**Updated: 10 Sept 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 provide support to direct payment users. 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. 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 [**https://www.camden.gov.uk/covid-19**](https://www.camden.gov.uk/covid-19).

# WHAT YOU CAN DO TO BE PREPARED IF YOU OR YOUR PA IS DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY CORONAVIRUS

# 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 continuing to open 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.

**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)**.

The rest of this page is deliberately left blank. Please continue reading the next page.

# Make a list of support tasks

Make a list of the tasks that 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. For example, 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.

# Volunteer support provided by Camden Council and voluntary organisations

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.

# 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, 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.org/**](https://covidmutualaid.org/).

Below are just some of the neighbourhood volunteer groups in Camden:

[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

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 that PPE is now used by all PAs delivering care if you are within 2 metres of the person you are delivering care to. PPE should still be worn even if the care you deliver does not involve touching the person you are delivering care to. You should also be wearing PPE if you are within 2 meters of anyone in the same household as the person you delivering care to, and they are coughing.

The [**government guidelines**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-illustrated-guide-for-community-and-social-care-settings) will tell you what types of PPE you should be using. This could include apron, gloves, mask, and/or eye protection.

**Q: How I do obtain PPE for my PA?**

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 purchases. 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.

**Q: What is the guidance on ‘sessional use’ and ‘single use’ of PPE?**

The PPE guidance sets out that masks and eye protection are now subject to ‘sessional use’ whereas gloves and aprons remain single use items. What this means in practice is set out below:

* Masks: PAs can wear the same face mask for the whole of a ‘session of care’ (i.e. when keeping the mask on without taking it off during a range of activities). The duration of a single session in a mask will vary. A single session refers to a period of time where a worker is undertaking duties in a specific care setting or environment. A session ends when the care worker leaves the care setting or environment. Once the mask has been removed it should be disposed of safely. PPE should not be subject to continued use if damaged, soiled, compromised or uncomfortable. PPE should not be re-used once it has been taken off.
* Eye protection: The same principles of sessional use described for masks above apply to eye protection.
* Aprons and gloves are subject to single use as per Standard Infection Control Precautions, with disposal and hand hygiene after each use.

Public Health England has recommended that PPE should be used for:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Situation** | **Disposable gloves** | **Disposable apron** | **Fluid-repellent surgical mask** | **Eye protection** |
| When providing any close personal care in direct contact with the person(s) you are caring for (e.g. touching) OR within 2 metres of anyone in the household who is coughing | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes – where there is risk of droplets or bodily fluid secretions  |
| When within 2 metres of a person you are caring for or household members but not delivering personal care, or needing to touch them, and there is no one within 2 metres who has a cough | Not required | Not required | Yes | Not required |
| Any other work situation when in the home of the person you are caring for; in your work premises; or with other staff members | Not required | Not required | Yes | Not required |

**Q: What is the guidance on using PPE safely?**

Safe working practices are needed when using PPE for people to protect themselves and limit the spread of infection.

Everyone should follow good hygiene practices. It is vital that you and your PA are properly trained in putting on, wearing and taking off PPE. Incorrect use of PPE can increase the risk of infection. See below for guidance on this. Where PPE is required, a risk assessment needs to be undertaken to assess whether eye protection is required. Eye protection is needed if there is a likely risk of contamination with splashes, droplets or blood or body fluids.

It is essential that used personal protective equipment is stored securely within disposable rubbish bags.

**Putting on PPE safely**

You should wash your hands before putting PPE on, and put it on in the following order:

1. disposable apron
2. fluid resistant surgical mask
3. eye protection if risk of splashing to the face or eyes
4. disposable gloves

**Removing PPE safely**

It is important that the PPE is removed in an order that minimises the potential for cross-contamination. Hand decontamination helps to prevent the spread of infection - use alcohol hand rub between removing items of PPE as below:

* 1. disposable gloves
	2. **decontaminate your hands**
	3. disposable apron
	4. eye protection (if worn)
	5. **decontaminate your hands**
	6. fluid resistant surgical mask
	7. **decontaminate your hands**

Hands should be washed with soap and water for 20 seconds after all PPE has been removed. Hand hygiene should extend to include washing of exposed forearms.

**Disposing of PPE**

It is essential that personal protective equipment is stored securely within disposable rubbish bags. These bags should be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste within the room. This should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in the usual household waste bin for disposal.

**Useful resources for training**

* [**Download a poster on putting on and taking off PPE**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877658/Quick_guide_to_donning_doffing_standard_PPE_health_and_social_care_poster__.pdf)
* [**Watch a video on how to put on PPE**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-GncQ_ed-9w&feature=youtu.be)
* [**Download poster on how to use wash hands**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877530/Best_Practice_hand_wash.pdf)

**Questions about PPE**

If you have any questions about PPE, these can be directed to **camdencarechoices@camden.gov.uk**

The email address camdencarechoices@camden.gov.uk should only be used for PPE requests. All other Adult Social Care non-PPE related questions should be directed to adultsocialcare@camden.gov.uk

**Q: I need to self-isolate and my PA does cleaning duties and supports me with laundry. What is the guidance on performing these tasks safely?**

If your PA undertakes 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 have symptoms) for you or someone to go launderette. Items that are heavily soiled with bodily 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.

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

**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).

The most common coronavirus symptoms are a new continuous cough, a high temperature, and loss or change of your normal sense of smell or taste. If your PA has any of these symptoms they would need to be tested within the first 5 days of having symptoms. Either you or they can [**arrange to have a free NHS test**](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-an-antigen-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/) to see if they have COVID-19.

As an employer, you can refer essential workers, such as Personal Assistants, for testing if they are self-isolating because they or their household member(s) have coronavirus symptoms.  Details about how employers can refer essential workers is available on the [**government's Coronavirus: getting tested webpage**](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested#essential-workers).

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).

If your PA requires medical help, advise them to visit [**https://111.nhs.uk/**](https://111.nhs.uk/)or type NHS 111 into their internet browser, or phone 111 (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) 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.

**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?***’ on page 11.

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?’*** on page 12.

**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?**

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/).

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**End of factsheet**