



## Covid 19 – A support guide for informal and family carers

We are aware that for the vast majority of unpaid informal carers and family carers, your care and support often goes largely unrecognised. We are in unprecedented times and the Covid pandemic has, and will, continue to demand our energy and resilience to continue to care for our loved ones family and/or friends. Your role is extremely vital, and even more so during the Covid pandemic. We hope that this support guide provides you with assistance and guidance to access support for yourselves, and please do make contact with us should you have any other suggestions on what may be useful during this difficult time.

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Principal Social Worker

### Section 1: National Guidance

For the most up to date guidance on Coronavirus restrictions and how to keep yourself and the person you care for safe, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> . If you need to speak to someone local, the helpline number is 01983 823600.

The Department of Health & Social Care is providing guidance for those who provide unpaid care to family and friends, including young carers, and will continue to keep this guidance up to date to communicate any new advice. This includes guidance for carers and family supporting adults and children with learning disabilities or autism. This can be found here <https://www.scie.org.uk/care-providers/coronavirus-covid-19/learning-disabilities-autism/carers-family> . If you need further information, please contact carers IW on 01983 553173.

## Section 2: Local services available



There are over 5.4 million people in England providing care to loved ones, including young carers. Supporting them to continue to make this invaluable contribution is vital over the winter period. As part of the national Winter Plan, Isle of Wight Council will be taking the following actions:

- We will follow the direct payments guidance and be flexible to maximise independence. We've included some helpful advice about finance below, together with some useful contact numbers and links
- We will ensure that assessments are updated to reflect any additional needs created by COVID-19 of both carers and those in need of social care
- We will work with services that may have closed, over the pandemic, to consider how they can reopen safely or be reconfigured to work in a COVID-19 secure way and consider using the Infection Control Fund to put in place infection prevention and control measures to support the resumption of services
- Where people who use social care services can no longer access the day care or respite services that they used before the pandemic, we will work with them to identify alternative arrangements that meet their identified needs

### **Q. Finance – when things change, who should I contact?**

A. The individual receiving care will receive an annual review each year where we can review any changes to their state paid benefits, if something changes with their finances before their review, they should contact the **Financial Assessment and Charging team on 01983 823479 or [fac.team@iow.gov.uk](mailto:fac.team@iow.gov.uk)**.

### **Q. Funding of respite and day services – what should we do if we've been charged for pre-booked respite that we couldn't get due to lockdown? Is there a process for utilising hours in a different way?**

The answer to this question will depend on how the individual you care for receives their care and support.

### **A. For traditional Non-Residential Care including Day Care / Respite**

If someone has their services managed by the Isle of Wight Council (e.g. not a personal budget) they will be asked to pay up to their maximum contribution towards the cost of their care. If their maximum contribution is higher than the cost of the care, they will only pay for the actual care and support they receive. If they want to change the care services they receive, i.e. wanted to swap day care for additional home care hours, they would need to discuss this with their care manager and request a new / revised care plan. These requests would need to be agreed by management as per the process. If you would like your care plan to be reviewed, please call Adult Social Care on 01983 823340.

### **A. For individuals with Direct Payment Personal Budgets (DPPB)**

A DPPB is billed on planned and not actuals, i.e. if someone has respite and daycare in their DPPB but doesn't use it, they would still need to pay towards the cost of this service as they are still receiving the money for it. A DPPB should allow for the individual to use their money in a more varied way, i.e. if normally they would pay £25 to go to day care, they could choose to have 2 additional PA hours at £12.50 per hour instead. Some people have decided to suspend their DPPBs throughout lockdown as they were unable to use the services they wanted to. As there was no DPPB in place, their client contributions towards the cost of it were also suspended. Whilst a DPPB is more flexible than traditional home care, if an individual no longer wanted to receive their respite for example, they could request that a new support plan is completed by the care management teams. If you would like your care plan to be reviewed, please call Adult Social Care on 01983 823340.

### **Q. Where can I find information about paying for residential care, deferred payments and top-ups?**

A. There are two helpful pages on the Isle of Wight Council website, one on our Charging for Residential Care Policy, along with the Deferred Payment Agreement (DPA) information and top ups:

General paying for care - <https://www.iow.gov.uk/Residents/Care-Support-and-Housing/Adults-Services/Adult-Social-Care-Finance/Overview>

DPA's / 3rd Party Top Ups - <https://www.iow.gov.uk/Residents/Care-Support-and-Housing/Adults-Services/Adult-Social-Care-Finance/Assessments2>

If you have any questions about these policies, or need to request a paper version, please contact the Financial Assessment and Charging Team on 01983 823479 or [fac.team@iow.gov.uk](mailto:fac.team@iow.gov.uk)

## Q. What about changes in Direct Payments during Covid-19?

A. There have been some changes in the Direct Payments process with regards to a family member, or friend, providing care and support to individuals if their usual carer is not available due to COVID-19 restrictions. In particular:

- Family members who are wishing to take over support due to the current situation and self-isolation can be paid without insurance or a DBS in place, however we are advising them to register as self-employed with the HMRC (self-assessment).
- If a direct payment is already in place and the family member is managing the budget and will be paying themselves, the budget will need to be **transferred to the DPSS team** to manage and make payments accordingly.

If you have any questions about Direct Payments, please call **01983 823340**.



**Carers IW** offer adult carers of adults a 7-day service, we are available on 01983 533173 Mon- Fri 8-8pm & Sat- Sun 10-4pm at the Carers Centre, The Quay, Newport PO30 2QR (round the back). If you need help, **please ring us**, we have some sessions open and are seeing carers at the Centre. **Are you struggling** through lack of **day-care** or to get your **shopping**, Carers IW have up to 12 hrs **free PA support** that you may be eligible for, contact them for more details before Feb 21.

**Contingency Planning - The Carers Emergency Alert scheme** is a free local service available to all unpaid carers. Carers register with the scheme and provide information about the person they look after, the names of people who can be contacted in the event of an emergency and who have keys to your home. This information is held securely by Wightcare and carers are issued with a wristband which gives a telephone number for people to contact in an emergency and gives a unique code to identify them. In an emergency, Wightcare will take action depending on what has happened to you, such as:

- Contact family or friends to inform them what has happened.
- Contact the person you care for and inform them.
- Check that the person's support needs are being met.
- Arrange emergency help as required.

For an application form to join the carers emergency alert scheme, **please contact Wightcare on (01983) 821105.**

The **Herbert Protocol** is a national scheme that encourages carers, family and friends to provide and put together useful information, which can then be used in the event of a vulnerable person going missing. **For more details ask Carers IW.**

**If you feel that it would be beneficial to complete a contingency plan more in depth than the Carers Alert Card scheme, then contact Carers IW for details on 01983 533173 Mon-Fri 8-8pm & Sat- Sun 10-4pm.**



**Advanced Care Planning** – Virtual sessions available from Mountbatten.

Advance Care Planning (ACP) provides an opportunity to plan your future health care and support needs. Planning ahead for illness, dying and death can be a difficult task but at Mountbatten our mission is to encourage and support people to do this as we know this can help lessen the worry and burden for loved ones at these difficult times.

These (virtual) sessions will explain what ACP is, how you can do this and what the potential benefits are. The session will also offer an opportunity to understand the difference between ACP and Advance Decision to Refuse Treatment (ADRT) and allow time for questions and answers to help build confidence and knowledge.

- If you are interested in attending a virtual session please email Linda Prendergast at [Linda.Prendergast@mountbatten.org.uk](mailto:Linda.Prendergast@mountbatten.org.uk) or telephone 01983 217390
- For more information about ACP visit <https://www.mountbatten.org.uk/plan-your-future-care>

Bereavement support is available from Mountbatten to any person on the Island who has experienced a bereavement.

- Mountbatten Bereavement Support Telephone number: (01983) 217346 (available during office hours).
- Or you can visit: <https://www.mountbatten.org.uk/coping-with-grief-in-self-isolation>

### Mountbatten contact numbers:

- Mountbatten Keep Connected 24 hour helpline for anyone in need of someone to talk to during the covid-19 pandemic to reduce isolation and to help people stay connected: **(01983) 217297**
- Mountbatten Main Reception for general enquiries: **(01983) 529511**
- Mountbatten Coordination Centre for 24 hour specialist advice if the person you care for has been referred to Mountbatten: **(01983) 533331**

## Health Services

**Flu Jabs** are important for both yourself and the person you care for, **as a carer you are entitled to a free vaccination**. You will be able to arrange your flu vaccinations through your GP. You can also access flu vaccinations via a pharmacy, although you will need to provide evidence you are a carer. If you are having difficulties with your GP or pharmacy about accessing your flu vaccination, you can escalate this to the CCG by phoning 01983 552064.

The IOWCCG website has a wealth of health-related information, including a list of GP surgeries and their contact details, the latest Coronavirus information and flu vaccination information: [www.isleofwightccg.nhs.uk](http://www.isleofwightccg.nhs.uk)

Echo by Lloyds Pharmacy – this is an online service where you can order your NHS prescriptions and have them delivered to your home, office or Post Office collection point for free. You can sign up at [www.echo.co.uk](http://www.echo.co.uk), where you will find instructions and a helpful video telling you how the scheme works.

### **Mental Health Crisis Support:** Do you need help, support or advice?

There are various services available to Isle of Wight residents should you need urgent mental health advice or treatment. To access mental health support, for adults or children, speak to your GP practice if they are open. You can also contact:

<b>Mental Health Crisis Advice</b>	<b>01983 522214</b>
<b>Community Safe Haven</b>	<b>01983 520168</b>
<b>Samaritans</b>	<b>116 123</b>
<b>NHS 111 Advice and Guidance</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>NHS Emergency</b>	<b>999</b>

## Section 3: Wellbeing and resilience advice

### Mindfulness and Relaxation

**Relaxation** is the antidote to stress. It is important to find ways of relaxation that work for you. This could be a breathing exercise, a visualisation exercise where you transport yourself to, for example, a woodland or beach, or an enjoyable hobby like gardening, reading or completing a jigsaw puzzle, or even just finding a quiet 5 minutes with a cup of tea.

**Mindfulness** is not actually a relaxation method but when practiced can have stress relieving benefits. It also can bring a sense of peace and enable greater control of emotions.

Mindfulness means paying attention to the present with purpose, with curiosity, and without judgement. When you are being mindful you are not getting caught up in the past or being dragged into the future. You are aware of thoughts and emotions arriving in your mind, but you let them pass rather than becoming carried away with them or reacting to them.

**Everyone can be mindful. Below are some links to help you get started.**

<https://www.headspace.com/>

<https://www.calm.com/>

Here are a couple of short exercises which may help:

#### **Three-minute mindfulness of breath exercise**

- For three minutes sit comfortably, close your eyes (or look at a blank spot on the wall or floor) and focus your attention on your breathing.
- Don't try to change your breathing in any way – just notice how it feels as you breathe in and out naturally.
- If you become distracted notice the distraction whether this is an external distraction like a noise or an internal distraction such as aches in your body or thoughts in your mind. Just notice the distraction and then return your attention to your breathing.
- Continue for three minutes.

#### **7/11 breathing:**

- Pause
- Breath in gently and calmly to the count of seven (if seven is too hard count to three)
- Breath out gently and calmly to the count of 11 (if 11 is too hard count to five)