

# Cost of Living Support

## Information for Community Leaders



Visit [cumbria.gov.uk/costofliving](http://cumbria.gov.uk/costofliving)



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## About Us

This pack has been produced by the organisations involved in the Cumbria Poverty Working Group. If you've got any feedback on the pack, for example, ideas of information you'd like to see included in future versions, please contact [Public.HealthEnquiries@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:Public.HealthEnquiries@cumbria.gov.uk)

## Introduction

This pack is designed to help community leaders to support people in their communities. It aims to give you information on the key messages and where people can access support, with a little more detail and background information than it is possible to include in short press releases and other public information.

Community leaders may be informal (someone who's set up a local support group) or formal (local councillors); the pack might also be useful to other people, including the staff of local voluntary sector organisations. We saw a huge community response to support people affected by Coronavirus and the lockdown restrictions in Cumbria. Over 300 new community groups were established, and existing voluntary and community organisations, and Parish Councils, played equally important roles.

We are now facing another public health emergency in the cost-of-living crisis.

## Cost of Living Crisis

The UK is facing a significant cost of living crisis in which households are facing the simultaneous impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, tax increases, rising interest rates and inflation outpacing rises in income (including wages, pensions, working age benefits). The picture in Cumbria matches the national picture, with a significant rise in demand for immediate welfare support and more people needing help.

Poverty and the cost-of-living crisis has been identified by the Director of Public Health as the greatest risk to public health in Cumbria following the COVID-19 pandemic. The cost-of-living crisis is impacting on people who were already struggling the most. During the pandemic there was an increase in demand on food banks, people applying for benefits and other kinds of support. Local reports and data suggest this has continued to increase since the end of the pandemic. Third sector organisations are telling us that people are becoming reliant upon food banks and having to make decisions between buying food and paying bills.

The crisis is also impacting on people in work on low incomes who were previously just managing but are now struggling to pay their bills.

Unfortunately, we anticipate more people will be affected over the next few months due, and extra costs such as winter heating bills beginning to build up.

## National support schemes

There are a number of government support schemes to give support to households, these can be found in detail at: [helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk](https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk)

These schemes include:

- Help with household costs
- Help with energy bills
- Help with childcare costs
- Help with transport costs
- Income support, and
- Help finding work



## Local support

### Support from your local Councils

#### Cumbria County Council

Supporting people through the cost of living crisis is a priority for Cumbria County Council. As costs rise, there will be many people in Cumbria struggling financially and emotionally.

It can be daunting for people to know what support is on offer and find the support they need, so information on local services has been summarised on: [www.cumbria.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/costofliving)

People who are struggling to buy food or essentials because of financial difficulties may be able to get a crisis payment from the Household Support Fund held by Cumbria County Council. Information on this is in the Financial Support section of the webpages above ([www.cumbria.gov.uk/costofliving/financialsupport.asp](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/costofliving/financialsupport.asp)). People can apply online, or by phoning the support line: **0800 783 1966**

There is information on the Cumbria County Council webpage on many topics if people prefer to browse online rather than make a phone call: [www.cumbria.gov.uk](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk)

The Cumbria County Council Public Health and Communities Teams connect and support local community groups and voluntary sector organisations, including supporting the Local Community Resilience Groups (along with colleagues from District Councils and other organisations).

If you need to contact the Area Teams, you can use the emails below:

- [Alledale.AreaSupport@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:Alledale.AreaSupport@cumbria.gov.uk)
- [Barrow.AreaSupport@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:Barrow.AreaSupport@cumbria.gov.uk)
- [Carlisle.AreaSupport@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:Carlisle.AreaSupport@cumbria.gov.uk)
- [Copeland.AreaSupport@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:Copeland.AreaSupport@cumbria.gov.uk)
- [Eden.AreaSupport@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:Eden.AreaSupport@cumbria.gov.uk)
- [SouthLakeland.AreaSupport@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:SouthLakeland.AreaSupport@cumbria.gov.uk)

**Struggling?**

Don't wait for problems to get worse, there are organisations that can help.

Find support now at [cumbria.gov.uk](http://cumbria.gov.uk)

## District Councils

There are currently six District Councils within Cumbria, each of which can help with a range of issues related to the cost-of-living crisis, including:

- Help with housing problems and homelessness
- Help to access food
- Help with benefits
- Help with Council Tax
- Help with energy advice

Some Districts may also be able to help community groups to find local funding opportunities.

You can find out more about the support available on each District Council's webpage.

- Allerdale: [www.allerdale.gov.uk](http://www.allerdale.gov.uk)
- Barrow: [barrowbc.gov.uk](http://barrowbc.gov.uk)
- Carlisle: [www.carlisle.gov.uk](http://www.carlisle.gov.uk)
- Copeland: [www.copeland.gov.uk](http://www.copeland.gov.uk)
- Eden: [www.eden.gov.uk](http://www.eden.gov.uk)
- South Lakeland: [www.southlakeland.gov.uk](http://www.southlakeland.gov.uk)



## Community Support

Many communities are keen to find ways to help people who are struggling financially, and the response to Cumbria's Warm Spots scheme has been incredible, with nearly 200 registered in the first few weeks. If you're interested in setting up a Warm Spot, then there's a section later in this pack on where to find the information to do so. If you're interested in setting up other activities in your community, ACTION with Communities in Cumbria has a series of Toolkits and Workbooks that can help to guide you.

Resources include toolkits and advice on setting up your own 'Good Neighbours' scheme, a community-run initiative linking people who are in particular need with community volunteers who are willing to help.

Neighbours can provide a sociable and a practical support network. Providing informal and enjoyable opportunities for people to come together in your community is a great way to encourage these networks to grow. There is guidance specifically for groups involved in Community Exchanges; these are regular community-led events that bring people together, provide services and information and reduce social isolation.

It's good to remind ourselves that people often want to contribute to their local community as well as receive support. Ideas like the Good Neighbours schemes and Community Exchanges provide opportunities for people with different skills and abilities to volunteer and encourages mutual support.

Link to resources [www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/resources/toolkits-workbooks](http://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/resources/toolkits-workbooks)

You may also be able to apply for funding for activities from [www.cumbriafoundation.org/fund/community-hardship-fund/](http://www.cumbriafoundation.org/fund/community-hardship-fund/)

## Information and guidance for Community Groups

If you need more help or advice, you can contact the County Council Area teams on the email addresses above, or get in touch with the following organisations:

**ACTION with Communities in Cumbria** (support on neighbourliness, community buildings and village halls and with community projects)

[www.cumbriaaction.org.uk](http://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk) / [info@cumbriaaction.org.uk](mailto:info@cumbriaaction.org.uk) / 01768 425666

**Cumbria CVS** (support for voluntary and community groups, and advice around volunteering and funding)  
[cumbriacvs.org.uk](http://cumbriacvs.org.uk) / [info@cumbriacvs.org.uk](mailto:info@cumbriacvs.org.uk) / 01768 800350

**Cumbria Community Foundation** have supported local groups with grant funding; groups can apply to their grant programmes: [www.cumbriafoundation.org](http://www.cumbriafoundation.org)

## Financial Advice and Guidance

### Financial support

#### Encouraging people to get support with financial worries

It is better to get advice on money problems sooner rather than later and getting advice from a reliable source can help people to borrow money safely – for example, from a local Credit Union rather than from Loan Sharks and other high interest rate lenders.

The current cost of living crisis is affecting many people who were previously just about managing financially, including many people who are working. Some of these people may be eligible to claim benefits such as Universal Credit but can be reluctant to do so. Sometimes this is simply because they don't know how, but it is often because they feel they should be able to provide for their family without help. It might be helpful to reassure people that rising costs means that this is now a common position for people to be in, that it's not their fault, and it's nothing to be ashamed of.

Benefits are designed to help in exactly this kind of situation – as a short-term fix to support people whilst they find another job. Claiming benefits can help prevent people building up large debts, and so make it easier for them to “get back on their feet” when they find a new job.

It's also worth letting people know that there's lots of extra financial help available once you are claiming benefits; this can include access to grant schemes, help with heating and utility bills, access to cheaper broadband packages, and free school meals. Citizens Advice will be able to help people work out what's available to them.

For people who already have significant debts, knowing that it can be possible to have these written off with a Debt Relief Order can encourage them to seek advice (again, Citizens Advice is a good source of further information). [www.gov.uk/options-for-paying-off-your-debts/debt-relief-orders](http://www.gov.uk/options-for-paying-off-your-debts/debt-relief-orders)

Many older people will be eligible to claim Pension Credits that will increase their income (and Citizens Advice or Age UK will be able to help with this). [www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/money-legal/benefits-entitlements/pension-credit/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/money-legal/benefits-entitlements/pension-credit/)

### Credit Unions

Credit Unions help people to save money and can also provide loans at low interest rates. Anyone who lives or works in the area a Credit Union serves can use them. They are an alternative to payday lenders and 'loan sharks' and can help you avoid getting into problem debt some credit unions offer a cash incentive after three months of saving.

There are 3 Credit Unions in Cumbria

- PCCU covers the whole of Cumbria: [www.pccu.co.uk](http://www.pccu.co.uk)
- Carlisle and District Credit Union also covers the whole of Cumbria: [www.carlislecu.com](http://www.carlislecu.com)
- Whitehaven, Egremont and District Credit Union operates in West Cumbria: [www.wedcu.co.uk](http://www.wedcu.co.uk)

## Claiming benefits

Working out what you can claim can be complicated, because different benefits have different rules. Some benefits are dependent upon having made National Insurance contributions, whilst others are related to your income and/or savings.

People can check what they might be eligible for using online tools by visiting [www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators](http://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators) or if they prefer to talk to someone, they can contact their local Citizens Advice (details above). If someone hasn't claimed means-tested benefits before, they can find out more about Universal Credit (and make their claim) online [www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk](http://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk)

They can also contact the Citizens Advice "Help to Claim" service on **0800 144 8 444**

## Housing problems

People who are having difficulties paying for housing, should contact their landlord, housing association or mortgage company, or get advice from Citizens Advice.

If people are struggling to pay their Council Tax, are at risk of eviction or are homeless, they should contact their local district council:

- 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 - **0845 050 4434**

District Councils have Council Tax reduction schemes in place for those on low incomes and benefits; contact your District Council for more information.

Further information is available on the District Council webpages – links on page 5.

## Food support

When people are struggling financially, buying food is often the most immediate problem that they face, and there are many food projects across Cumbria that can help.

In a crisis, people can access emergency food parcels from a Foodbank; they usually need to have been referred by another organisation, such as Citizens Advice or their Housing Association.

The Cumbria County Council Helpline Team can help people to get a referral to a Foodbank, or access other kinds of food support – look at the information online [cumbria.gov.uk/welfare/foodbank.asp](http://cumbria.gov.uk/welfare/foodbank.asp) or call **0800 783 1966**

There are also many other food projects (including food pantries and FareShare) in Cumbria that don't require a formal referral. Many of these are new (or have expanded) since the start of the pandemic, so it's worth a look at the website above to find out what's available in your area.

If you need more information on projects in your area, you can contact your local County Council Area Team on the generic email addresses in the earlier "Community Support" section of this pack.



## Good sources of support

**Citizens Advice** ([www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)) can also provide advice around applying for benefits (and around accessing the additional support available to those on benefits, such as free school meals and support with utility costs/bills), debts, and housing and employment problems. They can also help even if people are simply worried about reduced hours or redundancy.

The local phone numbers are:

- Allerdale - **01900 604735**
- Barrow - **0808 2787 817**
- Carlisle & Eden - **03300 563037**
- Copeland - Whitehaven **01946 693321** or Millom **01229 772395**.
- South Lakes - **0808 2787 984** (for debt & ongoing enquiries) or **0808 2787 984** for new enquiries)

**Cumbria Law Centre** may be able to provide advice about employment, housing, debt and benefits. You can call **01228 515129** or email [reception@cumbria-law.org.uk](mailto:reception@cumbria-law.org.uk) You can find out more here [www.cumbrialawcentre.org.uk](http://www.cumbrialawcentre.org.uk)

People can also get in touch with the **National Debtline** – online, with webchat and email support options ([www.nationaldebtline.org](http://www.nationaldebtline.org)) or by phoning **0808 808 4000**. Advisors available Monday to Friday 9am - 8pm

## Keeping Warm

### Warm Homes

Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAfS) can help people to make their homes warmer and more energy efficient.

The support available from the “Cold to Cozy” programme includes energy audits (currently via a telephone consultation) and free energy saving kits for people on low incomes.

For more information, ring **01768 216500** or visit: [cafs.org.uk/cold-to-cosy-homes-cumbria](http://cafs.org.uk/cold-to-cosy-homes-cumbria)

Sustainable Warmth Cumbria Grants - There is also help for eligible households to access a government grant to install energy efficient products into homes across Cumbria regardless of which local authority area you may live in. This scheme is supported by all 6 District and Borough Councils in Cumbria. These improvements will make homes warmer and more comfortable whilst helping to lower energy bills and carbon emissions. [www.carlisle.gov.uk/Residents/Housing-and-Homeless/Sustainable-Warmth-Cumbria-Grants](http://www.carlisle.gov.uk/Residents/Housing-and-Homeless/Sustainable-Warmth-Cumbria-Grants)

### Winter Warmth Fund

Cumbria Community Foundation (CCF) runs an annual Winter Warmth Appeal which raises funds to help older people in Cumbria keep warm and healthy through the coldest weather. There is more information here:

[www.cumbriafoundation.org/winter-warmth-fund/](http://www.cumbriafoundation.org/winter-warmth-fund/)

People aged 60 or over, on low income and struggling with the cost of heating their home, may be eligible for a household grant of £200. 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) **01900 844670**
- Age UK South Lakeland **01539 728118**

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



## Warm Spots – what they are and how to find one

Warm Spots are a warm and safe place to be this winter. They are places in the community that give people a warm space and a warm welcome.

In Cumbria, Cumbria CVS, ACTion with Communities in Cumbria, Cumbria County Council and other partners have come together to support the creation of Warm Spots. They'll include a wide range of spaces, including coffee mornings in village halls, churches opening up space for people to meet, and libraries welcoming people to work or chat in their buildings.

People can find their closest Warm Spots on this map: [www.cumbria.gov.uk/warmspots](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/warmspots)

To find out more about how to set up a Warm Spot, including how to access funding, visit: [www.cumbria.gov.uk/costofliving/stayingwarm.asp](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/costofliving/stayingwarm.asp)



## Fire Safety

**Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) are urging people to 'Stay Fire Safe' this winter.**

We recognise that price rises for fuel and food may lead to people having to make difficult choices to meet rising costs. What we don't want is for these choices to place them at greater risk from fire or Carbon Monoxide poisoning.

**Are there fire risks in your home? Spot them using our Online Home Fire Safety Check**

Firstly, we would encourage everyone to complete our free Home Fire Safety Check to identify any risks in your home. You can do this online at: [www.safelincs.co.uk/hfsc](http://www.safelincs.co.uk/hfsc)

This can be done for yourself or on behalf of a loved one, neighbour or relative. By answering a few simple questions, it will provide specific advice to the individual circumstances on how to keep safe from fire. For those people at greater risk, it will also generate a referral for a home Safe and Well Visit from CFRS staff.

**Alarms save lives – but only if they are working**

It is crucial that people have working smoke alarms in their home, we recommend at least one on each level of your home. Where there is a heating appliance which is not electric, we also recommend installing a carbon monoxide alarm. It is the only way to detect the colourless, odourless toxic gas which can be given off by fires, boilers, or other non-electrical appliances.

If people can only heat a single room, it is so important that this room has a working smoke and carbon monoxide alarm.

Both smoke and carbon monoxide alarms should be regularly tested to ensure they are always working, we recommend at least once a week.

**Don't risk your loved ones lives to cut costs**

With living costs rising, everyone is looking for ways to save some money. However, there are some areas where a saving could be a fire risk. Let's make positive changes that help our finances but don't put our families and homes in danger.

Other possible causes of harm are:

- Do not tamper with gas or electrical meters – this is illegal and very dangerous.
- Check your heating and electrical appliances are in good working order and not subject to product recall. You can sign up to product recalls and alerts on the Gov.UK website: [www.gov.uk/guidance/product-recalls-and-alerts](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/product-recalls-and-alerts).



- If you plan to recommission and old fireplaces, it will need checked and swept by a competent person – otherwise it could lead to a fire or CO poisoning.
- Do not hoard petrol in the home.
- Be careful of the risks of using naked candles.
- Camping cooking equipment should only be used outdoors.

### Find out more from CFRS

CFRS staff will be attending many Cumbria County Council 'warm spaces' to offer advice and support. Further lifesaving advice can be accessed via our website:

- [www.cumbria.gov.uk/safetyathome](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/safetyathome)
- [firekills.campaign.gov.uk](http://firekills.campaign.gov.uk)

## Energy saving advice

With the cost of energy rising considerably, many people are worried about how to save energy in their homes and businesses. There are lots of tips and advice for quick and easy ways to save energy, lower your bills and reduce your carbon footprint.

More information can be found at - [energysavingtrust.org.uk/hub/quick-tips-to-save-energy](http://energysavingtrust.org.uk/hub/quick-tips-to-save-energy)

## Staying Well

### Mental wellbeing and mental health support

It's very common for people to be feeling stressed and anxious at the moment – sometimes because of financial difficulties, sometimes because of the impact that COVID-19 has had, and sometimes just because it's been a very odd couple of years. Once again, people often need a little reassurance that this is not unusual to feel like this at the moment and it's OK to ask for help.

Many people may only need to talk about their worries with a family member, friend or someone they trust, and there is information on how to start these conversations in a later section.

However, a few people will need professional help, from voluntary sector organisations or the NHS, and there are links to some good sources of this support in the next section.

### Good sources of support

**Kooth** is an online service for young people aged 11-18 [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

Mindline Cumbria ([www.mindlinecumbria.org](http://www.mindlinecumbria.org)) offers support and guidance about mental health over the phone, via text or email. They will listen to your concerns and help to empower you to feel more in control of your mental health or support someone else.

There is more useful information from **Every Life Matters**:  
[www.every-life-matters.org.uk](http://www.every-life-matters.org.uk)

If people need to talk to someone urgently the **Samaritans** are available 24/7 on **116 123** ([www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org))

### Encouraging people to talk about their worries

We often worry about asking people how they're feeling because we're not really sure how to start the conversation, or if we'll be help them if they are experiencing mental health problems.

But in reality, people are often just waiting for someone to start the conversation; to ask how they are, and to be willing to listen to an honest answer. Although sometimes you might need to "ask twice", as we're so used to automatically saying "I'm fine"!



There are some websites that give good basic advice on how to start conversations about mental health, and to support other people with mental health concerns, including:

[www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/supporting-others](http://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/supporting-others)

[www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/if-youre-worried-about-someone-else](http://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/if-youre-worried-about-someone-else)

Listening carefully is often good enough - be non-judgemental, take their feelings seriously, and give them time to talk – and try not to let your own thoughts and worries take over.

It's OK to have silences, and you don't need to be able to fix all of people's problems.

You might be able to open up conversations about how people are feeling and their mental wellbeing with questions like these:

- Things are making us all so anxious at the moment, I'm just wondering how you are feeling?
- Everyone has been thinking about practical things over the last few weeks but it's important not to forget about our emotions and mental well-being – would it be helpful for us to chat about that for a while?
- I hope you don't mind me asking but I just wanted to check how you are feeling at the moment and wondered if you wanted to share any worries?
- We have talked about x but it is also important to share feelings of stress or any worries with others – are you managing to do that or is there anything else you would like to talk about at the moment?
- Some people find it hard to talk about their feelings but if there is anything else you would like to talk about before we finish chatting, I am happy to listen.

If you want to learn more about how to help people cope with the emotional issues, you could do the online Public Health England Psychological First Aid Training Courses (there is a general course, and one aimed particularly at people likely to be supporting children and young people). The courses don't require any background knowledge; they take about 3 hours, but you can do them at your own pace:

[www.futurelearn.com/courses/psychological-first-aid-covid-19](http://www.futurelearn.com/courses/psychological-first-aid-covid-19)

[www.futurelearn.com/courses/psychological-first-aid-for-children-and-young-people](http://www.futurelearn.com/courses/psychological-first-aid-for-children-and-young-people)

Every Life Matters offer a free online Suicide Awareness training course that lasts 60 minutes:

[www.every-life-matters.org.uk/training](http://www.every-life-matters.org.uk/training)

## Preventing ill health

Many chronic diseases are caused by key risk behaviours. By making healthy choices, you can reduce your likelihood of getting a chronic disease and improve your quality of life.

### Stop smoking

Stopping smoking (or never starting) lowers the risk of serious health problems, such as heart disease, cancer, type 2 diabetes, and lung disease, as well as premature death—even for long time smokers. Why not visit your local Stop Smoking Service and have a conversation with an understanding expert? You can find your nearest service at [www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services](http://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services)

There's more free, proven support for you! Millions have used NHS Smokefree support to help them stop smoking. Choose from an app, quit kit, email, SMS and face-to-face guidance - Sign up to NHS Smokefree at [stoptober.smokefree.nhs.uk](http://stoptober.smokefree.nhs.uk)

### Eat healthily

Eating healthy helps prevent, delay, and manage heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and other chronic diseases. A balanced, healthy diet includes a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and low-fat dairy products and limits added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium. Healthy eating can work for everyone's tastes, traditions, culture, and budget. If you are overweight, losing 5% to 7% of your starting weight can help prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. More information can be found at [www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-to-eat-a-balanced-diet/eight-tips-for-healthy-eating/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-to-eat-a-balanced-diet/eight-tips-for-healthy-eating/)

### Get regular physical activity

Regular physical activity can help you prevent, delay, or manage chronic diseases. Aim for moderate intensity physical activity (like brisk walking or gardening) for at least 150 minutes a week, with muscle-strengthening activities 2 days a week. More information can be found at [www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/exercise-guidelines/physical-activity-guidelines-for-adults-aged-19-to-64](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/exercise-guidelines/physical-activity-guidelines-for-adults-aged-19-to-64)

### Avoid drinking too much alcohol

Over time, excessive drinking can lead to high blood pressure, various cancers, heart disease, stroke, and liver disease. By not drinking too much, you can reduce these health risks. More information can be found at [www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/tips-on-cutting-down-alcohol](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/tips-on-cutting-down-alcohol)

### Get enough sleep

Insufficient sleep has been linked to the development and poor management of diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and depression. Adults should get at least 7 hours of sleep daily. More information can be found at [www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-health-issues/sleep](https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-health-issues/sleep)

**If people need urgent support with mental or physical health, then they can contact NHS111 online at [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk) who will direct them to appropriate services.**

## Covid and other respiratory infections

Whilst there are no longer any COVID-19 rules and restrictions in the UK, COVID-19 is still circulating in our communities and there is a possibility that numbers of people catching COVID-19 will increase over the winter months. This is because people will be spending more time mixing with other people indoors often in places with poor ventilation, which will increase the risk of the virus spreading.

Omicron is currently still the variant of COVID-19 that is circulating in the population, there is a possibility that the virus may mutate again, and a new variant may emerge, however we cannot currently predict if or when that may happen or if a new variant will be more transmissible or have different symptoms.

There are actions we can all take to help reduce the risk of catching COVID-19 and passing it on to others. These actions will also help to reduce the spread of other respiratory infections, such as flu, which can spread easily and may cause serious illness in some people.

COVID-19, along with many other respiratory infections such as influenza (flu), can spread easily and cause serious illness in some people. You may be infected with a respiratory virus such as COVID-19 and not have any symptoms but still pass infection onto others.

The risk of catching or passing on COVID-19 or respiratory infections is greatest when someone who is infected is physically close to or sharing an enclosed and/or poorly ventilated space with other people. When someone with a respiratory viral infection such as COVID-19 breathes, speaks, coughs or sneezes, they release small particles into the air that contain the virus which if they are breathed in or come into contact with the eyes nose or mouth of another person can then cause the spread of the infection. If a room isn't well ventilated, tiny moisture particles can build up as an aerosol that can stay in the air for hours. These particles can also be breathed in or can come into contact with the eyes, nose, or mouth and may also spread the infections. The particles can also land on surfaces and be passed from person to person via touch.

You will not always know whether someone you come into contact with is at **higher risk of becoming seriously ill from respiratory infections**, including COVID-19. They could be strangers (for example people you sit next to on public transport) or people you may have regular contact with (for example friends and work colleagues).

There are simple things you can do in your daily life that will help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections and protect those at highest risk. Things you can choose to do are:

1. Get vaccinated.
2. Let fresh air in if meeting others indoors.
3. Practise good hygiene:
  - wash your hands
  - cover your coughs and sneezes, dispose of tissues carefully
  - clean your surroundings frequently
4. Wear a face covering or a face mask in crowded and enclosed spaces.

While there are no longer any legal requirements to wear face coverings and face masks, some people still feel more comfortable wearing them in enclosed places, this is a personal choice that should be supported.

Face masks can help reduce the chance of you spreading infection to others, especially in crowded and enclosed spaces, they may also protect you from becoming infected by some respiratory viruses.

The basic guidance to reducing the risk of infections can be remembered as “Hands, Face, Space” Further guidance to preventing the risk of respiratory diseases can be found on [www.cumbria.gov.uk/warmspots](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/warmspots)

### If you develop Coronavirus or other respiratory infection symptoms

If you have symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as COVID-19, and you have a high temperature or do not feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities, you are advised to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people.

There is guidance on steps you can take to protect other people if you are unwell with symptoms of a respiratory infection, including COVID-19. [www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19)

### Vaccination

Vaccines are the best defence we have against COVID-19 and other respiratory infections such as flu. They provide good protection against hospitalisation and death. They also reduce the risk of long-term symptoms. The COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective and vaccine programmes are continuously monitored.

If you are eligible and you have not yet received your full course of a COVID-19 vaccine, you should **get vaccinated**. A full course of a COVID-19 vaccine provides protection against severe disease, including against the Omicron variant, but this protection wears off over time. Booster doses significantly improve the protection offered by vaccines. You should get a booster vaccine for COVID-19 if you are offered one.

You may be eligible for other vaccinations such as the Flu vaccine, particularly if you are at risk of becoming seriously ill. Get vaccinated as soon as you are able to.

There is more information about the vaccinations available and when you should have them on the NHS website. [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/)

### Clinically Extremely Vulnerable people

The success of the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination programme has meant that the requirement for shielding and identifying people as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) is no longer necessary. However, there remains a smaller number of people whose immune system means they are at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19, despite vaccination. The current advice for Clinically Extremely Vulnerable people is here: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk)

UK Health Security Agency

## Living with COVID-19:

**5 things** you can do to help yourself, your family and your community.

- 1** **Get vaccinated** to reduce your risk of becoming seriously ill and to protect others.
- 2** If you feel unwell and have flu-like or COVID-19 symptoms and a high temperature **avoid close contact** with others and **stay at home** if you can.
- 3** Let in **fresh air** when you meet others indoors, especially if they're at high risk from COVID-19.
- 4** **Wash your hands** regularly and cover your mouth and nose if you cough or sneeze.
- 5** Wear a **face covering** in crowded and enclosed places and when coming into contact with people at higher risk from COVID-19.

**Let's all keep helping each other.**  
For more information, go to [gov.uk/coronavirus](http://gov.uk/coronavirus)



## NHS Services

Hospitals are now running mainly as normal, but they are expecting a very busy winter, so it is important that people continue to choose the most appropriate NHS service. The graphic below gives some guidance on the most appropriate service to use under different circumstances.

More information for South Cumbria can be found at [www.healthierlsc.co.uk/KeepWellThisWinter](http://www.healthierlsc.co.uk/KeepWellThisWinter)

More information for North Cumbria can be found at [www.nenc-northcumbria.icb.nhs.uk/your-health/campaigns/winter-help-us-help-you](http://www.nenc-northcumbria.icb.nhs.uk/your-health/campaigns/winter-help-us-help-you)

## Urgent Treatment Centres

Urgent treatment centres are GP-led facilities that are open for at least 12 hours a day, every day of the week (including bank holidays).

If you need urgent medical attention but it's not a life-threatening situation, you should first call 111. If you think life is at risk, you should call **999**.

NHS 111 will assess you and give you the option to speak to a nurse, doctor or paramedic if appropriate. You'll then be advised where you need to go for treatment.

This could be an urgent treatment centre, an out-of-hours GP service, your local GP in normal hours, or the nearest A&E if necessary.

More information can be found at:

[www.ncic.nhs.uk/services/urgent-treatment-centre](http://www.ncic.nhs.uk/services/urgent-treatment-centre)

[www.morecambebayccg.nhs.uk/local-services/urgent-treatment-centre](http://www.morecambebayccg.nhs.uk/local-services/urgent-treatment-centre)

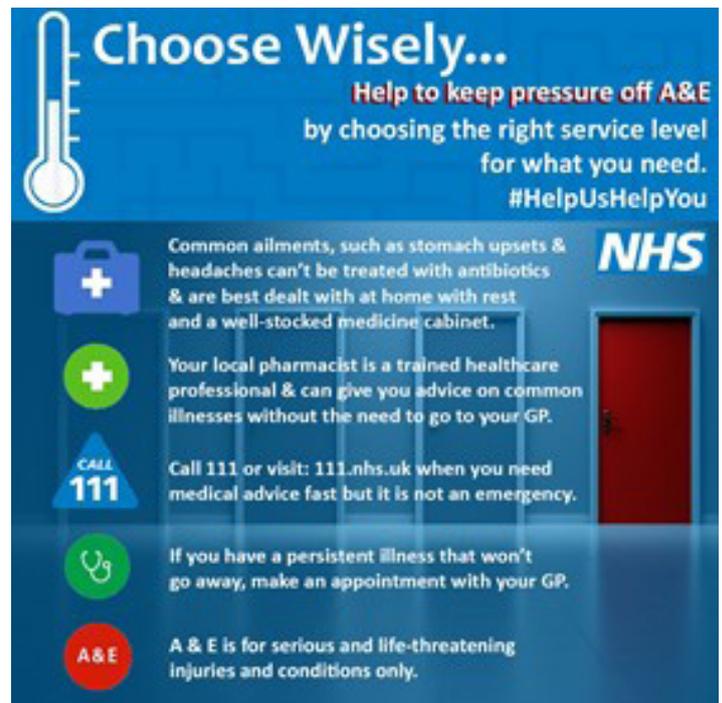
## Preparing for Winter Weather

### Winter travel

The Great British weather presents different challenges in different seasons. It's not just winter weather which can wreak havoc on the roads - rain at any time of the year can be dangerous. In fact, 9 out of 10 weather-related deaths and serious injuries on the roads take place in the rain.

From high winds, strong sunlight and fog to snow and ice, all weathers can present different challenges both for keeping the travel networks open and for those navigating through the difficult conditions.

Everyone who's lived in Cumbria for a while knows that there are days when winter weather makes travel around the county difficult. For information on how you can prepare for this, including how to check which roads have been gritted, visit: - [www.cumbria.gov.uk/winterready/default/emergencyready.asp](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/winterready/default/emergencyready.asp)



## Winter Weather and Flooding

Flooding is one of Cumbria's highest priority risks. Events which have happened around the country demonstrate the frequency and severity of floods in the UK, highlighting the need to plan and prepare. Floods can sometimes happen without any warning, or you may not live in a flood risk area, so you may not be notified by a flood alert or warning before one affects you.

More information on flooding can be found at - [www.cumbria.gov.uk/winterready/default/emergencyready.asp](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/winterready/default/emergencyready.asp)



You can also sign up to a free service to receive flood warnings if your home or business in England is at risk of flooding. [www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings](http://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings)

To check current weather warnings, and sign up for email alerts, visit the Met Office website: [www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/warnings-and-advice/uk-warnings](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/warnings-and-advice/uk-warnings)

You can check if you're in an area at risk of flooding, and sign up for flood alerts and warnings, visit: [www.gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk](http://www.gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk)

And to check current river levels and recent rainfall, visit: [www.gov.uk/check-flooding](http://www.gov.uk/check-flooding)

## Priority Service Registers

The Priority Services Register (PSR) is a free service offered throughout the energy industry that's available to domestic customers across England, Wales and Scotland. Through the PSR, eligible customers can receive additional services if they have communication, access and safety needs. This information will be used during an electricity, gas or water supply outage or if they're working to assist in a severe weather incident.

Many different groups of people are eligible to sign up for the Priority Services Register – if in doubt, it's well worth a check on the relevant website. It often includes older people, people with long term medical conditions, families with very young children and people who only speak limited English.

With customer consent, energy suppliers and network operators will keep and share PSR information securely across the energy industry.

Find out more here: [www.ofgem.gov.uk/get-help-your-supplier-priority-services-register](http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/get-help-your-supplier-priority-services-register)

Links for the individual utilities are:

- Electricity North West [www.enwl.co.uk/power-cuts/extra-care](http://www.enwl.co.uk/power-cuts/extra-care)
- Cadant Gas Network [cadantgas.com/help-advice/supporting-our-customers/priority-services-register](http://cadantgas.com/help-advice/supporting-our-customers/priority-services-register)
- Northern Gas Network [www.northerngasnetworks.co.uk/network-supply/priority-customers](http://www.northerngasnetworks.co.uk/network-supply/priority-customers)
- United Utilities [www.unitedutilities.com/help-and-support/priority-services](http://www.unitedutilities.com/help-and-support/priority-services)

## Avoiding trips and falls

Slips and falls in icy or wet conditions are a common problem. But there are things that you can do to reduce the risk of getting hurt.

- Avoid rushing or taking shortcuts over areas where snow or ice removal is incomplete
- Select suitable footwear - flat footwear with rubber soles provides better traction on ice and snow than leather-soled or high-heeled shoes
- Use handrails where you can
- Take small steps to keep your centre of balance under you
- Avoid carrying lots of heavy shopping bags, especially on steps
- Walk slowly and never run on icy ground
- Keep both hands free for balance, rather than in your pockets
- Always be aware of your surroundings - some places will stay icy for longer than others for example places that do not get the sun

- Be particularly careful getting into and out of vehicles - and hold on to the vehicle for support
- Keep paths clear of debris, water, ice and snow

It is also really important to prevent trips and falls at home, as we age, we become more at risk of falling, one in three people over the age of 65 will fall this year. More information on preventing trips and falls can be found here [www.csp.org.uk/system/files/get\\_up\\_and\\_go\\_0.pdf](http://www.csp.org.uk/system/files/get_up_and_go_0.pdf)

## Worried about someone?

### Mental Health

Are you worried that a friend, family member or colleague is behaving differently? We all have mental health in the same way that we all have physical health. But it can be much harder to know if someone is experiencing problems with their mental wellbeing. If you're concerned about someone's mental health, and worried that they might harm themselves, then the Samaritans website has good advice:

[www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/if-youre-worried-about-someone-else](http://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/if-youre-worried-about-someone-else)

### Domestic Abuse

When people are worried about money and paying bills, it can cause stress levels to rise, and abusive behaviour can escalate. There are many kinds of domestic abuse; it might involve physical violence, controlling behaviour, financial control, and/or isolating people from friends and family.

The levels of domestic abuse rose during the Coronavirus pandemic, and it is often a hidden problem. There are many organisations that can help, but if people are in danger, they should call **999**.

There's more information, including links to organisation that can help, on the Cumbria Police website: [www.cumbria.police.uk/Advice-Centre/Personal-Safety/Domestic-Abuse.aspx](http://www.cumbria.police.uk/Advice-Centre/Personal-Safety/Domestic-Abuse.aspx)

## Worried about a child or young person?

If you have concerns about a child being neglected or abused, please report them and help keep children safe. People can report concerns in the following ways:

- Call the **Cumbria Safeguarding Hub** on **0333 240 1727**
- Call the **NSPCC** on **0808 800 5000**
- If a child is at immediate risk of harm call **999**
- Children can contact [childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk) if they do not feel safe on **0800 1111**

Find out more at [www.cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/LSCB/covid19.asp](http://www.cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/LSCB/covid19.asp)

If you do not have a safeguarding concern but feel that a child, young person or family may need some additional support, they may benefit from 'early help'.

For further information - **Early Help : Cumbria County Council** ([cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk](http://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk))

The 0 – 19 Child and Family Support service offer activities and services to support children and young people from birth to 19 years of age, and can provide advice and support to families on a range of issues - **0 to 19 Child and Family Support Services | Cumbria's Family Information Directory**

**Concerned about a child?**

Call **0333 2401727**

## Worried about an adult?

This is a worrying time for everyone but particularly for the older and more vulnerable members of our communities. If you are concerned that an adult is at risk of abuse or neglect, please see the contact options below and report your concerns.

Find out more at [www.cumbriasab.org.uk/AdultSafeguarding/covid-19.asp](http://www.cumbriasab.org.uk/AdultSafeguarding/covid-19.asp).



# Safeguarding Adults

**Safeguarding adults** means protecting the most vulnerable from abuse or neglect.

**Abuse and neglect** can happen in different ways and be perpetrated by anyone. Abuse can be a crime.

**If you see something**, are told something or something doesn't feel right you need to report it.



### Contact us

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



If someone is at immediate risk of harm call 999



@cumbriasab



cumbriasab.org.uk



## Other topics

### Support for older people

Age UK offer advice and support to older people; links to the local branches are:

- Age UK Barrow: [www.ageuk.org.uk/barrow](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/barrow)
- Age UK Carlisle and Eden: [www.ageuk.org.uk/carlisleandeden](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/carlisleandeden)
- Age UK South Lakeland: [www.ageuk.org.uk/southlakeland](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/southlakeland)
- Age UK West Cumbria: [www.ageuk.org.uk/westcumbria](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/westcumbria)

### Support for unpaid Carers

The cost-of-living crisis may cause additional anxieties for people who provide unpaid care.

People who provide unpaid care can get support from their local Carers organisation. There are 5 Carers organisations in Cumbria; you can get information on your local organisation by ringing Carers Support Cumbria on **08443 843230** or visiting their website: [www.carerssupportcumbria.co.uk](http://www.carerssupportcumbria.co.uk)

### Disability Support

There are a number of specialist organisations Cumbria that can provide support and advice to people with disabilities. These include:

- Allerdale Disability Association: [www.allerdaledisability.com](http://www.allerdaledisability.com)
- Barrow and District Disability Association: [www.facebook.com/TheBDDA](https://www.facebook.com/TheBDDA)
- Copeland Disability Forum: [www.copeland.gov.uk/section/copeland-disability-forum](http://www.copeland.gov.uk/section/copeland-disability-forum)
- People First Cumbria: [wearepeoplefirst.co.uk](http://wearepeoplefirst.co.uk)

### Support with childcare costs

Free early education is available for 3 or 4 year olds, and some 2 year olds. Families may also be eligible for help from government childcare schemes.

Visit Childcare Choices for their childcare calculator to find out which scheme would benefit you the most and get an estimate of how much help you could get with your childcare costs.

For more information on childcare in Cumbria, please visit Childcare and Early Years | Cumbria's Family Information Directory or contact the Children and Families Information Service on **03457 125 737** or **childrens.information@cumbria.gov.uk**

### Looking after your pets

Many people who have found pets can find them to be a huge source of companionship, and this can help with their mental wellbeing. But we know that many people have been concerned about being about how they'll afford to feed their pets or pay vet bills.

Oak Tree Animals' Charity can provide advice and help people to find support with these issues; ring **01228 560082** or visit their website:

[www.oaktreeanimals.org.uk](http://www.oaktreeanimals.org.uk)



## Keeping up to date

### SHARE guidelines

Throughout this pack we've tried to give you links to some of the most useful websites where you can check for updated information.

If you're thinking of sharing information on social media, it's worth thinking about if it comes from a trustworthy source. The **SHARE** guidelines can help you decide if it's reliable information:

- **Source:** Make sure the story is written by a source that you trust, with a reputation for accuracy. If it's an unfamiliar source, try checking the website's "About Us" section for more information.
- **Headline:** Always read beyond the headline. If it sounds too good to be true, it might very well be! Be wary if something doesn't seem to add up.
- **Analyse:** Make sure you check the facts; just because you've seen a story several times doesn't mean it's true. If you're not sure, look at fact-checking websites and other reliable sources to double check.
- **Retouched:** Check if images look like they might have been retouched or altered. False news stories often contain altered photographs or reedited video clips. Or sometimes images may be authentic, but taken out of context.
- **Errors:** Many false new stories use "lookalike" web addresses – look out for misspellings! Poor grammar and bad layout are other signs that a website might not be genuine.

You can find out more about the SHARE checklist and disinformation here: [sharechecklist.gov.uk](https://sharechecklist.gov.uk)

### Cumbrian Information Sources

Information is available from a range of local organisations. The list below gives some suggested websites, and most of these organisations will have Facebook pages and Twitter accounts, which can be a good way to keep up to date with the latest information.

**Cumbria County Council:** [www.cumbria.gov.uk/costofliving/default.asp](https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/costofliving/default.asp)

#### District Councils:

Allerdale Borough Council: [www.allerdale.gov.uk](https://www.allerdale.gov.uk)

Barrow Borough Council: [barrowbc.gov.uk](https://barrowbc.gov.uk)

Carlisle City Council: [www.carlisle.gov.uk](https://www.carlisle.gov.uk)

Copeland Borough Council: [www.copeland.gov.uk](https://www.copeland.gov.uk)

Eden District Council: [www.eden.gov.uk](https://www.eden.gov.uk)

South Lakeland District Council: [www.southlakeland.gov.uk](https://www.southlakeland.gov.uk)

**Cumbria Police:** [www.cumbria.police.uk](https://www.cumbria.police.uk)

**Cumbria CVS** (support for voluntary and community organisations):  
[cumbriacvs.org.uk](https://cumbriacvs.org.uk)

**ACTion with Communities in Cumbria** (support for communities and community groups):  
[www.cumbriaction.org.uk](https://www.cumbriaction.org.uk)





If you require this document in another format (eg 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 norétumėte 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**