

Are you struggling to cope?

Advice and support are available, so please ask for help.

The Coronavirus pandemic is tough on all of us. It can be especially hard for people living on their own and people who cannot get out and about as much as others.

Help with getting food

The easiest way to get food without visiting a shop is to order online for delivery. Perhaps you can ask family and friends to help you to do this if you are unsure.

If you already have a priority delivery slot, that will continue; you don't need to do anything further.

If someone else is going to the shops for you, most major supermarkets have ways you can pay for your shopping, such as e-vouchers or gift cards. You can buy these online and the person shopping for you can use them in store. To find out about payment options, visit your supermarket's website.

If you don't have anyone who can help you with your shopping, contact your local Good Neighbour Scheme or local volunteer scheme for help (see below).

Help with medicine

In the first instance, ask a friend, family member, carer to collect your medicines for you. If no-one else is available to collect your medicines, contact your local Good Neighbour Scheme for help (see below).

Good Neighbour and local volunteer schemes

We have a network of volunteer-led groups and local Good Neighbour Schemes, who might be able to assist you with shopping, collecting medication and checking that you are OK.

You can contact them directly at gns@bedsrcc.org.uk or call 01234 838771.

You can also locate other volunteer schemes that cover your area at www.cvsbeds.org.uk or contact Advice Central (see contact details opposite).

Help if you are self-isolating

Making sure those who have COVID-19 (and those who have been in close contact with them) can self-isolate is one of our most powerful tools for controlling the spread of coronavirus.

Self-isolating, where friends and family or delivery services bring supplies to your door, helps prevent your family, friends and community from catching the virus, as well as helping to protect the NHS.

The government has introduced a new grant to support people in work on low incomes to self-isolate. You may be able to claim a £500 lump sum payment if you cannot work from home and are required to self-isolate.

For more information visit www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/self-isolation-payments

Financial advice and support

- **Department for Work and Pensions** - www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/employment-and-benefits-support/#east
- **Advice Central** – www.advicecentral.org.uk or call 0300 303 6666
- **Citizens Advice (Dunstable)** - www.dunstablecab.org.uk or call 01582 670003 or 07367 457 834
- **Citizens Advice (Mid Bedfordshire)** - www.midbedscab.org.uk or call 01525 402742, 01525 841217 and 01767 601368
- **Citizens Advice (Leighton Linlade)** - www.leightonlinladecab.org.uk or call 01525 373878
- **Bedford Credit Union** - www.bedfordcreditunion.org.uk or call 01234 346352
- **Money Matters Credit Union (Luton)** - www.mmcu.co.uk or call 01582 666877

Food banks

- **Biggleswade Baptist Church** – www.bbchurch.org.uk or call 01767 312667
- **Preen (Biggleswade)** - www.facebook.com/PreenCIC or call 01767 600332
- **Dunstable Foodbank** – www.dunstable.foodbank.org.uk or call 07874 200056
- **Leighton Linslade Community Foodbank** - www.llhsblackhorse.org.uk or call 01525 381129

Looking after yourself

The pandemic is a worrying time and it is natural to feel overwhelmed. You may feel lonely, low, worried, anxious, or be concerned about your health or that of those close to you. These are all common reactions to the difficult situation we face.

The NHS website Every Mind Matters has lots of advice, tips and guides on how to deal with stress and anxiety. www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters

Tips for looking after your mental health

- **Stay connected** – keep in touch with your friends and family by phone and video call if you cannot meet them
- **Be active** – physical health can have a big impact on how you feel. Simply going for a walk can help lift your mood.
- **Get your sleep** – good quality sleep makes a big difference to how you feel mentally and physically
- **Focus on the present** – try not to worry about what might happen in the future, focusing on the present can help manage your feelings
- **Help others** – helping someone else can help you as well as them, it can give you focus and purpose

Need help right now?

There is always someone you can talk to. The following websites and helplines may be helpful to you.

- **NHS** – call 111
- **Samaritans** – www.samaritans.org or call 116 123
- **MIND** – www.mind-blmk.org.uk or call 0300 330 0648
- **Bedfordshire Wellbeing Service** - <https://bedfordshirewellbeing.nhs.uk> or call 01234 880400
- **Shout Crisis** (text line) – text Shout to 85258
- **Silverline** (older people helpline) – call 0800 470 8090
- **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Support (CSMHS)** – <https://camhs.elft.nhs.uk> or call 01234 310800 (north) or 01234 893300 / 01234 893301 (South)
- **CHUMS** (children and young people) – <http://chums.uk.com> or call 01525 863924
- **Kooth** - www.kooth.com
- **National Domestic Abuse Helpline** 0808 2000 247. If you suspect domestic abuse and don't want to reveal your identity, call CrimeStoppers on 0800 555 111 or complete an online form at <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/domesticabuse>
- Information and support for carers is available from **Carers in Beds** <https://carersinbeds.org.uk/> or call 0300 111 1919