

[New adult social care guidance to protect the most vulnerable against COVID-19](#)

The [new guidance](#) covers a variety of scenarios relating to care homes, staff, and providers who care for people in their own homes to ensure older people and those with pre-existing conditions and care needs who receive support are best protected.

Elderly people and those with underlying health conditions are much more likely to develop serious complications. Anyone who is suspected of having COVID-19, with a new continuous cough or high temperature, should not visit care homes or people receiving home care, and should self-isolate at home.

People receiving care will be isolated in their rooms if they have symptoms of coronavirus. To ensure they can continue to receive the care they require, care staff will use protective equipment to minimise the risk of transmission.

Building on existing strong local relationships, the NHS will work with care providers where necessary to make sure people have the best possible care and remain in the community.

GPs have been asked to look at the possibilities of offering digital appointments to provide advice and guidance to patients and potentially their families.

Councils have been told to map out all care and support plans to prioritise people who are at the highest risk and contact all registered providers in their local area to facilitate plans for mutual aid.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said:

I understand how worried people most in need of care will be about coronavirus, and how concerned families around the country will be for their loved ones. And I want everyone to know we are working around the clock to ensure we do everything possible to reduce the risk vulnerable and elderly people face.

Public safety is my top priority and we are clear people in care should follow the same tried and tested protocols everyone else is following. These include good hand hygiene and self-isolating where necessary, allowing our fantastic care workforce to keep them well.

We are working closely with partners from across the social care sector to ensure local authorities, care providers and our health and social workforce are prepared to take action to protect our most vulnerable.

Local authorities will work with the NHS and care providers to bring together their pre-existing contingency preparations and make sure each decision is made with the best public health and clinical advice at its heart.

Minister for Care, Helen Whately, said:

We recognise that we are entering an incredibly challenging time for people living and working in care and we are working closely with industry experts to do everything we can to limit the impact that COVID-19 has on the most vulnerable.

This guidance is an important part of that work. Its aim is to help the NHS, local government and care providers to work together to take the best steps to protect those most at risk.

The social care workforce works tremendously hard to care for people of all ages with complex health needs. I am sincerely grateful for their commitment to the people they care for, now more than ever.

As part of the government's emergency legislation measures, Statutory Sick Pay will be paid from day one of sickness to support those affected by COVID-19. Those on zero-hour contracts will also receive Statutory Sick Pay or will be able to claim Universal Credit dependent on their circumstances.