

# Covid-19 Update

April 2020

This newsletter contains information about Coronavirus COVID-19 and the support available to older people to stay safe and well.



Dear member,

Hope you are feeling well. These are difficult and challenging times for everyone in Bristol and beyond, but particularly for older people. Together, Bristol Older People's Forum and Age UK Bristol (Friends Ageing Better) hope that all our members are staying safe and in good health.

We would like to reassure you that we have been working hard to support people and to help our members stay connected, active and healthy. In this newsletter, you will find essential information about COVID-19, as well as information about two new helplines to support you through the pandemic. Bristol City Council has set up 'We Are Bristol' Helpline for everyone in the city. Alongside this, we have set up a new Support Hub specifically for older people.

The Support Hub was set up by several partner organisations across the city, bringing their efforts together to provide services for older people during the pandemic. These include benefits advice and information, social and emotional support, home maintenance, support with shopping and activities you can access from home. You can reach the Support Hub via the Helpline number - see over the page for details. We will do our best to help you stay healthy and well while you are isolating at home.

If you have access to the internet, please visit our websites, as we are regularly updating them with useful information including links to other key websites. Finally, there have already been some very positive things happening, including friends and neighbours looking out for each other, a real appreciation of the NHS front-line staff and many people stepping up to volunteer to support those most in need. We encourage you to focus on these stories, stay positive and stay

connected with your community. If you are feeling concerned, please don't hesitate to contact us for support.

Best wishes,

**Bristol Older People's Forum and Age UK Bristol (Friends Ageing Better)**

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

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

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## **What is the latest advice from the Government?**

The Government has asked everyone in the UK to stay at home. This means people who are not at very high risk should only leave the house for limited purposes.

These are:

1. Shopping for basic necessities, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible.
2. One form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household. You should stay local and use open spaces near to your home where possible – do not travel unnecessarily.
3. Any medical need or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person.
4. Travelling to and from work, but only where this absolutely cannot be done from home.

## **What should I do if I'm unwell?**

If you have been identified as someone who is extremely vulnerable, and you develop a high temperature or a new, continuous cough you should seek clinical advice using the NHS 111 online coronavirus service or call NHS 111. Do this as soon as you get symptoms. You would have been contacted by the NHS to let you know you are considered a person who is extremely vulnerable.

You should also get in touch with the NHS if:

- you don't feel better after 7 days
- your symptoms are getting worse
- you feel you can't cope with your symptoms at home

**You should do this by using the NHS 111 online coronavirus service. Only call 111 if you need further advice as the line is very busy. Do not go to your doctor's surgery or to hospital.**

Stay at home for at least 14 days if you live with other people and you or they develop a new, continuous cough or high temperature.

For more information about COVID-19, you can call the We Are Bristol Helpline (0800 694 0184) or our Older People's Helpline (0117 929 7537).

# SUPPORT HUB

# 0117 929 7537

for older people

This is a new support hub for older people and their families to cope with the impact of the coronavirus, COVID-19. It provides a range of support for older people that you can access through a helpline or by going online. The hub offers practical support, social and emotional support and activities that you can join in with online or using your phone. You can access this support by calling the helpline on **0117 929 7537**.

The Support Hub has been developed by voluntary organisations that work to support older people in Bristol. We are: Active Ageing Bristol, Age UK Bristol, Alive, Bristol Ageing Better, Bristol After Stroke, Bristol Older People's Forum, CRUSE, Independent Age, LinkAge, Oasis-Talk, RSVP West, St Monica Trust, The Marmalade Trust and WE Care Home Improvements.



## Practical Support

- We can offer help with shopping and ordering prescriptions by post for people who have no-one else to do this for them.
- We can also offer information and advice about finances, pension collection, benefits and allowances, home maintenance and a weekly befriending phone call. If you have questions about benefits and entitlements, you can call the Age UK Bristol Adviceline on 0117 922 5353.
- We are helping support people in an emergency who have no food by working with local food banks and the We Are Bristol Helpline (0800 694 0184) run by Bristol City Council.

## Emotional Support

We can refer people who are very anxious to a qualified professional for a free 30-minute counselling session over the phone. Refer someone, or self-refer at [info@oasis-talk.org](mailto:info@oasis-talk.org) or call **0117 927 7577**. It is important to remember to mention the Support Hub when you contact Oasis-Talk.

## Virtual activities

These include a range of activities that can take place at home such as online shared reading groups and Tai-Chi sessions. We will also be sharing these activities in newsletters and social media. We know that not everyone has access to the internet, so we are making some of these activities available over the phone. Activities listed at [www.linkagenetwork.org.uk](http://www.linkagenetwork.org.uk)

### Staying Safe

There has been a wonderful response from many to the pandemic, with lots of people volunteering their support and helping others. Sadly, there have also been some reports of scams in response to Covid-19. Please only share sensitive information or accept help from people or organisations you trust, and if in doubt, please contact us through the helpline. You can find further tips on the Support Hub page of the Age UK Bristol website.

### We Are Bristol Helpline – 0800 694 0184

A dedicated free telephone hotline has been launched in Bristol to help the city's most vulnerable citizens during the coronavirus pandemic. This helpline is not specifically for older people and people of all ages can access it. Call handlers will be available initially during office hours (8.30am-5pm, Monday to Friday) to provide support for people with a wide range of needs, including obtaining food supplies, other essential items and medication. They can also help arrange follow-up support with different organisations.

# Staying well

## Keeping your mind occupied

Some tips for our physical and emotional wellbeing:

- Create a daily routine – this helps to give structure and purpose to your day. Try to have a good mix of work (be it housework or paid work), rest and leisure activities.
- What activities do you usually do? If they're important to you, have a think about why they are important and see if you can adapt the activity so you can do it at home – eg. Instead of meeting your friend for coffee, can you give them a call?
- Create a 'to do' list. Nothing gives a sense of achievement quite like ticking everything off.
- Keep up-to-date with government guidelines and advice through the media (choose trusted sources), but don't spend too much time watching rolling news – it can be counterproductive.

## **Keeping Active** *if you have no symptoms*

The latest advice states that even if you are over 70 but feel well you can still be active outside as long as you stay at least two metres (six feet or three paces) away from other people with whom you do not live. So walking the dog, going for a walk or going for a bike ride locally are all fine – provided you keep your distance.

## **Keeping Active** *if you have symptoms*

If you are self-isolating with symptoms, or someone in your household has them, you must not leave home but that doesn't mean you should stop moving. It's really important to use movement and activity as a way of breaking up your routine, if you feel well enough. Cook, play active games, dance, go into the garden if you've got one.



## **Stay in Touch**

**Age UK Bristol, Friends Ageing Better**

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www.facebook.com/Bristololderpeoplesforum

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