

# Your mental health matters

**Caring for ourselves and each other during the coronavirus pandemic**

**This is an unsettling time for everyone. As news about Coronavirus (Covid-19) dominates the news headlines, and we have to adapt to the challenges it brings in both our working and personal life, it is important to take care of our mental health as much as our physical health. Doing everything you can to look after your wellbeing will help you cope better with the current uncertainty. It will benefit you, our patients, and your colleagues, family and friends.**

**We have put together this guide to help you look after your wellbeing. There is guidance and support available, and we encourage you to read and share this guide. We are immensely proud of the work that you are doing to support our Trust, our patients and each other. Don't forget that you also need to care for yourself.**



**In work, take time to take breaks**



**Outside work, take time to rest and recharge**



**Eat healthy and keep hydrated**



**Keep active**



**Keep regular contact with friends and family**



**Don't be afraid to ask for help**



**Check your colleagues are OK too**



**Follow official government or Trust advice**



# Looking after your wellbeing



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## Make plans



Life may feel chaotic at the moment so try to plan ahead. You may need to change your plans, but the more you can plan ahead, the more you will feel at ease. This may include, if and how you may work from home, how you will order food/supplies if you need to isolate, who can support with childcare (providing they are also not at risk), and when you will make contact with family and friends.

## Consider finances



Naturally finances will be a worry for many at the moment. Vivup ([vivup.co.uk](http://vivup.co.uk)) has advice on debt management and links to further help. The Money Saving Expert website also provides a lot of helpful advice ([moneysavingexpert.com/news/2020/03/uk-coronavirus-help-and-your-rights](http://moneysavingexpert.com/news/2020/03/uk-coronavirus-help-and-your-rights)). Look out for NHS staff discounts and offers (see page 6-7), while Co-op are providing free lunches for students who receive government-funded free school meals at its academies. To find your local Foodbank: [trusselltrust.org/coronavirus-food-banks](http://trusselltrust.org/coronavirus-food-banks).

## Avoid unhelpful things



Sometimes stress can lead us to coping strategies such as increased alcohol consumption, substance misuse, smoking and unhelpful eating habits. The supposed benefits will be short-lived, and the long-term impact can be harmful. Look after your health during this time and you will feel better for it. If you know that this is an area of risk for you, start thinking now about what you can do to minimise the risk and find the support you may need.

## FACE COVID

FACE COVID is a set of practical steps for responding effectively to Coronavirus, using the principles of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT). Watch a video about FACE COVID: [youtube.com/watch?v=BmvNCdpHUYM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmvNCdpHUYM).

## Get support



This is a very difficult time, but we're all in it together and there is help available. There is a list of counseling support available on pages 5-6, and there are services offering free food and drink or to deliver services. If you know more, share with the communications team ([bchft.communications@nhs.net](mailto:bchft.communications@nhs.net)) so they can share with others.

## Be positive



We all need to work together to get through this challenging time. Do what you can to encourage positivity in and out of the workplace, and be a positive role model. Be considerate and kind to others as we can all handle situations and stress differently. Positive behaviours can be infectious, and they will last a lot longer than this virus will.

# Prepare yourself for self isolation



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Due to our work, we will be more at risk of being in contact with someone who may have contracted Covid-19, therefore it is important to prepare yourself for this. There is useful advice on the NHS website ([nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice)). During this isolation period:

## Be healthy



Follow a balanced diet, eat regularly and keep your blood sugar stable to help your mood and energy levels. Use your time to cook homemade, healthier meals. Plan ahead for having food delivered if needed and speak to family or friends who may be able to drop things off for you (you could do the same for them). Build physical activity into your daily routine. If you have equipment use it, but if not focus on housework, gardening and walking up and down stairs. Many gyms now offer online classes, and personal trainers like Joe Wicks have exercise sessions on YouTube. Try not to sit for longer than 30 minutes.

## Create a new routine



Write down how you will spend your time. Try to follow your ordinary routine if you can, but add new activities that will interest you and make you feel happy. Read a book, be creative, spend time in the garden. If you have children, create a plan of fun activities with them. Mentally Healthy Schools offer advice on looking after your and their health and wellbeing ([mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/coronavirus-resources-for-mental-health-and-wellbeing](https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/coronavirus-resources-for-mental-health-and-wellbeing)).

## Stay connected



You may be physically isolated, but use technology to ensure you don't feel alone. Keep in touch digitally with friends, family and colleagues using phone calls, video chats and WhatsApp groups. Some people have held online pub quizzes or parties. Maybe this is an opportunity to get back in touch with people that live further away, or that you may have lost touch with.

## Breathe in fresh air



Keeping in touch with green spaces, sunlight and fresh air can benefit us physically and mentally. Spend time in the garden if you have one. If you don't or would rather stay indoors, make sure you open curtains and if warm enough open windows.

## Home working



Set up a home office environment that supports your health. Back problems are common for those who work from home, so following advice ([paycare.org/paycare-blog-for-your-business/set-up-your-home-office-correctly-to-avoid-back-problems](https://www.paycare.org/paycare-blog-for-your-business/set-up-your-home-office-correctly-to-avoid-back-problems)) will help to avoid physical and mental strain. Consider if you need to complete a risk assessment (display screen equipment policy).

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## Plan medication



Plan ahead for your medication. Don't stockpile, but check you're not running low and you can order repeat prescriptions easily. You may be able to do this online using an app or website. Download the free NHS app ([nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/the-nhs-app](https://nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/the-nhs-app)) to see if your surgery is included. Ask your pharmacy if they will deliver medication, or if someone can collect it for you. If you or someone you know uses care services, you should let your local authority ([gov.uk/find-local-council](https://gov.uk/find-local-council)) and care provider know if you or they have to self-isolate. If you provide care, or support someone you don't live with, you should also let your local authority know if you have to self-isolate.

## Media

This is an uncertain and rapidly changing time. There is a lot of news and information available, but some of this is not factual and should not be trusted. You may also see a lot of comments or articles shared on social media, but it is important to know that this is reliable before you share with others. Think about the impact it may have. There are three 'rules' we should follow before sharing or commenting:

1 - Is it true (is it from a reputable source)?

2 - Is it useful (will it help people)?

3 - Is it kind (will it hurt or offend someone)?

Trust reliable information from reputable sources. These are:

UK government:  
[gov.uk/coronavirus](https://gov.uk/coronavirus)

NHS website:  
[nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19](https://nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19)

Foreign & Commonwealth Office:  
[gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](https://gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

Public Health England (@phe\_UK) and Dept of Health & Social Care (@dhscgovuk) on Twitter

Watch or listen to the daily news briefings from the government and experts

Dr John Campbell (retired nurse teacher/A&E nurse) on his [YouTube channel](#)

Consider limiting your news intake. This can help reduce anxiety and uncertainty, particularly if we're getting information from unreliable sources. Follow these tips:

- Mute or unfollow people who are posting unhelpful information or that you find increase your anxiety
- Turn off news notifications and plan when you will check the news
- Practice mindfulness. There is online guides including Vivup ([vivupbenefits.co.uk](https://vivupbenefits.co.uk)) and colleagues who can advise (contact: [samuel.skelding1@nhs.net](mailto:samuel.skelding1@nhs.net)). The app Headspace is also a good place to start and offers a free trial period.

# Accessing support and advice



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There is always support available within and outside of the workplace. This includes:

**Staff support:**  
[bcpft.nhs.uk/services/staff-support](https://bcpft.nhs.uk/services/staff-support)

**Employee assistance service (Vivup):**  
03303 800658 (24/7)  
[vivup.co.uk](https://vivup.co.uk)

**Able Futures:**  
[able-futures.co.uk/mental-health-support-for-individuals/](https://able-futures.co.uk/mental-health-support-for-individuals/)

**Black Country emotional support:**  
0808 802 2288

**Samaritans:**  
[samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan](https://samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan)

**Campaign against living miserably (CALM) (for men):**  
[thecalmzone.net](https://thecalmzone.net)

**Papyrus (Prevention of young suicide):**  
[papyrus-uk.org](https://papyrus-uk.org)

**Kaleidoscope Plus:**  
[kaleidoscopeplus.org.uk/crisis-text-line](https://kaleidoscopeplus.org.uk/crisis-text-line)  
Text TeamKPG to 85258

**SANE:**  
[sane.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/support/helpline](https://sane.org.uk/what_we_do/support/helpline)

**Paycare 24/7 GP, counseling and employee assistance (if signed up):**  
[paycare.org](https://paycare.org)

**Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Guardians:**  
[michael.hirons@nhs.net](mailto:michael.hirons@nhs.net) / 07717 630645  
[roger.bishton1@nhs.net](mailto:roger.bishton1@nhs.net) / 07827 234166

**Spiritual Care team**  
[bchft.spiritualcareteam@nhs.net](mailto:bchft.spiritualcareteam@nhs.net)

Chaplains are here to support staff for support that may be related to a person's faith, belief or culture

The Trust provides regular Mindfulness sessions (MS Teams), contact Emma Louis or Nikki Rose for more information: [elouis@nhs.net](mailto:elouis@nhs.net) / [nicolarose1@nhs.net](mailto:nicolarose1@nhs.net)

It is more important than ever that staff feel able to make suggestions, highlight problems and share awareness. We encourage all staff and managers to support this. Our FTSU Guardians continue to be available as appropriate for your situation.

There are useful articles on Covid-19 and mental health wellbeing:

- Mind - [mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing](https://mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing)
- BBC - [bbc.co.uk/news/health-51873799](https://bbc.co.uk/news/health-51873799)
- World Health Organisation - [who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf](https://who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf)
- Mentally Healthy Schools - [mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/coronavirus-resources-for-mental-health-and-wellbeing](https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/coronavirus-resources-for-mental-health-and-wellbeing)

There are useful apps and websites that can support during this time:

- Unmind is a wellbeing app that is offering free use for NHS staff ([blog.unmind.com/why-we-gave-nhs-workers-access-to-unmind](https://blog.unmind.com/why-we-gave-nhs-workers-access-to-unmind))
- Headspace is available for free for NHS Staff until 31 December 2020 ([headspace.com/nhs#start-your-journey](https://headspace.com/nhs#start-your-journey))
- Sleepio is an online sleep improvement programme app ([bighealth.com/en-gb/nhs-2020](https://bighealth.com/en-gb/nhs-2020))

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- Daylight is a smartphone-based app that provides help with worry and anxiety ([bighealth.com/en-gb/nhs-2020](http://bighealth.com/en-gb/nhs-2020))
- Movement for Modern Life is allowing NHS Staff to have a 10 week membership to access their online yoga sessions suitable for beginners to experts ([movementformodernlife.com/blog/announcing-our-free-nhs-membership](http://movementformodernlife.com/blog/announcing-our-free-nhs-membership))
- Oxford Mindfulness Centre is offering a free weekly mindfulness session and podcast ([oxfordmindfulness.org/online-sessions-podcasts](http://oxfordmindfulness.org/online-sessions-podcasts))
- Breathworks is offering a free online mindfulness course especially designed to help cope with the stresses and strains of Covid-19 ([breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk/news/a-message-from-vidyamala-covid-19-free-course-for-troubling-times](http://breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk/news/a-message-from-vidyamala-covid-19-free-course-for-troubling-times))
- Living Life to the Full for Young People includes really useful advice for both youngsters and adults ([littfyp.com/corona](http://littfyp.com/corona))
- The British Psychological Society offers psychological perspectives around Covid-19 ([bps.org.uk/responding-coronavirus](http://bps.org.uk/responding-coronavirus))
- WHO Q&A on Covid-19 and mental health with WHO's Aiysha Malik ([youtube.com/watch?v=zDx1LKkk5c4](https://youtube.com/watch?v=zDx1LKkk5c4))

## NHS staff benefits

Supermarkets are offering dedicated shopping slots for NHS workers and some also have separate stock reserved. Make sure you take your ID badge with you. It is important to check locally for the times that are dedicated as this is subject to change.

**ASDA**

Monday, Wednesday, Friday

8-9am

**Iceland**

Monday to Saturday

Last hour of trading

**M&S**

Tuesday, Friday

First hour of opening

 **Morrisons**  
SINCE 1889

Monday to Saturday

Differs but mostly 7-8am

**Sainsbury's**

Monday to Saturday

7.30-8am

**TESCO**

Sunday (browsing)

An hour before opening

**Waitrose**

Every day

First hour

# Staff discounts and offers



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- **Bargain Foods:** free delivery on orders over £25 ([bargainfoods.co.uk](http://bargainfoods.co.uk))
- **Spices:** free takeaway box of poppadoms, dips, onion bhaji, chicken/veg biryani, Tuesday to Sunday (01902 675111)
- **Halfords:** free 10-point car safety check including screen wash top-up
- **Nandos:** 50% off
- **Subway:** 50% off
- **Co-op:** 10% off
- **NCP parking:** Free for NHS Staff
- **Bravissimo:** 50% off
- **Arnold Clark:** if you have difficulty getting to work ([CSR@arnoldclark.com](mailto:CSR@arnoldclark.com))
- **John Hodgson Personal Training:** free 74 page fitness recipe book, fitness guides, workouts, advice ([mailchi.mp/a24a44056b64/nhs-health-and-fitness-pack](http://mailchi.mp/a24a44056b64/nhs-health-and-fitness-pack))
- **In The Style:** 50% off
- **Bloom and Wild:** 40% off
- **In 'n' Out Autocentres:** free MOT's and discounted service (0333 247 9999)
- **Allbirds:** free pair of shoes to frontline NHS Staff
- **NHS Staff Discounts and Offers** - [nhsemployers.org/news/2020/03/national-discounts-for-nhs-workers](http://nhsemployers.org/news/2020/03/national-discounts-for-nhs-workers)

Do you know more? Let the communications team know so that we can share here and in Trust communications: [bchft.communications@nhs.net](mailto:bchft.communications@nhs.net).

In order to support staff though this challenging time, NHS England / NHS Improvement have published advice about how NHS staff can secure hotel accommodation should they need it: [england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/hotel-accommodation-for-nhs-staff-20-march-2020.pdf](http://england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/hotel-accommodation-for-nhs-staff-20-march-2020.pdf)

## Health and wellbeing support

If you would like to discuss anything health and wellbeing related, please contact our Workplace Wellbeing Co-ordinator, Sam Skelding: [samuel.skelding1@nhs.net](mailto:samuel.skelding1@nhs.net).

