**Updated: 18 June 2020**

**Direct Payments in Camden**

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

We know people who employ their own PA for their care and support are really worried about Coronavirus (COVID-19). This is an uncertain time and ensuring

people who need care and support is a priority. We in Camden Adult Social Care give our assurance that we will do everything in our power to keep care going.

This factsheet sets out what you can do to be prepared if you or your PA is directly affected by the coronavirus, for example if either of you are in self-isolation. It includes **answers to some of the most common questions** we are receiving. You can also read [**government guidance for people receiving direct payments during coronavirus**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-people-receiving-direct-payments#history).

**Please note:** From 1 April 2020, your Direct Payment has increased in line with the London Living Wage. For help with budgeting and re-calculating PA salary, contact PSIC (contact details are below) or your existing payroll provider.

**KEY CONTACTS**

**Personalisation Support in Camden (PSIC)**

PSIC is continuing to deliver our services. Most of PSIC staff are now working from home in line with government advice.

You can contact PSIC on email: **info@psic.org.uk**or telephone **020 7383 4901 (option 1)**.

**Camden Adult Social Care Access and Response Team**

The Access and Response Team are continuing to deliver high quality services and respond as quickly as possible to your calls. Our staff are now working from home and you can contact us on **020 7974 4000 (option 1)** or email **adultsocialcare@camden.gov.uk**.

For the latest advice about coronavirus – staying at home, symptoms, and others visit [**www.camden.gov.uk**](http://www.camden.gov.uk)**/covid-19.**

# BE PREPARED

# Your support plan – make sure it is up to date

Check your support plan is up to date and that appropriate people have a copy. If you don’t have your support plan, produce a one-page document of the basic information people may need about you and your support needs.

# Emergency contact list – do people on the list know you may need to call them?

Make sure you have the contact details of people or organisations you may need to get in touch with such as your social worker and contingency care agency. Make sure this list is complete and up to date and that everyone on the list knows that you, or someone else, may call them.

# Plan ahead

Talk to your PA about how you might manage the situation before you need to. If you have a team of PAs, how might they change their working rota to cover absences or to reduce turnover of people coming in and out of the house?

Get any favourite foods in if you are getting low. You do not need to stockpile food; shops will be staying open. Some supermarkets are now opening early on certain days for older people and people with additional needs. Visit the

[**Food, shopping and other supplies page on Camden Care Choices**](https://camdencarechoices.camden.gov.uk/practical-information-for-staying-at-home/food-shopping-and-other-supplies/) for further details.

Make sure you have the medication you need and know where you can get supplies if you need them. Pharmacies will stay open so you do not need to stockpile regular painkillers etc.

**Use your Direct Payment flexibly**

Direct payments are to enable you to live as independently as possible with solutions that are tailored individually to you. During this challenging time where the government is telling everyone to be prepared for periods of self-isolation, living as independently as possible is more important than ever.

We therefore ask you to be flexible in how you use your Direct Payment to ensure your support needs are met.

If you have any questions about how your Direct Payment can be used, please contact PSIC on email: **info@psic.org.uk**or telephone **020 7383 4901 (option 1)**.

# Make a list of support tasks

What tasks need to be completed every day/week? It is easy to forget the little things. One suggestion is to do a ‘top to toe’ list. Get everything written down. Your regular PA may know to wipe your glasses, but someone else may not think of it.

**Split tasks into categories and list them**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Essential tasks** |  | **Important tasks** |  | **Could live without** **Tasks** |
| **1****2****3** |  | **1****2****3** |  | **1****2****3** |

# Who can help you?

**Social Worker**

**Acquaintances**

**Friends**

**Family**

**List the people who can help you in each circle**

* Start with family members who know you best and work outwards.
* Who can do what?
* Share your plans with people who are willing to help out

# PRACTICAL SUPPORT

You may need practical support with shopping, ordering supplies, collecting prescriptions and medicines, pet care and laundry services. There are people who want to offer support with these tasks.

To find a volunteer who understands self-isolation, social distancing and staying safe contact the **Camden Care Navigation and Social Prescribing Service on 0800 193 6067 (always leave a message to receive a return call).** This is not an emergency service. The service has good connections with community organisations that recruit volunteers. They also understand the importance of finding volunteers who are trustworthy and reliable.

# Volunteer support provided by Camden Council and voluntary organisations

# Camden Council, together with our voluntary and community sector partners are coordinating a volunteer pool to ensure that everyone receives the help they need. The type of support volunteers will provide can include picking up shopping, delivering urgent supplies, donating food, posting mail, and a friendly phone call. If you require support with any of the activities described above, contact the Adult Social Care Access and Response Team on 020 7974 4000 (option 1) or email ****adultsocialcare@camden.gov.uk****.

# Mutual aid volunteer support provided by residents

# There are a number of neighbourhood volunteer groups that Camden residents have set up to help others where they live. Activities are most likely to be useful for ‘out of the house’ tasks such as shopping or walking the dog.

Many of these resident volunteer groups are on Facebook, WhatsApp or other social media. The [**Covid Mutual Aid website**](https://covidmutualaid.org/) has the most up to date list of neighbourhood volunteer groups set up by residents. Find your nearest group by typing Camden in the search box at [**https://covidmutualaid.cc/**](https://covidmutualaid.cc/).

Examples of neighbourhood volunteer groups in Camden include:

[Camden Covid-19 Mutual Aid](https://www.facebook.com/groups/199172994722225/) - Facebook group

[Swiss Cottage Covid Aid](https://www.facebook.com/groups/3079277642124837/) – Facebook group

[Hampstead and Kilburn Covid-19 Community Relief](https://m.facebook.com/covidcommunityrelief/) – Facebook group

[Covid Mutual Aid NW5](https://m.facebook.com/groups/2544901795734563?_rdr) – Facebook group

Kentish Town Covid-19 Support – WhatsApp group

West Hampstead Community help – WhatsApp group

Before deciding to join a group, check the safety information on these groups, or get a second opinion and ask someone you trust to check the group’s authenticity.

Once you are confident the group is genuine, you may want to consider linking up with a volunteer who lives closer to you. Under no circumstances should you give out your personal details such as your address to the wider volunteer group.

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYERS OF PERSONAL ASSISTANTS**

**If YOU need to self-isolate because of suspected coronavirus infection or contact**

**Q: I need to self-isolate. Can my PA continue working?**

Your PA can continue working but you must provide **Personal Protective Equipment** (PPE) for them. PPE describes items such as plastic aprons, gloves and fluid-repellent surgical masks and eye protection (if there is a risk of droplets or secretions).

Public Health England has recommended in their [**guidance published on 10 June**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-people-receiving-direct-payments/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-people-receiving-direct-payments) that **PPE is now used by all PAs delivering direct care (within 2 metres) of ANY person, including for those without symptoms of COVID-19**. The appropriate PPE for direct care delivery is a plastic apron, a fluid resistant surgical mask, gloves +/- eye protection.

The cost of PPE is not included in any Direct Payment rates. We are asking people to use their Direct Payment funds to purchase PPE. If you already hold excess funds on your account this can be used for PPE purchase. If you have insufficient funds you will need to contact Adult Social Care at **adultsocialcare@camden.gov.uk** to request a top-up payment.

You will need to keep any receipts for PPE purchases.

**If you cannot obtain PPE elsewhere, you can contact Adult Social Care to request PPE at** **camdencarechoices@camden.gov.uk****.** Once the referral has been made you will be contacted to confirm your order and discuss requirements. PPE will need to be picked up from the Council offices or, if that is not possible, delivery can be arranged.

Please refer to theCamden information on **PPE for PAs who are not employed through an agency,** published on[**Camden Care Choices**](https://camdencarechoices.camden.gov.uk/information-and-advice/coronavirus-covid-19-latest-guidance/care-arranged-via-a-direct-payment/)**.** The information includes how to use PPE safely, putting on PPE and removing it and disposing of it.

If your PA undertake cleaning duties, they should use household products such as bleach and detergents to get rid of the virus on surfaces. Personal waste (eg used tissues and continence pads) should be securely put into rubbish bags. These bags should be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste within your own room. Set the bag aside for 72 hours before placing them into the usual household waste bin.

If your PA supports you with laundry, they should not shake the dirty laundry before washing it. If you do not have a washing machine, wait until it is permitted (ie. observing self-isolation rules if you or a family member is have symptoms) for you or someone to go launderette. Items that are heavily soiled with body fluids or items that cannot be washed, should be disposed of, with your consent.

Read [**government guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus infection**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection). It includes a section on cleaning and disposal of waste, and laundry.

**Q: I need to self-isolate. What are the options available to my PA if I don’t want them to provide personal care during this time?**

Before you tell your PA not to work for a period of time while you are self-isolating, discuss the following options with them:

* Are there other tasks they can do outside the home e.g. shopping, collecting medication, walking the dog. Your PA would be paid their normal wages.
* Ask your PA to take annual leave. However, they don’t have to agree if you have not given them enough notice (usually one week, or refer to the contract). Your PA would still be paid their normal wages.

If the above options are not agreeable, then you may need to ask your PA to stop working for a temporary period.

**Q: I need to self-isolate. I want to temporarily suspend my PA’s work/pay for a couple of weeks. What right is my PA entitled to?**

If the employment contract you have with your PA allows for a period of temporary suspension of work and pay (**Lay Off**) then they will have a right to **Statutory Guaranteed Pay**, payable for the first five days of absence. Read the [**Government guidance on lay-offs and short-time working**](https://www.gov.uk/lay-offs-short-timeworking/guarantee-pay).

If there is no lay off clause, your PA should be paid as normal. If there is a lay off clause but you want to pay your PA as normal anyway, you need to check this with Personalisation Support in Camden (PSIC). You can contact PSIC on email: **info@psic.org.uk** or telephone **020 7383 4901 (option 1)**.

The other options are:

* make the PA redundant
* agree the PA takes unpaid leave
* agree the PA takes paid leave if they are due any
* pay nothing if the PA is on zero hours

**Q: I received a text/letter from the NHS saying I am in the ‘clinically extremely vulnerable’ category.**

* **Can my PA still work for me?**

Yes, your PA can still work for you as your care and support needs will continue. It is really important that everyone you come into contact with (your PA and anyone else who lives in your house) follows strict NHS guidelines on hygiene to reduce risk. If you have personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, aprons or masks, you should use them but we know they are in short supply.

* **I do not want my PA to provide care for me. What are the options available?**

**The options are:**

* Statutory Guarantee Pay if the contract with your PA includes a lay off arrangement
* pay the PA’s full weekly wages
* make the PA redundant
* agree the PA takes unpaid leave
* agree the PA takes paid leave if they are due any
* pay nothing if the PA is on zero hours

**Q: I need to self-isolate. Can I make a claim for wages paid to my PA as they take temporary leave due to coronavirus (COVID-19)?**

The government has published guidance on the use of the [**Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme#employees-you-can-claim-for).

There is additional guidance relating to [**people receiving direct payments and personal assistants**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-people-receiving-direct-payments/coronavirus-covid-19-qa-for-people-receiving-a-personal-budget-or-personal-health-budget#the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme), and how PAs will be affected by the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, as below:

“ In general, the government expects that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will not be used by many direct payment holders. This is because most public sector employees, like PAs, are continuing to provide essential public services or contribute to the response to the coronavirus outbreak. The government consider PAs to be an essential worker who provide vital care and support, and as such, use of this scheme should be minimal.

Nonetheless, government recognise there will be certain circumstances where it would be appropriate for a direct payment holder to furlough somebody they employ. For example, if your PA has been advised to shield through a letter from the NHS or has certain caring responsibilities. The specific guidance mentioned above provides detail and practical examples on this. “

**If YOUR PA needs to self-isolate because of suspected Covid-19 infection or contact**

***p***

**Q: My PA needs to self-isolate. What do they or I need to do?**

You need to put your contingency Support Plan into action.

Self-isolating PAs are legally defined as being unfit to attend work. They should therefore notify you of their intention to self-isolate at the earliest opportunity by telephone. They have the right to remain away from work for a period of 14 days from the symptoms becoming known. Read the detailed [**government guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus infection**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance).

Advise your PA to visit [**NHS 111 online**](https://111.nhs.uk/)to get medical help if required.Your PA **will not** be able to go to their GP nor call NHS 111 unless they really need to.

If your PA then becomes sick with COVID-19, they should let you know by telephone. The normal sickness reporting procedure will apply, as will ongoing payment of Statutory Sick Pay (note - see below question for conditions of claiming SSP).

**Q: My PA needs to self-isolate or is sick. What entitlements or benefits can my PA receive or apply for?**

**Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)**

If your PA earns an average of at least £118 per week, they are eligible for Statutory Sick Pay from day one rather than day four of their self-isolation / illness. This will be applied retrospectively from 13 March 2020. Please read the guidance on [**Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)**](https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay)for eligibility, how much your PA will get, and for how long. You do not need evidence from your PA to be able to claim SSP for them.

SSP will be paid out through payroll and you can claim it back via HMRC. You can speak to **PSIC** about general payroll queries on **020 7391 0613**, or email them on **payroll@psic.org.uk**. The refund will be for up to two weeks per employee. For specific payroll-related queries, contact your payroll provider in the first instance.

**Universal Credit**

If your PA is not eligible to receive Statutory Sick Pay they will be able to apply for Universal Credit and they can receive an advance without physically attending a Job Centre. Before your PA can claim Universal Credit, you must fill in the [**SSP1 form**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-sick-pay-employee-not-entitled-form-for-employers) and send the completed form to your PA. You can advise your PA to read the guidance on [**Coronavirus and claiming benefits**](https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/coronavirus)**.**

**Q: My PA is showing symptoms but does not want to self-isolate and says she/he is fit for work. What do I do?**

You need to put your contingency Support Plan into action.

You must send your PA home and tell them to self-isolate because they are showing symptoms. Refer to the above FAQ ‘***My PA needs to self-isolate. What do they or I need to do?***’

You should claim SSP if they are eligible. If not, your PA will need to apply for Universal Credit. Refer to the above FAQ **‘*My PA needs to self-isolate or is sick. What entitlements or benefits can my PA receive or apply for?’***

**Q: My PA needs to self-isolate or is sick. I am unable to refer to my contingency Support Plan. What do I do?**

If it is not possible to refer to your contingency plan and nor are you able to ask friends and family for help, please contact your social worker for support. You can also contact **Adult Social Care Access and Response Team on 020 7974 4000 (option 1) or email** **adultsocialcare@camden.gov.uk****.**

Depending on what type of support you require, there are a number of community and volunteer groups in Camden who may be able to help with ‘out of the house’ tasks.

**Q: My PA has children. What arrangements are available to them?**

The government has confirmed that PAs are classed as **Key Workers** (someone who is employed to deliver an essential service and must be supported to continue to work). This means that if they are a single parent or the other parent is also a key worker, their children should continue to attend or other childcare provision.

If your PA has requested that they bring their children to work as their school has closed and they do not have alternative childcare arrangement, then at this time of crisis, use your discretion and be flexible on the rules. For example, as long as the PA and nor the children are displaying symptoms, it may be better for a PA to provide you with essential care even if it requires them to bring their child with them.

Bear in mind that normally a PA cannot bring children to the workplace as your employer’s liability insurance will be invalid if there is an accident. You should have a copy of your insurance policy which will include this information. **Make sure you talk to your Employment Liability Insurers’ legal advice service before taking any action.**

If your PA needs to take time off work because their children are off school due to illness or other, they have the right to take emergency leave to care for a dependant for a ‘reasonable time’ while they make other arrangements. Emergency leave is unpaid (though they could take paid holiday leave instead if they have any due).

**Further information**

After reading this information, if you still have concerns about your care, please contact **Adult Social Care on 020 7974 4000 (option 1) or email** **adultsocialcare@camden.gov.uk**.

You can find [**further guidance on coronavirus (Covid-19) at Camden Care Choices**](https://camdencarechoices.camden.gov.uk/information-and-advice/coronavirus-covid-19-latest-guidance/).

**Acknowledgements**

We thank Penderels Trust and Surrey Independent Living Council for the use of their publications to produce this factsheet.