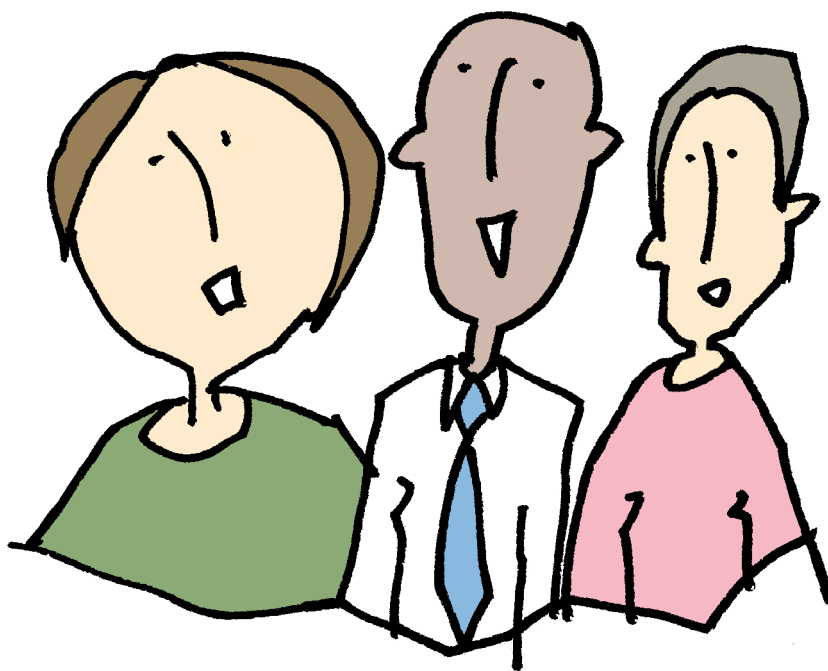


Gloucestershire County Council

COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Information for parents and carers

Issue 1



gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL

COVID-19

Information for parents and carers

We understand that during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, families are feeling worried about availability of support to help them care for their child/children in this time of uncertainty. We have outlined below some frequently asked questions to help answer some concerns.

We are working with partners, including NHS Digital to pull together our understanding of those deemed vulnerable at national level, whilst ensuring compliance with data protection regulations locally, and working with our communities to best support families at this time.

Q1: If our children are not on the government shielded list, we are not able to get priority food deliveries.

If you are unable to get out to a shop due to needing to self isolate or care for your child/children, please seek support from those who can offer help with food deliveries:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gloucestershires-community-help-hub/>
and click on the 'I need help' button.

If your child is in receipt of free school meals, you will receive a shopping voucher/general food hamper. This will be arranged through your school. For more information, please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools>

If your child has specific dietary requirements that this service is unable to cater for, please use the community help hub who will be able to assist you with shopping for specific needs.



Q2: What if I need help with collecting a prescription for my child's medication (or my own medication)?

Where possible it is advisable to liaise with your local pharmacy as many now deliver to your door. If you are unable to do this, please see below the link of the community help hub that can support you.



<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gloucestershires-community-help-hub/>
and click on the 'I need help' button.

A professional or clinician you are working with, can also make a referral to the NHS Volunteer Responders, who can help with tasks such as delivering medicines from pharmacies.

Q3: What if parent carers are ill with COVID-19 and cannot look after their child/children?

We would always advise to follow Government advice around self isolating. If a current care package is in place but is not sufficient to support parent carers during illness/self isolation, then please contact **DCYPS (Disabled Children and Young Peoples Service) Duty** if you are open to DCYPS on **01452 328069**.

If you have a children's continuing health care package please contact your health provider or email glccg.childrenscomplexcare@nhs.net If you don't have a package in place and need support, please ring the **Family Information Service** on **0800 542 0202**. We will do our utmost to support families.

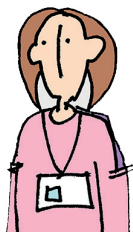
If you have an emergency out of hours please contact our Emergency Duty Team on: **01452 614194**
Email: edt@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Q4: I am worried about taking my child out for a walk.

We understand that to meet a child's sensory needs or the need to get out of the house for exercise, there may be reasonable adjustments that need to be made, given the current situation. Where possible families should follow Government guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>) but also talk to their lead professional or health provider about ideas on meeting sensory needs or exercise needs. The Council is working with police colleagues in terms of the current restrictions to seek further advice for families about reasonable adjustments. We will update on this as soon as possible.

Q5: I want to be tested for COVID-19 as I want my personal assistants and carers coming in to be tested.

We know the Government are rolling out testing as fast as possible. The Council will raise this issue with the clinical commissioning group and continue to update you on the availability of testing.



Q6: I am worried about carers/nurses / healthcare assistants coming into my home.

We understand the worry about infection control with visitors coming into your home. We would recommend that you always speak directly to your care/health provider who will reassure you about all measures they are taking to reduce risks around COVID-19.

Q7: I feel worried that I am losing my support networks such as school and short breaks provision.

Please do talk to your school about attendance to see if this is possible, as they are still supporting children to attend if needs can be met in school (in line with the national criteria). We appreciate some children will need to be shielded at this time and therefore can't attend school.

Regarding short breaks, there is currently less availability due to the current situation. Please talk to your social worker/ lead professional as there may be other options for support.

Where parents use a Direct Payment to purchase an activity, with discussion with their Social Worker, Lead Professional or the Disabled Children's duty service they can request the funds used for activity provision to be converted into Personal Assistant Hours for the equivalent financial value

Parents can also make contact with their Social Worker, Lead Professional or Disabled Children's duty service to request that funds are used to purchase activities or equipment that will meet their child's specific needs- eg Sensory toys. This has to be by agreement and receipts will need to be kept in line with the Direct Payment policy for audit purposes.

Where parents are seeking to recruit a personal assistant, the Glos assistants website is available. This also has the latest COVID-19 information on this.

<https://www.glosassistants.org.uk/>

Q8: How will COVID 19 affect my direct payments?

We will make sure that your payments are still paid on your regular payment dates.



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Q9: Where can I get support with my direct payment and employing a PA?

Where you already have Direct Payments in place, Penderels Trust will be able to support you. Tel: **02476 511 611/01452 411000**

If you don't yet have a Direct Payment and are interested in this as a way to meet your assessed needs please contact the Family Information Service on 0800 542 0202, or if you are known to the Disabled Children's Service phone your social worker or lead professional.

If you are new to considering Direct Payments please use the Glos Assistants website:

<https://www.glosassistants.org.uk/>

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Q10: What if my PA has children who need to stay at home?

PAs are considered to be key workers. This means your PA's children are eligible to continue to attend school if they can't be safely cared for at home.

The PA will need to contact the school for more information.

If your PA can work

If your PA can work, they should carry on fulfilling their duties.

You and your PA must take any new rules on health and safety procedures very seriously and implement them based on government guidance. This is for their protection and to prevent the spread of infection to other people.

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Q11: What if my personal assistant can't work?

Self-isolating employees are legally defined as being unfit to attend work. It's important to stay at home and self-isolate if you are displaying symptoms.

Please visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/>

If your Personal Assistant tells you they have symptoms of COVID-19 as described on NHS website, they should stay home or you can send them home. If they earn above the Lower Employment Limit (LEL) statutory sick pay would apply from day one.

If they don't qualify, they can check GOV.UK to see if they can get financial support in the form Universal Credit or Employment Support Allowance.

The statutory sick pay (SSP) regulations 2020 (coronavirus amendment) came into force Friday 13 March. SSP will now be payable to those self-isolating merely under Government guidance so there's no need for formal written notice to be given by a medical officer.

If you feel it's safer for your PA to self-isolate, even though they haven't displayed any symptoms, you'll need to pay them if they're on contracted hours.

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Q12: What if my PA doesn't want to come to work even without showing symptoms?

If your PA chooses not to work and there's no identified high risk then no pay other than authorised annual leave will be given as this is an unauthorised absence.



Q13: Is a personal assistant a key worker?

Yes. We have identified Personal Assistants as Keyworkers. We have a letter drafted to send out to parent carers for them to give to their personal assistant to identify them as keyworkers.

As the letter needs to identify your personal assistant by name we need to make contact with each parent by phone to ascertain names of Personal Assistants and email addresses we can use to send the letters. Due to the volume we may have different people from GCC than those you would normally be in contact with who are phoning you asking for this information, if you do have any concern of who is phoning you please call the DCYPs duty number who will be able to support you.

As soon as we get names of Personal Assistants and email addresses these letters will be sent to you.

Q14: Can I use Direct Payments to buy additional personal protection equipment or prioritise essential tasks at home

Personal protection equipment (PPE) can be:

- ➔ gloves
- ➔ masks
- ➔ sanitiser gel
- ➔ aprons

Normally the employer must ensure their employees are adequately protected but with PPE in short supply, we request that Direct Payments recipients contact their support agency in the first instance. If there are any concerns, please talk to your lead professional or the Family Information Service.

If you need to stay home because of self-isolation, you can use Direct Payment funding in a more flexible way to prioritise essential tasks. Where you do need to make a change to your child's usual support plan please inform your lead professional, Social Worker or Duty service so we can ensure this is recorded so we can continue to support you in the best way possible.

Well Child

Follow the link below for further information on COVID-19 from this national charity for sick children.

<https://www.wellchild.org.uk/2020/03/11/covid-19-information-for-parents-and-carers/>

We realise this is a challenging time for everyone and so please visit the link below to support your wellbeing.

Gloucestershire Carers Hub

0800 111 9000 or contact them via their webpage which is

<https://gloucestershirecarershub.co.uk>

See also <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/public-health/advice-on-covid-19/looking-after-your-wellbeing/>

The Parent Carer Forum

Our partner is the Gloucestershire Parent Carer Forum and we will continue to work together to provide updates for parents and carers. Please visit <https://glosparentcarerforum.org.uk>

The Gloucestershire Carers Hub message during COVID-19



Carers and partner agencies

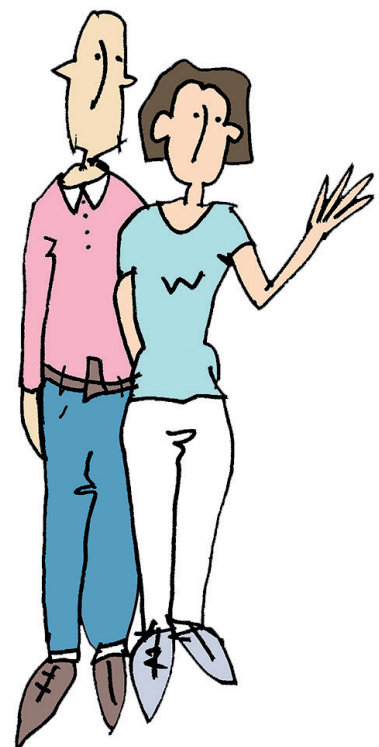
We understand that this is a worrying time for carers and, as such, are doing all we can to support carers through this situation.

Most of our communication channels remain open, though for the safety of carers and our staff, we are no longer providing face to face services. We are still available to offer support to carers during our normal opening hours (9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, but we will keep this under review and amend as appropriate) including information, advice and guidance over the phone and through our website, email and social media. Please do keep checking our website and social media for up to date information. The latest information from the government relevant for carers can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

At times like this contingency planning is at the forefront of our mind. Therefore, if you would like to talk about what might happen if you or your cared for becomes ill, please do phone. Whilst we may not be able to process registrations for the Carers Emergency Scheme as normal, we will continue to start the registration process for any carer who wishes to do so. We would request that carers are mindful that the registration processes may take longer than usually expected. It is really helpful to talk through emergency planning, even if you do not formally wish to register with the Carers Emergency Scheme. Information regarding the local Carers Emergency Scheme is available- <https://gloucestershirecarershub.co.uk/carers-emergency-scheme/>

We recognise that this is an increasingly isolating time for carers and we want to assure carers in Gloucestershire that we are here if you want to talk to someone. We will also be providing outreach calls to carers known to us, to offer emotional support, information, advice and guidance, as well as a conversation about contingency plans.

Of further interest may be the Jointly App which is supported by Carers UK. The app is available free of charge to all carers registered with the Gloucestershire Carers Hub. The app is there to support you with your caring role, and you can allow multiple individuals to log in and update information. The app can act as a live record of what is happening with the person you care for including appointments, updating medical details and medication.



Contact Gloucestershire Carers Hub

If you are a carer, please get in touch. If you know someone who is a carer, please look out for them at this time:

Phone: 0300 111 9000

Web: www.gloucestershirecarershub.co.uk

Email: carers@peopleplus.co.uk

Social media

Facebook: Gloucestershirecarershub

Twitter: @GCarersHub

Instagram: Gloucestershire_Carers_Hub

For Young Carers, please contact:

Gloucestershire Young Carers

Phone: 01452 733060

Web: <http://www.glosyoungcarers.org.uk>

Gloucestershire Parent Carer Forum

Phone: 07494 704564

Web: www.glosparentcarerforum.org.uk

Email: info@glosparentcarerforum.org.uk

Social media

Facebook: Gloucestershireparentcarers

Twitter: @CarerForum

GP Practices

Carers Emergency Scheme

We understand that GP Practices are extremely busy and even more so at this unprecedented time.

Carers are really important to the system as a whole. Therefore, we ask that if you receive information from us or a carer regarding a carer signing up to the Carers Emergency Scheme either via email or phone, you consider prioritising this so that we can continue to support and register carers at this time.

If you have any questions, or if you are aware of a carer, please contact Gloucestershire Carers Hub (details left).



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