

Support for Care Home staff

Aug 2020

Introduction

Care homes play a vital role in caring for some of the most vulnerable people in our society and this role has never been more important than during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is a very tough time for individuals, for families and for care providers and this document aims to support you with information and resources at this difficult time.

Thank you for your continued commitment, working to protect the most vulnerable members of our community. You're doing a great job!

What do I do if I feel unwell or have Coronavirus symptoms?

If you or a member of your household has symptoms of Coronavirus, stay at home, self-isolate and following the [government's guidance](#).

Staying away from work will help reduce the spread of the disease and will protect colleagues and residents.

If you are worried about passing the infection on, the following guidance documents contain advice on how to protect yourself, and others whilst ensuring that your residents receive the right care.

I am worried about passing the infection on to my family or other residents

- [The Admission and Care of Patients during COVID-19](#)
- The [care of the deceased from Coronavirus](#)
- [Managing the COVID-19 pandemic in care homes with older people](#)

You will also be provided with sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), in accordance with your employer's risk assessments. You are entitled to training on these risks and how to use PPE, if needed. The [Working Safely in Care Homes](#) and [Working Safely in Domiciliary Care](#) resources provide guidance on the use of PPE for care workers.

Where can I find support for my mental wellbeing?

It is common to feel overwhelmed, scared or helpless in the current situation and it's **OK** to feel this way. Experiences of bereavement, grief and loss also affect people in different ways. And these experiences are even more difficult under the current challenging circumstances.

It is important that you receive appropriate support at the right time. Be aware of your own mental wellbeing and that of others and share any feelings or concerns with your manager, colleagues, family members or others you trust.

Useful links

- The NHS has introduced a confidential staff support line, from 7:00am – 11:00pm, 7 days a week. Phone 0300 131 7000 or Text FRONTLINE to 85258.
- The NHS 111 line now has a dedicated mental health and wellbeing service.
- Your HR team or [Employee Assistance Programme](#) will be able to support you.
- Samaritans offers free, confidential support 24 hours a day on 116 123.
- National mental health services and helplines can be found [here](#) and [here](#).
- The Local Government Association has produced a [wellbeing toolkit](#) for care home staff.
- [Every Mind Matters](#) offers advice and practical tips to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing.
- [Mind](#) offers information to help you cope during the coronavirus crisis
- The Government has produced information for the [bereaved from Coronavirus](#).
- [Our Frontline](#) is a new resource and support service, accessed via text or telephone for all key workers.

Local support services

- The Public Health Team has produced [bereavement guidance](#) and a suite of [employee guidance](#) documents.
- [MK Talk for Change](#) offers access to talking therapies and mental health care Tel: 01908 72509
- Mind BLMK provide phone support on 0300 330 0648 and the **Crisis lines** on 01582- 722225 Tuesday to Friday 5 – 11pm.
- The MK [Five ways to wellbeing](#) provides information about services in the Milton Keynes area.



Wellbeing tips

1. **Connect with others** via email, social media, facetime and telephone. Adjust your social media intake if it is making you anxious.
2. **Maintain a healthy lifestyle.** Try to stay active, eat healthily and drink enough water.
3. **Take notice & focus on the present.** Make the most of any private outdoor space, and engage with nature.
4. **Stick to the facts & limit your news intake.** Set yourself a specific time to read updates and use trustworthy sources such as [GOV.UK](#) or [NHS](#) websites.
5. **Have a routine.** Get enough sleep. Include time to relax.
6. **Keep learning & do things you enjoy.** Keep your mind active.
7. **Offer support and help others.** Helping others makes you feel good. Check in with friends, neighbours or colleagues who may be self-isolating or vulnerable.
8. **Keep your children informed** by explaining the facts in a [child friendly way](#).
9. [The 5 ways to wellbeing](#) are a set of evidence-based actions which promote wellbeing, which you find useful.

Notes on variations for Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire:

- *EAP links need to be inserted for BBC and CBC*
- *Replace MK wellbeing service with: [Bedfordshire Wellbeing Service](#) offers a range of confidential talking therapies and specialist support. Tel: 01234 880400*
- *Replace Mk service with: Adult mental health services Crisis Teams 24/7 Luton & South Beds Tel: 01582 55697., Bedford & North Beds Tel: 01234 315691*
- *Insert links to location of bereavement guidance and employee guidance documents on BBc and CBC webpages*
- *The 5 ways to mental health for MK link needs to be removed*