

Coronavirus and mental wellbeing guide

The following guidance has been developed in partnership with Cornwall Council and Kernow Clinical Commissioning Group and wider stakeholders.

Please remember to follow government guidance on social distancing while doing any of our recommendations below. Latest advice is available on our [Coronavirus web page](#). You are allowed to be outside to exercise once a day on your own or with other people from your house. Please keep a two-metre distance from anyone else while you are outside.

Information about Coronavirus or COVID-19 is all over the news on TV and the radio. This includes information on the importance of following the latest guidance on [social distancing](#) or [staying at home](#), which is needed to protect yourself, your family, the NHS and wider community.

This can create feelings of stress and being overwhelmed with the unknown and uncertainty over the spread of the virus. This may include feelings of fear and anxiety, irritability, insecurity or being unsettled, lack of control, trouble sleeping or eating, and excessively checking for symptoms. Being worried at this time is normal, but it is important to consider how this may affect our mental wellbeing and impact on the communities we live in.

In addition, social distancing can make you feel bored, frustrated or lonely, which can heighten feelings of stress and anxiety about your health or those close around you. While we all may react

differently to this, it is important to consider both your physical and mental wellbeing. For this reason, this guide has been produced to help improve your mental wellbeing and/or provide information that will help you support someone else in your household or in the wider community.

Whether you are a young person, adult working from home, schooling your children at home or a carer for example, the following guide provides information about the things we can do to help protect and promote our mental health and wellbeing. Some people may need different advice and support, so a range of guides have been made available to help you and family during these challenging times. In addition, you can find out more information from the Kernow Clinical Commissioning Group mental wellbeing pages for [children](#) and [adults](#). A useful site for children and young people would also be [Start Now Cornwall](#) (see over leaf for more details).

Five ways to wellbeing

Following the five ways to good wellbeing can help protect your mental wellbeing;

1. Connect

Whatever your age or situation, it is important to stay in touch with friends and family and even making new friends. Not gathering with friends and family is an important element of our collective response to COVID-19, however social distancing or if you are having to self-isolate doesn't mean you can't stay in touch by setting up group chats via social media, email, facetime/video calling or just picking up the phone and having a chat with friends and family. It is a good idea to discuss your fears with someone you trust and focus on positive stories (e.g. listen to the voices of local people who have recovered or who have supported a loved one through recovery), practice gratitude together and talk about a mutual topic such as a book or film. If you feel that you are unable to talk about your worries with friends and family, then there are people you can speak to via [NHS recommended helplines](#).



2. Be active

Whether in or outside your home, it is important to keep active to maintain both your physical and mental wellbeing. Having a daily routine and taking the time to walk, garden or run, if you are able to, around your local environment (keeping the recommended 2 metres from each other) is the best way to get some exercise as it is great for your physical and mental wellbeing. There are a range of [exercises at home guided videos](#) designed by our Healthy Cornwall service. They have been designed for anyone to use, you can make them as easy or as hard as you feel comfortable. They have been designed for people who might have low mobility or a cardiac condition too. You won't need any special equipment just a chair, a couple of tins of food or bottles of water, and a couple of shopping bags. There are also free easy [10 minute work outs](#) and other [NHS Fitness Studio](#) sessions.



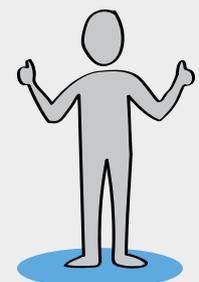
3. Keep learning

Doing something different such as trying a new hobby (e.g. a puzzle, craft, drawing, painting, cross word puzzles, photography or listening to new music) is also a good way to keeping active. Whilst it is important to be up to date with the facts, it is also important to take time away from the news and take part in the things you enjoy. This is particularly important for children and older people, so the activities need to be age appropriate.



4. Give

Supporting others in the community who are in need of help, or volunteering, can help make new friends, keep active and gain new skills. Avoiding stigma and accepting people's concerns, worries or behaviours that may come with the impact of Covid-19 and helping others in your community can make a real difference to your own and someone else's wellbeing. Lots of people are offering help during the outbreak, if you'd like to volunteer you can register with [Volunteer Cornwall](#).



5. Take notice

Try to be mindful of your environment in and around your home (e.g. your garden or other natural green spaces) whilst following the social distancing guidelines. Make the time to get as much sunlight, fresh air and nature as you can, while still following Public Health social distancing guidelines. If you can't get outside much you can still benefit from these positive effects by spending time with the windows open to let in fresh air and get some natural sunlight.

If you'd like to try mindfulness, Louise from Healthy Cornwall has created a short-guided session you can follow online at home <https://www.healthycornwall.org.uk/training/resources-and-videos/>.



Taking care of yourself

Taking the time to relax, eat well, stay hydrated and maintain healthy and active lifestyles that include good quality regular sleeping patterns (e.g. see [Every Mind Matters](#) sleep page) will also help you to support your overall wellbeing. There is also lots of helpful advice on our [mental health pages](#).

In undertaking these activities, it is important to follow guidance from trusted sources such as Public Health England, the NHS or Local Authority and maintain hygiene routines to the recommended amount of time to prevent the spreading of the virus (i.e. hand washing for 20 seconds). Equally, it is as important to avoid this becoming ritualistic in the way we live our lives. If you experience difficult feelings or behaviours to do with washing and hygiene, you might find it hard to hear advice about washing your hands, so please visit the [Mind website](#) for support to help you with this.

Using online apps such as “[Calm](#)” and “[Headspace](#)” may help with promoting calming thoughts and/or escaping the news. The [Mental Health Foundation](#) has provided some useful guidance about maintaining your mental wellbeing whilst at home. [Mind Your Way](#), [Cornwall Council Together for Families](#), [Start Now Cornwall](#) and the [Family Information Service](#) have useful guidance to support the mental wellbeing of children and young people.

If news about Covid-19 is becoming overwhelming and increasing your anxiety, then try to focus on the things you can control (e.g. deciding when and where to get information from) through a routine and setting goals can make a difference. Try to take the time to do the things you enjoy such as focusing on your favourite hobby, learning

something new or taking time to relax indoors can help give you relief from anxious thoughts.

There is also a range of support available on [Every Mind Matters](#) and the [Every Mind Matters](#) page on anxiety, the [NHS mental wellbeing audio guides](#) and the [NHS' mindfulness](#) page. If you have short-lived physical symptoms of feeling anxious (e.g. faster heartbeat, dizziness, headaches, chest pains or lack of appetite), then there is some useful information on the [NHS anxiety](#) page. Please contact NHS 111 online if you are concerned about these symptoms.

If you need additional support, then don't be afraid to contact 111 online or your GP. In addition, there is a range of support available for children, young people and adults. The following provides some examples from a range of self-help through to getting support for your mental wellbeing;

NHS 24/7 help line

To talk to someone about your mental wellbeing you can call the 24/7 NHS mental health telephone support, advice and triage help line - **0800 053 3800**. Support is available to anyone, regardless of age, all day every day. If you or someone you know feels they need to access urgent mental health support, they will listen to you and assess how best to help.

- The NHS has free apps and self-help therapies: www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/self-help-therapies/ or Google “NHS self help”.
- If you are a young person or worried about a child you can call the Early Help Hub for advice and help. Call **01872 322277** or email earlyhelphub@cornwall.gov.uk.

- Outlook South West provide free talking therapies for people aged 16+ and suffering with anxiety and depression. Self-referrals can be made online here: www.cornwallft.nhs.uk/outlook-south-west or by calling **(01208) 871905**; At this time any therapy being delivered will be via telephone or online platform.
- Cornwall Bereavement Network provide a list of charities and services able to support those bereaved, from any cause and any age – www.cornwallbereavementnetwork.org/. There are helplines you can call if you prefer to talk to someone about where to find the right emotional support (**01726 829 874**, between 10am and 6pm Monday to Sunday) or find out about the process and practicalities that you are having to cope with following a bereavement (**01872 252 713**, between 9am and 4pm Monday to Friday).
- To talk to a trained expert about drugs, alcohol and your mental health then you can contact ‘We are with you’ by calling **01872263001** or visit www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/cornwall-truro/.
- Call **0300 777 4777** or visit www.saferfutures.org.uk/ if you or someone else is affected by domestic abuse, sexual violence and those demonstrating abusive behaviours.
- For confidential advice from trained volunteers you can:

Call **116 123** to talk to Samaritans, or email: jo@samaritans.org for a reply within 24 hours.

Text “SHOUT” to **85258** to contact the Shout Crisis Text Line, or text “YM” if you’re under 19.

If you’re under 19, you can also call **0800 1111** to talk to Childline. The number will not appear on your phone bill.

Additional organisations can be found at www.cornwallft.nhs.uk/i-need-help-now or Google “I need help now Cornwall”.

The MindEd Covid-19 resilience hub has been developed to support everyone on the frontline health and care services.
<http://covid.minded.org.uk/>

Financial concerns about work and money can also have a big impact on your mental wellbeing. There is a range of guidance from [Public Health England](#), [Citizens Advice](#) or the [National Debt Line](#) that can help you find out more about your rights at work, benefits and wider support.

Further mental wellbeing guidance

Public Health England have published a series of guidance reports, which includes supporting more vulnerable groups such as those with a learning disability, autism, older people, those with dementia or those in crisis. These guidance reports apply to [children and young people](#), and [adults](#). In addition, there is more specific advice around mental wellbeing for different groups of people;

- Very young children 0-5 years
- Pregnancy
- Children
- Young people and students
- Working at home and/or in isolation
- Young and adult carers
- Mental illness and suicidal thoughts
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Psychological wellbeing
- Sheilding

These guides are available on our Covid-19 and mental wellbeing web page www.cornwall.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/mental-health/coronavirus-and-mental-wellbeing/mental-wellbeing-guidance

Mental health

Resources:

The below provides some useful links for further information.

- [Public Health England's](#) guidance on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of Covid-19
- [Public Health England's guidance](#) for parents and carers on supporting children and young people's mental wellbeing.
- [Mind Your way](#) helps 11 to 25 year olds look after their mental wellbeing.
- [Young Minds](#) provides guidance for children, young people and parents.
- [The Anna Freud Centre](#) supports the mental health and wellbeing of infants, children and their families.
- [The Mental Health Foundation](#) also provides support and information on how to look after your mental wellbeing.
- [World Health Organisation](#) Gives general guidance on the virus.
- [NHS information](#) on symptoms and what to do if you feel unwell.
- [Public Health England](#) general guidance for the public.
- [Mind](#) has more information on how to keep mentally well during Covid 19.
- We have more information on looking after your mental health on our [Every Mind Matters](#) and [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#) web pages.
- Healthy Cornwall home based [exercise videos playlist on YouTube](#)