

[Updated: 27.03.20]

Age UK Islington Wellbeing support

We'd like to let you know our core service is still in operation during the COVID-19 pandemic, although we are supporting clients by phone, rather than face-to-face meetings. We have refocused our operations to deliver the following package of Wellbeing support:

- **Age UK Islington Helpline – 020 7281 6018**, gethelp@ageukislington.org.uk
- **Guidance & practical support** – e.g. debt, housing issues, support for unpaid carers, support to stay active & engaged at home.
- **Connections to emergency help** – to access food and other vital supplies
- **Wellbeing calls to extremely vulnerable clients**

We have had to make the very difficult decision to stop Age UK Islington social groups and activities at this time.

What is Coronavirus

The [NHS website](#) [1] says “COVID-19 is a new virus that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called coronavirus.”

There are simple, effective things we can all do to reduce our risk of catching COVID-19 or transmitting the virus to other people.

Read the latest [NHS guidance on coronavirus](#)

[1] - www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

If you think you have symptoms of Covid-19 ([see NHS website](#)), don't delay, follow the latest NHS advice which is:

- don't go to your doctor's surgery, pharmacy or hospital

- contact the [NHS 111 online coronavirus service](https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19) 111.nhs.uk/covid-19
- or call NHS 111
- If you can't get through to NHS 111, you call your GP directly.
- In an emergency, call 999.

If you have a medical concern about anything else:

- If you have any other medical concerns you should call NHS 111, or your GP directly.
- In an emergency, call 999.

Stay at home to stop Coronavirus spreading

The latest NHS information [1] is that everyone must stay at home to help stop the spread of coronavirus.

You should only leave the house for 1 of 4 reasons:

- shopping for basic necessities, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible
- one form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle – alone or with members of your household
- any medical need, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person
- travelling to and from work, but only where this absolutely cannot be done from home

You should not otherwise leave your home

The Government has made clear that these four reasons are exceptions and you should not otherwise leave your home. For these activities you should continue to observe the advice to remain at least 2 metres apart from others (excluding members of your own household) and minimise time outside. The Government has also closed all non-essential shops and community spaces, as well as all gatherings of more than two people in public.

Those at 'high risk'

The Government has also issued guidance for 1.5 million people who are identified as being very 'high risk' due to [specific medical conditions](#).

NHS Letters and emails have been sent out telling people to stay at home, and self-isolate for at least 12 weeks.

This means avoiding all face-to-face social contact, remaining in your home and only allowing essential visitors, such as NHS staff or carers (including unpaid family carers) to enter your home.

You should arrange for family and friends to bring you the things you need, like food and medication, and leave them outside your door. People who deliver things to you must not come into your home and you must not leave your home to meet them.

If your friends or family cannot get your medication for you, contact your pharmacy and ask them to deliver it.

If it is not possible for others to help you to get food or medication, go to www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable or call 0800 028 8327.

If you are at 'high risk', you should have been contacted by the NHS by Sunday 29 March 2020.

If you have not received a letter and think you should have done:

Go to www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable or call 0800 028 8327 to register.

If you're not sure whether your medical condition makes you extremely vulnerable, register anyway. You can register yourself, or for someone else, and doesn't cost anything to do so.

For more information: see the NHS website:
www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/advice-for-people-at-high-risk/

Help planned for ‘high risk’ individuals

The government has announced that food parcels will be delivered to 1.5 million Britons who are in the ‘high risk’ group and who need to stay at home for the next 12 weeks.

The scheme is being coordinated by local councils in collaboration with supermarkets and the armed forces, and will be funded by the taxpayer. They are designed to help those most at risk get the food they need without having to leave their houses.

There might be a delay of a few days between the time that people receive the government letters and the food parcels being delivered.

If it is not possible for others to help you to get food or medication, go to www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable or call 0800 028 8327.

If a family member who usually cares for me, has got symptoms of Coronavirus:

At the moment, the government guidance is for people to ‘self-isolate’ for 7 to 14 days ([see NHS website](#)) if they are displaying symptoms of Coronavirus or if someone in their household is displaying symptoms. This means that they would have to stay in their own home and make alternative arrangements for another friend or family member, who doesn’t live with them, to support you.

How to reduce the risk of transmission of Coronavirus

According to the NHS website [1] hygiene is really important in protecting yourself against the transmission of the virus:

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- always wash your hands when you get home or into work
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available

- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin straight away and wash your hands afterwards
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

Health conditions

For those clients that have underlying health conditions, we'd recommend that you check the information available:

- Diabetes UK has provided an updated information page for people living with diabetes. (http://www.diabetes.org.uk/about_us/news/coronavirus)
- Asthma UK has released a blog post with advice for people with asthma (www.asthma.org.uk/about/media/news/Coronavirus/)
- The British Heart Foundation has published guidance for people with health problems. (<https://www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/heart-matters-magazine/news/coronavirus-and-your-health>)
- The Mental Health Foundation have issued advice and support. (www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak)

Note that these organisations are likely not to have information that is as up to date as the NHS website.

Useful phone numbers

You might want to think about having the following phone numbers handy should you have a need for support:

- For neighbours or family members that might be able to help
- Age UK Islington Helpline 020 7281 6018, Mon to Fri, 9am – 5pm / gethelp@ageukislington.org.uk
- Your GP phone number

Please note that all agencies are experiencing a high volume of calls. Outside of those days/hours, or if you can't get through, you can contact:

- Age UK National Helpline: 0800 678 1602. Monday to Sunday, 8am-7pm,
- We are Islington (Islington Council) Helpline: 020 7527 8222. Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm.
- Please note: all agencies are experiencing high volume of calls.

Shopping & supplies

Going to supermarkets

- Most of the big supermarkets are providing a special time for older, more vulnerable people and their carers to get special access to food & other provisions.
- There's been lots of reassurance that there is plenty of food to go round, and that any recent stock shortages have been caused by people buying more than they need, resulting in the temporary disruption to supermarkets' supply chains.
- Most of the big supermarkets have set limits on how many items can be bought of certain product lines to ensure there's enough for everyone.

Grocery shopping online

- Whilst it's difficult to get an online shopping delivery slot with most supermarkets, from 23rd March, Sainsburys will be giving online customers who are over 70 years of age or have a disability priority access to online delivery slots.

- Nearly all the big supermarkets say that if you have symptoms of Coronavirus and are “self-isolating” to put this in the delivery instructions.
- When you shop, it might be useful to buy long lasting supplies including tinned provisions that have good nutritional value.
- Have phone numbers of local food takeaways to hand, e.g. Ubereats - 0808 169 7335

Special times for supermarket access

Tescos

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, for an hour between 9am and 10am, the elderly and the vulnerable will be given priority to do their shopping

Sainsburys

Each Monday, Wednesday and Friday will see all their supermarkets dedicate 8am to 9am to their elderly and disabled customers, as well as their carers.

Iceland

Some Iceland stores are dedicating the first two hours of opening on Wednesday morning to the elderly (those of state pension age) and vulnerable people in their community, such as those with disabilities.

Co-op

Co-op is similarly introducing a dedicated hour at the start of opening for older people and those who are more vulnerable, and their carers – because some store opening times can vary from shop to shop, you

should check the opening time of your local shop. You can do so using their [store locator here](https://finder.coop.co.uk/food). <https://finder.coop.co.uk/food>

M&S

Older and vulnerable customers will be entitled to the first hour of opening at M&S on Mondays and Thursdays

Waitrose

The first hour of opening will be dedicated to the elderly and the vulnerable, plus their carers.

Prescriptions

- If you are self-isolating and unable to leave your home, please ask family, friends or neighbours to arrange to pick up your medication for you. If you don't have anyone who can collect your medicine, speak to your community pharmacy for advice about how they can help.
- If you have a repeat prescription that you normally request in person at your GP surgery or pharmacy, it is possible to request this online. To do this, you'll need to be registered for [online services](#).

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/gps/gp-online-services/>

- Please try to order your next prescription seven days before it is due, if possible, as pharmacies will be working very hard to meet demand.

Keeping active & engaged

If you need to stay home for a period of time, there's lots that you can still do to keep active and engaged.

Age UK Islington is producing a series of "Keeping Busy" Knowledge Articles to inspire you to keep active and engaged, even whilst you are at home. These are available on the Age UK Islington website.

You can explore new interests – from a Radio 2 Book Club, to a rich variety of online courses and singing exercises. There are also gentle exercise options which you can try out indoors.

Whilst we appreciate that this can't replace the power of face to face connections, we hope that these ideas can provide you with some inspiration.

These are just ideas, but the possibilities are endless! We'd love to hear from you if you've found something that you'd like to share with others, or details of how you are spending your time.

Keep us updated and we can provide inspiration to others in the same situation! Email us at Age UK Islington: keepbusy@ageukislington.org.uk.

Beware of Coronavirus related scams

Warn your neighbours, elderly family members and friends and vulnerable people about the current scam operating amid the COVID19 outbreak - health authorities are NOT offering door-to-door testing.

Fraudsters are also sending out coronavirus-themed emails in attempt to tricking people into opening malicious attachments or revealing sensitive

personal and financial details. Some are purporting to be from research organisations connected to Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organisations.

For more information about fraud and reporting it:
www.actionfraud.police.uk, or call 0300 1232040

For more information:

For more information related to problems that you are experiencing, directly in response to the current Coronavirus pandemic, or any other matter that you are struggling with, please contact us on our Helpline.

Age UK Islington Helpline 020 7281 6018, Mon to Fri, 9am – 5pm
/ gethelp@ageukislington.org.uk.

Out of hours/if you can't get through to Age UK Islington call:
Age UK National Helpline: 0800 678 1602. Monday to Sunday, 8am-7pm

We are Islington (Islington Council) Helpline: 020 7527 8222. Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm.

Further information for Carers:

For further information about your caring role, including how to prepare in the event that you are unwell, what to consider if you need to go into work, how welfare benefits assessments and appointments at job centres are operating during this pandemic:

<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/health/looking-after-your-health/coronavirus-covid-19>