

## **Frequently Asked Questions from the Community on COVID-19**

To help you find what you are looking for, this document has been broken down into useful sections:

**Section 1: Accessing Primary Care**

**Section 2: Community support**

**Section 3: Community pharmacies**

**Section 4: Emergency & urgent care**

**Section 5: Hospital care**

**Section 6: Maternity Services**

**Section 7: Mental health & wellbeing**

**Section 8: Shielding and People at the Highest  
Clinical Risk from COVID-19**

**Section 9: Testing for Covid-19**

**Section 10: Myths and misinformation**

**Section 11: Data Protection and the coronavirus  
(Covid-19)**

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### **1. Accessing Primary Care**

**1.1 Can I still have a GP appointment? How should I book my appointment with the GP Practice? What is my GP Practice doing to prevent the spread of coronavirus?**

GP practices across Sussex have transformed the way they work to ensure local patients remain safe and get the care they need during the Covid-19 pandemic.

With the safety of patients and practice staff a priority, new measures have been introduced through the creation of dedicated sites and areas within some practices, for anyone with Covid-19 symptoms to be seen safely.

Those who feel they need GP appointments are being asked to contact their surgeries as normal, and not to arrive at the practice unless specifically being told to do so following an initial assessment by a suitably trained clinician.

Patients will be asked to give an accurate and detailed description of their symptoms and this will allow them to receive the most appropriate treatment.

Patients may not be seen at their usual surgery, and following their assessment will be directed to a specific site locally to best deal with their health needs in the safest way, with local GPs changing the way they provide care.

Any patient with Covid-19 symptoms will be given an appointment at a so called 'hot site' rather than their own practice. These are formed by a group of practices coming together and identifying a single dedicated site to offer patients from their practices face-to-face consultation following their assessment.

Some GPs will be seeing patients without symptoms and patients with Covid-19 symptoms who will be separated into special zones, so that they are kept isolated from other patients. This will be undertaken in a safe way for patients and staff, and includes the

introduction of dedicated hot consultation rooms, with separate entrances and exits to maintain isolation.

Existing GP premises will also be dedicated for treatment of those without any Covid-19 symptoms or acute illness, to allow their management in a way that minimises risk of contact with any potentially ill patients. Patients will be screened for any fever or cough symptoms, so only those who are considered well can enter. The facility will be arranged to maintain social distancing measures and limit patient number on site at any one time.

Infection control measures set by government experts will be followed at all sites and residents can be reassured of their safety, even when they are close to any site seeing patients with Covid-19 symptoms. At a minimum a daily, a full deep clean will be completed at each hot site, including disinfection.

GP Practices are making alternative arrangements to ensure these patients from the deaf community, people with learning disabilities, those whose first language is not English, and anyone without access to a telephone can access appointments.

## **1.2. Are clinics still running in GP Practices?**

Yes, the majority of essential clinics such as blood taking, wound dressing and baby and child immunisations are still running but you should check with your GP Practice in the first instance.

### **1.3 I need to register as a patient at a GP Practice, can I still do this?**

Yes, anyone can register at a GP Practice as long as:

- it has capacity to take on new patients
- you live within the practice boundary

Practices will continue to register all patients, including those with no fixed address, asylum seekers, refugees and those who do not have photo identification.

GP Practices are making arrangements so that those seeking to register with a practice do not have to go in physically. For example, you may be asked to send in an application via post or electronically. If a GP Practice conducts online registration, you may be asked to apply online. Please check with the individual GP Practice.

### **1.4 I use British Sign Language (BSL), how do I access care?**

Sussex NHS Commissioners have implemented a Video Relay Service (VRS) for telephone appointments in every GP Practice.

This means mean d/Deaf patients across Sussex will now be able to call their registered practice for free, using the standard telephone number, speak with receptionists and book a telephone appointment with a GP, just as a hearing person can.

An NHS 111 British Sign Language (BSL) Service is also available. This is a free service where a BSL interpreter telephones an NHS 111 adviser and relays their conversation with them. Details of this service will be included below this video.

Where possible, interpreters will be sourced for GP appointments.

### **1.5 My GP Practice are only doing appointments via telephone, doesn't this go against the Equality Act (2010)?**

A number of GP Practices are seeking to limit the booking of appointments to telephone only to reduce the spread of infection. This change affects a number of patient groups.

Practices have a legal responsibility not to discriminate and to provide appropriate methods of communication. GP Practices are being asked to ensure that they explain to patients how they can access appointments.

## **2. Community Support**

### **2.1 I have suspected coronavirus symptoms, what support will I receive from the NHS?**

People self-isolating with suspected coronavirus symptoms will also get regular check-ins from a new NHS 111 online messaging service launched on

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2020. Once individuals have been through the online assessment, daily texts will be sent to those who have registered their Covid-19 symptoms and left contact details.

Depending on the duration of their isolation, the daily messages will check how people are and ensure that those who need help to get them through that period, receive it.

## **2.2 What is a Community Hub, and how can I request support for myself or on behalf of someone else?**

Community Hubs are run through our Local Authorities, and District and Borough Councils in East and West Sussex. The Hubs have been supporting those who are on the "[shielded](#)" list by ensuring people have access to food and other support. The Hubs are also a key contact point for other residents who are vulnerable, in order to access wider community support, which may include help with shopping and money, but also support with reducing isolation through access to services such as telephone befriending

Community Hubs will also provide a place for people to find out about local volunteering opportunities.

You request support yourself or on behalf of someone else using the details below:

## **Brighton and Hove Community Hubs**

Contact details for the Community Support:

[Brighton and Hove Community Support Website](#)

Brighton and Hove Community Support Telephone:  
01273 293117

## **East Sussex Community Hubs**

Contact details for the Community Hubs in East Sussex are below:

[Eastbourne Community Hub Website](#)

Eastbourne Community Hub Telephone: 01323 679722

[Hastings Community Hub Website](#)

Hastings Community Hub Telephone: 01424 451019

[Lewes Community Hub Website](#)

Lewes Community Hub Telephone: 01273 099956

[Rother Community Hub Website](#)

Rother Community Hub Telephone: 01424 787000  
(option 4)

[Wealden Community Hub Website](#)

Wealden Community Hub Telephone: 01323 443322

## **West Sussex Community Hubs**

Contact the West Sussex Community Support Team:

## [West Sussex Community Support Team Website](#)

West Sussex Support Team Telephone: 033 022 27980  
(Lines are open 8.00am - 8.00pm)

### **2.3 How can I volunteer to support my community?**

The NHS Volunteer Responders Programme has been set up to support the NHS and the care sector during the COVID-19 outbreak. NHS Volunteer Responders can be called on to do simple but vital tasks such as:

- delivering medicines from pharmacies;
- driving patients to appointments;
- bringing them home from hospital;
- or making regular phone calls to check on people isolating at home.

Recruitment to this scheme has temporarily paused to process the initial 750,000 applications. Further information will follow shortly.

In the meantime, you can read more about the scheme via the NHS Volunteer Responders FAQs [online here](#).

ID checks will be carried out for all volunteers. Patient transport drivers will need an enhanced DBS check and will receive additional guidance. Volunteers will receive guidance, including on social distancing rules to ensure the group being asked to shield themselves is protected.

People who have been advised to shield themselves from the coronavirus can now self-refer to the NHS Volunteer Responder Programme via telephone (0808 196 3646) or online by clicking on this [link](#).



The scheme can also now support people with cognitive impairments and significant vulnerabilities.

If you are a health professional, NHS England has produced guidance on how to make referrals for volunteer support. Click here to access the [information](#).

## **2.4 I have been asked to provide an isolation note, what is it and how do I get one?**

An isolation note provides proof that you have Covid-19 or are advised to stay at home.

Isolation notes will provide employees with evidence for their employers that they have been advised to self-isolate due to coronavirus, either because they have symptoms or they live with someone who has symptoms, and so cannot work.

For the first seven days off work, employees can self-certify so they don't need any evidence for their employer. After that, employers may ask for evidence of sickness absence. Where this is related to having symptoms of coronavirus or living with someone who has symptoms, the isolation note can be used to provide evidence of the advice to self-isolate.

You request an isolation note by visiting [NHS 111 online, rather than visiting a doctor](#).

After answering a few questions, an isolation note will be emailed to the individual. If they don't have an email

address, they can have the note sent to a trusted family member or friend, or directly to their employer. The service can also be used to generate an isolation note on behalf of someone else.

## **2.5 How do I provide a fit note (sick note) for symptoms not related to COVID-19?**

A fit note must be signed by a doctor, but you do not always need to see a GP in person to get one.

It depends on:

- why you're off work sick
- whether a GP needs to assess you face to face
- if you have been in hospital

"Fit note" is the informal name for a Statement of Fitness for Work. [Find out more about when you need a fit note.](#)

If you need a fit note, contact your GP practice. They will tell you whether you should make an appointment to see a GP or book a phone/online consultation.

A GP can give you a fit note on the day they assess you or at any time after the assessment, if appropriate.

## **2.6 I want to support the hospitals through donations, how can I go about doing this?**

Our NHS staff would like to thank everyone in the local community for their support.

Hospitals across Sussex have received many kind of offers: for personal protective equipment (PPE), home-made scrubs, gifts of food and other donations.

Our hospitals currently have adequate access to supplies of PPE. However, local councils are appealing for donations. These is being coordinated across Sussex by the Sussex Resilience Forum who ensure that PPE is shared across all health and care settings where organisations experience shortages. They have been asking for gloves, aprons or other protective equipment – [click here](#) to read more.

For hospitals in Sussex, donations of gifts and other support are being managed by each hospital's charity. You can find the contact details for these on each hospital's website.

It is important that everyone stays home to save lives and avoids unnecessary travel. Therefore, please do not visit any hospital site with donations without prior arrangement.

## 3. Community Pharmacies

### 3.1 Are all community pharmacies still open to the public?

Community Pharmacies are still open, although hours may be different to usual.

To check in advance to see when your local community pharmacy is open, [click here](#), before setting out, and be aware that a pharmacy may have to close without notice if there is an emergency on-site.

### 3.2 Why do I have to queue outside the pharmacy? It looks very busy, are they coping?

A queue outside a pharmacy does not necessarily mean the pharmacy is struggling to cope.

Many pharmacies now have measures in place such as **one-in-one-out of the premises**, which is why you may see a queue of people outside, as social distancing and infection control measures have been put in place in pharmacies to protect staff and patients during these exceptional times.

Pharmacies do a lot more than dispense medicines. They offer health services that many of us aren't aware of, and as one of the few frontline NHS services still seeing and treating patients face-to-face, staff may be dealing with, and treating patients, who need medical help for non Covid-19 issues.

### **3.3 How do I get my repeat prescription?**

Repeat prescriptions are still available as usual. It is important to only request your medicines when they are running low (e.g. one weeks supply left) as you usually would. Ordering medicines too early or ordering more than usual can lead to fewer medicines in the system and potentially, shortages for others.

Manufacturers, wholesalers and pharmacies are working hard to minimise medicine shortages as a result of COVID-19.

Patients are being encouraged to order their repeat prescriptions online directly from their GP practice via the practice website or through the NHS App wherever possible, which is supported by national policy (both pre-Covid and during Covid policy), or using Prescription Ordering Direct (POD) phone service, if this is available with their GP practice. This will speed up the process for repeat prescriptions to be issued.

It can take between 5 and 7 days from ordering a repeat prescription from a GP to it being ready to collect at the pharmacy. We urge all patients to plan in advance so that they don't run out.

### **3.4 I am on the 'Shielded' list, how do I receive my prescription?**

People who are on the shielded patient list (formerly known as the vulnerable patient list) have been identified by the NHS as being at very high risk of

severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) because of an underlying health condition, and for their family, friends and carers.

Everyone on the shielded list should have already received a letter, and a text message for those who have provided their mobile details to the NHS, with details on how to access support if needed. The letter is the important proof that the person is in the group who should practice social shielding.

Shielded patients should, in the first instance, ask friends, relatives, and neighbours to collect medicines for them. If this is not possible because friends, family and neighbours are vulnerable or isolating themselves, people should contact their local authority community hub to ask for a community volunteer to go to pharmacy to collect medicines for them (see the contact information for community hubs in Q5 below).

Patients who are being told they need to be shielded or believe they are at high risk should also [register themselves on the gov.uk website if they need extra help and support](#).

[Click here for more information if you are a shielded patient](#).

### **3.5 I'm not on the shielded list, but am still self-isolating / vulnerable so cannot get to a pharmacy to collect my prescription, what should I do?**

If you are self-isolating or poorly and you are unable to leave your home, in the first instance, **please ask friends, relatives, and neighbours to collect/pick up your medicines for you.** If you are isolating, ask them to drop it off outside your door so that you can avoid close face-to-face contact.

However, if this is not possible because friends, family and neighbours are vulnerable or isolating themselves, you should contact your local authority community hub to ask for a community volunteer to go to pharmacy to collect/pick up medicines for you (see the list of contact information for the hubs below).

Community pharmacies are extremely busy at the moment, so please contact your local council's community hub for support and avoid calling the pharmacy directly unless it's absolutely necessary.

If you are not on the shielded communities list, or you think you are but have not received the letter and need food and medication delivery, go to the Government website and register at: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable>. This will be shared with your GP. You can also email your GP to let them know you've registered. Please note that this is not an immediate service.

**Please see below for information on the local authority Community Hubs:**

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## West Sussex Community Hubs

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[West Sussex Community Support Team Website](#)

West Sussex Support Team Telephone: 033 022 27980  
(Lines are open 8.00am - 8.00pm)

### **3.6 I am collecting a prescription for a friend, family member or neighbour – how do I do this in a safe way?**

Before you start collecting and dropping-off medicines to patients' homes, it is important to understand how to undertake your tasks safely and effectively. This is key to protecting patient safety and confidentiality.

**Top Tips** for safely collecting and picking up prescriptions for a friend, family member or neighbour are below, and you can download a helpful poster created by Healthwatch and Community Pharmacy Surrey & Sussex [here](#):

- 1. It may be safest to only collect for up to two patients at a time**
- 2. Go to the right pharmacy**
- 3. Know the name and address of the person you are collecting for. It may also save time in the pharmacy if you know what medicine(s) you are expecting**

4. Please **don't be offended** if the pharmacist asks for ID or cannot hand over certain medicines. Please ensure you have appropriate ID with you, such as your driving licence or your letter of authority/volunteer ID from the District & Borough Council.
5. **Ask the patient** if they pay for their prescription – it's £9.15 per prescription item (they may be able to pay for the medication over the phone if the pharmacy offers this service, though not all do). If the patient doesn't pay, ask them **which 'exemption' applies** to them
6. Medicine deliveries **must be completed on the same day** you collected them from the pharmacy, and within the opening hours of pharmacy. Any medicines that cannot be delivered must be returned to the pharmacy that day; **you must not store other peoples' medicines overnight in your own home or fridge.**
7. **Do not open** the prescription package. If medicine packages split, or there's a breakage, call the pharmacy team immediately for their advice. It is likely you will have to return to the pharmacy in this situation.
8. Do not deliver the medicines to anyone other than the patient without **patient consent**

9. Where possible, place the medication on the doorstep, ring the bell / knock on the door and stand back to wait for an answer. **REMEMBER: NEVER LEAVE MEDICATION UNATTENDED**
10. When the door is answered, explain that you have a prescription to deliver and ask the person to confirm the name and address of the patient, to **ensure you have the correct address and that the patient lives there**
11. If a patient does not answer the door, please **return the medicines back to the pharmacy; do not** leave the medicines outside the house, with a neighbour or post the medicines through the letter box.
12. To avoid the potential for confusion, you must also complete all deliveries from a single pharmacy **before** picking up further prescriptions for delivery from another pharmacy
13. Some patients **may have more than one package of medicines**, check with the pharmacy the number of packages for each patient on collection and ensure that all bags of medicines are delivered.
14. Sometimes the pharmacy may not have all the medicines needed or the full quantity ordered on the prescription. When this happens, the pharmacy will issue an *Owings Slip*. It is **important that you pass this *Owings Slip* onto the patient** and advise

them that these items will be delivered when the pharmacy has the items back in stock.

15. If you have concerns for a patient's wellbeing call the pharmacy team for assistance and guidance. In emergency situations dial 999
16. Avoid pharmacies if you are **showing symptoms** of COVID-19
17. **Ask the pharmacist for advice** if you are not sure about anything

For further information on how to safely collect prescriptions on behalf of someone who is self-isolating and unable to visit a pharmacy to collect their own prescription, download this handy ['workbook'](#) that East Sussex County Council (ESCC) has developed, using CPSS information, for people volunteering to pick up medicines on behalf of friends, family and neighbours.

### **3.7 Can pharmacists prioritise processing the prescriptions of patients who are at a higher risk of catching COVID-19?**

No, pharmacists are unable to do this. Community pharmacies are extremely busy at the moment and are trying their best to ensure **all** patients get the care they need.

## 4. Emergency & urgent care

### 4.1 Are Accident and Emergency (A&E) departments closed? What should I do if there is an emergency?

A&E departments are not closed and continue to be open to deal with genuine life-threatening emergencies, such as:

- [loss of consciousness](#)
- acute confused state and fits that are not stopping
- [chest pain](#)
- Broken bones
- [severe bleeding that cannot be stopped](#)
- severe [allergic reactions](#)
- severe burns or scalds
- [stroke](#)
- major trauma such as a road traffic accident

A&E is not an alternative to a GP appointment.

If you have a medical emergency and need an ambulance, you should continue to call 999. You can use the find nearest A&E [here](#).

### 4.2 What should I do for urgent non-coronavirus medical queries?

Less severe injuries can be treated in [urgent care centres or minor injuries units](#). Conditions that can be treated at an urgent treatment centre include:

- sprains and strains
- suspected broken limbs
- minor head injuries
- cuts and grazes
- bites and stings
- minor scalds and burns
- ear and throat infections
- skin infections and rashes
- eye problems
- coughs and colds
- feverish illness in adults
- feverish illness in children
- abdominal pain
- vomiting and diarrhoea
- emergency contraception

You can find your nearest urgent care centre or minor injuries unit [here](#). Please check for any local changes before accessing this service.

Alternatively you can go to [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk) or call 111, which will direct you to the best local service.

NHS workers, clinicians and other medical staff are working around the clock to ensure that everyone gets the care they need. The coronavirus pandemic is unprecedented and unplanned for, meaning that many emergency measures are being taken. Please be as patient as you can with staff - they are doing their best at a very difficult time.

### **4.3 What do I do if I have a dental emergency?**

Since the Government announced social distancing measures to slow down the spread of COVID-19 all non-urgent dental activity has stopped. However, measures have been put in place so that people can get urgent dental treatment if needed.

To provide care for people with urgent and emergency dental problems thirty-six urgent dental care hubs have been put in place in the South East.

If you have a dental emergency, you should contact a dental practice for a telephone assessment to assess your dental needs. This could either be the dental practice you normally attend or you can search for an NHS practice nearest to your home address on the NHS website at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk). Out of usual surgery hours, you should call NHS111.

When calling the dental practice, you will be assessed so that you can be provided with the most appropriate care. This may include being prescribed medication for pain relief or to treat an infection or you may be referred to one of the urgent dental care hubs for treatment.

If you experience problems with accessing dental care which cannot be answered by the news item on our [website](#), please email [england.southeastdental@nhs.net](mailto:england.southeastdental@nhs.net) and the relevant member of the dental team will answer.

## 5. Hospital care

### 5.1 What are the new hospital visiting restrictions?

The difficult, but essential, decision to restrict visiting throughout hospitals with immediate effect and until further notice has been made.

The only exceptional circumstances where one visitor – an immediate family member or carer – will be permitted to visit are listed below:

- The patient you wish to visit is receiving end-of-life care.
- You are the birthing partner accompanying a woman in labour.
- You are a parent or appropriate adult visiting your child.

Please contact the ward or department in advance to discuss appropriate arrangements.

Your health, safety and wellbeing, that of our patients, communities and individuals and teams across the organisation remain our absolute priority. Please find other ways of keeping in touch with your loved ones in hospital, like phone and video calls.

### 5.2 Will I still be referred to the hospital if my GP thinks I need it?

Yes, your GP will still refer you; however, many of the referrals will be held until the pressure on the NHS



lessens. All referrals will be looked at by a clinician and reviewed for urgency. You should hear directly from the hospital about your appointment; you do not need to go back to your GP unless your condition deteriorates.

The exception to this our Musculoskeletal (bone and joint) services, who are not taking new referrals to the service, unless urgent; in this case patients may be offered a phone assessment as a first step.

### **5.3 If I am worried I might have cancer, would I still be referred to the hospital?**

You should contact your GP immediately with any worrying symptoms; if your GP is concerned, you will be referred to hospital, and should be seen within two weeks.

### **5.4. Can I still access Patient Transport services?**

Non-emergency Patient Transport services are still operating. If you qualify for this service, Sussex patients' first journey must be booked by a healthcare professional or by calling the Central Booking Line using the below details:

- Central Booking Line 0300 123 9841 between 07:00 – 20:00 Monday to Saturday (08:00 – 17:00 Sundays and Bank Holidays)
- Patient Transport Service Cancellation Line 0300 790 0143 available 24/7 365 days a year

You can access further information about Patient Transport [online here](#).

## 6. Maternity Services

Maternity service users across Sussex have been sharing their queries and concerns with their local Maternity Voices Partnerships and Healthwatch representatives. Maternity Voices Partnerships (MVPs) are committees made up of health care professionals, maternity service users and third sector organisations and they are working closely together to facilitate communications, incorporating the latest clinical guidance, but also reflecting local service user questions and concerns. Some of the answers to these FAQs vary locally so we recommend you go to your local hospital's social media account or website for the latest information, but below is a selection of FAQs we have seen to date relating to maternity services at Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust (BSUH), East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT) and Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (WSHFT):

### **6.1 Are antenatal appointments happening as normal?**

There are several changes, with some appointments not going ahead and others being undertaken by phone or video conference. There are some which remain face to face to enable a physical examination and blood tests to be taken. Please see your local Trust website or ask your midwife for further information.

## **6.2 Can I bring someone with me when I attend a scan?**

Unfortunately, in order to observe social distancing guidance, only those who are pregnant are able to attend scan appointments. However, your partner/ friend/ family member can wait in the car park so that you have someone close by. They can be invited in to be with you at the end of the scan in the event of you receiving difficult news.

## **6.3 What should I do if I'm worried about my baby's movements?**

Your midwife is there to answer any questions and support you with any concerns. Please don't hesitate to contact them. Top tip: if you haven't eaten anything for a while, have something substantial to eat and a cold drink and then lie down on your left side with your hands on your tummy. If your baby's movements aren't as you would expect, please contact your midwife.

## **6.4 Can I have a home birth in Sussex?**

Unfortunately two of the Trusts in Sussex (Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust) have made the difficult decision to temporarily suspend home birth services, however midwifery led care in a 'home from home' environment is available at those hospitals. This is being kept regularly under review and any changes to this situation will be communicated via your local hospital.

## **6.5 Are there any changes in the hospital as a result of Coronavirus?**

Most hospitals have green and red zones. The maternity wards and clinics are within the green zones. Your local Trust will have uploaded a film on their website or social media account to show you a virtual tour of the hospital, including what staff will look like in their PPE. Other maternity service users have found these really helpful; as one new parent said this week, “I know we cannot see the smiles behind the masks, but we can tell you’re smiling”.

## **6.6 Will I be tested for Covid-19?**

Guidance is changing regularly and it is likely that this will shortly be happening for all those admitted to the hospital as an inpatient so please check your local Trust website or ask your midwife for further information.

## **6.7 Can my partner accompany me if I am in labour?**

Unfortunately it will not be possible for your partner to stay with you whilst you are attending the antenatal clinic or postnatal ward due to social distancing guidance. One birth partner, who is free of Covid-19 symptoms, can join you once you are in active labour and have moved to the labour ward as you will then be in a single room. Further information about when you are in active labour and how long your partner can stay with you after the birth can be found on the Trust’s websites. Your birth partner can attend the hospital with you and wait outside of the Triage area until you are in

active labour. Once you have been assessed, you can sit outside of the ward with your birth partner, if you wish to do so, until you are in active labour. Your birthing partner cannot be swapped for another family member or friend during labour.

### **6.8 Can my partner accompany me for my C-birth?**

You are advised that for a pre-booked C-section, you should come alone initially. Your birth partner can attend the hospital with you and wait outside of the Triage area until you are called down to Theatre. Once you have been checked in, you can sit outside of the ward with your birth partner, if you wish to do so, until you are called down to Theatre or you can wait on the ward and your partner can join you when the C-section is due to start (the staff will help ensure your partner is notified in time)

### **6.9 Can I have visitors whilst I am on the postnatal ward?**

Visiting restrictions are in place as a result of Coronavirus – please see your local Trust website or ask your midwife for further information. Each Trust is prioritising discharge so that you can go home as quickly as it is safe for you and the baby to do so after you have given birth.

### **6.10 Can I breastfeed if I have Covid-19?**

Yes, evidence suggests it is unlikely that Covid-19 would be transmitted through breastfeeding. It is still

appropriate to implement hygiene measures, such as washing your hands regularly with soap and water and wearing a medical mask, if possible, to reduce the possibility of droplets with Covid-19 being spread to the infant. Feeding support is available virtually and by telephone from both midwives and health visitors.

### **6.11 Where can I find out about local support groups?**

Your midwife will be able to signpost you to local support groups, but your local Maternity Voices Partnership social media account may also provide some helpful pointers.

### **6.12 Where should I go for more information?**

The Sussex Health and Care Partnership maternity service providers update their websites and social media accounts regularly:

<https://www.esht.nhs.uk/service/maternity/>

<https://www.facebook.com/conquestmaternityteam/>

[https://west-sussex-family-](https://west-sussex-family-assist.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/350)

[assist.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/350](https://west-sussex-family-assist.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/350)

<https://www.facebook.com/WSXFamilyAssist/>

<https://www.bsuh.nhs.uk/maternity/about-us/covid-19/>

<https://www.facebook.com/BSUHMaternityServices/>

We are aware that some of the Sussex population will be accessing their maternity care at [Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust](#) and [Maidstone Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust](#). They are also updating their websites

regularly and further information can be found by following the links.

### **6.13 Where should I go if I have any other questions?**

Please do contact your MVP as they will be happy to respond to any questions you may have or, if they don't have the answer, find it out on your behalf.

<https://www.facebook.com/eastsussexmaternityvoices/>

<https://www.facebook.com/westsussexMVP/>

<https://www.facebook.com/MidSussexMaternityVoicesPartnership/>

<https://www.facebook.com/brightonandhovemslc/>

### **6.14 National guidance**

You can find out further information by clicking on the below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-ymea8LQtU&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/coronavirus-covid-19-pregnancy-and-womens-health/>

<https://www.rcm.org.uk/advice-for-pregnant-women/>

## 7. Mental Health and Wellbeing

### **7.1 I feel anxious, worried and lonely and want support with this, where should I access this support?**

You might be worried about coronavirus (COVID-19) and how it could affect your life. NHS Every Mind Matters provides useful tips and suggestions on maintaining your mental wellbeing while staying at home such as staying connected with people, talking about your worries, and looking after your body.

You can read more about NHS Every Mind Matters by clicking this link [here](#).

### **7.2 What additional local support is available for people needing urgent help with their mental health?**

People across Sussex struggling with their mental health during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak are being offered additional telephone and crisis support to help them cope.

Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust has expanded the Sussex Mental Healthline - 0300 5000 101 - to provide a 24/7 service to people needing urgent help with their mental health.

As well as crisis support it will provide psychological support to people who have general concerns about their mental health.



Registered clinicians are at the other end of the freephone number to provide help, support and advice to anyone who needs it, at any time of the day or night, regardless of their age or where they live in the county.

The team at the Sussex Mental Healthline can offer advice and support to callers who are experiencing a crisis in their mental health, and if needed they can refer them to one of five newly created urgent help hubs for assessment and treatment.

General advice about how to manage your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak is available at [www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/coronavirus) as well as through @withoutstigma on Twitter and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/SussexPartnership](http://www.facebook.com/SussexPartnership)

### **7.3 Where can I get further support?**

It is quite common to experience short-lived physical symptoms when your mood is low or anxious, for example:

- faster, irregular or more noticeable heartbeat
- feeling lightheaded and dizzy
- headaches
- chest pains or loss of appetite

It can be difficult to know what is causing these symptoms, but often people who experience them due to stress, anxiety or low mood find that they get worse

when they focus on them. See advice from the NHS on [managing the physical symptoms](#).

If you are concerned about your physical symptoms, then do contact [NHS 111 online](#).

For advice on coronavirus (COVID-19) and any symptoms see the [NHS website](#).

If you are experiencing stress, feelings of anxiety or low mood, you can use the [NHS mental health and wellbeing advice website](#) for self-assessment, audio guides and practical tools. [Every Mind Matters](#) also provides simple tips and advice to start taking better care of your mental health.

Further information on services available can be found via the Sussex NHS Commissioners websites. Click the links below:

[NHS Brighton and Hove CCG](#)

[NHS East Sussex CCG](#)

[NHS West Sussex CCG](#)

If you are still struggling after several weeks and it is affecting your daily life, please use [NHS 111 online](#). If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111.

In a medical emergency [call 999](#). This is when someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk. A mental health emergency should be taken as seriously as a physical health emergency.

## 8. Shielding and People at the Highest Clinical Risk from COVID-19

### 8.1 What is shielding?

Shielding is a measure to protect people who are clinically extremely vulnerable by minimising all interaction between those who are extremely vulnerable and others.

The UK Government is strongly advising people with serious underlying health conditions (listed below), which put them at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19), to rigorously follow shielding measures in order to keep themselves safe:

1. Solid organ transplant recipients.
2. People with specific cancers:
  - people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy
  - people with lung cancer who are undergoing radical radiotherapy
  - people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
  - people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
  - people having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
  - people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs

3. People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD.
4. People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell).
5. People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.
6. Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.

Shielding is for your personal protection. It is your choice to decide whether to follow the measures we advise. Individuals who have been given a prognosis of less than 6 months to live, and some others in special circumstances, could decide not to undertake shielding. This will be a deeply personal decision. We advise calling your GP or specialist to discuss this.

## **8.2 I think I should be considered as highest clinical risk, but I haven't received a letter. What should I do?**

Most people that are within the highest clinical risk group have already received a letter through the post. However, we are aware that central records do not capture everybody in this group. The process for identifying additional people who meet the clinical criteria but have not been identified through the initial central process is continuing. People identified through this process will receive a letter shortly. This list is also being reviewed by GPs and hospital clinicians.

In the meantime, please continue to follow the [social distancing guidance](#).

### **8.3 I live with a person who is ‘shielding’, but I am unable to socially distance from others because of my work (i.e. NHS, social care worker, education or other key worker), or the size/ layout of my home doesn’t allow me to live separately from the vulnerable person who is shielding. What do I do?**

If you live with someone who has been identified as being at highest clinical risk, you should read and familiarize yourself with the ‘shielding’ guidance below, and strictly follow social distancing guidance.

The rest of the household should support the person shielding to stay safe and stringently follow guidance on social distancing, reducing their contact outside the home. In your home, you should:

- minimise the time spent in shared spaces (kitchen, bathroom and sitting areas) and keep shared spaces well ventilated;
- aim to keep 2 metres (3 steps) away from others and encourage them to sleep in a different bed where possible;
- use separate towels from other people in the house and, if possible, use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household, or clean the bathroom after every use;
- avoid using the kitchen when others are present, take your meals back to your room to eat where

possible, and ensure all kitchenware is cleaned thoroughly.

If the rest of your household are able to follow this guidance, there is no need for them to take the full protective measures to keep you safe.

All people who have a letter and have been identified at highest clinical risk should register for government support at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable>. Even if you do not require support at this time, please register with the site.

Please note that government support is only available to the individual who is at the highest clinical risk and has received a letter confirming this.

#### **8.4 I have received a letter to say that I am at highest clinical risk, does this mean I will be de-prioritised for ventilation if I contract COVID-19 and require hospital care?**

You were sent this letter to inform you that your condition, or the treatment/ medication you are receiving, means that you are at the highest clinical risk from COVID-19. The purpose of the letter is to draw your attention to the guidance issued by Public Health England regarding 'shielding' in order to keep you safe during this COVID-19 outbreak.

If you fall ill from COVID-19, or any other condition, and require treatment in hospital, you will still be treated as

normal and will not be denied any medical intervention because you are in the 'shielded' group.

### **8.5 I have received a text message telling me that I am at highest clinical risk. How do I know if this text is real or a scam?**

NHS Business Services Authority have sent out a number of text messages from the 'NHS coronavirus service'. Daily text messages were sent from 23 to 29 March from the same number - 07307 810357. If your text does not come from this number, please ignore it.

The first text should have looked like this:

NHS Coronavirus Service: We have identified that you're someone at risk of severe illness if you catch Coronavirus. Please remain at home for a minimum of 12 weeks. Home is the safest place for you. Staying in helps you stay well and that will help the NHS too. You can open a window but do not leave your home, and stay 3 steps away from others indoors. Wash your hands more often, for at least 20 seconds.

Read more advice about staying safe at home.

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable-guidance>

We will send you more messages with information.

To opt out reply STOP

## **8.6 I have more questions about people who are at the highest clinical risk from COVID-19?**

NHS England has published guidance specifically relating to people defined by the United Kingdom's Chief Medical Officer as being extremely vulnerable to, or at the highest clinical risk from, COVID-19. You can read the information [here](#).

## **9. Testing for Covid-19**

### **9.1 Can I be tested for the coronavirus and when is best to ask for a test?**

If you're in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland and have any of the symptoms of coronavirus, you can ask for a test through the NHS website at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/>

You need to have the test in the first 5 days of having symptoms. It's best to ask for the test in the first 3 days, as it may take a day or two to arrange.



## 9.2 Can I request a test for someone else?

Yes, you can ask for a test for someone you live with, if they have coronavirus symptoms. If you're asking for a test for someone else and the person is aged 13 or over, check they're happy for you to ask for a test for them.

You can book a test here:

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/ask-for-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/ask-for-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/)

## 9.3 I am an essential worker, can I be tested for coronavirus?

If you're an essential worker in England, Scotland or Northern Ireland, you can apply for priority testing through GOV.UK. You can also get tested through this route if you have symptoms of coronavirus and live with an essential worker.

To book a test for an essential worker:

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-essential-workers>

See the list of essential workers below:

- all NHS and social care staff, including:
  - doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff, including volunteers and unpaid carers
  - the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector

- those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines, and medical and personal protective equipment
- NHS Blood and Transplant frontline staff (blood donation staff, specialist nurses for organ donation, staff running therapeutic apheresis services in NHS hospitals)
- those providing ancillary support to NHS workers (such as hotel accommodation for NHS staff)
- personal care assistants
- essential public services staff, including:
  - prisons, probation, courts and tribunals staff, judiciary
  - religious staff
  - charities and workers delivering critical frontline services
  - those responsible for the management of the deceased
  - journalists and broadcasters covering coronavirus or providing public service broadcasting
  - public health and environmental staff, such as specialist community public health nursing
- public safety and national security staff, including:
  - police and support staff
  - Ministry of Defence civilians, contractors and armed forces personnel (those critical to the delivery of critical defence and national security)

- outputs and critical to the response to the coronavirus pandemic), including defence medical staff
- fire and rescue service employees (including support staff),
- National Crime Agency staff, those maintaining border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles, including those overseas
- British Transport Police and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency
- transport workers, including:
  - those who keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the coronavirus response
  - those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass
- education and childcare workers, including:
  - support and teaching staff
  - social workers
  - specialist education professionals
- critical personnel in the production and distribution of food, drink and essential goods, including:
  - those involved in food production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery
  - those critical to the provision of other essential goods, such as medical supply chain and distribution workers, including community pharmacy and testing (such as PHE labs), and veterinary medicine

- workers critical to the continuity of essential movement of goods
- local and national government staff critical to the effective delivery of the coronavirus response, or delivering essential public services, such as the payment of benefits
- public and environmental health staff, including in government agencies and arm's length bodies
- funeral industry workers
- frontline local authority staff and volunteers, including
  - those working with vulnerable children and adults, victims of domestic
  - abuse, and the homeless and rough sleepers (and hotel staff supporting these groups)
  - voluntary sector organisations providing substance misuse treatment
- utilities, communication and financial services staff, including:
  - staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure)
  - the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage)
  - information technology and data infrastructure sector and primary industry supplies to continue during the coronavirus response

- essential staff working in the civil nuclear, chemicals, telecommunications (including but not limited to network operations, field engineering, call centre staff, IT and data infrastructure, 999 and 111 essential services), postal services and delivery, payments providers and waste disposal sectors
- In England, you can get tested if you're a social care worker or resident in a care home whether you have symptoms or not.

## **9.4 Can I apply for testing for my care home and workers?**

You can apply for coronavirus testing kits to test the residents and staff of your care home. You can apply whether or not any of your residents or staff have coronavirus symptoms. You can only get tests if your care home looks after older people or people with dementia. This testing is currently only available in England.

See the guidance on [testing for care home residents and workers](#).

The link to apply for these tests is here :

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-care-home>

## **9.5 Is there further guidance available on testing for the coronavirus?**

Further information on testing can be found online here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/ask-for-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

## **10. Myths and misinformation**

### **10.1 There is a lot of misinformation about coronavirus, how do I know what is correct?**

A new GOV.UK WhatsApp Coronavirus Information Service has now been launched to combat the spread of misinformation. To use the service, members of the public simply add +44 7860 064422 to their contacts and send a WhatsApp message saying “Hi”.

### **10.2 Are homemade face masks effective?**

The use of homemade and fabric masks is not recommended. Inappropriate use of facemasks and use of non-conforming products can lead to a greater risk of self-inoculation.

An effective face mask for use in healthcare must conform to British Safety Standards:

- Carry the CE mark
- Be certified as fluid repellent:

- **EN 14683 Type IIR performance ASTM F2100 level 2 or level 3 or equivalent;**  
Fluid resistance at minimum 120 mmHg pressure based on ASTM F1862-07, ISO 22609, or equivalent  
Breathability: MIL–M-36945C, EN 14683 annex C, or equivalent  
Filtration efficiency: ASTM F2101, EN14683 annex B, or equivalent  
[https://www.who.int/medical\\_devices/ppe\\_ebol\\_a\\_24nov\\_en.pdf](https://www.who.int/medical_devices/ppe_ebol_a_24nov_en.pdf)

Masks must be disposed of when soiled/damp (approximately 20minutes) and immediately following close contact with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

### **10.3 Can 5G mobile networks spread COVID-19?**

No, viruses cannot travel on radio waves/mobile networks. COVID-19 is spreading in many countries that do not have 5G mobile networks.

COVID-19 is spread through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or speaks. People can also be infected by touching a contaminated surface and then their eyes, mouth or nose.

### **10.4 Now that we have warmer weather, are we protected from Covid-19?**

You can catch COVID-19, no matter how sunny or hot the weather is. Countries with hot weather have reported cases of COVID-19. To protect yourself, make sure you

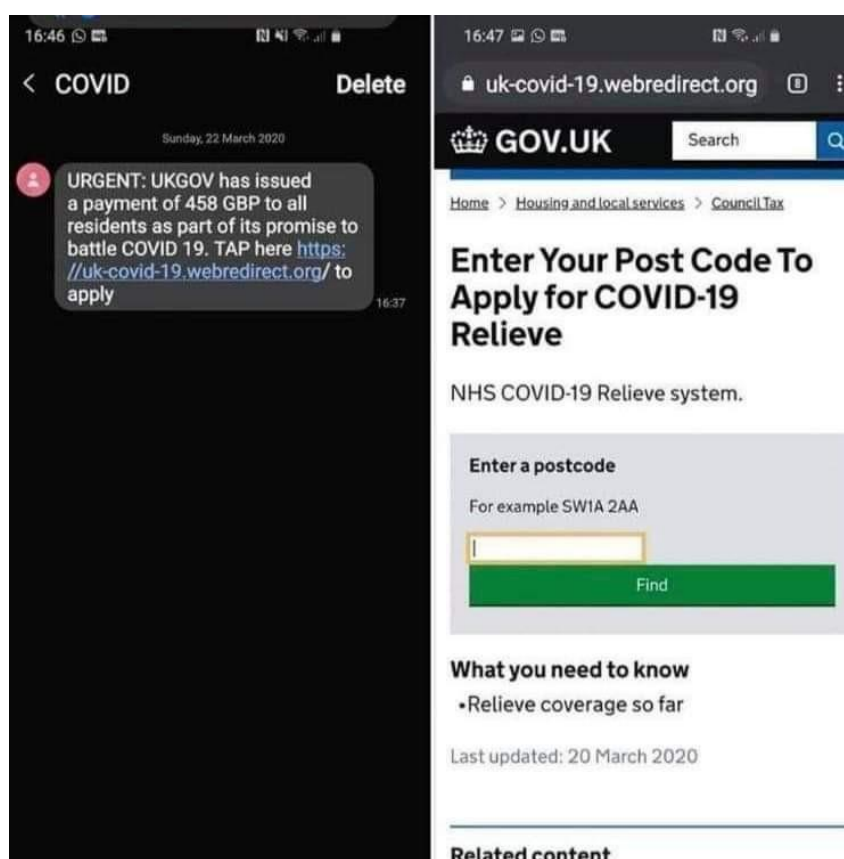
clean your hands frequently and thoroughly and avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.

## 10.5 Scam Texts – what to look out for

Scam texts often include links or attachments which can't be trusted. Don't click on them.

Here's an example of a scam text, claiming to be sent by the Government, offering a payment related to the coronavirus. On the left is the text; on the right is the web page you'll be taken to if you click on the link in the text.

However, look at the URL – it does not link to the UK Government website. It is a fake website which requires you to enter your personal details – it is a phishing scam.





## 10.6 What Scams relating to Covid-19 have been discovered?

### COVID-19 scams identified include:

#### Doorstep crime

- Criminals targeting older people on their doorstep and offering to do their shopping. Thieves take the money and do not return.
- Doorstep cleansing services that offer to clean drives and doorways to kill bacteria and help prevent the spread of the virus.

#### Online scams

- Email scams that trick people into opening malicious attachments, which put people at risk of identity theft with personal information, passwords, contacts and bank details at risk. Some of these emails have lured people to click on attachments by offering information about people in the local area who are affected by coronavirus.
- Fake online resources – such as false Coronavirus Maps – that deliver malware such as AZORult Trojan, an information stealing program which can infiltrate a variety of sensitive data. A prominent example that has deployed malware is '*coronavirus-map[dot]com*'.

#### Refund scams

- Companies offering fake holiday refunds for individuals who have been forced to cancel their trips. People seeking refunds should also be wary of fake websites set up to claim holiday refunds.

## **Counterfeit goods**

- Fake sanitisers, face masks and Covid19 swabbing kits sold online and door-to-door. These products can often be dangerous and unsafe. There are reports of some potentially harmful hand sanitiser containing glutaral (or glutaraldehyde), which was banned for human use in 2014.

## **Telephone scams**

- As more people self-isolate at home there is an increasing risk that telephone scams will also rise, including criminals claiming to be your bank, mortgage lender or utility company.

## **Donation scams**

- There have been reports of thieves extorting money from consumers by claiming they are collecting donations for a COVID-19 'vaccine'.

## **Loan sharks**

- Illegal money lenders are expected to prey on people's financial hardship, lending money before charging extortionate interest rates and fees through threats and violence.

## **10.7 I think I have been “scammed” - what should I do?**

If you or someone you know has been targeted by a scam you should report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040. For advice and information on how to check if something might be a scam, visit:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/scams/check-if-something-might-be-a-scam/>.

## **11. Data Protection and coronavirus (Covid-19)**

### **11.1 As an NHS patient, how is my data being managed during the coronavirus crisis?**

Please be assured that the data of all NHS patients continues to be managed securely and in accordance with data protection law during this period of the coronavirus crisis. While a greater degree of legal data sharing and collection is permitted to help the Covid-19 response, the same strict rules that protect your privacy as a citizen continue to apply. These rules include collecting no more than the minimum amount of information required; not using the information collected for the Covid-19 response for unrelated purposes; ensuring appropriate safeguards are in place and keeping information only for as long as the outbreak is ongoing.

## **11.2 What additional sharing of patient data is taking place under Covid-19?**

Additional sharing of two types of data is taking place: data from which patients can be identified and data in which patients remain anonymous.

## **11.3 What additional sharing of identifiable patient data is happening?**

The sharing of data from which patients can be identified is being extended in three ways:

### *Sharing patient data for direct care purposes*

As usual, health and care organisations remain able to share information from your patient record without asking for your explicit consent where it is necessary in order to provide you with the direct care you need. Steps have been taken to enhance this sharing, and a comprehensive summary of patients' GP records is now available to other health and care services. This will ensure, for instance, that GP practices providing care to new patients when infection closes a nearby practice temporarily, or health and care professionals providing advice to people who contact NHS111, will have the information they need. Controls are in place to ensure that only those caring directly for patients have access.

### *Sharing patient data across health and care organisations to manage the Covid-19 outbreak*

All health and care organisations, including the CCG, are required to share patient information with each other where it is necessary to help protect public health and manage the Covid-19 outbreak, for instance, to identify patients who may be in need of additional support. This is based on existing data protection laws which allow for such data sharing in a public health emergency. Only the data needed for the purpose may be shared, and all organisations must ensure that data remains secure in accordance with data protection law.

### *Shielded Patient List*

In order to support vulnerable people during the health emergency, NHS Digital has used GP records to compile a list of patients most vulnerable to Covid-19, known as the Shielded Patient List. Patients can also identify themselves as needing to be added to this list. More information about how this list has been compiled and the organisations it is shared with can be found on the [NHS Digital website](#).

## **11.4 And what additional sharing and collection of non-identifiable data is going on?**

### *National Covid-19 data store*

The NHS is developing a single, national store of data from across the health and care system to help manage the Covid-19 response. Part of this project provides

NHS leaders and the Government with a live feed of aggregate statistics on hospitalisations, availability of critical care beds, ventilators, etc.

This data store uses information already collected at a national level by NHS England, NHS Improvement, Public Health England and NHS Digital, along with new data such as that on 999 calls and hospital capacity. It also includes data provided by patients themselves, and where you report to your care provider that you are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms they may need to collect specific data about you. All information remains fully under the control of the NHS and safeguarded in accordance with data protection legislation. Information will be retained for no longer than required to address the public health emergency.

### *Using patient data for research into Covid-19*

As part of the NHS' response to Covid-19 a wide range of research projects are underway, looking into such matters as:

- Developing AI tools to assist in diagnosing and managing Covid-19 patients
- Identifying the effects and risks of different medical conditions and medications on Covid-19 infection
- Understanding the effect of Covid-19 on different patient groups
- Developing new treatments and vaccines.

Where research uses patient data without consent, strict statutory controls remain in place. These ensure that the

data always remains under the control of the NHS, that anonymous data is used wherever possible and that identifiable data is only ever used in exceptional circumstances and always with stringent confidentiality safeguards.

### **11.5 My doctor has offered me a video consultation. Will this affect the confidentiality of my data?**

During this period of emergency, your health care provider may offer you a consultation via telephone or video conferencing. By accepting the invitation and entering the consultation you are consenting to this. All systems authorised for use in this way are secure, and your personal information will be protected in the same way it would with any other consultation.

### **11.6 What data rights do I have in respect of data shared or collected for Covid-19 purposes?**

Some of your usual rights in respect of your health data – to opt-out of its use for research purposes or to have data erased, for instance – will not generally apply to the data used to manage the Covid-19 response because of the public interest in sharing the information. You can still make, free of charge, subject access requests to individual health and care organisations to establish which information of yours they hold, where they obtained it from and with which organisations it has been shared. Given the additional pressures health and

care organisations are facing at this time, it may take longer than usual for organisations to respond.

### **11.7 Can healthcare organisations contact individuals in relation to Covid-19 without having prior consent?**

Yes. NHS organisations may use the contact details they have to send public health messages to you, either by phone, text message or email. Individuals included on the Shielded Patient List should in particular expect to be contacted in this way.

### **11.8 What happens if an IG breach takes place?**

All processing of patient data continues to be required to comply with GDPR and data protection legislation. All health and care organisations that process your personal data are required to monitor and report any breaches of data protection legislation and these will be investigated in the usual way.

### **11.9 Where I find further information?**

The CCG has provided additional information on their websites:

- [Privacy Notice](#) (Brighton and Hove),
- [Privacy Notice](#) (East Sussex)
- [Privacy Notice](#) (West Sussex)



about how your personal data may be shared and processed differently during the Covid-19 pandemic period. Please contact the CCG's IG Team ([SXCCG.IG@nhs.net](mailto: SXCCG.IG@nhs.net)) or your health care provider (e.g. hospital or GP) directly if you require any further information.

## **12. Tell us about your experiences and let us know what you need!**

### **12.1 Who should I contact if I have a question or want to give feedback about my experiences of health and care services?**

The Sussex Covid-19 NHS Community Connectors Team ensure that our people and communities across Sussex can ask questions and give feedback about their experiences of health and care services at this difficult time.

Covid-19 Community Connectors Team are here to help make sure you, and the people you help and support, get the information and support needed. Please do contact the team using the contact details below:

**Email:** [sxccg.involvement@nhs.net](mailto:sxccg.involvement@nhs.net)

**Telephone:** 012 73 238 725

Deaf British Sign Language (BSL) users can use a Video Relay Service (VRS) called SignLive (a free app which connects deaf people to a qualified British Sign Language Interpreter before connecting you to one of the Community Connectors Team).

Simply [download the SignLive app](#), register your details, and search for NHS Brighton and Hove in the Community Directory. An interpreter will join you on the call before the call is put through to the engagement team.

This service is currently available every **Thursday from 14:00-16:00**. Please contact the Community Connectors using the details above if this is not convenient.

## **12.2 I want to raise concerns about NHS and social care services to an independent body, who can I talk to?**

You can also raise issues through Healthwatch, which is an independent body responsible for gathering people's views of health and social care services. Contact details are below:

### **Healthwatch Brighton and Hove:**

Telephone: 01273 234 040

Email: [info@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk)

Website:

<https://www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk/contact-us/>

### **Healthwatch East Sussex**

Telephone: [0333 101 4007](tel:03331014007)

Email: [enquiries@healthwatcheastsex.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatcheastsex.co.uk)

Website: <https://healthwatcheastsex.co.uk/contact/>

## Healthwatch West Sussex

Telephone: 0300 012 0122

Email: [helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk](mailto:helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk)

Website:

<https://www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk/contact-us>

### 13. Useful links and further information

#### 13.1 Sussex (East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove)

**BSLHealthAccess** is a new on-demand video remote interpreting service for any public health care requirement in England, Wales and Scotland where access to BSL interpretation is not available. The Deaf Health Charity, SignHealth and online interpreting company Interpreter Now have been working together to provide this free service, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is easy to sign up and there is a useful **step by step process to help with this.**

**The British Lung Foundation** have [advice about what to do](#) if you have a lung condition.

**Doctors of the World**, in partnership with the Red Cross, Migrant Help and Clear Voice, have translated NHS guidance about Coronavirus into over 40 languages. The full list of languages is available on their website where you can [download the relevant information in your chosen language.](#)

**Every Mind Matters** has launched a campaign to encourage adults to take steps to look after their mental health during this difficult time using a range of selfcare resources. The [tips and advice](#) are there to help you keep on top of your mental wellbeing, but it is important that you get further support if you feel you need it.

**Healthwatch** have designed a poster with guidance on [how to safely collect medicines](#) on behalf of someone.

**Looking out for each other** is a campaign to inform those **who are well and not at risk** on the things that they can do to help support their friends and neighbours who need to stay at home because of Coronavirus (COVID-19). [A range of materials](#) have been developed to help with this.

**Macmillan** have produced information for those with Cancer during the Coronavirus crisis:

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/coronavirus>

**MIND, the charity for better mental health** has lots of information for people with existing Mental Health problems who may be finding it difficult to cope during the COVID-19 outbreak. The charity can provide [information and support](#).

**Nosy Crow** have published [a free information booklet](#) explaining the coronavirus to children, illustrated by Gruffalo illustrator Axel Scheffler. The book answers key questions in simple language appropriate for children aged 5 – 9 years.

**Public Health England** have published materials on Coronavirus in a [range of languages](#) including Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Polish, Romanian, Russian and Urdu. This includes posters and social media content all of which can be found online at <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/101/resources/4992>

**Public Health England** campaign resource centre have published information and resources including posters about **staying at home during Ramadan**.

**Ramadan at home:** In this short film, Dr Azma Ali who works in Berkshire, **explains how Ramadan will be different** for fellow Muslims this year due to the coronavirus which continues to affect almost every aspect of everyone's day to day lives.

#### **Resources in British Sign Language:**

- [Home isolation advice for those with symptoms](#)
- [Hand hygiene advice](#)

**Survivors' Network**, who support survivors of sexual violence and abuse in Sussex, have set up a new web/phone-based service for female survivors of sexual violence (aged 14+) plus supporters and professionals of all genders. The helpline number is 01273 720110 and is open on Monday and Wednesday between 12pm – 2pm. You can also email for support at [help@survivorsnetwork.org.uk](mailto:help@survivorsnetwork.org.uk). Emails are checked during helpline hours.

**Sussex Young people mental health** website - e-wellbeing - has been launched to help 13 – 25 year olds across Sussex. It provides self-help information, handy toolkits and a directory of local services and **COVID-19 advice**.

**The Eve Appeal** have developed a **cancer and coronavirus information hub** for people to get up to date and accurate information on gynaecological cancers. The information is reviewed regularly, and any changes added as they are announced.

**The Health Innovation Network** have produced a **booklet for people caring for someone with dementia**. It includes dementia friendly activities which may be useful during this period of isolation.

**The Post Office** has made it easier to **access to cash faster for self-isolating customers** through their 'Payout Now' and 'Fast PACE' (a pre-authorized cheque encashment) services.

**UK SAYS NO MORE** is working with Boots UK, Superdrug Pharmacies and independent pharmacies that have signed up to the **Safe Spaces scheme**, to use their pharmacy consultancy rooms as a Safe Space for victims of domestic abuse during COVID-19.

**Urgent care dental hubs** have been set up across the region to provide care for people with urgent and emergency dental problems. If a patient has an urgent or emergency dental condition, they should contact any dental practice for a telephone appointment. If the

dentist thinks you need to be seen for urgent treatment, they will make a referral to one of the new Urgent Dental Care Hubs. Please note you cannot self-refer to one of these Hubs. Out of usual surgery hours, you should call your local out of hours [emergency dental service](#) and if you are unsure of their contact details NHS111 will be able to provide this.

## 13.2 Brighton and Hove

**Ability Net** are providing free, one-to-one remote support for anyone who needs help to get online during the pandemic. Please call **0800 048 7642** for help.

**Ageing Well** is a charity based in Brighton and Hove for people living in the city aged over 50. They have some practical information about:

- [Services and help available](#)
- [Shopping and help accessing food](#)

The website will be updated as organisations get their revised services in place so do check back for the most up to date information. You can call the team on **07770 061072** Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm or email [ageingwellbh@impact-initiatives.org.uk](mailto:ageingwellbh@impact-initiatives.org.uk).

**Bird & Blend Tea Brighton** have launched a scheme where you can nominate a person(s) who are isolating during this crisis who might benefit from a real letter. If you or your organisation work with people who might benefit (for example in a care home setting) please [complete an online form](#) or if you have any questions

contact Bird & Blend directly on 01273 325 523 or [theteabirds@birdandblendtea.com](mailto:theteabirds@birdandblendtea.com).

**Brighton and Hove city libraries** is offering a [free book delivery service](#) during Covid 19. They deliver standard print, large print or audiobooks. Please phone 01237 290800 and leave your name and phone number and mention that you are interested in the Home Delivery Service.

**Brighton and Hove Community Podiatry** run by Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust are only open to high risk / emergency cases i.e. if someone has an open wound etc. They are not able to do routine nail cutting. Diabetes UK have some [simple self-care measures](#) you can take to look after your feet.

**Brighton and Hove Speak Out** are continuing to offer support to people with learning disabilities during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The telephone helpline is open Monday-Friday from 9am - 5 pm on 01273 421921. **More information is on their website.**

**Brighton and Hove Wellbeing Service** is a free NHS service for anyone aged 4 years old and upwards with a postcode beginning BN1, BN2, BN3 or BN41 which offers a variety of support. You can be reached the service by phone 0300 00 30 130 and (\*for Brighton and Hove residents contact the Brighton and Hove Wellbeing service on 0300 002 0060)

**Brighton Lifelines** are running weekly, [virtual activities](#) to help tackle loneliness, social isolation, and



to improve health and well-being in older people in Brighton & Hove. All activities are free, and training and support is provided. To book please call 01273 688 117 or email [lifelines@volunteeringmatters.org.uk](mailto:lifelines@volunteeringmatters.org.uk).

### **Community Hub**

Vulnerable people who don't have family, friends or a support worker to help them, can get additional COVID-19 related support from the [community advice and support hub](#). If you do not have access to the internet, you can call on 01273 293117 then choose option 2. The telephone line is open Monday to Friday, 10am to 4.30pm.

**Digital Brighton and Hove** have applied for emergency funding to source more new tablets to loan out during the pandemic. If you know a vulnerable person at home or shielding [please complete an online form](#) to express your interest. If you need guidance and support to use a device or get connected during the pandemic, then please call **07475 946084**.

**Grief Encounters** bereavement group Zoom session on Self Care and Self-Regulation Monday 27th April 7-9pm, email [grief.encounters@switchboard.org.uk](mailto:grief.encounters@switchboard.org.uk) for [details](#)

**Healthwatch Brighton and Hove** have put together information from lots of different groups and organisations about [how to stay physically active indoors](#) and how to look after your mental health.

**LGBTQ Disability Project** running Zoom social and support meetings every Wednesday 2:30pm. Visit the Switchboard Facebook page for details on how to join.

**LGBTQ Older People's Project** offering support via phone: email [helen.bashford@switchboard.org.uk](mailto:helen.bashford@switchboard.org.uk) - [we can help connect you with shopping deliveries or befriending as well as offering telephone support](#)

**Macmillan Horizon Centre** have set up online and phone support for people living with cancer during the coronavirus pandemic. To find out more telephone 01273 468770 or email [horizoncentre@macmillan.org.uk](mailto:horizoncentre@macmillan.org.uk)

**Rainbow Cafe** dementia project offering telephone support plus help accessing shopping services, befriending, etc. email [rainbow.cafe@switchboard.org.uk](mailto:rainbow.cafe@switchboard.org.uk)

**Switchboard** services are now being delivered remotely so we can continue to support our communities during the Covid-19 crisis.

**Switchboard Helpline** operating remotely Wednesdays & Thursdays 7- 9.30pm. We can also call people back at other times if you contact us on [info@switchboard.org.uk](mailto:info@switchboard.org.uk)

**Trans & Non-Binary Link** social prescribing service - contact [translink@switchboard.org.uk](mailto:translink@switchboard.org.uk), or 07928 830757, or use our online referral form:

<https://www.switchboard.org.uk/projects/trans-support/trans-link/referral-form/>

## 12.3 East Sussex

**Care For the Carers** is still offering some telephone support through their carers' hub on 01323 738390, email [info@cftf.or.uk](mailto:info@cftf.or.uk), or text 07860 077300.

**Carers O'Clock Café** - during the lockdown period there is a new Culture Shift Project aiming to help carers to structure some time into their day to support their own health and wellbeing – [more info at virtual Carers O'Clock café.](#)

**Community Connectors** (Social Prescribing) – the face to face service is now closed however staff are working remotely to communicate with and support existing clients with their mental wellbeing. They will work through the waiting list and continue to promote the service and [accept new referrals](#) as part of the effort to offer mental health support at this time. For queries contact (Operations Manager) Kirstie 07787 296014 / [Kirstie.Addleton@southdown.org](mailto:Kirstie.Addleton@southdown.org)

### **Community Hubs**

There are five hubs – one in each part of the county. They are usually open during working hours, 9am to 5pm, although this will vary slightly from hub to hub. Each one can be reached online or by phone. Further information can be found [here](#).

**Counselling Plus** is prioritising existing clients with telephone/skype/zoom counselling sessions and only accepting referrals from people who have experienced sexual assault, with access as usual through SARC (the Sexual Assault Referral Centre) as well as referrals via Supporting Survivors of Suicide project for clients at high risk of suicide. Contact on 01424 428300 or via an online referral form on [www.counsellingplus.org](http://www.counsellingplus.org).

**East Sussex County Council** have produced a [useful guide for volunteers](#) who are collecting medicines on behalf of a friend, family member or neighbour.

**East Sussex Libraries' Family Learning Service** is offering free interactive [Zoom sessions](#) for families to support them with home learning and getting children ready for school. These sessions are free if you are over the age of 19 and have lived in the UK or an EU country for the last 3 years. For more information or to enrol please email [family.learning@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:family.learning@eastsussex.gov.uk)

**East Sussex Parent Carer Forum** have put together a list of services and support that are still available for children with SEND:

- SENDIASS Advice line – Tel 01273 772289 Email [sendiass@amazesussex.org.uk](mailto:sendiass@amazesussex.org.uk)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for parents with a child with SEND
- CAMHS Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services  
Tel 0300 304 0100
- CITES (Childrens Integrated Therapy & Equipment Service) Tel 0300 123 2650

- Education Tel 0345 6080192 Email [cs.customerrelations@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:cs.customerrelations@eastsussex.gov.uk)

**East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board** guidance about [identifying and reporting any safeguarding concerns](#) and areas of exploitation during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak.

**East Sussex School Health Service** is now providing a text support service. The text service is available to both young people 11-19 and their parents. Text 07507 332473 Mondays-Fridays 9am-5pm.

**East Sussex Wellbeing Centres** are closed but telephone, email and social media support will be on offer for new and current clients. All current clients have been contacted and can access phone support and advice using the [normal Wellbeing Centre contact numbers](#). Support for people's mental health and wellbeing is still offered using new or existing support plans, Contact 01323 405334 / [ESCN@southdown.org](mailto:ESCN@southdown.org) for general enquiries.

**Hastings and Rother Mediation Service** provides conflict resolution through mediation. Intergenerational (Time 2 Talk) Mediation supports children & young people (age 18 and under) and their parents/carers where there is risk of family breakdown. Time 2 Talk is offered free of charge to families living in Hastings and Rother. Please phone 01424446808 or e-mail [admin@hrmediation.co.uk](mailto:admin@hrmediation.co.uk) to enquire.

**Hastings Sanctuary Service** is short stay residential and offers support for people in a mental health crisis and for people who have a personality disorder. The service remains open to referrals which come through CRHT. They do not accept self-referrals. People who are in a mental health crisis stay for approximately 4-7 nights and people with a Personality Disorder stay for a maximum of 3 nights on the pathway. Staff aid recovery and support people with any problems they are experiencing. For further information please **call the service on 01424 200353**.

**Health in Mind** is a free NHS service for anyone in East Sussex experiencing stress, anxiety and depression or other kinds of emotional or psychological difficulties. If you have access to the internet, there is no need to go through your GP, people can self-refer via the website <https://www.healthinmind.org.uk>

**Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Employment Support** - will continue to give telephone support for current caseloads, continuing to take referrals from SPFT. The service will also continue to work with clients in job retention and move to offering advice to keep people well while working from home and regarding coronavirus related absences. Referrals for this service is via clinical teams, [information and contact details are on the webpage](#).

**i-rock offers advice and support** on emotional and mental wellbeing for people aged 14 – 25 years. The service continues to offer an 11-6pm provision daily

through virtual clinic software, telephone or email, the i-rock website, Facebook and Instagram pages have more information. Email [irockhastings@gmail.com](mailto:irockhastings@gmail.com) for more details.

**Linking Lives Eastbourne** is a befriending service for people in Eastbourne who live alone and/or are isolated or lonely. Their usual face to face service has changed but they have a telephone service for the duration of the social distancing restrictions. More information including [a referral form](#) is available online or you can phone on 07930 113661 or email [coordinator@linkingliveseastbourne.com](mailto:coordinator@linkingliveseastbourne.com)

**Open for parents** has [information for parents](#) about home schooling, health and wellbeing, working from home and financial advice. Their website is updated with an extensive list of helpful links for parents.

**Out of hours crisis café support (evenings and weekend)** - Staying Well Hastings and the new Staying Well Eastbourne - now operate as a telephone support service (opening times below). Referrals can be made by professionals or as self-referrals.

**Hastings:** 6pm - 10.30pm on weekdays & 3pm - 10.30pm weekends.

**Eastbourne:** 4pm - 10.30pm on weekdays & 3pm - 10.30pm weekends.

Phone **0800 023 6475** for queries or to discuss a referral

Email [stayingwell.eastbourne@southdown.org](mailto:stayingwell.eastbourne@southdown.org)

Email [stayingwell.hastings@southdown.org](mailto:stayingwell.hastings@southdown.org)

[Staying Well webpage](#)



**POhWER Advocacy in East Sussex** offers support to people with mental health issues, physical and sensory disabilities, learning disabilities and carers. You can contact POhWER in a number of ways:

Telephone: 0300 456 2370

Minicom: 0300 456 2364

Text: send the word 'pohwer' with your name and number to 81025

Email: [pohwer@pohwer.net](mailto:pohwer@pohwer.net)

**Safe in East Sussex** offer help, advice or support to people experiencing domestic abuse and sexual violence. Contact the helpline on 0300 323 9985 or visit [Safe in East Sussex webpage](#).

**Seaview** (day centre to support the homeless and vulnerable in St Leonards) – a reduced service offer, with access limited to urgent appointments including St John's Hastings Homeless Service. Rough sleepers' hub remains open on Thursday mornings. Lunches in takeaway containers are being offered each weekday at 1pm. Food bank, showers, toiletries are offered on an urgent request basis. Clients are being offered telephone contact and advice on Covid-19. The service can be reached at [admin@seaviewproject.org.uk](mailto:admin@seaviewproject.org.uk) or by calling 01424 717981.

**Support for People Bereaved by Suicide:** Sussex Community Development Association (SCDA) - assessments and counselling services are being offered via phone or video calls wherever possible. [Visit the website](#) and call 07796869484 (Rhian Gower) for referrals and other information.



**Sussex Community Development Association** (SCDA) offer support for people bereaved by suicide. Assessments are carried out over the telephone or by video calls wherever possible. Please [visit their website](#) or contact Rhian Gower on 07796869484 for more information.

**Telephone Befriending Service** providing emotional support between people in isolation in the Hastings area, has been introduced. To sign up to receive calls people can phone 01424 444010 or [complete an online form](#).

**Thinking Well** (dedicated service for clients with EUPD) – a partnership service with community (Southdown) and clinical (SPFT) delivery, this service is now being offered remotely via close communication with members. Both staff teams are offering regular phone sessions of up to 40 minutes per week for each member to manage their mental health at home during this period. For queries contact (Team Manager) Nathan on 07772 613938 or [nathan.hayes@southdown.org](mailto:nathan.hayes@southdown.org).

Referrals to the **Wellbeing Centres and Peer Support services** will continue to be accepted, although referrers and clients should be aware of the temporarily reduced service offer. Wherever possible, new client assessments will be completed using the phone or video calling.

## 13.4 West Sussex

### **Adur Community Grants**

Adur District Council is proud to continue their small grants programme in 2020/21. Closing date for this round of funding is 30 April 2020 - **more information is available** on the Council website. **Please note:** The current main priority is to support not-for-profit groups who are helping residents during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

**Adur and Worthing Council** have an **online form to request support** for you or someone you know who needs help as a result of the Coronavirus.

<https://adur-worthing-eforms.onmats.com/w/webpage/community-support>

**Age UK West Sussex** are offering doorstep deliveries for older people who are housebound. They will deliver meals, groceries and essential medication to doorsteps as well as knitting kits, CDs/DVDs, books and jigsaws. Please call on 01903 731800 or email [information@ageukwestsussex.org.uk](mailto:information@ageukwestsussex.org.uk)

**Community Hubs** (set up by West Sussex County Council) are working to make sure the most vulnerable people in our community get the support they need. Both public and professionals can contact the hub by calling 033 022 27980 between 8am – 8pm or by **[visiting the dedicated page online](#)**.

### **Counselling as usual at Relate**

Relate North and South West Sussex is offering telephone and video link counselling services. Charges

are on a sliding scale and subsidies or a limited number of sessions free of charge may be available. Contact 01293 657055 or visit <https://www.relate.org.uk/sussex>

**Horsham District Council** have 27 community hubs across the district supporting vulnerable people who are isolated at home. You can find out more about [what support is available](#) or request support for you or someone you know via their website.

**The Maternity Voices Partnership** - There are, at present, differences across the West Sussex patch around options for birthing due to COVID19. The situation is rapidly changing and constantly under review. Decisions are being made individually by each Trust around the withdrawal of services based on several factors but, primarily, with due regard to the safety and well-being of staff, women and their babies. For more detailed information please go to:  
<https://www.bsuh.nhs.uk/maternity/our-services/>  
<https://www.westernsussexhospitals.nhs.uk/services/maternity/>  
<https://www.surreyandsussex.nhs.uk/our-services/a-z-of-services/maternity-services/>

**Mid Sussex District Council** have a dedicated **Coronavirus Community Support** page on their website where you can find all the latest information. A helpline is also available 8am – 8pm 7 days a week by calling 033 022 27980.

**Pathfinder West Sussex** can help find the right mental health support although not all services are working as they usually would. [Information on their website](#) is updated every Tuesday and includes [contact details for the local Pathfinder teams](#) in West Sussex

## **Support Services for people living with Sight Loss at this time:**

### **1. 4Sight Vision Support HQ**

For patients requiring general information, advice, guidance and support, including help with daily living aids and low vision products, please contact us by phone or email:

Telephone: 01243 828555  
Email: [enquiries@4sight.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@4sight.org.uk)

### **2. Sight Care Advisor service**

Our Sight Care Advisors are available by phone to support patients from Southlands and St Richard's Hospital Eye Clinics who may have specific concerns about their eye health.

Annie Taylor: 07858 128312  
Jan Wise: 07947 310651

### **3. West Sussex County Council**

The WSCC Sensory Services ROVI Team (Rehabilitation Officers for the Visually Impaired) can be contacted on 01243 642121.

#### **4. Referrals**

Eye Clinic Staff can refer patients directly to us with the patient's permission, or the patient can contact us directly using the details above.

#### **5. Urgent medical problems**

If a patient's eye health deteriorates suddenly and they require urgent treatment, they can use the following helpline numbers:

Southlands Hospital: 01903 205111 ext 83111

St Richard's Hospital: 01243 788122 ext 33533

Sussex Eye Hospital: 01273 696955

**West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership** has a new webpage with [Resources relating to Safeguarding of Neglected and Abused Children](#)

**West Sussex Wellbeing** have produced information for older people on general health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak. [Click here to read more.](#)