

COVID-19 frequently asked questions for people with care and support needs and family carers

This information is reviewed regularly and was last updated on 20 December 2021.

Care services remain open to support people during the Coronavirus pandemic. Many local support groups continue to operate, but some support has reduced, and some support may take place over the telephone or by video call. If you need help, please ask. There are more details below on the best place to get advice and support.

Please see the following government Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance:

- [Guidance and measures on how to stay safe and prevent the spread of Coronavirus.](#)
- [Guidance for people previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable](#) (CEV) from COVID-19

There are specific FAQs for family carers here: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/serviceupdates

1. Will my homecare carry on as usual?

Yes, if you or your care worker do not have any symptoms of COVID-19. If you have [symptoms of COVID-19](#), tell your care worker straight away so that they can check you are safe and take steps to minimise the risk of transmission to others. Also, get a PCR test and [self-isolate](#). To prevent the virus from spreading, follow [government](#) and [NHS advice](#).

2. I am waiting for a social care assessment or review – will you still come?

We will contact you to let you know. We will be prioritising people who need the most support. We may arrange to carry out your assessment over the telephone or by video call.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 (a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; loss or change to your sense of smell or taste) please let us know. If we do visit, we will wear personal protective equipment (PPE), ensure we maintain high standards of hygiene and keep a good distance from you as required.

3. Can my assessment take place over the phone?

Yes. If you are happy with this. We could also arrange a video call. We can do this through an app like Skype or WhatsApp.

4. I get care – who do I tell if I have COVID-19 symptoms (a high temperature; a new continuous cough; loss or change to, your sense of smell or taste)?

[Self-isolate](#) straight away and get a [PCR test](#) as soon as possible if you have any of these three symptoms of COVID-19. Tell your care worker straight away so that they can check you are safe and take steps to minimise the risk of transmission to others.

Also, follow [NHS advice and](#) use the [NHS 111 online COVID-19 service](#).

Consider asking a friend, family member or a delivery service to carry out errands on your behalf, like dropping off food at your door.

5. How will it affect my care if I am self-isolating without symptoms?

Tell your care worker. Your care can continue as normal if no-one in the house is showing any symptoms of COVID-19. PPE will be worn, and normal good hygiene practices will be followed by you and your care worker.

6. How will it affect my care if I am self-isolating with symptoms?

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you should let your care worker know so that they can check you are safe and take steps to minimise the risk of transmission to others. The NHS advises that you [self-isolate](#) and [get a PCR test](#) as soon as possible if you have any of these three symptoms of COVID-19: a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste. Consider asking a friend, family member or a delivery service to carry out errands on your behalf like dropping off food.

If you need urgent assistance, please call us on **0300 123 4042**.

7. Someone I know needs to move into a care home, is that still possible?

Yes, many care homes are still accepting new residents although the process of moving in will be different at the moment to comply with government guidance. If you are having difficulty finding a care home place and you need urgent assistance, please call us on **0300 123 4042**.

8. What are the rules about visiting a relative in a care home?

Care homes are following [government guidance](#) on visiting.

We are working with care providers and the [Hertfordshire Care Providers' Association](#) to facilitate visits where Government guidance allows and to provide technology and training to support them with remote contacts. Please talk to the home about the different ways they can best help you have contact with your loved one. A video call via WhatsApp, Skype or Facebook portal, could be arranged for example.

People in care homes and their families should be involved as much as possible in planning and decisions about their health and care, including end of life care. Visits at the end of life are important both for the individual and their loved ones and should continue.

9. I want to stop care temporarily – will I get it back again?

Yes. Please talk to your care provider. Every effort will be made by care organisations and the Council to ensure services can be reinstated when things get back to normal.

10. How do I know a care worker is taking the correct precautions?

Care workers have been given strict guidelines to follow. You can see what support we are giving to care providers on the care provider hub at www.hcpa.info. There is also [government guidance on providing home care](#) during COVID-19 and on [PPE for care workers delivering homecare](#). Care workers will wear PPE, wash their hands when they arrive and leave and will keep a safe distance as required under the guidance. Care workers that give personal care will have extra guidance. Please tell your care worker if you are self-isolating or are unwell.

You should tell your care worker if in the past you received a letter from your GP identifying you as someone clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19.

11. I am very anxious about myself or someone I care for?

If you need urgent assistance, please call us on **0300 123 4042**.

Carers can contact Carers in Hertfordshire for support www.carersinherts.org.uk

If you are anxious about self-isolation, there are things you can try to help your wellbeing at: www.mind.org.uk.

If you or someone you care for has COVID-19 symptoms, use the [NHS 111 online Covid service](#). Call 111 if you cannot get help online.

There is general support and information on our website www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/adults

For information on Coronavirus, visit www.gov.uk/coronavirus

12. Do I need to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) to provide personal care for someone?

If you live with the person you care for and they do not have any symptoms of Coronavirus, no personal protective equipment (PPE) is required above and beyond usual hygiene practices. Please follow any additional advice you may have received about wearing PPE from a healthcare professional, like a GP or nurse.

If you care for someone living in a separate home to you or the person is unwell with suspected Coronavirus, you should wear PPE eg. face mask, apron, gloves and eye protection should there be a risk of droplets in your eyes if the person has a cough.

More information on PPE is available in the [government guidance for those who provide unpaid care to friends or family](#).

13. Do I need to do more cleaning?

Consider regular and thorough cleaning of well-used touch points and areas, such as door handles, bathrooms and surfaces such as phones. If you or someone in your house is self-isolating be very careful to clean surfaces in shared areas, such as bathrooms and kitchens.

14. Where can I get food if I am running low?

Most supermarket chains offer online shopping services you can use if you are unable to get to the shops. Otherwise, ask family or friends if they can help.

If you have no family or friends to help, HertsHelp can look for support with food – please call them on **0300 123 4044** or email info@hertshelp.net

15. Is there anyone that can go shopping for me or pick up a prescription?

HertsHelp can look for help in your local area and get someone to come out to you if you are unable to go to the shops or pharmacy yourself. Please call them on **0300 123 4044** or email info@hertshelp.net

You can use our online form to [tell us about someone who needs help](#) or visit www.hertshelp.net

16. Do I still have to pay for care if I temporarily stand down care or the care workers are not able to come?

All Hertfordshire County Council day services are currently open; however, capacity may be reduced. The situation may be different for other day activities that are run by other community organisations, so please contact your usual day service if you have any queries.

17. Will my day service or day activities stay open?

All Hertfordshire County Council day services are currently open; however, capacity may be reduced. The situation may be different for other day activities that are run by other community organisations, so please contact your usual day service if you have any queries.

18. My personal assistant cannot come, and I cannot manage on my own, what can I do?

If you need urgent assistance, please call us on **0300 123 4042**.

19. I was told by my GP that I am in the clinically extremely vulnerable group. What should I do now that shielding has ended?

The shielding programme has now ended in England for people who were classed as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) to COVID-19. Government [guidance for people previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable](#) (CEV) from COVID-19 says that as a minimum, you should continue to follow the same [guidance](#) as everyone else on staying safe and preventing the spread of COVID-19. It also suggests that you may want to consider, alongside any advice from your clinician, if additional precautions are right for you. This could include avoiding crowded places and social distancing.

HertsHelp can look for help in your local area and get someone to come out to you if you are unable to go to the shops or pharmacy yourself. Please call them on **0300 123 4044** or email info@hertshelp.net

You can use this online form to [tell us about someone who needs help](#) or visit www.hertshelp.net

20. How do we help others?

If someone you know is well and not in a vulnerable group, they can visit www.thvolunteering.org.uk to sign up and support others affected by Coronavirus. You can also email Volunteering@thvolunteering.org.uk or call **01462 416499**

You can sign up [here](#) to volunteer to help Hertfordshire unite against Coronavirus.

21. Am I entitled to the Covid-19 vaccine?

You can find out if you are eligible at: www.nhs.uk/covidvaccination

Subject to eligibility, you can book appointments for the first, second, third (for immunosuppressed, only if eligible) and booster doses of the COVID-19 vaccine through the NHS booking system (www.nhs.uk/covidvaccination) or by calling 119 free of charge.

You can find out more about vaccination arrangements in Hertfordshire at [COVID-19 vaccination information | A Healthier Future](#). This NHS website includes details of walk-in vaccination centres and information on lots of topics, including getting the vaccine when you are pregnant or breastfeeding, as well as resources specially written for young people and their parents.

Also see: [Easy read covid information](#)