

Covid frequently asked questions for people with care and support needs and family carers

Care services remain open during the national Covid restrictions. 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.

| Questions | Answer |
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| 1. Will my home care carry on as usual? | <p>Yes, if you or your care worker do not have any symptoms of Covid. If you have symptoms, book a test and 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.</p> <p>To prevent the virus from spreading, follow government and NHS advice.</p> |
| 2. I am waiting for a social care assessment or review – will you still come? | <p>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.</p> <p>If you have symptoms of Covid (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough or 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.</p> |
| 3. Can my assessment take place over the phone? | <p>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.</p> |
| 4. I get care – who do I tell if I have Covid symptoms (a high temperature, a new continuous cough or loss or change to, your sense of smell or taste)? | <p>Book a test and 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.</p> <p>If you or someone else in your home has Covid symptoms, follow NHS advice and use the NHS 111 online Covid service. Self-isolate, by staying at home and not socialising. Consider asking a friend, family member or a delivery service to carry out errands on your behalf, like dropping off food at your door.</p> |
| 5. How will it affect my care if I am self-isolating without symptoms? | <p>Tell your care worker. Your care can continue as normal if no-one in the house is showing any symptoms of Covid. PPE will be worn, and normal good hygiene practices will be followed by you and your care worker.</p> |

| Questions | Answer |
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| <p>6. How will it affect my care if I am self-isolating with symptoms?</p> | <p>If you have symptoms of Covid you can ask for a test and 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. If you or someone else in your home has Covid symptoms, the NHS advises that you self-isolate by staying at home and not socialising. Consider asking a friend, family member or a delivery service to carry out errands on your behalf like dropping off food.</p> <p>If you need urgent assistance, please call us on 0300 123 4042.</p> |
| <p>7. Someone I know needs to move into a care home, is that still possible?</p> | <p>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.</p> |
| <p>8. What are the rules about visiting a relative in a care home?</p> | <p>Care homes are following Government advice on visiting. Please talk to the home about how they can best help you have contact with your loved one, such as setting up a video call via WhatsApp, Skype or Facebook portal for example. We are working with care providers to facilitate visits where Government guidance allows and to provide technology and training to support them with remote contacts.</p> <p>If you consider it essential that you visit for the resident's mental wellbeing, then please discuss this with the care home in the first instance, who may be able to carry out a risk assessment with a health or social care professional to facilitate a visit in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>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.</p> |
| <p>9. I want to stop care temporarily – will I get it back again?</p> | <p>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.</p> |
| <p>10. How do I know a care worker is taking the correct precautions?</p> | <p>Care workers have been given strict guidelines to follow. You can see what support we are giving to care providers on our Hub at www.hcpa.info. There is also government guidance on providing home care during Covid. Care workers will wear PPE, wash their hands when they arrive and leave and will keep a safe distance. Care workers that give personal care will have extra guidance. Please tell your care worker if you are self-isolating or are unwell.</p> |

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| | <p>You should also tell your care worker if you have received a letter from your GP and you are classed as clinically extremely vulnerable. The government guidance sets out who is in this group and gives advice on taking extra care.</p> |
| <p>11. I am very anxious about myself or someone I care for?</p> | <p>If you need urgent assistance, please call us on 0300 123 4042.</p> <p>Carers can contact Carers in Hertfordshire for support www.carersinherts.org.uk</p> <p>If you are anxious about self-isolation, there are things you can try to help your wellbeing at: www.mind.org.uk.</p> <p>If you or someone you care for has Covid symptoms, use the NHS 111 online Covid service. Call 111 if you cannot get help online.</p> <p>There is general support and information on our website www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/adults</p> <p>For up-to-date information on Coronavirus, visit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/coronavirus and www.gov.uk/coronavirus</p> |
| <p>12. Do I need to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) to provide personal care for someone?</p> | <p>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.</p> <p>If you care for someone living in a separate home to you or the person is unwell with suspected Coronavirus, you should wear PPE e.g. face mask, apron, gloves and eye protection should there be a risk of droplets in your eyes if the person has a cough.</p> <p>Government guidance can be found here on the correct use and disposal of PPE.</p> |
| <p>13. Do I need to do more cleaning?</p> | <p>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.</p> |
| <p>14. Where can I get food if I am running low?</p> | <p>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.</p> <p>If you have no family or friends to help, HertsHelp can help you to get support with food or energy – please call them on 0300 123 4044 or email info@hertshelp.net</p> |

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| <p>15. Is there anyone that can go shopping for me or pick up a prescription?</p> | <p>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</p> <p>You can use our online form to tell us about someone who needs help or visit www.hertshelp.net</p> |
| <p>16. Do I still have to pay for care if I temporarily stand down care or the care workers are not able to come?</p> | <p>No. You only have to pay for the care you receive. If you think you have been overcharged, contact us using the details on your care charging letter and we will check. This may take some time as our own staff may be poorly. We will refund any difference.</p> |
| <p>17. Will my day service or day activities stay open?</p> | <p>All Hertfordshire County Council day services will remain open during the new national restrictions; however, capacity is reduced due to social distancing measures. 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.</p> |
| <p>18. My personal assistant cannot come, and I cannot manage on my own</p> | <p>If you need urgent assistance, please call us on 0300 123 4042</p> |
| <p>19. I think I am in the Clinically extremely vulnerable group. What should I do?</p> | <p>The government guidance sets out who is in this group and gives advice on staying at home and avoiding face-to-face contact. You will get/have received a letter from your GP or the NHS if you are in this group. The letter tells you exactly how you can get extra support if you do not have people that can help you.</p> <p>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</p> <p>You can use our online form to tell us about someone who needs help or visit www.hertshelp.net</p> |
| <p>20. How do we help others?</p> | <p>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</p> <p>You can sign up here to volunteer to help Hertfordshire unite against Coronavirus.</p> |

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