

## **Carers and Coronavirus**

This has been a very unsettling time, and unpaid Carers are at the forefront of the national effort to support vulnerable people. Your role in keeping people safe and protecting those who are 'extremely vulnerable' is critical - you are some of the key workers for whom the nation claps on a Thursday night. Thank you!

Although the situation is always changing, the Government's guidance for Carers in mid-April is still relevant. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-providing-unpaid-care/guidance-for-those-who-provide-unpaid-care-to-friends-or-family>.

**Testing.** The Government considers Carers to be key workers, so if you (or someone you live with) have symptoms, you are eligible for COVID testing in the same way as paid care workers. The details about how to book a test are here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>, or call 0300 303 2713 if you cannot book on-line.

**PPE.** Carers are able to access supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) if you cannot source their own, and are providing personal care to someone that lives separately, or if either of you has symptoms of Covid-19. Please contact Signposts on 01803 66 66 20 or [signposts@nhs.net](mailto:signposts@nhs.net) for more details.

Carers UK has national information for Carers and also about drafting contingency plans in case you or the person you care for contract coronavirus. <https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19>

Carers UK have also undertaken a survey about caring during the coronavirus outbreak, and the results are in the 'Caring behind Closed Doors' report. This shows that 70% of you are providing more care, and outlines the impact that this is having. <https://www.carersuk.org/news-and-campaigns/campaigns/caring-behind-closed-doors>

The Social Care Institute for Excellence has written guidance for Carers of people with a learning disability or autism <https://www.scie.org.uk/care-providers/coronavirus-covid-19/learning-disabilities-autism/carers-family>

There are also various pages about supporting people with dementia / Alzheimer's [http://www.idealproject.org.uk/media/universityofexeter/schoolofpsychology/ideal/covid-19/Dementia\\_leaflet\\_Coronavirus.pdf](http://www.idealproject.org.uk/media/universityofexeter/schoolofpsychology/ideal/covid-19/Dementia_leaflet_Coronavirus.pdf)  
<https://www.dementiauk.org/dementia-uk-coronavirus-advice/>  
<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/coronavirus-covid-19>

NHS and Social Care services are still functioning, but often via phone or video. However, please be reassured that where face-to-face support is needed, it is being

provided, but staff will wear Personal Protective Equipment if necessary. Please still seek advice from your doctor or use NHS111 for advice including whether to attend Torbay's Emergency Department or a minor injury unit. The Trust's page is at <https://www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk/about-us/news-and-publications/latest-news-and-events/coronavirus/>

Healthwatch's website has a significant amount of information about local support <https://healthwatchtorbay.org.uk/information-advice-on-coronavirus-covid-19/>

There is particular support about people's wellbeing and mental health. <https://healthwatchtorbay.org.uk/information-advice-on-coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-local-resources-4/>

Torbay Council has launched an on-line newsletter about statutory services. <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/news/pr8000/>

If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at [signposts@nhs.net](mailto:signposts@nhs.net) or on 01803 66 66 20.  
Please stay safe.