



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
Working better with you

# Coronavirus (Covid-19) useful information

IN THIS EDITION - MAY 2020

## 1. Coronavirus latest

- Current guidance (1a)
- What to do if you are unwell (1b)

## 2. Where to get help

- Where to get urgent food and medicine (2a)
- Where to get Council service information and alternative formats (2b)
- Where to access medical help (2c)
- Where to get financial and welfare advice (2d)
- Giving support back to your community (2e)
- Utility companies (2f)

IN THE NEXT EDITION

JUNE 2020

## 3. Staying well

- Mental health and wellbeing (3a)
- Loneliness (3b)
- Healthy eating (3c)
- Exercise (3d)
- Learn something new (3e)
- Support for families (3f)
- Support for carers (3g)
- Limiting alcohol intake (3h)
- Quitting smoking (3i)

JULY 2020

## 4. Staying safe

- Safeguarding (4a)
- Domestic abuse (4b)
- Avoiding scams (4c)
- Tips for online shopping (4d)
- Be a good neighbour (4e)
- Advice for pet owners (4f)

All factsheets can be accessed also online at [www.reading.gov.uk/coronavirusadvice](http://www.reading.gov.uk/coronavirusadvice)

# 1. Coronavirus latest

## 1a. Current guidance

### Stay at home, protect the NHS, save lives

Everyone must stay at home to help stop the spread of coronavirus.

The current guidance is:

You should only leave your home for very limited purposes:

- shopping for basic necessities, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible;
- one form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household - but you should still be minimising time spent outside;
- any medical need, including to donate blood, avoid or escape risk of injury or harm, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person;
- travelling for work purposes, but only where you cannot work from home.

How to stay safe:

- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft or 3 steps) away from other people at all times. This is called social distancing;
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water as soon as you get home;
- Do not meet others, even friends or family. You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

How to stop infection spreading:

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with coronavirus.

Do:

- wash your hands with soap and water often - do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- 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 immediately and wash your hands afterwards

Don't:

- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

People at increased risk

You may be at increased risk from coronavirus if you:

- are 70 or older
- are pregnant

- have a condition that may increase your risk from coronavirus:
  - lung conditions, such as asthma, COPD, emphysema or bronchitis
  - heart disease, such as heart failure
  - chronic kidney disease
  - liver disease, such as hepatitis
  - conditions affecting the brain and nerves, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
  - diabetes
  - problems with your spleen - for example, sickle cell disease, or if you've had your spleen removed
  - a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
  - being very overweight (having a BMI of 40 or above)

Call the NHS 111 for the latest NHS information and advice.

In Reading you can get food and medicine delivered and left outside your door - ask friends and family to help or **call the One Reading Community Hub on 0808 189 4325** for further assistance

#### Further useful advice if you are at higher risk

Some charities and organisations have worked with the NHS to produce specific advice about coronavirus:

- Asthma - Asthma UK:
  - Tel: 0300 222 5800 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
- Other lung conditions, such as COPD - British Lung Foundation:
  - Tel: 03000 030 555 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
- Joint and muscle conditions, such as arthritis - Versus Arthritis:
  - Tel: 0800 5200 520
- Heart disease - British Heart Foundation:
  - Tel: 0300 330 3311 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
- Stroke - Stroke Association:
  - Tel: 0303 3033 100
- Diabetes
  - Tel: 0345 123 2399
- Parkinson's
  - Tel: 0808 800 0303
- Multiple Sclerosis
  - Tel: 0808 800 8000
- Cystic Fibrosis
  - Tel: 020 3795 1555
- Dementia
  - Tel: 0808 888 6678
- Cancer support:
  - Macmillan Cancer Information Centre still operating locally. Call 01183228700 email [macmillan.information@royalberkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:macmillan.information@royalberkshire.nhs.uk)
- Cystic Fibrosis
  - Tel: 020 3795 1555 or email [enquiries@cysticfibrosis.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cysticfibrosis.org.uk)

## 1b. What to do if you are unwell

### Coronavirus symptoms

Do not leave your home if you have coronavirus symptoms

Do not leave your home if you have either:

- a high temperature - this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough - this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- To protect others, do not go to places like a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Stay at home.
- Use the 111 online coronavirus service to find out what to do:  
<https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>
- Only call 111 if you cannot get help online.

### Babies and children

Call 111 for advice if you're worried about a baby or child.

If they seem very unwell, are getting worse or you think there's something seriously wrong, call 999.

**Do not delay getting help if you're worried. Trust your instincts.**

### Self-isolation if you or someone you live with has symptoms

Do not leave your home if you have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or live with someone who does. This is called self-isolation.

If you are self-isolating, you must:

- not leave your home for any reason - if you need food or medicine, order them by phone or online, or ask someone else to drop them off at your home
- not have visitors, such as friends and family, in your home
- You can use your garden, if you have one. Any exercise should be taken at home.

If you have symptoms of coronavirus, you'll need to self-isolate for 7 days.

After 7 days:

- if you do not have a high temperature, you do not need to self-isolate
- if you still have a high temperature, keep self-isolating until your temperature returns to normal

You do not need to self-isolate if you just have a cough after 7 days.

A cough can last for several weeks after the infection has gone.

### If you live with someone who has symptoms:

If you live with someone who has symptoms, you'll need to self-isolate for 14 days from the day their symptoms started. This is because it can take 14 days for symptoms to appear.

If more than 1 person at home has symptoms, self-isolate for 14 days from the day the first person started having symptoms.

If you get symptoms, self-isolate for 7 days from when your symptoms start, even if it means you're self-isolating for longer than 14 days.

If you do not get symptoms, you can stop self-isolating after 14 days.

### To help yourself stay well while you're at home:

- rest and sleep
- drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration - drink enough so your pee is light yellow and clear
- take paracetamol to lower your temperature

### Use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service if:

- you feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home
- your condition gets worse

DAY	PERSON A	PERSON B	PERSON C	PERSON D
01	Develops symptoms, triggering 7-day isolation for herself and 14 days for her household			
02				
03		Develops symptoms and starts 7-day count		
04				
05				
06				
07				
08	Isolation ends if symptoms have stopped			
09				
10		Isolation ends if symptoms have stopped		
11				
12				
13				
14				Develops symptoms and starts 7-day count
15			No symptoms isolation ends	
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				Isolation ends if symptoms have stopped

## 2. Where to get help

### 2a. How to get urgent food and medicine

If you need extra help during the Coronavirus outbreak, don't be afraid to ask a friend or neighbour. Alternatively, ask a support organisation you already know. Although public buildings are closed, the organisations you would usually contact for help are running services, including the Council, Brighter Futures for Children, the Citizens Advice Bureau and local charities.

You can get food and medicine delivered and left outside your door - if friends and family are unable to help, register at GOV.UK on 0800 028 8327 or contact the One Reading Community Hub on 0808 189 4325 to get coronavirus support if you need it.

Pakistani Community Centre, is also offering help with groceries, errands and language support. Call 0118 926 9031

#### One Reading Community Hub

The One Reading Community Hub has been created for Reading Borough Council residents needing additional support during the outbreak. Through this service, you can arrange for an urgent delivery of food or medicine, connect with befriending services, or contact other sources of support.

If you, or someone you know, is in need of extra support:

- Call 0808 189 4325 (freephone) from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, 9am to 1pm on Saturday

Please only contact the Hub if you have urgent welfare needs which a family member or trusted friend cannot help you with. This is so that resources can be directed to the people who need it most. The Hub cannot provide health advice and will direct customers to NHS 111.

## 2b. Where to get Council service information and alternative formats

Reading Council will be updating its website with any news about service disruption. You can find the latest information at: [www.reading.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.reading.gov.uk/coronavirus) - please check back regularly for updates and pass on any information to friends and family who may not be online.

Although our offices are currently closed, many council services are available online 24 hours. Our customer services team is available from 8.30am to 5pm (Monday to Friday) via 0118 937 3787 (out-of-hours emergencies: 0118 937 3737)

### Information in alternative formats

On the Council's website all this information can be translated through Google Translate - you should find this feature at the bottom of each page of this site.

[www.reading.gov.uk/coronavirusadvice](http://www.reading.gov.uk/coronavirusadvice)

Please call us on 078 11 026070 (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday) if you would like a hard copy posted to you for the resources listed in this section.

### Alternative languages

The Government has released translated guidance for self-isolation; social distancing as well as shielding vulnerable people into the following languages: Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Mandarin, French, Gujarati, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Urdu and Welsh.

- Stay at home guidance in alternative languages
- Social distancing
- Shielding vulnerable people

### Easy read

Mencap has produced a series of easy read guides for coronavirus:

- What is Covid 19

Learning Disability England have put together the important information about Coronavirus and have posters, Easy Read guides and key links.

- Information on the Coronavirus

### Accessible information

If you have difficulties communicating or hearing, you can call 18001 111 on a textphone or access the NHS 111 British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter service through [www.nhs.uk/111](http://www.nhs.uk/111)

### British Sign Language

Visit our BSL support page at [www.reading.gov.uk/BSL](http://www.reading.gov.uk/BSL)

You can contact the information officer at Reading Deaf Centre on 0118 9594969  
Mobile/SMS 07754 361592 or by email [info@readingdeafcentre.co.uk](mailto:info@readingdeafcentre.co.uk)

### **Sight advice**

RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People) have put together key information for people who are blind or visually impaired. Call 0303 123 9999 or email: [sightadvicefaq@rnib.org.uk](mailto:sightadvicefaq@rnib.org.uk)

### **Reading Association for the Blind**

For key information for people who are blind or visually impaired, please get in touch with Reading Association for the Blind on Tel: 0118 957 2960

### **Information for autistic people and families**

Contact Autism Berkshire for support and advice on 0118 959 4594 (open Monday to Friday 10 am to 1 pm)

### **Get the latest information on WhatsApp:**

WhatsApp have a Corona advice page, letting you know how you can get reliable information: [www.whatsapp.com/coronavirus](https://www.whatsapp.com/coronavirus)

To use the free GOV.UK Coronavirus Information Service on WhatsApp, simply add 07860 064422 in your phone contacts and then message the word 'hi' in a WhatsApp message to get started.

## 2c. Where to access medical help

### How do I access medical help locally?

- If you have coronavirus symptoms, to protect others do not go to places like a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Stay at home.
- Use the 111 online coronavirus service to find out what to do:  
<https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>
- Only call 111 if you cannot get help online.

### How do I access non-coronavirus medical support?

Patients who have a medical problem that is not related to coronavirus can ring their surgery as normal. Please do not attend the surgery in person. All GP appointments will initially be on the telephone with the GP doing all they can to help over the phone. If you feel you need a face-to-face examination then an appointment can be arranged.

Prescriptions can be sent straight to a pharmacy of your choice. This limits the number of people visiting the GP practices. You can request repeat prescriptions by using the NHS App <https://digital.nhs.uk/services/nhs-app> which means that you do not have to phone or visit the surgery.

If you are seriously unwell Royal Berkshire Hospital's Emergency Department is still a safe option for medical care, despite the coronavirus outbreak. If you have symptoms relating to a serious medical issue, such as strokes, heart attacks or breathing problems, please do not avoid visiting A&E and seek medical assistance as soon as possible.

### Can I get my prescription collected?

Healthwatch Reading have launched a Reading Prescription Delivery Scheme to ensure medicines can be delivered to isolated and vulnerable people during the coronavirus crisis. Your GP, local pharmacy or the One Reading Community Hub (tel: 0808 189 4325) can refer you to Healthwatch for support.

### Reading Walk-in Centre

A special medical hub has been set up for local people who are showing symptoms of Coronavirus but don't need immediate hospital treatment. The hub is based at the Walk-in Centre in Reading's Broad Street Mall.

This service will only be available to patients who have already gone through a medical assessment. Anyone experiencing coronavirus symptoms of a constant cough and/or high temperature will still initially be asked to self-isolate for seven days and seek advice from NHS 111 online if required. Patients will then be referred on to their GP practice and/or the hub where appropriate. Find out more at [www.berkshirewestccg.nhs.uk/about-us/primary-care/berkshire-west-primary-care-hubs](http://www.berkshirewestccg.nhs.uk/about-us/primary-care/berkshire-west-primary-care-hubs)

GP services for registered patients at the Walk-in Centre have been temporarily moved to: Milman Road Health Centre, Reading, RG2 0AR. The phone number to contact remains the same: 0118 902 8300.

## Medical advice for children

If your child has a medical condition or injury, they should access treatment and attend medical appointments as recommended by their hospital, GP or healthcare professionals. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPSH) has put together this handy traffic light guide to help you know what to do when your child is unwell or injured:

### Advice for parents during coronavirus

Whilst coronavirus is infectious to children it is rarely serious. If your child is unwell it is likely to be a non-coronavirus illness, rather than coronavirus itself.

Whilst it is extremely important to follow Government advice to stay at home during this period, it can be confusing to know what to do when your child is unwell or injured. Remember that NHS 111, GPs and hospitals are still providing the same safe care that they have always done. Here is some advice to help:

 <p><b>RED</b></p>	<p><b>If your child has any of the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Becomes pale, mottled and feels abnormally cold to the touch</li><li>• Has pauses in their breathing (apnoeas), has an irregular breathing pattern or starts <b>grunting</b></li><li>• Severe difficulty in breathing becoming agitated or unresponsive</li><li>• Is going blue round the lips</li><li>• Has a fit/seizure</li><li>• Becomes extremely distressed (crying inconsolably despite distraction), confused, very lethargic (difficult to wake) or unresponsive</li><li>• Develops a rash that does not disappear with pressure (the 'Glass test')</li><li>• Has testicular pain, especially in teenage boys</li></ul>	<p><b>You need urgent help:</b></p> <p>Go to the nearest A&amp;E department or phone 999</p>
 <p><b>AMBER</b></p>	<p><b>If your child has any of the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is finding it hard to breathe including drawing in of the muscles below their lower ribs, at their neck or between their ribs (<b>recession</b>) or <b>head bobbing</b></li><li>• Seems dehydrated (dry mouth, sunken eyes, no tears, drowsy or passing less urine than usual)</li><li>• Is becoming drowsy (excessively sleepy) or irritable (unable to settle them with toys, TV, food or picking up) - especially if they remain drowsy or irritable despite their fever coming down</li><li>• Has extreme shivering or complains of muscle pain</li><li>• Babies under 3 months of age with a temperature above 38°C / 100.4°F</li><li>• Infants 3-6 months of age with a temperature above 39°C / 102.2°F</li><li>• For all infants and children with a fever above 38°C for more than 5 days.</li><li>• Is getting worse or if you are worried</li><li>• Has persistent vomiting and/or persistent severe abdominal pain</li><li>• Has blood in their poo or wee</li><li>• Any limb injury causing reduced movement, persistent pain or head injury causing persistent crying or drowsiness</li></ul>	<p><b>You need to contact a doctor or nurse today.</b></p> <p>Please ring your GP surgery or call NHS 111 - dial 111</p> <p>The NHS is working for you. However, we recognise during the current coronavirus crisis at peak times, access to a health care professional may be delayed. If symptoms persist for 4 hours or more and you have not been able to speak to either a GP or 111, then take your child to the nearest A&amp;E</p>
 <p><b>GREEN</b></p>	<p><b>If none of the above features are present</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You can continue to provide your child care at home. Information is also available on NHS Choices</li><li>• Additional <b>advice</b> is available to families for coping with crying of well babies </li><li>• Additional <b>advice</b> is available for children with complex health needs and disabilities.</li></ul>	<p><b>Self care</b></p> <p>Continue providing your child's care at home. If you are still concerned about your child, call NHS 111 - dial 111</p>

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The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health is a registered charity in England and Wales (1057744) and in Scotland (SC038293).

  
**Healthier Together**  
Let's make our children healthier

  
**RCPSH**  
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health  
Leading the way in Children's Health

## Children's vaccinations

It is important we all continue with childhood immunisation programmes, to avoid outbreaks of serious vaccine-preventable diseases that could increase the numbers of patients requiring health services. Providing your baby and you as a parent or carer are well and not displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or other infections, routine immunisations for babies are still being given - please contact your GP to discuss this.

Due to the current closure of schools, the school-aged immunisation programme (ages 4-16) delivered by the school nursing team is suspended. If your child has missed a planned immunisation session or clinic appointment the school nursing team will reschedule this as soon as they can.

**New Immunisation Advice Line:** If you have any queries or concerns you can contact the School Aged Immunisation Advice Line, on 07929 185006 from 10:00 - 14:00 Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays.

## Health visiting

The Health Visiting service is currently prioritising new birth and 6-8 week checks, and these will mostly be undertaken as virtual appointments:

- an online video consultation (similar to a Skype or What's App call)
- a telephone consultation
- professional advice on how to manage your own care.

For general queries such as infant feeding support, weaning, behaviour, toilet training and sleeping, you can still use the health visitor duty line: 0118 931 2111 option 1 (9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, excluding bank holidays). Email [hvwbrdgDuty@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:hvwbrdgDuty@berkshire.nhs.uk) or you can take advantage of the new evening health visiting duty line which runs from 4.30-8pm, Monday to Friday (except bank holidays) on 077713 44503.

## Advice for parents expecting a new baby

The Royal Berkshire Hospital have also put together a set of frequently asked questions about care during pregnancy, birth and the post-natal period due to coronavirus. If you would like a hard copy by post of this document, please contact us on 07811 026070 (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday).

## Dental treatment during coronavirus

During the Covid-19 pandemic all routine NHS and private dentistry has stopped. Patients who have scheduled appointments in the coming weeks are being contacted by their dental practice.

The NHS is continuing to provide urgent and emergency dental care. This will be available to both NHS and private patients. If patients have a dental emergency they should call their dental practice during opening hours for further advice. If they do not have a regular NHS dentist they can search for a local dentist on the NHS website and call them. In the evening and at weekends patients can contact NHS 111 who will provide advice and direct patients to an out-of-hours service if necessary.

## 2d. Financial and welfare advice

We have closed most of our public buildings but will continue to run essential frontline services. Our priorities at this time are to:

- ensure continuity of care
- support vulnerable people
- support the local economy

If you need to contact us please do it online [www.reading.gov.uk/myaccounts](http://www.reading.gov.uk/myaccounts) in the first instance, or by phone on 0118 937 3787 if it is an urgent welfare issue. We appreciate your patience as we deal with enquiries at this busy time. We will prioritise those in most urgent need of our help, and we will respond to everyone as soon as is possible.

### Financial difficulties

Council officers are available by phone to provide advice and assistance if you are in financial difficulty. We can help ensure you receive the income and/or welfare benefits you are entitled to. You can contact us on 0118 937 2197 or email [debt.advice@reading.gov.uk](mailto:debt.advice@reading.gov.uk).

Find out more at: [www.reading.gov.uk/debtadvice](http://www.reading.gov.uk/debtadvice)

The government has suspended new evictions from social or private rented accommodation until the current national emergency ends. If you owe rent you are expected to work together with your landlord to make an affordable repayment plan, and to take immediate action to reduce the level of any rent arrears by claiming benefits you are entitled to.

If you are struggling to pay your rent, let your landlord know as soon as you can and seek advice.

### Council tax

If you are concerned about paying your council tax and you don't have access to the internet, call us on 0118 937 3707.

### Paying for energy

If you have a pre-payment meter and are unable to add credit due to the disruption caused by the coronavirus, contact your energy provider and discuss what you can do to keep your energy supply. Options include nominating a third party for credit top ups, having a discretionary fund added to your credit, or being sent a pre-loaded top-up card.

If you do not have a pre-payment meter and are in financial difficulty, you should still contact your supplier for help. They may be able to reassess, reduce or pause your bill and/or debt repayments.

## Loan and credit card payments

If you are experiencing financial difficulties due to the impacts of coronavirus, contact your bank or lender and explain. Most banks offer a three month 'payment holiday', while some will also not charge you for missed payments or accept reduced payments.

Most lenders will not charge you for missed payments, and some will allow you to increase your credit limit or give you a 'payment holiday'. Be careful when extending your credit limit.

## Being paid while off work

The government has issued guidance for households with possible coronavirus to stay at home and self-isolate. Contact your employer as soon as you know you are unable to attend work and discuss arrangements for your pay. Check with your manager if your company has a sick pay scheme; details will be in your employment contract.

If you cannot get company sick pay, check if you are eligible for Statutory Sick Pay. This is when your employer pays you £94.25 per week while you are unable to work for up to 28 weeks. You are eligible to receive it from the first day you are unable to work (from 13 March 2020).

For more information:

Telephone: 03000 560 630 - Monday to Thursday, 8:30am to 5pm / Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm

If your employer asks you not to work and you are not self-isolating, you should receive your full pay.

If you are self-employed you are not eligible to receive Statutory Sick Pay. If you cannot work as you are following government guidance on coronavirus you may need to claim benefits to increase your income.

## Claiming benefits

If your income is disrupted, you need to claim all the benefits you are entitled to straight away. Universal Credit helpline for claims 0800 144 8444

The situation regarding benefit entitlement in relation to the coronavirus is changing day by day. The best way to find out the benefits you might be entitled to is to use an online calculator.

Reading Borough Council has a benefit calculator you can use at [www.reading.gov.uk/uc/claiming](http://www.reading.gov.uk/uc/claiming) select 'Universal Credit online calculator' to check your entitlement to all benefits.

If you are already claiming benefits you will need to notify the DWP of your reduction in income so it can be reassessed. Telephone: 0800 328 5644

## If you lose your job

The coronavirus is having an effect on jobs, with some employers asking employees to take unpaid leave and others having to lay off a number of their employees.

If this happens to you, it is important that you get all the advice available to you so you can make informed decisions and apply for benefits quickly.

## Furloughed workers

If you and your employer both agree, your employer might be able to keep you on the payroll if they're unable to operate or have no work for you to do because of coronavirus (COVID-19). This is known as being 'on furlough'. You could get paid 80% of your wages.

## How to apply for benefit

The local Job Centre is closed for face-to-face support. If you are already receiving benefit payments these will be paid automatically - use your online journal to contact the Job Centre and log queries.

To apply for any benefits please go online: [www.gov.uk/benefits](http://www.gov.uk/benefits)

If you make a claim online, your local Job Centre will contact you.

- General advice line for all benefits 0344 4111 444
- Universal Credit helpline for claims 0800 144 8444
- Text phone for vulnerable adults 0800 328 1344. NGT text relay if you cannot hear or speak on the phone: 18001 then 0800 328 5644

To get more information generally please visit:

[www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/coronavirus)

## Housing and homelessness

If you have nowhere safe to sleep tonight, contact the Homeless Prevention Service on 0118 937 2165 Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm. This is a voicemail facility. Leave a message clearly giving your name and a contact number. The voicemail is checked every half an hour by the team and you should receive a call back within one hour of leaving a message.

For evenings, weekends or Bank Holidays, contact the Emergency Duty Team on 01344 786543.

For less urgent queries you can contact the Homeless Prevention Team via email. This will only be checked on Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm:

[housing.advice@reading.gov.uk](mailto:housing.advice@reading.gov.uk)

If you are concerned about someone sleeping rough please refer them to Reading's Street Outreach Service. Call 0300 500 0914.

## Welfare advice organisations

For general queries and advice, you can contact

Citizens Advice: 03444 111 444 / Text relay: 03444 111 445

ACAS: 0300 123 1100 Open Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm.

Reading Community Welfare Rights provides support to vulnerable members of the community in Reading who are facing hardship. It is still working remotely and supporting existing clients. New clients looking for benefits advice can also get in touch: email

[advisor@readingspecialist.co.uk](mailto:advisor@readingspecialist.co.uk), call 0118 955 1070

Communicare offers advice and guidance on a range of topics including debt, benefits, housing and form filling. Call 0118 9263941 or email: [office@communicare.org.uk](mailto:office@communicare.org.uk)

### **Business support**

If you are a business owner and need help, call the government's business support helpline on 0300 456 3565.

For local business advice, including financial help for businesses and charities, the self-employed and individuals, as well as licensing, regulation and related guidance, visit: [www.reading.gov.uk/c19business](http://www.reading.gov.uk/c19business)

HMRC have changed their helpline number to ensure those needing help and support can reach their advisers during this time of high demand. Call: 0800 024 1222, Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm.



## 2e. How to give back to the community

Our communities are strong and resilient and there are simple things you can do to help them continue to thrive. Firstly, do check in on any vulnerable family, friends and neighbours. Sometimes just helping with shopping or checking they have everything they need can make a big difference. If you're providing help to people who are self-isolating, make sure you follow government advice to leave deliveries of groceries, medications or other shopping at the door.

If you'd like to volunteer further to help your community, call 0118 937 2273 or email [info@rva.org.uk](mailto:info@rva.org.uk)

### Local charities with Covid-19 appeals

These not-for-profit organisations are raising funds to help those most in need.

**Readifood** Reading's food bank is seeking donations of food and other items. Please contact the One Reading Community Hub on 0808 189 4325

**Berkshire Community Foundation** is raising money to be split between local charities in Berkshire. Call 03456 01 10 45 Monday to Friday, 9am - 5.30pm.

### Berkshire Women's Aid

If you are concerned about domestic violence, Berkshire Women's Aid are there to help men, women and families who may be affected by any form of domestic abuse, and their services and refuges remain open. You can call their 24/7 helpline on 0118 950 4003.

You can also contact them via Facebook or email [helpline@bwaid.org.uk](mailto:helpline@bwaid.org.uk) just let them know how to contact you and what time to contact you.

## 2f. Utility Services

### Thames Water Priority Service

If the water supply gets interrupted, Thames Water will try to deliver bottled water to people with water-dependent medical conditions (such as at-home dialysis) and to those with mobility issues as a priority. If you have a pre-existing health condition, or communication needs, please tell Thames Water by registering on their priority list.

To register, call 0800 009 3652 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

### Energy

If you experience a power cut:

Telephone: 105 (a free phone number)

Visit [www.powercut105.com](http://www.powercut105.com)

If there's a serious immediate emergency risk, call the emergency services too.

Contact the Citizens Advice Helpline if you need additional help with an energy problem - for example with your bills or meters. Go to [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/energy](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/energy) or call them free on 0808 223 1133.

### Priority register

If you or someone you know is vulnerable, of pensionable age or has a disability or long-term medical condition it's important to let your energy supplier know, so that you get the support you need, especially if you are dependent on your supply for medical reasons.

Further information here: [www.ofgem.gov.uk/consumers/household-gas-and-electricity-guide/extra-help-energy-services/priority-services-register](http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/consumers/household-gas-and-electricity-guide/extra-help-energy-services/priority-services-register)

**Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN)** has extended its priority register to include customers at increased risk of severe illness during the coronavirus pandemic. [www.ssen.co.uk/PriorityServices](http://www.ssen.co.uk/PriorityServices). Call 0800 294 3259 and register over the phone. If you use a text phone, you can register by calling 0800 316 5457

Government guidance might change over the next few days and weeks, please listen out for updates via TV and radio.