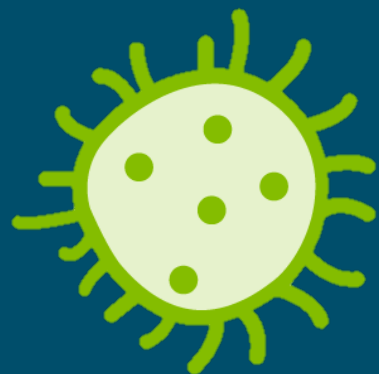
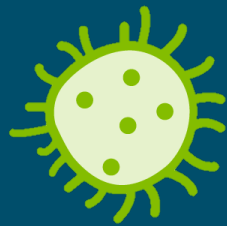


**Covid-19: Providing  
support and advice  
through these challenging  
times**

May 2021



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## How to Use This Resource

For the foreseeable future, we will face challenges and difficulties that we have not experienced before. To help support people with difficult conversations at home or even at work, this resource provides a brief review of key websites and their content. Additional resources, such as Easy Read, British Sign Language (BSL) or frequently asked questions, are linked to in the appendix.

Bereavement and loss can be difficult on a personal level and you should be mindful to pace yourself when dealing with any of the topics in this guide. If you start feeling overwhelmed at any point, stop and take a break.

Health Education England has created a [guide](#) and a series of videos, including this [one](#), on how to discuss unwelcome news during the Covid-19 pandemic. These resources talk about the importance of being prepared and can help you have some confidence in these conversations.

This resource is continuously being updated and it is not a definitive list of resources. The links provided are to national websites with further information, which will have the most up to date information. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact your local Healthwatch at [phone and email details here.]

## Difficult Conversations

The importance of warmth, openness and honesty remain central to our conversations. Giving people time to talk is powerful. It's important to also recognize that although it's uncomfortable, gaps and silence is perfectly natural in enabling someone to express themselves.

Dr Brené Brown offers a reminder that empathy is a useful quality when communicating in the video below:

[Dr Brené Brown on Empathy YouTube video](#)

Conversations about bereavement and loss can be very challenging. Don't underestimate how challenging these conversations might be. We might need to do some self-care after our interactions by taking a break, going for a walk outside or having a cuppa.

Health Education England have produced four short videos to support having challenging conversations. Further information as well as the videos can also be found on the [e-learning for Healthcare](#) website:

[Helping break unwelcome news](#)

Cruse Bereavement Care is a national charity for bereaved people in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Below is information they have shared on bereavement, grief and accessing support:

[General guidance on grief](#)

[Coronavirus: coping with talk of death and dying](#)

## Mental Health

This pandemic affects everyone and everyday life is affected in one way or another. A lack of control coupled with an enforced lockdown can impact the most emotionally resilient person. It's now more important than ever to check our own mental health, as well as remaining aware of resources that are available to us as we go through this pandemic. There is a multitude of sources on the topic of keeping well. Find one or more below that suits you or the person you are supporting:

[Mind's guide on how to stay well](#)

[Healthwatch England's guide on mental health](#)

[Five stories of how lockdown has affected people's lives from Healthwatch England](#)

[Rowans Hospice's guide on Maintaining Mental Wellbeing During Lockdown](#)

[Rowans Hospice courses and education downloads](#) (scroll down through education downloads for mindfulness materials)

For young people, especially young carers, they may be worried or anxious about coronavirus. Young carers may have a sick parent to care for or have recently lost a parent, both which will likely impact their mental health. Young Minds, a national charity that supports children and young people's mental health, have provided information and resources, including a list of helplines:

[Helplines and services available](#)

[Looking after yourself as a young carer](#)

Action for Carers have fun activities that can be done at home and guidance for young carers on how they can support their mental health during this time, including helplines they can contact:

[Coronavirus advice for young people](#)

# The impact of Covid-19 on BAME communities and vulnerable groups

## Homelessness

The coronavirus pandemic is placing those who are already vulnerable through poverty and homelessness at more risk. If you or someone you know needs advice on how to stay safe when you don't have a home or need financial support if you are already in poverty, Shelter and the UK government have provided advice:

[Shelter's housing advice](#)

[UK government's guidance on Covid-19 and what to do if you're unemployed and cannot work](#)

## Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities

Health inequalities are differences in the access, quality and experience of healthcare, which are affected by social determinants of health, such as where people live. BAME groups generally have poorer health and health outcomes than the overall population. For example, there are significantly higher rates of asthma in BAME groups.

NHS Confederation's BME Leadership Network published a paper, "The impact of COVID-19 on BME communities and health and care staff", in April 2020 with initial findings and recommendations on areas for action and how to mitigate risks:

[The impact of Covid-19 on BAME communities and health and care staff](#)

Public Health England have published their own report "COVID-19: understanding the impact on BAME communities" in June 2020, which notes "disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19 shows that there is an association between belonging to some ethnic groups and the likelihood of testing positive and dying with COVID-19." The full report can be accessed online:

[COVID-19: understanding the impact on BAME communities](#)

The Interfaith Network is maintaining news on the impact of Covid-19. This includes how faith communities are responding:

[Faith communities and coronavirus](#)

Ramadan lasts for 29-30 days every year, usually in April, and ends with the celebration of Eid-ul-Fitr. How does Covid-19 impact Ramadan? Further information can be found below:

[Covid-19 and Ramadan](#)

## LGBT+ community

Briefing on the impact of Covid-19 on LGBT+ community and why the LGBT+ community might be at higher risk:

[LGBT Foundation's report on the effects of Covid-19](#)

## People with Learning Disabilities

Learning Disability England has put together a page on their website providing important information regarding coronavirus:

[Keeping informed and in touch during coronavirus](#)

They have also put together learning disability friendly resources and links, which covers topics such as information for individuals and families, being prepared in case you need to go to hospital and disabled people's rights:

[Resources that can help](#)

## Coronavirus and what you need to do

You may receive calls from friends, family and others who are frightened, needing to be listened to. If they are describing symptoms of Covid-19 symptoms, you should encourage them to call 111 or visit [www.111.nhs.uk/covid-19](http://www.111.nhs.uk/covid-19). If you are a professional, you have a duty of care to direct them to contact NHS 111.

The UK government's website is updated regularly and covers a wide range of topics, including what to do if you or a loved one or colleague suspects they have Covid-19:

[UK government's advice on Covid-19](#)

## People who are extremely vulnerable and need support

According to the UK government, people are considered extremely vulnerable when they are clinically "at high risk of getting seriously ill from coronavirus (COVID-19)". If you are considered extremely vulnerable, you may have been advised to shield. Below is the latest guidance from the government about shielding, including support you can access:

[UK government's guidance on shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable persons](#)

## What is shielding like?

[Rosie tells Healthwatch England her story](#)

## I am an unpaid carer

If you're an unpaid carer, it may be helpful to contact your local carers support organisation for help and advice. You can find your local carer organisations below:

[Carers UK website for general information & their sources of additional support](#)

The UK government and Carers UK have provided information on various topics for carers, including making an emergency plan. Having a plan in place can help ease worries if you are not able to care for those you look after at any point in the future:

[UK government's guidance for those who provide unpaid care to friends or family](#)

[Carers UK advice on planning for emergencies](#)

## Advance Care Plans (ACP)

An Advance Care Plan clarifies your wishes and preferences, so that your end of life care is delivered to meet your needs. It ensures that your wishes are recorded and can be acted upon if necessary, including helping doctors make difficult decisions because they already know what the patient has asked for. As Healthwatch England notes in their guidance, having the plan in place can also help make things easier for loved ones too.

Healthwatch England have also shared some tips on a few things to consider when making an Advance Care Plan:

- 1. Advance statements: What you want to happen.**  
These are not legally binding but should be considered carefully when future decisions are being made. They can include any information the person considers important to their health and care.
- 2. Lasting power of attorney: Who will speak for you?**  
This involves giving one or more people legal authority to make decisions about health and welfare, and property and finances.
- 3. Advance decisions: What you don't want to happen.**  
These are for decisions to refuse specific medical treatments and are legally binding.

Further information on how to complete a plan:

[Planning care at the end of life from Healthwatch England](#)

[Making decisions about treatment from Compassion in Dying](#)

## Critical Care and treating Covid-19

While some patients with Covid-19 may receive treatment outside of a hospital, some may need more intensive care. According to the Royal College of Physicians, “To get enough oxygen the person may need to be admitted to critical care for further treatment. Critical Care is a place that provides specialist care for people when they become critically unwell. Critical Care treatment supports a person’s breathing and other organ functions to keep them alive while allowing the illness to run its course. Treatment on critical care might include needing to be given heavy sedation (medication to keep you asleep to tolerate the breathing support needed) and a tube inserted into the windpipe to connect to a ventilator (a machine to support breathing). Sadly, despite this intensive treatment many people who are admitted to Critical Care will still not survive.”

For more information, refer to the NICE Critical Care Guidelines below:

[Understanding treatments and outcomes in hospital and critical care](#)

## Do Not Attempt to Resuscitate (DNAR) form

It may be important for you to understand what DNAR means for you or your loved ones. If you choose to complete a DNAR form, Compassion in Dying is a national organisation that has more information on the forms and your rights, which can help you make the right decision for you:

[Planning ahead - issuing DNAR forms](#)

If you choose to refuse treatment, ensure your decision is recorded. More information is below on how you can do this:

[How to refuse treatment](#)

## End of life care

Marie Curie have created this new coronavirus section to bring together the latest guidance on palliative and end of life care. Below is information that might help you if you are working in primary care, community care or in a residential home setting. The Marie Curie information hub addresses all areas of support and bereavement, including Covid-19 related information:

[Marie Curie’s end of life care during coronavirus](#)

[More information from Marie Curie on end of life care during the Covid-19 pandemic](#)

[Visiting someone who may die soon during coronavirus](#)

[Advice on when you can’t visit someone who is dying](#)



## What to do when someone dies

The UK government has provided step-by-step guidance on what to do after a death, including how to register the death, notifying government departments and managing financial issues:

[UK government's advice on when someone dies](#)

The British Medical Association (BMA) have produced temporary guidance on death certification and cremation, which detail specific measures to support the response to Covid-19. BMA have noted their guidance for “GPs has been produced to outline the key issues, protocols and principles that should be considered during this time for verification of death, completing [medical certificate of cause of death] MCCDs and cremations forms”:

[BMA's guidance on Covid-19 death certification and cremation](#)

## Care of the deceased

Advice from the UK government has been primarily designed to assist people who are working to care for and manage bodies of deceased persons. The guidance ensures that:

- The bodies of those people who have died as a result of Covid-19 are treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect
- And the people who work in these services and mourners are protected from infection

[UK government's guidance on care for the deceased and Covid-19](#)

## What do I need to think about when arranging a funeral?

When arranging a funeral, it's worth considering the following from Age UK before you contact a funeral director:

- Who you want to attend, being mindful of those in high-risk groups
- Arranging service sheets as service books are unlikely to be available
- Recording the eulogy on a phone or other recording device so those not in attendance can listen or watch at another time
- Services may need to be shorter so the venue can be cleaned between services
- Organising a celebration of life or memorial for a later date, when it's safe to do so
- Social distancing requirements

For further information:

[Age UK's advice on arranging a funeral and Covid-19](#)

[Co-op Funeralcare updates on coronavirus](#)

## The Inter Faith Network on funerals

This page contains guidance from faith communities and organisations on funeral rites and practices during the Coronavirus pandemic:

[Covid-19 and funerals](#)

## Dealing with bereavement and grief

During the Covid-19 pandemic, bereaved people may have to deal with increased trauma and may be cut off from some of their usual support network.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the feelings you may feel at any point may include feeling numb, denial, restlessness and disturbed sleep, loss of confidence, guilt, anger, profound sadness and depression, and acceptance and relief. These are common emotions to experience.

Cruse have put together resources on bereavement and grief and the effects of the pandemic:

[Dealing with bereavement and grief](#)

The UK government has provided a leaflet with important information to help bereaved families and friends make important decisions:

[Information for the bereaved from the UK government](#)

## Rights and changes in the law

The Care Act 2014 is being eased temporarily to ensure patients can be safely discharged from acute hospital beds as quickly as possible.

The following organisations have provided information on the Care Act 2014 easements:

[Easy Read from Mencap](#)

[Care Quality Commission \(CQC\)](#)

[Healthwatch England](#)

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/coronavirus-dealing-bereavement-and-grief>

[UK government's general guidance on the easements](#)

[UK government's Covid-19 action plan for adult social care](#)

[Beacon's article on Coronavirus Emergency Legislation and NHS Continuing Healthcare \(including hospital discharge and the local palliative care teams\)](#)

## Coronavirus-related deaths of employees or volunteers in adult social care

If you work for a local authority or a social care provider, the UK government has released information about managing coronavirus-related deaths of employees or volunteers in adult social care:

[Steps to take following the death of a person who worked in adult social care in England](#)

## Getting well enough to go home

If you are in hospital during the Covid-19 pandemic, [Beacon](#) have advised that the decision to discharge you is made by the clinicians caring for you. It is a good idea to prepare for your discharge, which will happen quickly.

It is worth you considering the following so you can be discharged safely:

- Whether you think you might be able to return home with support or care
- Whether you think you will need to go into residential care

Care and support should be put in place for the day of your discharge, as necessary. If you require ongoing care and support after this, you should be visited by a lead professional or multidisciplinary team either on the day of your discharge, or the next day.

## Appendix A: Resources

### Key information

See the Healthwatch England website for updates:

[Coronavirus advice and guidance](#)

For local information, please check your local Healthwatch's website. Some Healthwatch have a set of comprehensive frequently asked questions with links to further information. An example below is from Healthwatch West Sussex:

[Your frequently asked health and care questions answered](#)

### Accessibility

For people who are deaf or hard of hearing:

[Sign Health's Covid-19 resources](#)

For autistic adults and children:

[Coronavirus and autistic patients](#)

Translated information regarding coronavirus:

[Public Health England's translated Covid-19 resources](#)

[Doctors of the World translated Covid-19 resources](#)

Easy Read for people with learning disabilities:

[NHS England's Easy Read newsletters](#)

[Keeping away from other people](#)

[Covid-19 and advice on staying at home](#)

[Information on a variety of topics from Learning Disability England](#)

[Hand washing](#)