



# COVID-19

Information



and support



This is a very challenging time, but you are not alone, and help is available if you need it. We are stepping in to help you remain safe and well. We are working with the Government, NHS and local voluntary sector to support you through this difficult time.

This leaflet tells you where to get help if you:

- Need extra support getting food or medication
- Are worried about your finances
- Want advice on keeping healthy
- Want advice on how to stay safe.



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## Southwark Council Community Hub



**020 7525 5000** Choose the COVID-19 option.



**covidsupport@southwark.gov.uk**



**www.southwark.gov.uk/communityhub**

Our hub was set up to help residents during the COVID-19 crisis. It can help you if you need:

- Food, medicine or other items delivered
- Financial advice
- Help for someone you know
- Other advice about where you can get support and information on childcare, education and your local mutual aid groups.

We host the Community Hub, but it is a joint initiative with local charities, the local NHS and GP surgeries to provide you with important information in one place. Once you have contacted the Community Hub you may be referred to the voluntary and community sector or NHS, depending on your need, if you give us consent to refer you.

## £ Financial support

### Concerns about paying your bills

#### Paying council-related bills

At the point this leaflet was produced we have suspended debt recovery relating to:

- Council tax
- Businesses rates
- Council-related rent and service charge payments.

If you have any difficulty in making these payments, contact us on




**020 7525 5000**

#### Energy, rent or mortgage payments

If you are on a gas or electric prepayment meter contact your supplier straightaway if you can't afford to top up your meter. If you have a prepayment meter and are self-isolating or unable to leave your home, speak to your supplier on options such as having credit added remotely or a pre-paid card sent to you.

If you're struggling to pay your rent, mortgage or energy bills it's important you don't ignore your bills. Speak to the organisation you owe money to – they might help by letting you pay smaller amounts or taking a break. Your bank or building society might advise you with your debts or let you delay loan or credit card repayments.

### Issues with paying your rent, or becoming homeless

If you're struggling with rent payments, and you receive Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit, you may be eligible for extra financial support. This is through a discretionary housing payment. For more information, or if you are worried about becoming homeless, contact Southwark Council on  **020 7525 2434**.

**Financial support** continued**Loss or interruption of your income**

If you're unemployed or have experienced a sudden loss or interruption of income due to COVID-19 you may be able to claim benefits to support you. For most working-age people the benefit you need to claim is Universal Credit.

If you are already claiming Universal Credit and your circumstances have changed, report the change immediately by signing into your Universal Credit account.

If you need support applying for Universal Credit, contact Southwark Council on  020 7525 2434.

**If you've been affected by coronavirus, you might be able to claim benefits, or get more money in addition to your current benefits if:**

- You have coronavirus, or you're following guidance to stay at home
- You've lost your job
- You're self-employed and can't get work
- You can't work because your workplace has closed.

**Keeping healthy****Eating well**

Eating a healthy balanced diet based around the NHS Eatwell Guide is really important. What you eat can help to improve your mood, manage your weight and promote a healthy immune system. During the coronavirus pandemic, it is just as important that you continue to eat and drink well.

**For tips on healthy eating, visit:**



[www.southwark.gov.uk/healthyeating](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/healthyeating) or

[www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide)

**Food safety**

It is very unlikely that you can catch coronavirus from food. However you should still wash your hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after you handle packaged food, and every time before you eat. Use cold running water to wash fruit and vegetables before eating. Never use washing-up liquid or other household cleaning products to clean fruit and vegetables. They are not intended to be eaten, and you may accidentally leave some of the product on the food. Washing fruit and vegetables with dish soap can cause stomach upset like vomiting and/or diarrhoea.

**Information on how to prepare and cook food safely:**



[www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-to-prepare-and-cook-food-safely](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-to-prepare-and-cook-food-safely)

or [www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/cleaning](http://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/cleaning)

**Keeping healthy** continued**Staying active**

It's important to look after your physical wellbeing and stay active, even when you are staying at home. Regular exercise can help reduce the risk of chronic illnesses such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and stroke. Exercise can also boost self-esteem, energy, mood and sleep quality. You should aim to do at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week – just over 20 minutes a day.

Get support on how to be active safely by calling our Healthy Lifestyles Hub on [☎ 033 3005 0159](tel:03330050159).

**Impact of COVID-19 on existing health conditions**

If you have an existing health condition or a disability that affects your health, you may be particularly worried about the impact of coronavirus. Here are some organisations that may be able to advise you on your health condition.

**Macmillan Cancer Support**

[☎ 080 0808 0000](tel:08008080000) Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

If you have cancer, the most important thing is to follow the advice of your healthcare team. You can also get further advice from Macmillan Cancer Support. They are a charity that can help you live life as fully as you can, by providing physical, financial and emotional support.

**Asthma UK**

[☎ 030 0222 5800](tel:03002225800) Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

They are a charity that help people manage their daily life with asthma effectively.

**Marie Curie**

[☎ 080 0090 2309](tel:08000902309) Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Saturday and Sunday, 11am to 5pm.

They are a charity that can provide information and support if you have a terminal illness.

**SCOPE**

[☎ 080 8800 3333](tel:08088003333) Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm. Saturday to Sunday 10am to 6pm.

SCOPE are a disability charity that provides practical information and emotional support.

**Mental health**

This is a difficult and uncertain time, and many people find that they are more anxious than normal. If you're struggling with your mental health, our website is a good place to look for help

[☛ www.southwark.gov.uk/takingcareofyourmind](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/takingcareofyourmind)

**The Southwark Wellbeing Hub**

[☎ 020 3751 9684](tel:02037519684) or [07849 084 368](tel:07849084368) if the mainline is busy. Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

[✉ southwarkhub@together-uk.org](mailto:southwarkhub@together-uk.org)  
[☛ www.together-uk.org/southwark-wellbeing-hub/the-directory](http://www.together-uk.org/southwark-wellbeing-hub/the-directory)

**The Southwark Wellbeing Hub can offer you:**

- Information about the services and activities that are available in your community
- Tools to manage your own wellbeing
- Practical support if you're struggling with your mental wellbeing, loneliness, or things like debt or benefits.

It's good to have information on what's going on, but it can lead to feeling more anxious or overwhelmed by the news. If that's the case for you, try to check the news only once a day and get the facts from trusted sources like the BBC or the Government at [☛ www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus).

**Connect more, by spending time with others**

Loneliness has a big impact on our mental health. Connecting with others might feel hard right now, but it is important to stay in contact with friends and family:

**Keeping healthy** continued

- Arrange phone calls or send instant messages or texts. If you're worried that you might run out of things to talk about, make a plan with someone to watch a TV programme or read a book separately so that you can discuss it when you contact each other.
- Think about things you can do to connect with people. For example, putting extra pictures up of the people you care about might be a nice reminder of the people in your life.
- Listen to a talk radio station or podcast if your home feels too quiet.

**The Samaritans**

☎ 116 123  
 🌐 [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

The Samaritans offer a friendly chat. You can call them on the above number.

**Age UK**

☎ 080 0678 1602

Everyday, 8am to 7pm.

Age UK offer an advice line and a friendly chat if you are feeling lonely.

**Extra mental health help and support**

If you are feeling overwhelmed or need extra help, support is available.

- **Your GP** can provide advice on how to deal with your symptoms and talk about available treatment.
- **Talking Therapy Southwark** supports people struggling with low mood, stress and anxiety. You can contact them on ☎ 020 3228 2194, but you must be registered with a Southwark GP first.
- **The Big White Wall** is free, available to all Southwark residents aged 16+ and provides 24 hour support, seven days a week. Register at 🌐 [www.bigwhitewall.com](http://www.bigwhitewall.com) and enter your postcode when prompted.

**Mental health support for young people**

- **The Nest** is a service for young people seeking free, confidential support for stress, anxiety, worry, or just a chat. Contact the team at ☎ 020 8138 1805 or 🌐 [www.thenestsouthwark.org.uk](http://www.thenestsouthwark.org.uk)
- **Kooth** is an online counselling service for people aged 11 to 25 years old to get free, anonymous mental health and emotional wellbeing support 🌐 [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

**What to do if you are having a mental health crisis**

In an emergency always call ☎ 999.

Southwark's NHS 24 hour mental health support line is available for residents who are experiencing mental distress on ☎ 080 0731 2864.

**Coping with non-coronavirus related health conditions****Contacting your GP surgery**

Don't put off contacting your GP surgery if you need to consult a doctor or nurse about your usual health issues or anything new. They have measures in place to make sure you can be safely seen, and are offering video or telephone consultations.

**Getting your child immunised**

It's important to make sure your child doesn't miss out on immunisations. These protect them and other vulnerable people from potentially life-threatening infections.

**Immunisations if you are pregnant**

If you are pregnant, you should get your whooping cough (pertussis) vaccine to protect your baby. If you are at least 16 weeks into your pregnancy you should have heard from your GP surgery about your vaccine. If not, contact your practice.

For more information on immunisations, contact your GP, or go to 🌐 [www.nhs.uk/vaccinations](http://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations).



## Keeping yourself busy

### Southwark Council Stay At Home Library

 [www.southwark.gov.uk/stayathomelibrary](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/stayathomelibrary)

It's a good idea to keep your brain occupied and challenged, especially if you are not working at the moment.

**We have launched the Stay At Home Library, where you can:**

- Borrow ebooks and films
- Find learning resources for adults and children
- Take part in online activities
- Access online arts and culture.



## Staying safe

### Domestic and sexual abuse

If you or someone else in your home is in immediate danger call  999.

Abuse can be physical, psychological, sexual, financial or emotional. If you're worried about domestic abuse, ask for help in whatever way it is safe for you. You can contact the following organisations if you are worried about or have experienced abuse.

#### Solace Advocacy and Support Service

 020 7593 1290

 [southwark@solacewomensaid.org](mailto:southwark@solacewomensaid.org)

 [www.solacewomensaid.org](http://www.solacewomensaid.org)

Solace provides a help and advice service for anyone aged 16 or over who lives in Southwark. They give free and confidential support with safety, housing, finances, legal services, parenting and emotional support.

#### The London Survivors Gateway

 080 8801 0860

Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm.

The charity offers victims and survivors of rape and sexual abuse help to access specialist services.

#### National Domestic Violence Helpline

 080 8200 0247

24 hours a day, 365 days per year.

Find out how to get help if you or someone you know is a victim of domestic abuse  [www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help)

## Staying safe continued

## Look out for fraudulent callers at your door

The Police have told us that criminals may be taking advantage of residents by posing as door-to-door coronavirus testers in order to gain access to their homes. Nobody, and specifically neither the NHS nor the Police, are conducting such door to door tests. If anyone knocks on your door and claims to be conducting such tests call the Police on 📞 999.

Don't give money or personal details to anyone you don't know or trust – for example, if someone you don't know knocks on your door and offers to help.



## Keep in touch

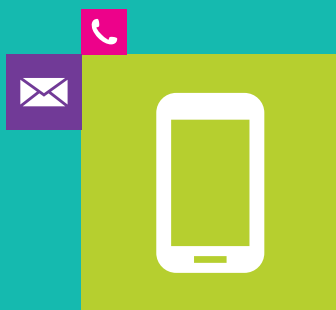
## You can keep in touch with us at:

Website	<a href="http://www.southwark.gov.uk">www.southwark.gov.uk</a>
Facebook	@southwarkcouncil
Twitter	@lb_southwark
Instagram	@southwarkcouncil
YouTube	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/southwarkcouncil">www.youtube.com/southwarkcouncil</a>

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[www.southwark.gov.uk/newslettersignup](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/newslettersignup)







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