

# COVID-19: ADVICE FOR INFORMAL (UNPAID) CARERS AND YOUNG CARERS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Updated 22 May 2020 @ 10:00

## Key Messages

- **Follow** public health advice.
- Carers, people with care and support needs and people coming into the home of a person with care needs should follow **hygiene and infection control** guidelines.
- **Plan** for contingencies and check with your Trust what the emergency plan is.
- **Make the most of networks** now, family, friends and neighbours, and your local community organisations to plan for “what if”.
- Make sure you have **key information** to hand about the person you care for.
- **Make the most of technology** that can keep you in touch with the person for whom you care, or keep them in touch with others.
- It is recognised that the new situation carers find themselves in can be confusing and demanding, even tough. **Support is available** to help you to get through this.
- **Remember** to use the Coronavirus Take 5 message each day

[Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing](#)

## What's New in this Update?

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6	Social Distancing	Link to Guidance on Social Distancing for Vulnerable People has been removed
7	Shielding extremely vulnerable family members who are at risk	Information updated
7	What if your family members have symptoms?	Link updated
8	Physical and emotional wellbeing	New links
9	Can care workers continue to deliver care?	Information updated
10	Carer's Assessment	Link updated
10	Direct Payments/Self Directed Support	Information updated
11	Carer's Allowance	Information on Discretionary Support Grant updated
13	Local pharmacy/prescriptions	Wording updated
13	Grocery shopping	Information updated
14	Access to PPE	Greater clarity provided
16	Benefits	Link updated
17	Caring for those with learning disabilities and Autism	Information updated
20	Contacts	Additional links and new contacts added

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## Introduction

This information provides advice and support for **informal carers, young carers and family members**. It pulls together already existing sources of information into one place and signposts carers to others who may be able to help. All links provided throughout this document are from reliable sources.

As the crisis with COVID-19 (Coronavirus) continues, this document will be regularly reviewed to update the information and advice.

**Always ensure you are reading current COVID-19 information from reliable sources as guidance may change frequently.**

This advice contains links to the **.gov.uk** website. The information contained in these links is very useful but you should be aware that, on occasions, it includes further web links to information specific to England.

[A number of resources on COVID-19 in British and Irish Sign Language are available via this link:](#)

[www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus)

## Planning ahead for an emergency

It is vitally important that you have a contingency plan in place in the event that you become ill and are unable to provide care.

- If you don't have one, speak to your **named worker** about getting one in place.
- If you already have a plan, check with the Trust that it is still workable due to COVID-19 (and review periodically)
- Be prepared for the person being cared for needing to be admitted to hospital (have a bag packed, include a list of medication, contact details for their carer and family members,)
- Know who your **named worker** is and what arrangements are in place for cover in the event that they are off work
- This plan may help you to record vital information in the event of an emergency. Keep it up to date and share with your **named worker** and other family members. This will help significantly if your family member needs to be hospitalised or in the event that you may become unwell.

### [Carers UK - Planning for emergencies](#)

You might find this tool useful to help you plan:

#### [Planning for emergencies tool](#)

It might also be worth families considering to provide neighbours and friends of the individual with 'In case of Emergency' numbers and also place these in personal items (e.g. handbag, purse, wallet) of the individual. This is particularly useful for people with dementia who may try to go out for exercise but become displaced or confused.

## Health advice

**The Public Health Agency website has all the relevant information relating to COVID-19 (Coronavirus) in Northern Ireland and can be accessed here:**

[www.publichealth.hscni.net](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net)

You can also download the **COVID-19 NI** app for your phone/tablet from either the Apple Store or the Play Store for Android phones/devices.

## Social distancing

Everyone is advised to reduce the contact they have with others – referred to as social distancing. It is important you know how to effectively do this when you are looking after someone. The Public Health Agency (PHA) is urging people to follow the advice on social distancing as an essential part of slowing the spread of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) and saving lives. To access further information on social distancing see links below:

[PHA - social distancing](#)

## Self-isolation

Social distancing is not the same as self-isolation. Self-isolation is about staying at home if you or someone you live with is showing signs of COVID-19 and protecting others. Guidance on how to self-isolate can be accessed here:

[www.gov.uk - Covid-19 stay at home guidance](http://www.gov.uk - Covid-19 stay at home guidance)

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 7 days, or until your symptoms have gone, 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. For anyone else in the household who starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for 7 days from when their symptoms appeared – or until their symptoms have gone, whichever is the longer – regardless of what day they are on in the original 14-day isolation period.

## Looking after someone who is vulnerable as an unpaid carer

You may be looking after someone who is considered as clinically vulnerable. Clinically vulnerable people are those who are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus infection (COVID-19). This group includes:

- those who are aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- those under 70 with a specified, underlying health condition (for adults, this usually means anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds)
- pregnant women

You should now keep up to date with announcements and advice on the [Department of Health](#) or [PHA](#) websites and follow the latest advice set out in the [guidance on social distancing for everyone in the UK and protecting older people and vulnerable adults](#), which includes tips on how to help protect a vulnerable person you live with.

[NI Direct - Covid-19 advice for vulnerable people](#)

## Shielding extremely vulnerable people who are at risk

There are some clinical conditions that put people at even higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. If you, or the person you care for, are in this category, you will have received a letter from your GP advising you to stay at home and shield. The letter of advice from their GP includes a Freephone helpline which will put you in touch with voluntary services about advice and support they can offer.

Advice on how to help shield the family member or person you care for can be accessed here:

[www.gov.uk - Guidance on shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable persons from Covid-19](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19)

A good source of information about infection control can be accessed here:

[NISSC - Supporting good infection control](https://www.nissc.org.uk/supporting-good-infection-control)

[www.publichealth.hscni.net - preventing-the-spread-of-infection](https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/preventing-the-spread-of-infection)

## What if your family members have symptoms?

If you suspect that the person you are looking after may have the symptoms of COVID-19:

- do not take them to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital
- you do not need to contact 111 to tell them they are staying at home
- testing for coronavirus (COVID-19) is not needed if they're staying at home

**If you feel you cannot cope with their symptoms at home, or their condition gets worse, or their symptoms do not get better after 7 days, then call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999.**

Calling your GP is **only** necessary if you have:

- an existing health condition;
- problems with your immune system;
- very serious symptoms.

Do **not** attend your GP surgery or emergency department in person before calling ahead and speaking with someone.

This information can be found on the Public Health Agency (PHA) website at:

[www.publichealth.hscni.net - what-should-i-do-if-i-think-i-have-covid-19](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net - what-should-i-do-if-i-think-i-have-covid-19)

Helpful information about staying at home if you think someone has symptoms can be found at the following link. This includes information around cleaning, laundry, waste disposal and visitors to your home.

[www.gov.uk - Covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance for households with possible coronavirus Covid-19 infection](http://www.gov.uk - Covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-Covid-19-infection)

## Interpreting services

Since the outbreak and spread of COVID-19, many Health and Social Care services and essential information sources have switched to telephone contact only, creating significant challenges and risk to deaf people and others who use sign language. A free, temporary service has been established to enable the Deaf community to communicate effectively via telephone and secure video link.

A free interpreting service provides the Deaf community in NI with access to:

- NHS111 services during the COVID-19 pandemic via a video relay system.
- All other Health and Social Care services including GPs via either a video relay system or video remote interpreting.

Further information can be found at the following link:

[www.hscboard.hscni.net/interpreting-service-bsl-isl/](http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/interpreting-service-bsl-isl/)

## Physical and emotional wellbeing

The outbreak of COVID-19 has impacted on us all, leading to unprecedented changes in our everyday lives. The restricted living conditions and daily challenges we face can lead to feelings of stress and other difficult emotions.

It's very important that we keep in touch with friends and family during this pandemic. Simple things like setting up a telephone rota to make sure we make regular contact can make a difference for those living on their own or are feeling isolated. There are lots of technology aids such as WhatsApp or Messenger which allows multiple people to communicate together, so consider setting up a family or friend group chat. Regular video calls using Facetime, WhatsApp or Skype (others are available) can be a fun and cheap way to keep in touch with loved ones.

Health and Social Care (HSC) in partnership with ORCHA (Organisation for Review of Care and Health Apps) has developed a library of high quality, convenient Apps to support health and social wellbeing during these difficult times.



The Apps included in the library provide useful support and information on how to manage stress and improve wellbeing, sleep management, staying fit and nutrition.

You can access the Apps Library via your smart phone or PC at:

[apps4healthcare.ni.hscni.net](https://apps4healthcare.ni.hscni.net)

These links have some useful tips and advice on looking after your wellbeing:

[Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing](#)

[www.mindingyourhead.info](http://www.mindingyourhead.info)

[www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk) - taking care of your mental health and wellbeing

[www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org) - looking after your mental wellbeing

[www.rcot.co.uk/staying-well-when-social-distancing](http://www.rcot.co.uk/staying-well-when-social-distancing)

[www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/)

[WHO - mental health considerations \(pdf\)](#)

An excellent resource for people who are isolated or vulnerable can be found on the SCIE website:

[www.scie.org.uk/support-for-people-who-are-isolated](http://www.scie.org.uk/support-for-people-who-are-isolated)

A new free online stress control class is available through YouTube. To access these classes go to:

[www.stresscontrol.org](http://www.stresscontrol.org)

## Support for you in your caring role

If you are new to a caring role during COVID-19 it is very important that you contact your local Trust (see contact details at end of this Advice) and identify yourself as a carer. This will allow the Trust to be aware of you and your situation and give you access to various support and help provided by the Trust.

If the person you care for is already in receipt of services and you have any concerns about them, contact the **named worker** who will be best placed to give advice and support.

### Can care workers continue to deliver care?

Government advice is that people who need care and help should continue to receive it. Domiciliary care workers and community-based health and social care staff have access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and will follow strict

guidelines about hygiene in order to keep you safe. It is important that you read, understand and follow the guidance for hand hygiene and keeping the home clean.

[www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/hand-hygiene](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/hand-hygiene)

### **If the person you care for needs to go to hospital**

If the person you care for needs to go into hospital, the information contained in the link below will give you guidance about supporting the person whilst they are in hospital:

[DoH Visiting Hospitals Guidance \(pdf\)](#)

### **Carer's Assessment**

As a carer you are entitled to a Carer's Assessment so that the Trust can identify your needs. During COVID-19 (Coronavirus) the Trust may need to contact you by phone or using video (e.g. Skype, Facetime etc.) in order to talk to you about your situation. Talk to your local Trust and/or Care Co-ordinator about this.

For children's services, this will be via the Gateway Teams (a list of which is attached) but please note that each case will be on the basis of an individual assessment of need and may reflect the capacity of the service to respond during the current situation. Priority will be given to cases where children are at risk or likelihood of family breakdown.

As Trusts respond to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic their capacity to respond to requests may be impacted. Therefore, it might take longer to process your request for an assessment. However, do not let that put you off asking for an assessment – by law you are entitled to an assessment.

For more information on Carers Assessments visit:

[www.nidirect.gov.uk - assessments for carers](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk - assessments for carers)

[www.carersuk.org/Factsheets/Assssments.pdf](http://www.carersuk.org/Factsheets/Assssments.pdf)

### **Direct Payments/Self Directed Support**

If you, as a carer, are in receipt of services, Direct Payments can be made to you so that you can 'buy-in' your own help rather than using the services provided by the Trust. If you think Direct Payments might help you, discuss this with your **named worker** or your local Trust's **Carer Co-ordinator**. Contact details are included at the end of this document.

[Direct Payments User Guide - April 2020](#)

The Department of Health is currently working to provide more comprehensive guidance on the use of Direct Payments during the COVID-19 period. A link to the new guidance will be added to this advice as soon as it is available.

Please access the links below for further information and help:

[www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk) - [Direct Payments](#)

[Centre for Independent Living NI](#)

Please note that Direct Payments are just one option in a range of services Trusts will provide in conjunction with the assessment of need or where those already in receipt of Direct Payments have been assessed as having a change in their circumstances which requires a revision of existing provision.

During the assessment process, Trusts will seek to engage with families during this period in regard to their specific circumstances and will try to be as flexible as possible in responding to your needs.

### **Carer's Allowance**

If you are new to caring or are looking after someone and do not receive an allowance, you may be entitled to some financial support, called Carer's Allowance. It is paid by the Department for Communities. Information on the allowance can be accessed here:

[www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk) - [carers allowance](#)

Existing carers will continue to be paid Carer's Allowance when they have temporarily ceased to care for a severely disabled person due to either of them self-isolating or being infected with coronavirus.

During the COVID-19 pandemic emotional support can also count towards the 35 hours a week you spend caring for someone who is ill or has a disability.

### **Additional financial support during COVID-19**

You may also be entitled to a Discretionary Support Grant if you have been effected by COVID-19. Details on the grant and how to apply can be access via this link:

[www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/extra-financial-support](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/extra-financial-support)

### **Carers Cash Grant**

Each Trust will have funding dedicated for carer cash grants. The grants are there to support carers who are receiving a service and are known to the HSC Trust and who may need one-off financial support. Please contact your **named worker** if you need to be assessed for a carers cash grant.

## COVID-19 Testing for Personal Assistants paid through Direct Payments

PAs (Personal Assistants) employed to provide care through Direct Payments are considered Key Workers and are eligible for COVID-19 testing should they need to self-isolate. All recipients of Direct Payments should have been informed of this decision by your local Trust. Please speak to your **named worker** if you have any questions about this.

[www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/testing-covid-19](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/testing-covid-19)

## Voluntary/community support

Every effort will be made to support communities to work together to help the most vulnerable in our society. The Department of Health and Department for Communities are currently undertaking work with community and voluntary groups in order to co-ordinate and support the capacity of the groups and volunteers who are able to support isolated people or people in need in the community.

If you need to be put in contact with a community and voluntary group working in your area for support then you can use the COVID-19 Community Helpline operated on behalf of the Department for Communities by Advice NI. The **Freephone COVID-19 Community Helpline** number is **0808 802 0020** or e-mail: [covid19@adviceni.net](mailto:covid19@adviceni.net) or text: ACTION to **81025**.

There is a **Family Support Hub** in your area and their work is continuing. They can provide access to a wide range of early help services including foodbanks, advice on parenting and children's issues through to money matters. Details of services are available are on:

The Family Support NI website [www.familysupportni.gov.uk](http://www.familysupportni.gov.uk)

Children & Young Peoples Strategic Partnership website [www.cypsp.hscni.net](http://www.cypsp.hscni.net) or

NI Direct website. [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk) - [support hubs](#)

## Short breaks

In response to the latest government directives and announcement about restriction of movements all Trust arranged short break provision has been stopped in the short-term, however, if you are feeling under pressure in caring for a family member you should contact your **named worker** to provide support to prevent family breakdown. This position will be kept under review as the COVID-19 situation develops.

It is important that you also look after your own health and well-being for your own sake and to enable you to continue caring. If you are concerned about your situation you should speak to your **named worker**.

Do look at the section above called **Physical and emotional wellbeing during COVID-19 (Coronavirus)** about coping during this difficult period.

### **Short breaks including residential short breaks for children with disability including those with complex health needs**

Nevertheless, the range of short break services are recognised as an important aspect of support especially to families caring for disabled children. Services will strive to seek a balance between maintaining this support and ensuring the health of the person being cared for is not further compromised.

Details of support and role of Family Support Hubs is noted above.

### **What if I need medical supplies?**

If you or the person you care for normally receives medical supplies from the Trust or through your GP prescription to your community pharmacy, or from your district Nurse, this will continue. **This process has not changed.** Those who are on regular prescriptions are being advised to order in good time and if there are difficulties to contact your **named worker**.

### **Local pharmacy/prescriptions**

If you are unable to collect a prescription from the general practice or community pharmacy you are advised to:

- ask someone who can do this on your behalf, such as a friend, neighbour, family member or local support network (this is the best option, if possible);
- If this cannot be arranged some community pharmacies may be able to arrange to collect and deliver your prescription to your home.

In order to check if your pharmacy offers a prescription delivery service you can contact the COVID-19 Community Helpline on 0808 802 0020 or Carers NI on 028 9043 9843.

### **Grocery shopping**

Members of the public who have received letters from their GPs with advice to stay home and shield themselves from harm can now access priority delivery slots for online shopping from a number of supermarkets. To register for this facility use the following link:

[www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/register-priority-online-food-delivery](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/register-priority-online-food-delivery)

You are encouraged to stay indoors as much as possible, especially if you are caring for a person who is shielding. Getting your shopping delivered directly by the

supermarket is a useful way of getting your groceries without the need to venture outside. The main supermarket chains all offer a home delivery service. You will need to set up an online account and be able to pay by either a debit or credit card. Planning ahead will be necessary as delivery slots can be quickly taken up although the supermarkets are working to increase capacity.

Smaller local shops may also be offering home deliveries. Either phone round or check facebook and other social media platforms for details in your area.

The Consumer Council for Northern Ireland has developed a map showing small businesses who are offering a delivery service. It can be accessed here:

### [Who's Delivering Northern Ireland](#)

Volunteer Shopping Cards are available from various supermarkets, including Sainsbury's, Lidl, Asda and Marks and Spencer. Cards are pre-set with a specific amount of funds and can be purchased by the cared for person via telephone or online. Cards can be posted out or emailed and printed off and given to the carer to carry out shopping duties. This can be a safer way to shop as it eliminates the need for cash or the exchange of bank details or bank cards.

## **Access to PPE (masks, aprons etc.)**

In most instances where you provide informal care you will not require PPE, for example if you provide shopping, deliver medications or help with meals. However if you provide direct hands on care, for example personal care and toileting, to the person you care for, you should be provided with disposable gloves and disposable plastic aprons. Fluid-resistant surgical masks (face mask) and eye/face protection can be provided following a risk assessment which determines that there is an anticipated/likely risk of contamination with splashes, droplets of blood or body fluids. Where informal carers consider there is a risk to themselves or the individuals they are caring for, they should wear a fluid repellent surgical mask with or without eye protection. Please note that the face mask should be replaced if it becomes damaged, soiled or uncomfortable. After you have provided care directly to the individual, you should remove the face mask (and any other PPE) and maintain a distance of 2 metres or more.

**PPE will be provided by your local Trust and you will not be charged.** As an informal carer you should contact your **named worker** to secure access to PPE or contact the relevant Carer Support Service referenced on page 20 of this document. Likewise if your needs change or you are new to the caring role, again please contact your **named worker** or the relevant Carer Support Service.

The guidance has been based on the advice of PHE. See link below.

[assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/879111/T4\\_poster Recommended PPE additional considerations of COVID-19.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/879111/T4_poster_Recommended_PPE_additional_considerations_of_COVID-19.pdf)

Trusts must ensure that all **Direct Payment recipients** have a **named worker** in their Trust to contact about the need for PPE provision. In this situation the Direct Payment recipient should not be charged for the provision of PPE from Trust stocks.

As a result of COVID-19, if resources are not available through the Trust, a Direct Payment recipient may purchase PPE out of their Personal Budget fund, without prior Trust approval. They can then record, and report the associated costs for reimbursement under normal Direct Payment practices. If your care is provided by an independent provider, for example a domiciliary care provider, then the provider must source and provide the PPE.

## Working carers

You may be a carer who also has a full time or part-time job. Juggling your caring and working role can be difficult in normal times. Trying to do this during COVID-19 may place additional stress upon you. It is vital you seek support of other family members where possible, and even more important to take time for yourself.

Keep in touch with the **named worker** who will be best placed to give advice and support.

Remember the **Take 5** messages each day to help you and your family get through this.

## Employment rights

All employers have been asked to be flexible with their staff during COVID-19 (Coronavirus). If you need to take extra time off work because you have caring responsibilities, you should check your employer's policy on Carers/Caring for Others and discuss your situation with them.

The Law Centre has produced useful information about your employment rights:

[Law Centre NI - employee rights - Covid-19](#)

Guidance on Statutory Sick Pay:

[www.nidirect.gov.uk - Statutory Sick Pay](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk - Statutory Sick Pay)

[www.gov.uk - Statutory Sick Pay](http://www.gov.uk - Statutory Sick Pay)

The Equality Commission for NI also have help advice on employment issues if you are a carer and are being asked to return to work:

[www.equalityni.org//Caring-responsibilities-and-returning-to-work](http://www.equalityni.org//Caring-responsibilities-and-returning-to-work)

## Benefits

For advice and assistance on other benefits such as housing, Universal Credit etc., please access the NI Direct website in the first instance:

[www.nidirect.gov.uk - information on benefits and financial support](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk - information on benefits and financial support)

[www.communities-ni.gov.uk - benefits and pensions/make the call](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk - benefits and pensions/make the call)

You may also be entitled to a Discretionary Support Grant if you have been effected by COVID-19

[www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/extra-financial-support](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/extra-financial-support)

## Are you a young carer?

A young carer is someone aged between 8 and 18. Young carers may care for a parent, sibling or relative who has a disability, mental health condition, long-term illness, or drug or alcohol addiction.

A Young Carers Service will continue to be provided:

- in the Southern, South Eastern and Belfast Trust areas by Action for Children  
Contact Jennifer Hamilton, email: [niyoungcarers@actionforchildren.org.uk](mailto:niyoungcarers@actionforchildren.org.uk)
- in Northern and Western Trust areas by Barnardo's  
Contact Dougie Tyler, email: [dougie.tyler@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:dougie.tyler@barnardos.org.uk)

Referrals to the Young Carers service will continue in the usual way and in line with the regional guidance to HSC Trusts which identifies processes for:

- The assessment and identification of Young Carers
- The provision of services to Young Carers
- Young Carers entitlement to a Carer's Assessment

Both Barnardo's NI and Action for Children Young Carers services will continue to process referrals to their service in the usual way and will offer 1-2-1 support, assessment and reviews.



All contact currently will be “remote / virtual” in keeping with social distancing advice and mindful that young carers are often at the ‘front’ of a situation where there is someone at home who is very vulnerable. During the current health crisis, the Young Carers’ Services will continue to maximise the use of phone, text, Skype, and any other means which are safe and acceptable to young carers and their families.

### **Useful information for young carers**

We have gathered together some information below to help support young carers to understand the current situation surrounding COVID-19 that we hope you will find useful.

For the latest news about Coronavirus for young people, CBBC Newsround - [www.bbc.co.uk/newsround#more-stories-2](http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround#more-stories-2)

The charity Young Minds have written a blog about what young people can do if they are feel anxious about Coronavirus - [www.youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/)

There is lots of support surrounding young people’s mental health on the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust website. They have free resources which you can download to support your wellbeing - [www.cwmt.org.uk/](http://www.cwmt.org.uk/)

There is also a PDF workbook from Mindheart to download and print out, which you can use to colour or write down your thoughts about how you are feeling - [www.mindheart.co/descargables](http://www.mindheart.co/descargables)

### **Caring for those with learning disabilities and Autism**

Lifestyle changes such as social distancing, shielding and self-isolation can be particularly difficult for those with learning disabilities and Autism. Support for families/carers of people with learning disabilities through the Coronavirus restrictions can be found here:

[bild.org.uk/Coronavirus-resources-for-use-by-families](http://bild.org.uk/Coronavirus-resources-for-use-by-families)

[scie.org.uk/learning-disabilities-autism](http://scie.org.uk/learning-disabilities-autism)

[www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/guidance-hsc-staff-healthcare-workers-and-care-providers/staff-health-and-0#supporting-people-with-learning-difficulties-and-or-autism](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/guidance-hsc-staff-healthcare-workers-and-care-providers/staff-health-and-0#supporting-people-with-learning-difficulties-and-or-autism)

Carers who have a family member with a learning disability or autism may need to leave their homes several times a day for exercise or medical need, this may include travel beyond their local area. To support these circumstances the Health and Social Care Board has shared a template letter with the Health and Social Care Trusts which is available, upon request, from the relevant Trust area. Families who wish to avail of this letter should contact their key worker in their local Trust.

Surestart have developed some resources that carers may find very useful – the resources reach out to children with a disability and young people as well.

[SureStart-Newsletter-2nd-Issue-May-2020.pdf](#)

Guidance on providing unpaid care to adults with learning disabilities and autistic adults can be found at the following link. While some of the guidance contained duplicates what is already in this document, these are useful:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-providing-unpaid-care-to-adults-with-learning-disabilities-and-autistic-adults](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-providing-unpaid-care-to-adults-with-learning-disabilities-and-autistic-adults)

## Caring for someone with a Dementia

Caring for someone with a dementia is particularly stressful both emotionally and physically as the person with the dementia may require continuous support and supervision. If the person you care for is involved with Trust services, keep in touch with the **named worker** who will be best placed to give advice and support. For information about Dementia (including information booklets):

[www.NIDirect.gov.uk/dementia](http://www.NIDirect.gov.uk/dementia)  
[www.hscboard.hscni.net/dementia/](http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/dementia/)  
[www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications?keys=dementia](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications?keys=dementia)  
[www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications?keys=delirium](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications?keys=delirium)

It is important for everyone including people with a dementia to keep active during this pandemic. The following links provide useful suggestions:

[www.playlistforlife.org.uk](http://www.playlistforlife.org.uk)  
[musicmemories.bbcrewind.co.uk](http://musicmemories.bbcrewind.co.uk)  
[www.facebook.com/events/224767148793291/](https://www.facebook.com/events/224767148793291/)  
[www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/coronavirus-activity-ideas-people-living-dementia#content-start](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/coronavirus-activity-ideas-people-living-dementia#content-start)

A number of Apps have been developed which provide support through self-monitoring and self-management of care in relation to people living with a dementia. These are available at:

[apps4dementia.orchestra.co.uk](http://apps4dementia.orchestra.co.uk)

The Royal College of Psychiatrists have created a useful webinar entitled, '**Supporting carers and care staff to understand and respond to changes in behaviour in people with dementia during the COVID-19 pandemic**'. This can be downloaded from the following link.

This link also includes the guide used by all Trusts on “How to support people with Dementia during COVID-19”:

[www.northerntrust.hscni.net/services/dementia-services/clear/](http://www.northerntrust.hscni.net/services/dementia-services/clear/)

There are several charities offering support and help for dementia carers:

- Age NI
- Alzheimer's Society
- Carers NI
- Dementia NI
- Together in Dementia Everyday (Tide)

Further details can be found in the Contacts section on page 21.

## Distance caring

Know the contact number of your relative's GP and **named worker** within the Trust and ensure they have your contact details as next of kin. Check that the current domiciliary care package is being maintained.

Consider setting up a rota/schedule for regular phone calls to keep in touch or using technology such as WhatsApp or Facetime to keep your family and friends connected over long distances.

## Bereavement and End of Life Care

Where the person you are caring for has palliative or end of life care needs, services and care will be planned and delivered to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to meet these needs and continue to support you in your caring role.

[www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus#bereavement](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus#bereavement)

[www.macmillan.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.macmillan.org.uk/coronavirus)

[www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support/coronavirus](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support/coronavirus)

## Contacts

### Online information and contact numbers for carers support in each Trust

#### Northern Trust

Telephone Carer Hub: [028 2766 1210](tel:02827661210) (available Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)

E-mail: [carers.coordinator@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:carers.coordinator@northerntrust.hscni.net)

Carer Hub can be accessed at the following link:

[northerntrust.hscni.net/services/carers-service/](http://northerntrust.hscni.net/services/carers-service/)

[www.carersdigital.org](http://www.carersdigital.org) resources for the Northern Trust only can be downloaded and easily accessed and connection to other carers through the carers chat forum. Carers create their own personal account and download the Jointly app for free using the code DGTL2770.

#### Belfast Trust

The Belfast Trust Carers Support page:

[www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/services/CarersServices.htm](http://www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/services/CarersServices.htm)

Telephone Carer Service: [028 9504 6702](tel:02895046702) and leave a message or

Email: [CarerSuppSvcs@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:CarerSuppSvcs@belfasttrust.hscni.net)

#### Southern Trust

The Southern Trust Carers Support page:

[southerntrust.hscni.net/health-wellbeing/community-development-and-user-involvement/carers-information/](http://southerntrust.hscni.net/health-wellbeing/community-development-and-user-involvement/carers-information/)

Telephone: [028 3756 6284](tel:02837566284)

Email: [carers.coordinator@southerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:carers.coordinator@southerntrust.hscni.net)

#### Western Trust

The Western Trust Carers Support page:

[westerntrust.hscni.net/service/carers-support-service/](http://westerntrust.hscni.net/service/carers-support-service/)

Southern Sector (Fermanagh/Omagh/Castledearg)

Telephone: [028 6634 4163](tel:02866344163) or Mobile: [075 2589 8985](tel:07525898985)

Email: [Cathy.Magowan@westerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:Cathy.Magowan@westerntrust.hscni.net)

Northern Sector (Strabane/L'Derry/Limavady)

Telephone: [028 7135 5023](tel:02871355023) or Mobile: [078 1015 6551](tel:07810156551)

Email: [GeraldineAnn.McLaughlin@westerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:GeraldineAnn.McLaughlin@westerntrust.hscni.net)

### South Eastern Trust

The South Eastern Trust Carers Support page:

<http://www.setrust.hscni.net/services/CarersInformation.htm>

Sharon Graham, SET Carer Support Officer

Telephone: [028 4372 1807](tel:02843721807)

E-mail: [carer.support@setrust.hscni.net](mailto:carer.support@setrust.hscni.net)

### **Community COVID Helpline Freephone**

Telephone: [0808 802 0020](tel:08088020020) (Every day 9am-5pm)

Email: [covid19@adviceni.net](mailto:covid19@adviceni.net)

Text: ACTION to 81025

### **Carers NI**

Telephone: [028 9043 9843](tel:02890439843) (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm)

Email: [advice@carersni.org](mailto:advice@carersni.org)

Website: [www.carersuk.org/northernireland](http://www.carersuk.org/northernireland)

### **Action for Children**

Contact via Facebook [www.facebook.com/YoungCarersNI/](https://www.facebook.com/YoungCarersNI/)

### **Age NI**

Telephone: [08088 087 575](tel:08088087575)

Email: [www.ageuk.org.uk/northern-ireland](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/northern-ireland)

Website: [www.ageni.org](http://www.ageni.org)

## **Alzheimer's Society**

Telephone: [028 9066 4100](tel:02890664100)

Helpline: [0300 222 1122](tel:03002221122)

Email: [nir@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:nir@alzheimers.org.uk)

Website: [www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)

## **Dementia NI**

Telephone: [028 9693 1555](tel:02896931555)

Email: [info@dementiani.org](mailto:info@dementiani.org)

Website: [www.dementia.org](http://www.dementia.org)

## **Together in Dementia Everyday (Tide)**

Telephone: [07841 457596](tel:07841457596)

Email: [Fiona@lifestorynetwork.org.uk](mailto:Fiona@lifestorynetwork.org.uk)

Website: [www.tide.uk.net/](http://www.tide.uk.net/)

## **Other useful links**

If you need to talk to someone about coping with the pressures, you may wish to call:

Lifeline on [0808 808 8000](tel:08088088000)

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

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

[www.education-ni.gov.uk/](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/)

[www.communities-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/covid-19-service-updates](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/covid-19-service-updates)

[www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19)

[www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus)

The Centre for Independent Living has a useful set of FAQs:

[www.cilni.org/bwl-knowledge-base-category/coronavirus-faqs/](http://www.cilni.org/bwl-knowledge-base-category/coronavirus-faqs/)