

## Camden & Islington Public Health:

VERSION 1.0 05/05/20

# Guidance on providing unpaid care during the response to COVID-19

If you require further guidance or have questions relating to COVID-19 and providing unpaid care contact Public Health: [ciphadmin@islington.gov.uk](mailto:ciphadmin@islington.gov.uk)

This local guidance does not replace national guidance. Local guidance has been produced to facilitate the interpretation and application of national guidance to specific local services and situations, taking full account of national guidance and evidence.

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### 1. About this guidance

This guidance is for anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who, due to a lifelong condition, illness, disability, serious injury, a mental health condition or an addiction, cannot cope without their support.

This guidance has been adapted from [national guidance for unpaid carers](#) and national guidance on [Infection prevention and control](#). We will keep this guidance under constant review in light of the evolving COVID-19 situation and changes to national guidance.

If you require further guidance about COVID-19 or have questions relating to this guidance, please contact Public Health: [CIPHAdmin@islington.gov.uk](mailto:CIPHAdmin@islington.gov.uk).

## 2. COVID-19 definitions

### Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- **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)

### People at higher risk from coronavirus

There are 2 levels of higher risk:

- **People at high risk:** for people who are over 70 years old, are pregnant, have a learning disability, or have certain long term health conditions.
- **People at very high risk (shielding group):** for people who have certain health conditions which puts them at very high risk from coronavirus. These people should have received a letter from the NHS. Speak to your GP or hospital care team if you have not been contacted and think you should have been.

The full list of conditions can be found on the NHS website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

## 3. General advice

**We advise all unpaid carers to create an emergency plan with the person they care for**, to use in circumstances where help from other people to deliver care may be needed. Depending on the circumstances, this could be help from family or friends, or a care provider. Detail on how to do this can be found [here](#), also see section 5.

**Generally, within households PPE is not recommended.** This is because those living in the same household tend to be in constant contact with one another as well as with the 'household environment' – i.e. touching surfaces, furnishings etc. It would not be practical to expect someone to wear PPE throughout the day and even if they did it is likely that it would get contaminated by this constant contact and would not be effective.

**For unpaid care delivered to a person living in a different household, PPE is needed.** PPE requirements depend on the care being delivered and whether care is being delivered to a person who is shielding. PPE is only effective if combined with good hand washing and if it is put on and taken off in the correct order.

**If PPE is used it should be disposed of correctly** – this means putting it in a rubbish bag, tying it up, double bagging this and then leaving it for at least 72 hours before disposing of it with household waste.

## 4. Providing care for someone who lives in the same household

### 4.1 Carer from same household: What steps are needed if you, or the person you are providing unpaid care to, are in the extremely vulnerable (shielding) group?

For information on who is included in this group see guidance [here](#).

The best preventative measure that family members living with someone who is shielding can take are to follow the social distancing guidelines to reduce their exposure and therefore risk of passing it to the household member who is shielding.

#### **Social distancing measures for family members while outside the home:**

- Avoid contact with anyone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough.
- Avoid non-essential use of public transport when possible.
- Work from home, where possible. Your employer should support you to do this. Please refer to [employer guidance](#) for more information.
- Avoid large and small gatherings in public spaces, noting that pubs, restaurants, leisure centres and similar venues are currently shut as infections spread easily in closed spaces where people gather together.
- Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media.
- Use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services.

#### **Additional measures for household members to take inside the home:**

[Guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19](#) sets out the measures that households can take to reduce risk of transmission to shielding family members, including:

- Everyone in your household should regularly wash their hands, avoid touching their face and clean frequently touched surfaces.
- Minimising time spent together in shared spaces, and keeping these spaces well ventilated.
- The shielding person should sleep in a separate bed if possible.
- If possible, the shielding person should use a separate bathroom to the rest of the household, if possible. If this is not possible, the bathroom should be cleaned after every use. The shielding person could also use the bathroom first. Separate towels should always be used (including for hand drying purposes).
- If the person you are caring for is shielding and it's not possible to avoid close contact with them, you could consider shielding as well, i.e. staying at home all the time.

#### **Advice on how to give care safely to a person who is shielding**

If you're caring for someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, there are some simple steps that you can take to protect them and to reduce their risk.

Ensure you follow advice on good hygiene:

- Only provide care that is essential.
- Wash your hands when you get in and often, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser.

- 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.
- Do not provide care if you are unwell and make alternative arrangements for their care.
- Provide information to the person you care for about who they should call if they feel unwell, how to use [NHS 111 online coronavirus service](#) and leave the number for NHS 111 prominently displayed.
- Find out about different sources of support that could be used and accessing further advice on creating a contingency plan is available from [Carers UK](#).
- Look after your own wellbeing and physical health during this time. See further information from [Every Mind Matters](#).

#### **PPE is not required**

Within households, residents tend to be in constant contact with one another as well as with the 'household environment' – i.e. touching surfaces, furnishings etc. It would not be practical to expect someone to wear PPE throughout the day and even if they did it is likely that it would get contaminated by this constant contact and would not be effective. The best way to reduce the risk of infection transmission in a household is with the simple steps outlined above.

#### **Accessing prescriptions for a household where someone is shielding**

If you normally collect prescriptions for the person you care for, you will not be able to do this if you are shielding. If possible, arrange for a friend or family member not in your household to pick up prescriptions and other supplies. Most pharmacies provide a home delivery service. Telephone them to see if this is available or if there is another scheme running locally to help you access prescriptions.

When dropping off prescriptions or other supplies, contact should be limited and a 2 metre distance should be kept between those dropping off the supplies and household members.

If you required further assistance around getting medication or other supplies delivered and you or someone in the household is shielding:

Contact [WeAreIslington](#) or call: 020 7527 8222

#### **4.2 Carer from same household: how to deliver unpaid care safely if you, or the person you are providing unpaid care to, are displaying symptoms of coronavirus**

If anyone in a household develops symptoms of COVID-19, all household members should follow the [stay at home guidance](#) which states:

- The first person to develop symptoms must stay at home (self-isolate) for 7 days from when their symptoms first started.
- All other household members who remain well must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days from when the first person in the household became ill.
- If another household member goes on to develop symptoms themselves, they should stay at home for 7 days from the start of their symptoms.

### **PPE is not required**

Within households, residents tend to be in constant contact with one another as well as with the 'household environment' – i.e. touching surfaces, furnishings etc. It would not be practical to expect someone to wear PPE throughout the day and even if they did it is likely that it would get contaminated by this constant contact and would not be effective. The best way to reduce the risk of infection transmission in a household is with the simple steps outlined in section 4.2 above.

**If you are well enough to provide care, you may continue to do so.** Continuing to provide care will not increase the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in a household setting where everyone tends to be in constant contact with one another as well as with the 'household environment'.

**If you are not well enough to provide care** you should consider asking friends or family outside of the household to support. In this instance there may be a need for them to wear PPE – please see guidance in section 5 on providing unpaid care for someone who lives in a different household to you. If you cannot organise alternative care you can contact your local authority or health care provider.

- For urgent support regarding any safeguarding matters or if you cannot organise alternative care contact **Islington's Access and Advice Team on 020 7527 2299**.
- If you or the person you care for has underlying health problems which become worse during or after the isolation period you should seek medical advice by either **phoning your GP, phoning NHS 111, or visiting <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/>**.
- You can get support and advice from **Age UK Islington Carers Hub on 0800 085 1141**.
- You can also get information and support at [Carers UK](#).

### **Accessing prescriptions for a household self-isolating due to COVID-19**

If you normally collect prescriptions for the person you care for, you will not be able to do this if you are self-isolating. If possible, arrange for a friend or family member not in your household to pick up prescriptions and other supplies. Most pharmacies provide a home delivery service. Telephone them to see if this is available or if there is another scheme running locally to help you access prescriptions.

When dropping off prescriptions or other supplies, contact should be limited and a 2 metre distance should be kept between those dropping off the supplies and household members.

If you required further assistance around getting medication or other supplies delivered and you or someone in the household is shielding, please:

Contact [WeAreIslington](#) or call: 020 7527 8222

## 5. Providing care for someone who lives in a different household to you

### 5.1 Carer from different household: Providing care for anyone who is not shielding

**Before your visit**, please contact the person you care for to confirm if:

- anyone at home has COVID-19 symptoms (or is self-isolating relating to household members having had symptoms)
- anyone at home is extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 and advised to shield.

**You should not undertake any caring responsibilities if you have symptoms of COVID-19** (a high temperature and/or a new continuous cough). You should be self-isolating at home as set out in the [stay at home guidance](#).

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 you should consider asking friends or family outside of your household to support. In this instance there may be a need for them to wear PPE – please see guidance in section 5 below. If you cannot organise alternative care you can contact your local authority or health care provider.

- For urgent support regarding any safeguarding matters or if you cannot organise alternative care contact **Islington’s Access and Advice Team on 020 7527 2299**.
- If you or the person you care for has underlying health problems which become worse during or after the isolation period you should seek medical advice by either **phoning your GP, phoning NHS 111, or visiting <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/>**.
- You can get support and advice from **Age UK Islington Carers Hub on 0800 085 1141**.
- You can also get information and support at [Carers UK](#).

#### **PPE is required for all care-related home visits at this time**

During the current time, Public Health England have advised that COVID-19 is circulating in the community at high levels and PPE should be worn for all care-related home visits, regardless of whether someone at the household has COVID-19 symptoms or not. The minimum PPE required is a face mask. Other PPE depends on the task you are completing – see table below.

	<b>Personal care and direct contact</b> e.g any activity in which you are touching the person  <u>OR</u> <b>being within 2m of a person who is coughing</b>	<b>Activities which bring you within 2 metres of the person</b> e.g bringing food to them
 Disposable gloves	✓	✗

 Disposable apron		
 Which type of mask?	 Fluid resistant surgical mask	 Standard surgical mask OR Fluid-resistant Surgical Mask (if risk of <u>prolonged contact</u> with a person who is coughing)
 Eye protection	Risk assess for risk of contamination with splashes, droplets or blood or body fluids	

**Safe working practices are needed when using PPE.** This includes:

- Follow good hygiene practices including washing with soap and water for 20 seconds and washing up to exposed forearms after removing any element of PPE. If masks are touched or adjusted, hand hygiene should be performed immediately.
- Ensure you are totally clear about putting on, wearing and taking off PPE (posters and videos for donning and doffing PPE can be found [here](#))
- Don't remove PPE and then put it back on (e.g. if you go to the toilet, have a drink, have a cigarette).
- Don't hang your mask on your neck or on your head. If the mask is removed from your mouth it must be disposed of and replaced.
- Don't touch your face especially if wearing gloves.
- Store used personal protective equipment securely within disposable rubbish bags. These bags should be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste within the room for at least 72 hours before being put in the usual household waste bin for disposal.

## 5.2 Carer from different household: Providing care for an individual who is shielding

Only essential care should be provided to people who fall into the clinically 'extremely vulnerable group' (shielding).

**Do not undertake any caring responsibilities if you have symptoms of COVID-19** (a high temperature and/or a new continuous cough). You should be self-isolating at home as set out in the [stay at home guidance](#).

Where possible, explore if friends and family can support the person requiring care. If alternative arrangements cannot be made, you can contact your local authority or health care provider:

- For urgent support regarding any safeguarding matters or if you cannot organise alternative care contact **Islington’s Access and Advice Team on 020 7527 2299.**
- If you or the person you care for has underlying health problems which become worse during or after the isolation period you should seek medical advice by either **phoning your GP, phoning NHS 111, or visiting <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/>.**
- You can get support and advice from **Age UK Islington Carers Hub on 0800 085 1141.**
- You can also get information and support at [Carers UK](#).

It is very important to wash your hands on arriving in the property, before delivering any care. Hands should be washed after care. It is important that PPE is put on and taken off in the correct order – this [information and video](#) shows you what you need to do to make sure the PPE works.

[Guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19](#) sets out the measures to protect people who are shielding.

**PPE is required to deliver informal care to a person who is shielding when carer from a different household.**

	Giving care to a person who is shielding	If the shielded person has symptoms of COVID-19
 Disposable gloves	✓	✓
 Disposable apron	✓	✓
 Which type of mask?	✓ Standard surgical mask If not available, use a fluid resistant surgical mask	✓ Fluid resistant surgical mask
 Eye protection	X	Risk assess for risk of contamination with splashes, droplets or blood or body fluids

### **5.3 Carer from different household: If you (the unpaid carer) are in the extremely vulnerable (shielding) group**

If you (the unpaid carer) fall into the clinically 'extremely vulnerable group' (shielding), it is important to consider your personal situation. In line with the [guidance on shielding](#), you are strongly advised to stay at home at all times and avoid any face-to-face contact if you're clinically extremely vulnerable to protect yourself.

Where possible, explore if friends and family can support the person requiring care. If alternative arrangements cannot be made, you can contact your local authority or health care provider:

- For urgent support regarding any safeguarding matters or if you cannot organise alternative care contact **Islington's Access and Advice Team on 020 7527 2299**.
- If you or the person you care for has underlying health problems which become worse during or after the isolation period you should seek medical advice by either **phoning your GP, phoning NHS 111, or visiting <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/>**.
- You can get support and advice from **Age UK Islington Carers Hub on 0800 085 1141**.
- You can also get information and support at [Carers UK](#).

If you normally collect prescriptions for the person you care for, you will not be able to do this. If possible, arrange for a friend or family member not in your household to pick up prescriptions and other supplies. Most pharmacies provide a home delivery service. Telephone them to see if this is available or if there is another scheme running locally to help you access prescriptions.

When dropping off prescriptions or other supplies, contact should be limited and a 2 metre distance should be kept between those dropping off the supplies and household members.

If you required further assistance around getting medication or other supplies delivered and you or someone in the household is shielding, please:

Contact [WeAreIslington](#) or call: 020 7527 8222

### **5.4 Carer from a different household: applying for a test if you have symptoms of Covid-19**

The government has recently (4 May 2020) added unpaid carers to the list of essential workers who are eligible for a test if they have symptoms of Covid-19. This means that if you are self-isolating because you have symptoms yourself, or you are self-isolating because one of your household has symptoms, you or the person with symptoms in your household, can apply for a test via the government testing scheme.

The test needs to be completed within in the first 5 days of having symptoms. It is best to apply for the test in the first 3 days as it may take 1 or 2 days to arrange. Please note that you might not get a test if you apply, it will depend on how many tests are available. It is also important to understand that this is not an antibody test and therefore cannot test for previous infection and immunity.

Test are available by appointment at a regional drive-through test site, or by home test kit (although these are currently limited in number).

Further information on arranging a test is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested#essential-workers>.

## 6. Creating an emergency plan and seeking alternative arrangements for care

We advise all carers to create an emergency plan with the person they care for, to use in circumstances where help from other people to deliver care may be needed. Depending on the circumstances, this could be help from family or friends, or a care provider.

In order to create an emergency plan that fits the needs of the person you care for, you will need to set out:

- the name and address and any other contact details of the person you look after
- who you and the person you look after would like to be contacted in an emergency
- details of any medication the person you look after is taking
- details of any ongoing treatment they need
- details of any medical appointments they need to keep

You should also ensure that it is in a format that can readily be shared with other people who will need to discuss the plan with the person you care for.

Having to organise alternative care can be difficult and concerning. You may be able to arrange help and support from family and friends, but it can be reassuring to have the involvement of your local authority or [healthcare provider](#) in case informal arrangements fall through.

- For urgent support regarding any safeguarding matters or if you cannot organise alternative care contact **Islington's Access and Advice Team on 020 7527 2299**.
- If you or the person you care for has underlying health problems which become worse during or after the isolation period you should seek medical advice by either **phoning your GP, phoning NHS 111, or visiting <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/>**.
- You can get support and advice from **Age UK Islington Carers Hub on 0800 085 1141**.
- You can also get information and support at [Carers UK](#).

## 7. Where to obtain PPE, if required

Contact AUKI Helpline: 020 7281 6018

Please note AUKI are unable to accept drop in requests. Please contact AUKI Helpline to discuss your PPE requirements.

## **8. Further support and information**

If you need time off work to care for a relative who has symptoms or is self-isolating you should talk to your employer about your caring needs and what arrangements can be put in place. Information regarding statutory sick pay entitlements can be found in the [Guidance for employees](#).

Some people may be entitled to benefits as a carer, such as Carer's Allowance. You should check on GOV.UK for further details.

- Further information can be found at [Carers UK](#).
- You can find out about local carer organisations at [Carers UK](#).
- You can also find information out about local services on the [Carers Trust website](#).

Islington Carers Hub can provide support, advice and guidance on a range of topic including contingency planning, PPE, carer benefits as well as regular carer news and carer related stories in Islington. Contact them on 020 7281 6018.