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## Coronavirus guidance: 20 March 2020

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### All the latest news from West Sussex County Council



### Coronavirus (COVID-19)

West Sussex County Council's Public Health team is working closely with Public Health England (PHE), which is leading the national COVID-19 response and providing

messaging for the public.

The latest [Department of Health & Social Care and Public Health England information on COVID-19](#) is available to read on the Government website.

Public Health England has a regularly updated blog to answer many [frequently asked questions](#).

You can help prevent the spread of germs and infection by following [NHS advice](#):

- 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 straight away and wash your hands afterwards
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell

Find out about how the [coronavirus is affecting West Sussex](#) on our website.

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### Information for parents regarding schools

On 19 March, the Government [updated its guidance for educational settings](#), which now asks that parents should keep their children at home, wherever possible. It also asks that schools remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend.



West Sussex schools are being asked to continue to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, whose parents are key workers and critical to the COVID-19 response, and children who cannot be safely cared for at home. Definitions of 'vulnerable children' and 'key workers' are provided in the guidance.

The Government has also published further [information for parents and carers about the closure of schools](#) and other educational settings, which will continue to be regularly updated.

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### Help us help you!



We are focused on making sure we can continue to support the most vulnerable people in our community; those who rely on someone else to help with daily living. Some of these people can manage on their own but, as a result of social distancing, now find themselves without access to care, support or basic provisions because the support network they've relied on is no longer available to them

during this crisis.

We are finalising a new section on our website where residents can let us know about:

- someone they're worried about
- if they need support themselves
- if they can offer support and help by volunteering, or taking-up casual employment
- any businesses and organisations who want to support us.
- there will also be details of other places where you can get help or support

We know that there has been a local neighbourhood response and we want to support the continuation of community activity to build a network of support in partnership with our local council and voluntary sector colleagues.

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### Staying healthy and well at home

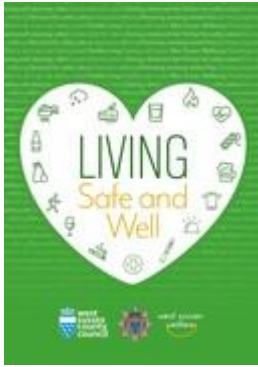
Maintaining your general health and wellbeing at home will be important in the coming weeks. Try including these ideas in your routine:



- Stay physically active – stand up from your chair regularly, move around your house, and try to get outside into the garden; check out exercise resources online, including [Super Six](#).
- Maintain a healthy diet and drink plenty – eat a variety of food groups, including protein, dairy and at least five fruit and veg a day (frozen or tinned are good), and 6-8 mugs of fluid.
- Keep connected to your friends and family – talk to people on the phone, by text or video call if you can.
- Look after your mental wellbeing – keeping busy with hobbies or learning something new can help – this [guide](#) has lots of ideas.
- Stay safe and warm at home – let natural light and fresh air in, and use this [safety checker](#).

You can also find guidance on staying safe and well at home from [Age UK](#).

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## Fire service on keeping vulnerable residents safe

West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service is offering alternative ways of ensuring vulnerable residents are fire safe in their homes during the coronavirus outbreak.

The service will be offering their free Safe and Well Visits via phone, Skype and by posting a useful resource document.

The visits are a way of offering advice on how to stay safe as well as smoke detectors and other specialist fire equipment free of charge.

General fire safety advice includes:

- Smoke alarms should be on every level of the home. Check they're working regularly.
- Avoid smoking in comfortable furniture or beds #DontSnoozeAndSmoke
- Fires such as log burners should be cleaned regularly, and guards placed around any open flames.
- Electrical items should be checked, don't overload plug sockets. Don't leave anything on charge overnight.
- Try and be more careful in the kitchen. 50% of home fires start here.
- You should close your doors at night in case a fire breaks out. This will help to contain the fire/toxic smoke and prevent the spread by up to 20 minutes.

Book or refer someone for free Safe and Well advice here:

<http://bit.ly/WSFRSSafeAndWell>.

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## All West Sussex Libraries closed until further notice

Following the latest Government advice, all 36 libraries in West Sussex are now closed until further notice.

Libraries provide a valuable service to residents and the library team are working on plans to offer a modified library service during these unprecedented times, which we will update people on as we know more.



For now, anyone who is currently not a member of their local library, but wants to join, can do so [online](#).

Once registered, you will have instant access to the e-library service, where there are a range of downloadable books, audiobooks, magazines, comics and newspapers.

There are also procedures in place for anyone who currently has items on loan:

- Library staff will automatically renew everything that is currently on loan and will continue to do so during the closures.
- No fines and charges will be incurred during the closure.
- Individuals do not need to call the renewals line to stop books and other items from going overdue.

More details will follow in due course, to keep up-to-date follow the library service on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).



### Explore the outdoors, responsibly

These are obviously very uncertain times. However, it is important people do still get fresh air and stay fit and well while closely following government guidance.

Spring is slowly arriving in West Sussex, take a moment if you can to think of your health and wellbeing and see our wonderful outdoors, while following guidance on social distancing.

To see what we have on offer in West Sussex, visit [www.experiencewestsussex.com](http://www.experiencewestsussex.com)

Due to current circumstances all residents and visitors with bookings should contact the individual businesses to check their operating status, postponement and cancellation policies. For more information please click [here](#).

### Care workers urgently needed – can you help?

The care industry will inevitably be under enormous pressure as the coronavirus outbreak develops. Our most vulnerable residents require round the clock care and a resilient workforce is required to look after their needs at this difficult time. If you are able to step in and take on a job in care please [get in touch](#) now. Don't worry if you haven't worked in care before as full training and on-going support is given. You may have worked in the travel, leisure and hospitality industries and have the perfect skills to work in care.



Our friendly Proud to Care team can help you find the right role – email now at [proudtocare@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:proudtocare@westsussex.gov.uk) or search for jobs [here](#).



### Registration services - changes to service

Registration offices are currently closed in: Burgess Hill, East Grinstead, Littlehampton and Storrington but appointments are available at the main hub locations.

Registering a death: In light of the current guidance, we are asking that only the main person informing us of a death, attends the appointment. We would also ask that anyone who is in self-isolation arranges for an alternative informant who has not been in contact with anyone who has the virus to collect the Medical Certificate of Death and attend the appointment. We apologise for any upset this may cause, but hope you understand the importance of protecting everyone's wellbeing. Please note, the above guidance relates to registration of death appointments.

Registering a birth: we would ask that parents consider keeping those attending the appointment to register a birth to a minimum where possible, accepting that both parents need to attend if unmarried.

For further advice please ring 01243 642122.

## **Ceremonies**

Following the latest public health advice we have reviewed our approach to forthcoming ceremonies at both our WSCC ceremony rooms and Licensed Venues. We will be contacting couples directly to make them aware of the precautions we are taking to ensure we can deliver ceremonies in a safe way and will publish updates and responses to frequently asked questions on our website.

Understandably, we are dealing with an unprecedented volume of calls and are working our way through postponements, cancellations and questions, whilst dealing with the most imminent ceremonies first. We are committed to maintaining this service in these unprecedented times and adhering to the statutory minimum guidelines which require the couple, two witnesses and two registrars.

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### **Latest news:**

[Former docs and nurses told "Your NHS Needs You" to tackle greatest global health threat in history](#)

[WSCC continues to work with bus companies to help during coronavirus outbreak](#)

[How to look after your mental wellbeing while staying at home](#)

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