Coronavirus (Covid-19) useful information

1. Coronavirus latest
   - Current guidance
   - What to do if you are unwell

2. Where to get help
   - Where to get urgent food and medicine
   - Where to get Council service information
   - Where to get support with personal care
   - Where to access medical help
   - Where to get financial and welfare advice

3. Staying well
   - Mental health and wellbeing
   - Healthy eating and exercise
   - Support for families and carers
   - Limiting alcohol intake
   - Quitting smoking

4. Staying safe
   - Safeguarding
   - Domestic abuse
   - Avoiding scams
   - Noise and nuisance

Information in other languages
You can translate all of this information at: www.reading.gov.uk/coronavirusadvice using Google Translate found at the bottom of each page of this site.
Coronavirus latest

Current guidance

Stay alert, protect the NHS, save lives

Everyone must stay at home as much as possible to help stop the spread of coronavirus.

The current guidance is:

- stay at home as much as possible;
- work from home if you can;
- limit contact with other people;
- keep your distance if you go out (2 metres apart where possible);
- wash your hands regularly.

Do not leave home if you or anyone in your household has symptoms.

For further details on what you can and can’t do visit: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

How to stay safe:

- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft or 3 steps) away from other people at all times. This is called social distancing;
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water as soon as you get home.

How to stop infection spreading:

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with coronavirus.

Do:

- wash your hands with soap and water often - do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards

Don’t:

- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

Visit www.nhs.uk/coronavirus for the latest NHS advice.
What to do if you are unwell

Coronavirus symptoms

Do not leave your home if you have coronavirus symptoms

Do not leave your home if you have either:

- a high temperature - this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough - this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- To protect others, do not go to places like a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Stay at home.
- Use the 111 online coronavirus service to find out what to do: https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19
- Only call 111 if you cannot get help online.

Babies and children

Call 111 for advice if you’re worried about a baby or child.

If they seem very unwell, are getting worse or you think there’s something seriously wrong, call 999.

Do not delay getting help if you’re worried. Trust your instincts.

Self-isolation if you or someone you live with has symptoms

Do not leave your home if you have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or live with someone who does. This is called self-isolation.

If you have symptoms of coronavirus, you’ll need to self-isolate for 7 days.

If you live with someone who has symptoms:

If you live with someone who has symptoms, you’ll need to self-isolate for 14 days from the day their symptoms started. This is because it can take 14 days for symptoms to appear.

Use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service if:

- you feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home
- your condition gets worse

Visit www.nhs.uk/coronavirus for the latest NHS advice.
Where to get help

How to get urgent food and medicine

If you need extra help during the Coronavirus outbreak, don’t be afraid to ask a friend or neighbour. Alternatively, ask a support organisation you already know. Although public buildings are closed, the organisations you would usually contact for help are running services, including the Council, Brighter Futures for Children, the Citizens Advice Bureau and local charities.

You can also get food and medicine delivered and left outside your door - if friends and family are unable to help, register at GOV.UK www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable or contact the One Reading Community Hub www.reading.gov.uk/coronavirussupport.

One Reading Community Hub

The One Reading Community Hub has been created for Reading Borough Council residents needing additional support during the outbreak. Through this service, you can arrange for an urgent delivery of food or medicine, connect with befriending services, or contact other sources of support.

If you, or someone you know, is in need of extra support:

- Fill in our online coronavirus support form at www.reading.gov.uk/coronavirussupport
- Call 0808 1894325 (freephone) from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, 9am to 1pm on Saturday

Please only contact the Hub if you have urgent welfare needs which a family member or trusted friend cannot help you with. This is so that resources can be directed to the people who need it most. The Hub cannot provide health advice and will direct customers to NHS 111.
Where to get Council service information

Reading Council will be updating its website with any news about service disruption. You can find the latest information at: [www.reading.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.reading.gov.uk/coronavirus) - please check back regularly for updates and pass on any information to friends and family who may not be online.

Although our offices are currently closed, many council services are available online 24 hours. Please contact us at: [www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk)

Our customer services team is available from 8.30am to 5pm (Monday to Friday) via 0118 937 3787 (out-of-hours emergencies: 0118 937 3737)

You can also check the council’s social media for regular updates:

- [www.facebook.com/readingcouncil](http://www.facebook.com/readingcouncil)
- [www.twitter.com/readingcouncil](http://www.twitter.com/readingcouncil)

Information in alternative formats

On the Council’s website all this information can be translated through Google Translate - you should find this feature at the bottom of each page of this site. [www.reading.gov.uk/coronavirusadvice](http://www.reading.gov.uk/coronavirusadvice)

Accessible information

If you have difficulties communicating or hearing, you can call 18001 111 on a textphone or access the NHS 111 British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter service through [www.nhs.uk/111](http://www.nhs.uk/111)

British Sign Language

Visit our BSL support page at [www.reading.gov.uk/BSL](http://www.reading.gov.uk/BSL)

You can contact the information officer at Reading Deaf Centre on 0118 9594969 Mobile/SMS 07754 361592 or by email info@readingdeafcentre.co.uk
[https://readingdeafcentre.co.uk](https://readingdeafcentre.co.uk)

Sight advice

RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People) have put together key information for people who are blind or visually impaired. [www.sightadvicefaq.org.uk/independent-living/Covid-19](http://www.sightadvicefaq.org.uk/independent-living/Covid-19)
Where to get support with personal care

If you or a family member need support with personal care due to a physical, mental health and/or a learning disability and your usual support arrangements are unavailable due to the Covid-19 crisis, please call 0118 937 3747.

If you have an allocated worker and/or are in receipt of support services in the community, one of our adult social care team should already have been in contact with you to discuss how Covid-19 is impacting on you and your care arrangements. Please let them know if you are having any difficulties and they will do their best to help. If you need to contact them, you may already have their contact details or you can call 0118 937 3747.
Where to access medical help

How do I access medical help locally?

- If you have coronavirus symptoms, to protect others do not go to places like a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Stay at home.
- Use the 111 online coronavirus service to find out what to do: https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19
- Only call 111 if you cannot get help online.

How do I access non-coronavirus medical support?

Patients who have a medical problem that is not related to coronavirus can ring their surgery as normal. Please do not attend the surgery in person. All GP appointments will initially be on the telephone with the GP doing all they can to help over the phone. If you feel you need a face-to-face examination then an appointment can be arranged.

Prescriptions can be sent straight to a pharmacy of your choice. This limits the number of people visiting the GP practices. You can request repeat prescriptions by using the NHS App https://digital.nhs.uk/services/nhs-app which means that you do not have to phone or visit the surgery.

If you are seriously unwell Royal Berkshire Hospital’s Emergency Department is still a safe option for medical care, despite the coronavirus outbreak. If you have symptoms relating to a serious medical issue, such as strokes, heart attacks or breathing problems, please do not avoid visiting A&E and seek medical assistance as soon as possible.

Can I get my prescription collected?

Healthwatch Reading https://healthwatchreading.co.uk have launched a Reading Prescription Delivery Scheme to ensure medicines can be delivered to isolated and vulnerable people during the coronavirus crisis. Your GP, local pharmacy or the One Reading Community Hub www.reading.gov.uk/coronavirussupport can refer you to Healthwatch for support.

Reading Walk-in Centre

A special medical hub has been set up for local people who are showing symptoms of Coronavirus but don't need immediate hospital treatment. The hub is based at the Walk-in Centre in Reading’s Broad Street Mall.

This service will only be available to patients who have already gone through a medical assessment. Anyone experiencing coronavirus symptoms of a constant cough and/or high temperature will still initially be asked to self-isolate for seven days and seek advice from NHS 111 online if required. Patients will then be referred on to their GP practice and/or the hub where appropriate. Find out more at www.berkshirewestccg.nhs.uk/about-us/primary-care/berkshire-west-primary-care-hubs
**Children’s vaccinations**

It is important we all continue with childhood immunisation programmes, to avoid outbreaks of serious vaccine-preventable diseases that could increase the numbers of patients requiring health services. Providing your baby and you as a parent or carer are well and not displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or other infections, routine immunisations for babies are still being given - please contact your GP to discuss this.

Due to the current closure of schools, the school-aged immunisation programme (ages 4-16) delivered by the school nursing team is suspended. If your child has missed a planned immunisation session or clinic appointment the school nursing team will reschedule this as soon as they can.


**New Immunisation Advice Line:** If you have any queries or concerns you can contact the School Aged Immunisation Advice Line, on 07929 185006 from 10:00 - 14:00 Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays.

**Health visiting**

The Health Visiting service is currently prioritising new birth and 6-8 week checks, and these will mostly be undertaken as virtual appointments:

- an online video consultation (similar to a Skype or What’s App call)
- a telephone consultation
- professional advice on how to manage your own care.

For general queries such as infant feeding support, weaning, behaviour, toilet training and sleeping, you can still use the health visitor duty line: 0118 931 2111 option 1 (9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, excluding bank holidays). Email hwwbrdgDuty@berkshire.nhs.uk or you can take advantage of the new evening health visiting duty line which runs from 4.30-8pm, Monday to Friday (except bank holidays) on 077713 44503.

Additional advice and information is available online at [https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk](https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk)

**Dental treatment during coronavirus**

During the Covid-19 pandemic all routine NHS and private dentistry has stopped. Patients who have scheduled appointments in the coming weeks are being contacted by their dental practice.

The NHS is continuing to provide urgent and emergency dental care. This will be available to both NHS and private patients. If patients have a dental emergency they should call their dental practice during opening hours for further advice. If they do not have a regular NHS dentist they can search for a local dentist on the NHS website and call them. In the evening and at weekends patients can contact NHS 111 who will provide advice and direct patients to an out-of-hours service if necessary.
Financial and welfare advice

We have closed most of our public buildings but will continue to run essential frontline services. If you need to contact us please do it online www.reading.gov.uk/myaccounts in the first instance, or by phone on 0118 937 3787 if it is an urgent welfare issue.

We are available by phone to provide advice and assistance if you are in financial difficulty. We can help ensure you receive the income and/or welfare benefits you are entitled to. You can contact us on 0118 937 2197 or email debt.advice@reading.gov.uk.

Find out more at: www.reading.gov.uk/debtadvice

If you are concerned about paying your council tax you can find out more about the help available here: www.reading.gov.uk/counciltaxhelp

Claiming benefits

If your income is disrupted, you need to claim all the benefits you are entitled to straight away. www.gov.uk/universal-credit

The situation regarding benefit entitlement in relation to the coronavirus is changing day by day. The best way to find out the benefits you might be entitled to is to use an online calculator.

Reading Borough Council has a benefit calculator you can use at www.reading.gov.uk/uc/claiming select ‘Universal Credit online calculator’ to check your entitlement to all benefits.

If you are already claiming benefits you will need to notify the DWP of your reduction in income so it can be reassessed. www.gov.uk/universal-credit/changes-of-circumstances

To get more information generally please visit: www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/coronavirus

Housing and homelessness

If you have nowhere safe to sleep tonight, contact the Homeless Prevention Service on 0118 937 2165 Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm. This is a voicemail facility. Leave a message clearly giving your name and a contact number. The voicemail is checked every half an hour by the team and you should receive a call back within one hour of leaving a message.

For evenings, weekends or Bank Holidays, contact the Emergency Duty Team on 01344 786543. For less urgent queries you can contact the Homeless Prevention Team via email. This will only be checked on Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm: housing.advice@reading.gov.uk

If you are concerned about someone sleeping rough please refer them to Reading’s Street Outreach Service: www.streetlink.org.uk

Welfare advice organisations

For general queries and advice, you can contact www.citizensadvice.org.uk and www.acas.org.uk/advice
Staying well

Mental health and wellbeing

We know that staying at home for a prolonged period of time can be difficult, frustrating and lonely for some people. During this challenging time, it’s important to take care of your mind as well as your body.

It’s also important to remember it is OK to feel this way and that everyone reacts differently. Remember, this situation is temporary and, for most of us, these difficult feelings will pass.

Every Mind Matters is an NHS service that provides simple tips and advice to help you take good care of your mental health. The website also has special sections for coping with isolation: www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters

Top tips for staying well

- Try to stay virtually connected with friends, family and neighbours – pick up the phone or have a conversation online through conference or social media apps.
- Keep active - look for ideas of exercises you can do at home on the NHS website.
- Eat well - try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals and drink plenty of water.
- Activate your brain - do things you enjoy such as reading, cooking, learning a new craft, or mindfulness exercises.
- Structure your day and make plans for what you can control. Keep to your normal routine as much as possible - set your alarm, eat at regular meal times and go to bed as usual.
- Have a back-up plan in case somebody you normally rely on or look after needs to self-isolate.
- Should you need someone to talk to you can contact the One Reading Community Hub on 0808 189 4325. They can help you access emotional as well as practical support.
- Although it’s good to feel you’re in touch with the world, limit how much time you spend listening to the news and stick to reliable sources. There is a lot of misinformation circulating about coronavirus. You can check facts here: https://fullfact.org

Local Mental Health Support

Compass Recovery College www.compassrecoverycollege.uk offers a range of Courses that aim to promote good mental health and improve personal wellbeing. You don’t need a diagnosis or a referral and you can still sign up as a new student during this time. A member of the team will call back to chat about your personal situation and goals, and how Compass can help. Call 07739 823140 or email compass.opportunities@reading.gov.uk

Berkshire West Your Way www.together-uk.org/projects/berkshire-west-your-way offers individually tailored one-to-one and peer support to help people deal with the personal and practical impacts of mental health issues. Call 0118 9660240 or email berkshirewest-yourway@together-uk.org
Talking Therapies [https://talkingtherapies.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/covid-19-coronavirus](https://talkingtherapies.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/covid-19-coronavirus) is a NHS service that offers support if you’re coping with challenges such as depression, stress, anxiety or phobias. Call 0300 365 2000 or email talkingtherapies@berkshire.nhs.uk

Depression Xpression [www.facebook.com/groups/depressionxpression](https://www.facebook.com/groups/depressionxpression) is a depression and anxiety peer support group. Email depressionxpression@gmail.com or phone 07852 732194.

No5 [https://no5.org.uk](https://no5.org.uk) provides free, confidential counselling and support to children and young people aged 11-25. Call 0118 901 5668 or email info@no5.org.uk

Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS) [https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/children-and-adolescent-mental-health-services-camhs/](https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/children-and-adolescent-mental-health-services-camhs/) works with young people who are experiencing significant, severe and complex difficulties with their mental health. If you have urgent/significant concerns about your child’s mental health call 0300 365 1234 (8am to 8pm, Mon-Fri excluding Bank Holidays). Outside of these hours, please contact the Crisis Team on 0300 365 9999.

Loneliness

Although sticking to the advice is essential in the current crisis, staying at home with limited human contact can have a significant impact on our mental wellbeing - and in particular - feelings of loneliness. Loneliness can affect people of all ages, particularly if they are quarantined at home.

Engage Befriending [https://engagebefriending.org](https://engagebefriending.org) is a local charity which links people who are isolated with a befriending volunteer. Normally, they support older people, but they recognise that some younger people may need help to combat loneliness at this time. Call 01189 567 000 and press option 2.

The Campaign to End Loneliness [www.campaigntoendloneliness.org](https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org) has tips on keeping in touch, particularly for older people.

Age UK [www.ageuk.org.uk](https://www.ageuk.org.uk) has a free confidential advice line on 0800 678 1602. For local support visit [www.ageuk.org.uk/berkshire](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/berkshire) or call 0118 959 4242, and [www.ageuk.org.uk/reading](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/reading) call 0118 950 2480

The Samaritans [www.samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org) provide confidential listening support to help anyone work through what’s on their mind if they are feeling low. Call 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org at any time of the day or night.
Healthy eating and exercise

The Eatwell Guide from the NHS has useful information on achieving a healthy balanced diet. The website includes lots of recipes and food tips: [www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide)

Change4Life, the government service aimed at helping families be healthier and happier, has lots of quick and easy family meals and meal planning ideas: [www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes)

Staying active is more important than ever, both for your physical and mental health, but it can be hard to do as much as you would like. If you’re fit and well, and showing no symptoms of coronavirus, you can go outside for one form of exercise a day, such as a run, walk or cycle - alone or with members of your household. You must follow social distancing guidelines to help protect yourselves and those most at risk - so stay at least 2m (6ft) away from others.

How do I stay active in and around the home?

To stay fit and healthy, it is recommended that you get at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity a week, or around 20 to 30 minutes a day. Plus, you should aim to do strengthening and balance exercises at least 2 days a week. There are still plenty of ways you can build movement and exercise into your day when you are at home.

You may not be able to go your favourite classes, but the Reading Sport and Leisure team have lots of videos online, including classes with their own coaches. There are activities for everyone, including people with long-term conditions, and it’s all free to access: [www.readingleisure.co.uk/exercise-classes](http://www.readingleisure.co.uk/exercise-classes)

Get Berkshire Active has created an Active at Home website with a range of activities to suit all ages and abilities: [https://getberkshireactive.org/active-at-home](https://getberkshireactive.org/active-at-home)

One You from the NHS has a good selection of home workout videos: [www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/move-more/home-workout-videos](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/move-more/home-workout-videos)

Sport England’s Stay in, work out portal has a great selection of online fitness options: [www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout](http://www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout)

Workouts for kids

- Joe Wicks is live-streaming workouts for kids on his YouTube channel The Body Coach TV: [www.youtube.com/user/thebodycoach1](http://www.youtube.com/user/thebodycoach1)
- Change4Life accessible activities for children and young people with disabilities: [https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/activities/accessible-activities](https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/activities/accessible-activities)
- Change4Life - Wake Up Shake Ups Fun family activities to do together: [https://www.nhs.uk/10-minute-shake-up/shake-ups](https://www.nhs.uk/10-minute-shake-up/shake-ups)

For people with a disability

We Are Undefeatable [https://weareundefeatable.co.uk/covid-19](https://weareundefeatable.co.uk/covid-19) has covid-19 advice specifically for people living with long-term health conditions, as well as advice about getting active at home.
Support for families

**Reading’s Family Information Services** [www.reading.gov.uk/fis](http://www.reading.gov.uk/fis) provides free impartial information and guidance about a wide range of services for children, young people and their families.

**Brighter Futures for Children** [https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/coronavirus-covid-19-update](https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/coronavirus-covid-19-update) provide local support for parents and children, including information on schools.


**Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership**, a group of leading local health and social care organisations, has produced a new guide offering support to families struggling during the Covid-19 lockdown. It signposts people to a range of information and groups across Berkshire who are experts in dealing with mental health, anxiety, stress, self-care, wellbeing and sleep issues: [www.berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp/helping-you/coronavirus](http://www.berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp/helping-you/coronavirus)

Support for carers

**Looking after yourself**

Caring can be demanding, physically and mentally. This can have a huge impact on your own health and wellbeing, even more so during lockdown. It’s important to take time for yourself. It’s also important to understand what advice and support may be available for you and those you care for - including to cover the possibility of you becoming ill or needing to self-isolate, and so that you can continue to care safely and without putting your own health and emotional wellbeing at risk.

**Reading and West Berkshire Carers Hub** [www.berkshirecarershub.org](http://www.berkshirecarershub.org) offers a range of support for carers, to help you look after yourself as well as the loved one you care for. Call 0118 324 7333, visit their Facebook group at [www.facebook.com/RWBCarersHub](http://www.facebook.com/RWBCarersHub) or email ask@berkshirecarershub.org

**Carers UK** [www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19) has lots of advice for carers available, including help on understanding how to work with the Council, care agencies, local voluntary groups and your employer to manage caring at this time.

**Young Carers**

A young carer is aged between 5 and 18 and spends a significant amount of time caring for a family member. If you are a young carer or know a young carer who needs support, call 0118 937 6545 or visit [www.reading.gov.uk/young-carers](http://www.reading.gov.uk/young-carers)
Limiting alcohol

In times of stress we can find ourselves drinking more often or more heavily. Isolation is disrupting everyone’s routine and you might be thinking about how to watch your alcohol intake.

The NHS One You [www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/drink-less](www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/drink-less) website has a handy guide to drinking less.

Drinkaware [www.drinkaware.co.uk](www.drinkaware.co.uk) has easy guides on how much alcohol is safe and tips on how to cut down while you’re in isolation.

Further support for problem drinking and addiction

Drinkline is a free, confidential helpline for people who are concerned about their drinking, or someone else’s. Call 0300 123 1110 (weekdays 9am-8pm, weekends 11am-4pm).

Change Grow Live [www.changegrowlive.org/drug-alcohol-service-reading](www.changegrowlive.org/drug-alcohol-service-reading) Reading’s drug and alcohol service, has support if you or someone you know is struggling with addiction contact Change Grow Live. Call 01189 557333

Quitting smoking

Why quit smoking now?

Stopping smoking is one of the best things you’ll ever do for your health, now more than ever. Smoking and breathing in second-hand smoke can make the impact of the coronavirus worse.

Where can I get support to quit?

Although quitting is never easy, help is at hand. You’ll have more chance of quitting if you enlist the help of an expert.

Smokefreelife Berkshire is a local free personalised service offering advice for people wanting to quit smoking. Although face-to-face clinics are closed, there is still a huge amount of free virtual support available to you from your home. Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) is available through the post and the service is VAPE friendly.

To get support:

- self-refer online [www.smokefreelifeberkshire.com](www.smokefreelifeberkshire.com)
- call 0118 449 2026
- text QUIT to 66777
- use the Quit with Bella app [http://quitwithbella.co.uk](http://quitwithbella.co.uk)

One You: Quit Smoking Support [www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/quit-smoking](www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/quit-smoking) from the NHS has daily support emails, personal quit plans and options to beat the cravings. You can also download the Smoke Free app to track your progress, see how much you’re saving and get daily support wherever you are.
Staying safe

Safeguarding

Protecting vulnerable people during the COVID-19 outbreak

Supporting vulnerable adults and children is a key priority for the Council during the Covid-19 crisis. Safeguarding remains an ongoing priority.

Safeguarding is everyone’s business. Safeguarding means looking out for and trying to protect others in our community who are vulnerable or may be at risk of harm. If someone is at risk, an alarm needs to be raised. Everyone can make a difference.

Please report safeguarding concerns to the Council’s safeguarding team on 0118 937 3747 (01344 786 543 outside of office hours) or email safeguarding.adults@reading.gov.uk

Safeguarding people with reduced mental capacity

Living with conditions such as dementia, stroke or brain injury at any time brings everyday challenges for the person and those around them. For these people, coronavirus is making daily life much harder. Similarly, people with learning disabilities, autism or with mental health issues may also struggle to understand the situation and to follow the necessary guidelines to protect themselves and others. Individuals may feel anxious, scared or lonely. But they are not alone - help is available.

If you have concerns about a relative, friend or neighbour placing themselves and others at risk due to limited mental capacity, please contact us for support and advice. If the situation is urgent please call the Council’s safeguarding team on 0118 937 3747 (01344 786 543 outside of office hours) or email safeguarding.adults@reading.gov.uk

The following organisations offer support:

- **Dementia support** [www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/coronavirus-covid-19) Alzheimer's Society's new personalised support service, Dementia Connect, has a support line: 0333 150 3456
- **Stroke** [www.stroke.org.uk/finding-support/information-coronavirus-stroke-survivors](http://www.stroke.org.uk/finding-support/information-coronavirus-stroke-survivors) or call 0303 3033 100
- **Mencap, for those with a learning disability** [www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/health/coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/health/coronavirus-covid-19) or call 0808 808 1111, email helpline@mencap.org.uk
- **Reading Mencap** [www.readingmencap.org.uk](http://www.readingmencap.org.uk) is helping local children and adults with a learning disability and their families. If you, or someone you know, needs support, please call: 0118 966 2518 or email office@readingmencap.org.uk
Domestic abuse

Please reach out for support if you are experiencing abuse or worried about another adult you believe may be experiencing abuse.

Escaping abuse is an entirely valid reason for leaving your home during the Covid-19 crisis. There are many organisations which can help support you to do this as safely as possible. It’s important to know that you are not alone. Even if you are unable to leave your home you can still access support through one of the helplines listed below. If you suspect that members of your family, friends, neighbours or those in your community are victims of domestic abuse, we encourage you to report it to the police.

How to get help

If you feel you are in immediate danger call 999. Press 55 when prompted if you can’t speak. If you can’t use a voice phone, you can register with the police text service - text REGISTER to 999.

If your situation is not urgent, call the police on 101 or contact the Housing Advice Service on 0118 937 2165 (01344 786 512 after 5pm) to plan your next steps if you need to move home because you are at risk. Find out more at www.reading.gov.uk/domesticabuse

Berkshire Women’s Aid www.berkshirewomensaid.org.uk is there to help men, women and families who may be affected by any form of domestic abuse, and its services and refuges remain open. You can call the 24/7 helpline on 0118 950 4003. You can also contact them via Facebook or email helpline@bwaid.org.uk. Just let them know how to contact you and what time to contact you.

Refuge UK supports women, children and men experiencing domestic violence with a range of services and offers support through their 24-hour helpline: 0808 2000 247

Safeguarding children

You can raise concerns about a child’s welfare via the Children’s Single Point of Access (pre-birth to 18 years old) in Reading. Phone: 0118 937 3641 (includes out of hours contact details). Email: cshoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

If a child is in immediate danger call the police on 999. Find out more information at https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/concerned-about-a-child

National support and advice: www.nspcc.org.uk

If you’re an adult concerned about a child, call 0808 800 5000

Children and young people can call Childline on 0800 1111
Avoiding scams

We all need to be more vigilant against scams, particularly about sharing our financial and personal information, as criminals seek to cash in on the Covid-19 pandemic. Only accept help from trusted sources or people you know. Don’t give money to someone you don’t know or in response to unsolicited requests by text message or email. If in doubt, check with the organisation the message claims to come from and if an offer sounds too good to be true - it probably is.

At this time, be particularly aware of people offering or selling:

- Virus testing kits - these are only offered by the NHS or official organisations
- Vaccines or miracle cures - there is currently no vaccine or cure
- Overpriced or fake goods
- Shopping, medications collection services, or home cleaning services (only use trusted sources)

If someone claims to represent a charity, ask them for ID. Be suspicious of requests for money up front.

To deal with scams, follow these three steps:

- **Stop:** Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.
- **Challenge:** Could it be fake? It’s OK to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.
- **Protect:** Contact your bank immediately if you think you’ve fallen for a scam.

Reporting scams

Please report the scam or anything you spot that is suspicious. Your information is useful and may protect others. Contact the police immediately by calling 101 if the scammer is in your area or if you’ve transferred money to the scammer in the last 24 hours. If a person is carrying out a scam and their behaviour is threatening or if you feel unsafe call 999.

**Citizens Advice Consumer Service** [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) can offer support if you or someone you know has been scammed. They will give you advice on what to do next. Visit their website or call **0808 223 1133**. You can use the online scams helper: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/scams/reporting-a-scam](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/scams/reporting-a-scam)

The information you provide will be shared with other organisations, including the Council’s trading standards team for any local action needed.

**Friends Against Scams** [www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk](http://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk) has a useful list of the current scams that are circulating.

Many groups are still contactable through their website or usual phone number. Please check the Reading Services Guide for updates on what is happening locally: [http://servicesguide.reading.gov.uk](http://servicesguide.reading.gov.uk)
Reduce noise and nuisance

Now we are all at home people are noticing noises and annoyances that they may not have done before. A considerable number of people will need to work from home and children will be doing school work at home. The pandemic situation will also result in increased anxiety for many people. With this in mind, please think about how noise from your home could be causing problems and upset to others. For the same reason, we would urge everyone to be more tolerant and patient with noise and activity.

The Council can help in certain circumstances if noise is sustained and unacceptable – however, everyday noise for instance is not something we can act against. You can use the noise app available at www.thenoiseapp.com to record evidence of the nuisance. You can also email environmental.protection@reading.gov.uk

The police are urging people to only call 999 if it is an emergency and 101 if it is urgent. If you can, use online services www.thamesvalley.police.uk. Please only contact the police about breaches of the 'stay at home' measures if you feel there is a significant issue or serious breach of the restrictions.

www.thamesvalley.police.uk/police-forces/thames-valley-police/areas/coronavirus