

Caring for vulnerable and older people

A customer guide

This guide has been put together to support Orbit customers who may have caring responsibilities for older and vulnerable people. **This guide has been developed by Orbit colleagues as a support tool for customers.**

On Monday 23 March 2020 Boris Johnson, the Prime Minister, introduced a period of confinement that means you should remain at home unless you are classed as an “essential or key worker”. This may have put you in a difficult position if you care for a family member who doesn’t live in your home, and if you have children. It is important, however, to remember that staying at home, although difficult, is essential as you are helping to protect yourself and others by doing so.

It's vital that you follow the Government's social distancing guidelines for your safety - explicitly that you maintain a two metre (six feet) distance between yourself and people outside of your home.

We hope that you and your families remain safe and well.

Orbit Housing

Caring for a family member

The Government produced guidance for social distancing for vulnerable people which can be seen [here](#). Vulnerable people are classed as, those who are:

- Aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions).
- Under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (i.e. anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds).
- Those who are pregnant.

For a comprehensive list of vulnerable people please follow the link [here](#).

If you are caring for someone who is vulnerable, there are some simple steps that you can take to protect them and to reduce their risk at the current time.

Ensure you follow advice on good hygiene such as:

- Wash your hands on arrival 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 visit if you are unwell and make alternative arrangements for their care.
- Provide information on 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 access further advice on creating a contingency plan is available from [Carers UK](#)

You should also look at alternative ways to keep in contact with family members during this time, so calling, Facetiming or Skyping for those more tech savvy and encouraging your wider family to make contact can share the responsibility. Check out your Local Authority website for additional support on a local level.

Use trustworthy sources such as [GOV.UK](#) or the [NHS website](#) and fact-check information from the news, social media or other people.

You also need to look after yourself and your own mental wellbeing. We have another guide, **Looking after your wellbeing at home**, which can support you to stay healthy.

Caring for children

During this period of lockdown, you may be working from home while your children are off from school.

Although we all want our children to stick with routine they are not at school so be mindful of not setting yourself up to fail. Setting up a learning plan is fine but difficult to adhere to. We all want to support our families whilst working from home so now is the time to consider different ways of working. Talking with your line manager about being flexible with times of work or how you should react if children come in when you're on a skype call etc, we all remember that BBC interview when the children interrupt a live interview. If ever we need a smile and reminding the struggle is real then do have a watch, here is the [link](#).

Top tips

- Allow for free play time while you are working.
- Take time away from your work during the day to do planned learning with them.
- Ensure children have time for outdoor play, if you don't have outdoor space ensure you go out for a daily walk (ensuring you adhere to social distancing guidelines).
- If doing work skype meetings use the start of the meeting to allow the children to say hi or wave to the other people, this removes the mystery and if they come back in just 'mute' your mike while you settle them back to other activities.
- If you are on a call and are interrupted suggest calling back when it's a better time.
- All join in fun things, like joining Joe Wicks for his daily PE lesson, 9.00am Monday to Friday on YouTube #PEwithJOE.

We have also put together some age appropriate fun activity packs for children between the ages of 4 – 10.

Additional Information (taken from the government website)

What are the symptoms of coronavirus?

The symptoms are:

- A cough
- A high temperature
- Shortness of breath

These symptoms are similar to lots of other illnesses, like common colds and [flu](#). If someone has these symptoms it doesn't necessarily mean they have coronavirus.

However, to ensure we limit the spread, anyone who has symptoms that could be coronavirus, however mild, needs to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for between 7 and 14 days.

How long to stay at home

If you have symptoms of coronavirus, you'll need to stay at home for 7 days.

If you live with someone who has symptoms, you'll need to stay at home for 14 days from the day the first person in the home started having symptoms.

If you live with someone who is 70 or over, has a long-term condition, is pregnant or has a weakened immune system, try to find somewhere else for them to stay for 14 days.

If you have to stay at home together, try to keep away from each other as much as possible.

Visit <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/> for more information. Only call 111 if you cannot get help online.

How to avoid catching and spreading coronavirus (social distancing)

Everyone should do what they can to stop coronavirus spreading.

Do

- Wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds.
- Always wash your hands when you get home or into work.
- Use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available.
- 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.
- Avoid close contact with people who have symptoms of coronavirus.
- Only travel on public transport if you need to.
- Work from home, if you can.
- Avoid social activities, such as going to pubs, restaurants, theatres and cinemas.
- Avoid events with large groups of people.
- Use phone, [online services](#), or apps to contact your GP surgery or other NHS services.

Don't

- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.
- Do not have visitors to your home, including friends and family.

Advice for people at high risk - If you're at high risk of getting seriously ill from coronavirus, there are extra things you should do to avoid catching it.

These include:

- Not leaving your home – you should not go out to do shopping, visit friends or family, or attend any gatherings.
- Avoiding close contact with other people in your home as much as possible.

Please note that information contained in this guide has been sourced from external websites which are free to use for the general public. Further details are available upon request.