

Dear Resident

You may have been self-isolating for some weeks by now. Apologies if you've already been contacted and have previously said you have everything you need. However, I'm sure you'll appreciate there are lots of people who do not have help and support. So, we're writing to let you know about a few things that may help you keep safe and well during these times.

Dorset Council has a dedicated helpline to assist people of all ages with access to food shopping and delivery, collecting medicine, dog walking, befriending and more during this COVID-19 situation. If you need help, please call us on **01305 221000**, 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week or email communityresponse@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk. You can also visit our website at www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/coronavirus.

If you have a specific care requirement, call our Adult Social Care team on 01305 221016 and we can talk with you about how you can be best supported.

'Support if you're self-isolating' e-newsletter

We are setting up a regular e-newsletter specifically for people who are self-isolating during this time. Please sign up at www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/e-newsletter.

Digital hotline

Not everyone is confident using online services. We have set up a free hotline run by digital volunteers for anyone with queries about getting online or improving your online skills.

Call **01305 221000**. An advisor can assist you with the following:

- Help with video conferencing and calling such as on Skype, Zoom or Facetime
- Online shopping and banking
- Accessing virtual books, magazines and TV channels
- Accessing health information
- Supporting you or your children to learn remotely

If you are on a low income and do not have a broadband connection or device at home to connect to the internet, we may be able to help you to get set up.

Mental health and wellbeing

Your health matters. To support your health and wellbeing, there's a raft of resources at www.dorsethealthcare.nhs.uk/coronavirus-wellbeing-support. You'll find information and advice, helpline numbers, and local mental health and therapy services, all designed to support people living in Dorset to deal with the stress and distress of facing COVID-19. You are definitely not alone... help is just a call or a click away.

If you are in urgent need of mental health advice and support Dorset HealthCare's Connection service offers a 24-hour helpline on **0300 123 5440**.

The NHS in Dorset is encouraging you to continue to get the help you need during the current COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst the way services are being delivered may be different, we want to reassure everyone that the Health Service is there for you to access as usual.

For help from a GP, please use your GP surgery's website to access online advice, or call the surgery to speak to a GP who will assess your needs.

For urgent medical help, use the NHS 111 online service or call 111. For life-threatening emergencies, call 999 for an ambulance. If you're advised to go to hospital, it's important to go.

If you have been identified on the Shielded Patient List (SPL), GPs are making local necessary arrangements to make sure your care continues.

Local community activity

There are lots of community-based schemes and support groups across the county. If you want to know what's happening or is available in your local area, please go to the Help and Kindness website (www.helpandkindness.co.uk) or call our helpline on **01305 221000**.

Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice is a free, independent and confidential service. Call the **Dorset Adviceline** on **0344 411 1444** for advice on claiming benefits, help with your finances, employment or any other issue. If you need help with your heating or energy costs, call the Citizens Advice **Dorset Energy helpline** on **01929 775500**. They can check that you are registered with Priority Services for energy and water. Advisors can also help with pre-payment key/card meters, bills, grants and discounts and complaints.

Post Office Cashless System

The Post Office has made it easier for people self-isolating to access cash:

- 'Payout Now' - a voucher sent by text, email or post that you then share with a trusted individual to withdraw cash on your behalf
- 'Fast PACE' – a service that allows you to arrange for a trusted individual to collect a cheque from you, cash it at Post Office, and return with the cash.

Virtual befriending

If you're self-isolating and feeling lonely there are two ways you could keep in touch with people. You can register to become a befriender and chat to others who are also self-isolating, or you can chat to someone because you're feeling lonely. Contact Volunteer Centre Dorset on **01305 229214** to register for either service.

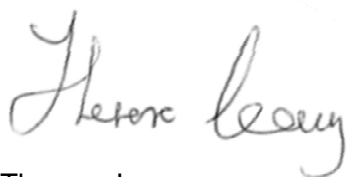
Faith and belief

Due to the coronavirus, the government called for all places of worship to close. Many churches, synagogues, mosques and temples are providing worship online. Some are livestreamed and others pre-recorded. Technology is being used in creative ways to keep people connected. Contact your local place of worship for more information. Also, as a number of celebrations have been cancelled or are being celebrated online, you can keep up to date on how different faiths and beliefs are dealing with the current situation by visiting www.interfaith.org.uk.

Lastly, please don't be afraid to ask for help and support during this time. No-one should go without essential food or medicines, feel lonely or frightened. We're working with community organisations, town and parish councils, and registered care and housing providers across the county to make sure support is available to anyone who needs it. If you do need help, please don't leave it until it's too late.

Need help reading this? Call 01305 221000

With best wishes,



Theresa Leavy

Executive Director – Dorset COVID-19 community response

On behalf of Dorset Council, Dorset NHS partners and voluntary community sector