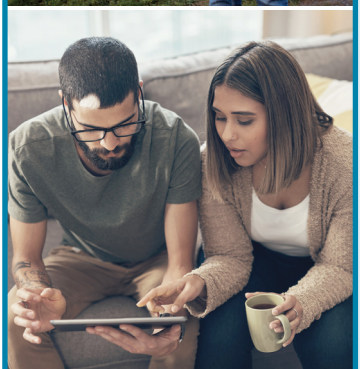






Help is here

Issue 3

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected people in lots of ways, and whilst Cumbrian communities have been fantastic at supporting each other, many people are finding they need a bit of extra help and support.

This booklet gives you information about the help that is available. Don't wait for problems to get worse, there are organisations that can help, and it's better to get advice sooner rather than later.

It also gives you some tips on what we can do to limit the spread of the virus, and to keep everyone as safe as possible.

A message from
Cllr Deborah Earl, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities



"This pandemic continues to be really challenging for people, and I would urge anyone in Cumbria who is struggling, whether that's emotionally, financially or just because you need practical help to get in touch and seek support. It can be daunting to search through what is on offer and to find what you need. This booklet provides local information for Cumbrian residents on a range of helpful topics and is being delivered to every household in the county.

You might feel worried, or find yourself in a position you have never experienced before. Please don't wait for problems to get worse, there are many local organisations that can help.

Please stay safe."

Deborah

CUMBRIA COVID-19 SUPPORT HELPLINE

The Cumbria County Council support line can help if you are struggling as a result of COVID-19 and the lockdown restrictions. This might be because:

- **You are struggling to afford food or other essentials.**
- **You have COVID-19, are self-isolating, and need help with shopping.**
- **You are shielding, and need food or prescriptions delivered.**
- **You can't work out where best to get information and advice.**

Call the team on 0800 783 1966 (Monday to Thursday 9.00am to 5.00pm, Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm). They're used to answering a wide range of questions, and they'll help you to get the support you need.

If you've got access to the internet, you can search for support in your local area using the interactive map on the Cumbria County Council website: **cumbria.gov.uk** – there are community groups that can help with shopping, dog walking, or a regular phone call if you're feeling lonely.

You can also email the helpline team: COVID19support@cumbria.gov.uk and you will receive a response within one working day.

CUMBRIA Together We CAN **SUPPORT EACH OTHER #TogetherCumbria**

Help with food

If you are struggling to feed yourself or your family, there are organisations that can help. They are used by hundreds of people every week in Cumbria and from all walks of life.

There are food banks and other food projects located across the county, find your nearest at: cumbria.gov.uk/welfare or call the county council's support line on **0800 783 1966**.

Financial help

Money and debt

If you are worried about money, you can contact **Citizens Advice**. They can give you free advice on debt, benefits, employment and housing problems, and make sure you're getting all the support you're entitled to.

Go online at citizensadvice.org.uk or call your local office:

- Allerdale **01900 604735**.
- Barrow **0808 278 7817**.
- Carlisle and Eden **03300 563037**.
- Copeland and Whitehaven **01946 693321**.
- Millom **01229 772395**.
- South Lakes
  (for debt & ongoing enquiries) **03444 111444**.
  (for new enquiries) **01539 446464**.

Cumbria Law Centre can offer free legal advice on housing, debt, employment and welfare benefits to those on low incomes. Call **01228 515129** or visit: cumbrialawcentre.org.uk.

Lost your job?

If you've lost your job or had your hours reduced, then you might be able to claim benefits. Many people miss out because they don't know what they're entitled to.

The **Citizens Advice Help to Claim** service can talk you through the early stages of making a claim and make sure you're claiming the right benefits; call **0800 144 8444** to find out more.

Or you can find out more about **Universal Credit** (and make your claim) online: understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk.

Whilst you are claiming benefits, you may be eligible for additional financial support, such as help with childcare and utility costs. **Citizens Advice** can help you find out what's available.

Getting back into work?

If you've lost your job as a result of COVID-19, there is help available to get back into work.

Cumbria Opportunities has information about local jobs, training courses and apprenticeships. Go to cumbriaopportunities.co.uk.

Cumbria Jobs Fuse helps to connect people looking for work to local employers looking for staff. If you're looking for work, call **0800 100 900**; if you're an employer looking for staff, call **0808 196 3596**.

Winter Warmth Fund

If you are aged 60 and over and struggling with the cost of heating your home, you may be eligible for a grant of up to £250. To apply, please contact:

- Age UK Barrow **01229 831425**.
- Age UK Carlisle and Eden **01228 536673**.
- Copeland Age & Advice Service **01946 552166**.
- Age UK West Cumbria (Allerdale) **01229 779711**.
- Age UK South Lakeland **01539 728118**.

These organisations can also provide a wide range of other help and advice to older people.

Help with housing

If you are having difficulties paying for housing, you should contact your landlord, housing association or mortgage company.

If you are struggling to pay your council tax, get in touch with your local district council; if you are on a low income you may be eligible for a grant towards the cost. Your district council can also help if you are at risk of eviction or homelessness. You can find information on their website, or contact them on the numbers below:

- Allerdale Borough Council **0303 123 1702**.
- Barrow Borough Council **01229 876543**.
- Carlisle City Council **01228 817200**.
- Copeland Borough Council **01946 598300**.
- Eden District Council **01768 817817**.
- South Lakeland District Council **01539 733333**.

Credit Unions

Credit Unions help people to save money and can also provide loans at low interest rates. They are an alternative to payday lenders and 'loan sharks' and can help you avoid getting into problem debt.

There are four Credit Unions in Cumbria:

- Affinity Credit Union covers the whole of Cumbria: affinitycu.co.uk **01900 65723 / 01946 817508 / 01768 890065**.
- Carlisle and District Credit Union also covers the whole of Cumbria: carlislecu.com **01228 594007**.
- Barrow & District Credit Union operates South West Cumbria: barrowdistrictcu.co.uk **01229 870110**.
- Whitehaven, Egremont and District Credit Union operates in West Cumbria: wedcu.co.uk **01946 66755**.

Fire safety from Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service

At home

Whilst we are all spending more time at home, it's important our homes are as safe from fire risks as possible, visit cumbria.gov.uk/cumbriafire or call **0800 358 4777** for advice.

Education

School closures are putting extra pressure on many families. Helping your child with schoolwork can be hard, particularly if you're struggling financially, or are trying to fit home education around your own work commitments.

If you're struggling to access online learning, make sure your child's school knows this is the case. They may be able to help by arranging free data top ups for a mobile phone, or by loaning you a tablet or laptop.

The **BBC** has online resources at bbc.co.uk/bitesize and is showing educational content on TV each weekday: for primary school pupils on **CBBC** from 9.00am until midday, and for secondary school pupils on **BBC 2** from 1.00pm until 3.00pm.

If you're struggling to combine work and home education, your employer may be able to use the furlough scheme.

If you are on a low income, your children may be entitled to free school meals and clothing grants. You can check your eligibility and apply online at: cumbria.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals or call **01228 606060**.

Business support

If you run a business, **Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership** provide up to three hours of fully funded support, which is specifically targeted at the needs of your business. To discuss your needs, in confidence, please email: info@thecumbrialep.co.uk.

Further information for businesses, including details of the grants available, can be found in the **COVID-19 Business Toolkit** at: thecumbrialep.co.uk.

Cumbria Chamber of Commerce has a Coronavirus Business Toolkit and other resources including Cumbria Business Growth Hub which offers a choice of advice, training, networking and more, all tailored to your needs. Go to: cumbriachamber.co.uk.

Business support grants

Information is available from your local district council.

Mental health and wellbeing

There are many things that can affect your mental health, particularly if you are dealing with financial problems. It's normal and there is help available.

If someone is in a mental health crisis and needs urgent help, they can call their local Crisis Team 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

- People in North Cumbria can call **0800 6522 865**. (Those who are Deaf/hard of hearing can text **0779 565 6226**.)
- People in South Cumbria can call **0800 953 0110**.

NHS psychological therapies services in Cumbria are still open during the pandemic, and can provide treatments for a range of common mental health problems including depression, anxiety disorders and panic attacks, and post-traumatic stress disorder. You can refer yourself for support, or ask your GP to make a referral for you.

For more details:

- First Step North Cumbria visit: cntw.nhs.uk/firststep.
- First Step South Cumbria visit: lscft.nhs.uk/first-step.

If you need to talk to someone urgently the **Samaritans** are available 24/7 on **116 123** or online at samaritans.org.

Mindline Cumbria offers support and guidance about mental health over the phone on **0300 561 0000** or text 'Mind' to 81066. You can also go online and chat to trained professionals at mindlinecumbria.org.

Togetherall is a service offering free online support to anyone aged 16 and over, 24/7 you just need a Cumbrian postcode to register. It provides online peer-peer support, access to an anonymous community and lots of information, as well as courses and resources covering a range of mental health and wellbeing topics. Go to: togetherall.com.

Kooth is a free online service for young people over 11. Go to kooth.com.

Every Life Matters have produced a guide to looking after yourself and others. It contains practical information about things you can do now to look after your mental health and wellbeing, and how you can support others. Go to: every-life-matters.org.uk or call **07908 537541**.

If you are worried about someone you know and want to help support them it can be difficult to know the right thing to say or do. The **Samaritans** and **Time to Change** have information on their websites to help you start these conversations.

Bereavement support

The death of a loved one can be among the most difficult moments that any of us will face in our lives. Because of the restrictions that the COVID-19 pandemic places on us, the difficulties are multiplied. We may not have been able to see our loved one before they died, and we cannot take part in the usual rituals that help us grieve. Because we cannot meet with those that would normally provide support, then there might be a greater need to contact an organisation for support. You can get specialist support by ringing the **Cruse** helpline on **0808 808 1677**.

Staying safe from abuse

Everyone is entitled to live safely without fear of violence or abuse, and even with COVID-19 restrictions in place, you can leave home to seek help if you are suffering abuse.

Always call **999** in an emergency if someone is at immediate risk of harm.

If you, or someone you know is suffering from domestic abuse, help is available. Call **101**, or report online at cumbria.police.uk. You can also contact Victim Support Cumbria on **0300 3030 157**.

If you have significant concerns about a child please contact the Cumbria Safeguarding Hub, on **0333 240 1727**.

If you are concerned that an adult is at risk of abuse or neglect please call:

- Copeland and Allerdale **0300 303 3589**.
- Carlisle and Eden **0300 303 3249**.
- Furness and South Lakes **0300 303 2704**.
- Out of Hours **01228 526690**.

NHS services

The NHS is busy during the pandemic, but you should still seek help if you need support with your mental or physical health.

Please **choose wisely** and use the most appropriate services for your needs:

- Call **111** or visit **111.nhs.uk** –for 24-hour advice on any healthcare need.
- Pharmacy – trained professionals can prescribe medicines and give advice for many common conditions.
- GP – for ongoing or persistent medical issues.
- Minor injuries and Urgent Treatment Centres – for urgent but not life-threatening issues.
- A&E - for life-threatening and serious emergencies only.

If you are invited to an appointment please make sure you go, unless you are showing symptoms of COVID-19. Measures are in place to keep patients safe from COVID-19, so please don't put your health at risk by missing planned care.

Maternity guidance

If you're pregnant, and are worried about your maternity care, talk to your midwife about the arrangements that are now in place to allow your partner to be with you as much as possible (for example, for scans and during the birth).

COVID-19 vaccination

The COVID-19 vaccination programme is already protecting people across Cumbria.

The most vulnerable groups of people are being vaccinated first, and you'll be contacted by the NHS when it's your turn. Your GP practice is busy seeing patients as normal alongside delivering vaccinations, so please don't contact them to ask when you are likely to receive your vaccination appointment.

Criminals may seek to take advantage of the roll out of the COVID-19 vaccine to commit fraud. Remember: The COVID-19 vaccine will only be available via the NHS.

- The COVID-19 vaccine will always be available free of charge from the NHS.
- The NHS will never ask you to share your bank details to confirm your identity.

For more information on scams and how to report them, visit the Action Fraud website: actionfraud.police.uk.

Protecting each other during the pandemic



There are simple actions we can all follow to protect each other during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Wash your hands frequently, cover your face in indoor areas such as shops, and make space by staying 2 metres apart from people you don't live with.

The majority of COVID-19 infections in Cumbria are now caused by the new, more infectious variant, and so it's more important than ever to be careful about the basics in order to limit the spread of the virus.

If you develop symptoms

One of the most important ways to stop the spread of COVID-19 is to self-isolate (stay at home) for 10 days and get a test if you experience any of the main symptoms: a continuous cough, a high temperature, or a loss or change in taste or smell. You should get a test even if your symptoms are mild.

Other people in your household should also self-isolate, but they do not need to book a test unless they develop symptoms themselves.

You can book a test on the **NHS** website, or by calling **119** or via **gov.uk/coronavirus**.

If you're working and on a low income, you may be eligible for a £500 support grant if you test positive, or if you are contacted by NHS Test and Trace and told to self-isolate. Contact your local district council to apply for these.

If you require this document in another format (e.g. CD, audio cassette, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone: **0300 303 2992**.

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে 0300 303 2992 নম্বরে টেলিফোন করুন।

如果您希望通过母语了解此信息，请致电 0300 303 2992

Jeigu norėtumėte gauti šią informaciją savo kalba, skambinkite telefonu 0300 303 2992

W celu uzyskania informacji w Państwa języku proszę zatelefonować pod numer 0300 303 2992

Se quiser aceder a esta informação na sua língua, telefone para o 0300 303 2992

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde görmek istiyorsanız lütfen 0300 303 2992 numaralı telefonu arayınız