus)), including how to maintain and protect your wellbeing. This can be found on the main Coronavirus and mental wellbeing pages ([www.cornwall.gov.uk/mentalhealth](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/mentalhealth)) and the Start Now site for children and young people <https://www.startnowcornwall.org.uk/>. Our Covid-19 mental wellbeing pages ([www.cornwall.gov.uk/mentalhealth](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/mentalhealth)) contain specific [guides](#) containing a lot of information about how to

support your mental wellbeing whether you are a child, young person or adult.

It is also normal right now to be in need of some additional support with your mental wellbeing. **To talk to someone** about your mental wellbeing you can call the 24/7 NHS mental health telephone support, advice and triage help line - **0800 038 5300**. Support is available to anyone, regardless of age, all day every day. If you or someone you know feels they need to access urgent mental health support, they will listen to you and assess how best to help.

**Online** you could try googling “NHS self-help” to find recommended self-help therapies and apps you can download for free [www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/self-help-therapies/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/self-help-therapies/) or Google “NHS self help”.

A **safety plan** is a ‘mental health first-aid kit’ and can really help someone, possibly someone like you, who is feeling that your mental health and wellbeing is low, or even that you are at risk of harming yourself or acting on suicidal thoughts. This is because this mental health first aid kit can help you to develop strategies to keep yourself safe and give you some control. You can go to [www.cornwall.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/mental-health/mental-health-safety-plans](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/mental-health/mental-health-safety-plans) to find an interactive, downloadable or digital plan (app).

**If you feel overwhelmed, there is immediate help and support available** so do not be afraid to contact **111** online or your GP. If you need medical treatment don’t forget you can attend A&E.

If you are a child or young person under 19;

- you can also call **0800 1111** to talk to Childline.
- Text “SHOUT” to **85258** to contact the Shout Crisis Text Line, or text “YM”.

Or

- Call **116 123** to talk to Samaritans, or email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) for a reply within 24 hours.
- To find a list of other organisations that can help, you just need to google “I need help now Cornwall”.

**For additional support** for your mental wellbeing;

- If you are a young person or worried about a child you can call the Early Help Hub for advice and help (call **01872 322277** or email [earlyhelphub@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelphub@cornwall.gov.uk)).
- Outlook South West provide free talking therapies for people aged 16+ and suffering with anxiety and depression. Self-referrals can be made online here: [www.cornwallft.nhs.uk/outlook-south-west](http://www.cornwallft.nhs.uk/outlook-south-west) or by calling **01208 871905**; At this time any therapy being delivered will be via telephone or online platform.

- To talk to a trained expert about drugs, alcohol and your mental health then you can contact ‘We are with you’ by calling **01872 263001** or visit [www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/cornwall-truro](http://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/cornwall-truro)
- Call **0300 777 4777** or visit [www.saferfutures.org.uk](http://www.saferfutures.org.uk) if you or someone else is affected by domestic abuse, sexual violence and those demonstrating abusive behaviours.
- Additional organisations can be found at [www.cornwallft.nhs.uk/i-need-help-now](http://www.cornwallft.nhs.uk/i-need-help-now) or Google “I need help now Cornwall”.

### Digital Support

One-to-one phone/digital support to help you get online and to develop digital and online streaming skills.

Contact Cornwall Link - **01872 243557** or Digital Inclusion Team at CRCC **01872 243534**

or Email: [digitalinclusion@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:digitalinclusion@cornwall.gov.uk)

### Social Prescribing during Covid-19

Many GP surgeries offer a social prescribing service that helps you access a range of activities to support your wellbeing. Social Prescribing Link Workers are providing 1:1 consultations via telephone or video conferencing during Covid-19. Please contact your GP for further information and to make an appointment.

### Disability Cornwall

This is a values based, user-led charitable company with a mission to represent, include, support and empower people living with a long-term health condition or disability, their families and carers in Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly.

Phone: **01736 759500**

[www.disabilitycornwall.org.uk](http://www.disabilitycornwall.org.uk)

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) provides adult community health, mental health and learning disability services to people of all ages.

If you are unhappy about your care, the care of a relative or about any aspect of NHS services, you should initially try to speak to a member of staff who is with you at the time or a member of the care team. They may be able to resolve your concerns straight away. However, if you are unable to resolve your concerns by talking to a member of staff, please contact the Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS), which provides support and advice to patients, their families, carers and friends. Independent advice and support.

Phone: **01208 834620**

Email: [cpn-tr.Palscft@nhs.net](mailto:cpn-tr.Palscft@nhs.net)

[www.cornwallft.nhs.uk/patient-advice-and-liaison-service](http://www.cornwallft.nhs.uk/patient-advice-and-liaison-service)