

Coronavirus (Covid19) Frequently Asked Questions for people with disabilities and family carers

List of helplines							
HSE: 1850 24 1850	Inclusion Ireland: 0818 559891	Family Carers Ireland: 1800 240724	ALONE: 0818 222 024	NALA: 1800 20 20 56	Samaritans: 116 123	Barnardos Parent Support: 1800 910123	Parentline: 1890 927277

List of helpline numbers for Local Authorities Community Support Fora

Carlow County Council 1800 814300 covidsupport@carlowcoco.ie	Limerick County Council 1800 832005 covidsupport@limerick.ie
Cavan County Council 1800 300404 covidsupport@cavancoco.ie	Longford County Council 1800 300122 covidsupport@longfordcoco.ie
Clare County Council 1890 252943 covidsupport@clarecoco.ie	Louth County Council 1800 805817 covidsupport@louthcoco.ie
Cork City Council 1800 222226 covidsupport@corkcity.ie	Mayo County Council 094 9064660 covidsupport@mayococo.ie
Cork County Council 1800 805819 Text 085 8709010 covidsupport@corkcoco.ie	Meath County Council 1800 808809 covidsupport@meathcoco.ie
Donegal County Council 1800 928982 covidsupport@donegalcoco.ie	Monaghan County Council 1800 804158 covidsupport@monaghancoco.ie
Dublin City Council 01 222 8555 covidsupport@dublincity.ie	Offaly County Council 1800 818181 covidsupport@offalycoco.ie
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council 01 2713199 covidsupport@dlrcoco.ie	Roscommon County Roscommon 1800 200727 covidsupport@roscommoncoco.ie
Fingal County Council 1800 459059 covidsupport@fingal.ie	Sligo County Council 1800292765 covidsupport@sligococo.ie
Galway City Council 1800 400150 covidsupport@galwaycity.ie	South Dublin County Council 1800 240519 covidsupport@sdblincoco.ie
Galway County Council 1800 928894 covidsupport@galwaycoco.ie	Tipperary County Council 0761 065000 covid19@tipperarycoco.ie
Kerry County Council 1800 807 009 covidsupport@kerrycoco.ie	Waterford County Council 1800 250185 covidsupport@waterfordcouncil.ie
Kildare County Council 1800 300174 covidsupport@kildarecoco.ie	Westmeath County Council 1800 805816 covidsupport@westmeathcoco.ie
Kilkenny County Council 1800 500000 covidcommunity@kilkennycoco.ie	Wexford County Council 053 9196000 covidsupport@wexfordcoco.ie
Laois County Council 1800 832010 covidsupport@laiscoco.ie	Wicklow County Council 1800 868399 covidsupport@wicklowcoco.ie
Leitrim County Council 1800 852389 covidsupport@leitrimcoco.ie	

Testing for Covid 19	
1. I have a disability and I have symptoms which may be Covid-19. How do I get a test?	You should phone your GP to discuss your symptoms. If your GP decides that you need to be tested, they will give your details to the test centre. The GP will also advise you about how to protect yourself and others while you are waiting for the test. The test centre will contact you about your appointment. It may take up to 7 days before they contact you.
2. I am a family carer and I have symptoms which may be Covid-19. How do I get a test?	If you are getting a test it would be a good idea to write down the names of all the people you have been with in the week before you started to feel unwell. This will help with contact tracing.
3. I cannot attend a test centre because I am looking after a family member who cannot be left alone. Can I be tested at home?	You should ask your GP about this when discussing your symptoms.
4. I have an appointment for a test but I have no way of getting there.	You should let your GP know this when discussing your symptoms. You could contact your Local Authority's Community Supports Forum to find out whether they can arrange to bring you to the test centre. (See the list of county numbers on page 1)
Preventing infection	
5. I've been advised to self-isolate and because I'm looking after someone at home that will be very difficult.	<p>The Covid-19 Public Information Booklet is being sent to every household. It gives information on what to do. The booklet is also in Easy Read and other languages at: https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/.</p> <p>If the person you are caring for is at high medical risk you should contact your regular service provider immediately. If you don't have a regular service provider, contact your Public Health Nurse or Local Disability Manager (HSE Disability Services). You can also call one of the helplines on page 1 for information and advice.</p> <p>If you need help in developing a new care plan or routine, contact Family Carers Ireland.</p> <p>If the person you are caring for is not at high risk and there is someone else in the house who can look after them instead, you should isolate yourself as much as possible:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stay in one room with a window you can open. 2. If you can, use a toilet and bathroom that no one else in the house uses. 3. If you have to share a bathroom with others, use the bathroom last and then clean it thoroughly. 4. Do not share food, dishes, drinking glasses, cups, knives, forks and spoons, clothing, towels and bedding with the other people in your house. <p>If there is no-one else who can look after the person you care for, follow the guidelines as closely</p>

	<p>as you can, such as not sharing food, dishes or towels. You should also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear a face mask • Wash your hands thoroughly and repeatedly • Keep your distance whenever possible
<p>6. What should I ask healthcare staff to do in order to prevent infection when they come in to my house?</p>	<p>Health and social care staff who visit homes, including home helps and PAs, have been given clear guidance.</p> <p>Where Covid-19 is not suspected or confirmed, they should carry on with what they usually do, in particular:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Clean their hands with soap and water or with hand sanitiser when they arrive and before they leave your house b) Not touch their face with their hands c) Not eat or drink in your home d) Cover their nose and mouth with a tissue if they cough or sneeze e) Stay at least 1 metre from people, except when they are providing direct personal care. <p>If staff are not keeping to these standards, you should contact your service provider.</p> <p>Healthcare staff must wear masks when providing care to people which requires them to be within 2 metres of that person, regardless of where that person has Covid 19 or not.</p> <p>If anyone in your house has a new cough, a raised temperature or is short of breath, you should contact their GP and the service provider right away before the health staff or home support arrives.</p>
<p>7. Where can I get Personal Protective Equipment? No-one in my household has or may have Covid-19.</p>	<p>Personal Protective Equipment, or PPE, is protective clothing, such as masks or gloves, and its use depends on the circumstances. PPE is not required by family members for normal routine care if Covid-19 infection is not suspected or confirmed.</p> <p>Gloves and aprons are only needed for direct personal care and Public Health Nurses usually supply these for Medical Card/Long Term Illness card holders. There is a shortage of gloves at present and efforts are being made to address this.</p> <p>Some charities and service providers, including Family Carers Ireland, have received donations or funding for Personal Protective Equipment to use in the home. For more information, contact Family Carers Careline at 1800 240724.</p>
<p>8. I'm worried about how the restrictions on leaving the house are going to affect the person I support.</p>	<p>Government restrictions allow you and those you live with to leave your house for exercise within 2 kilometres of your house. Make sure you stay 2 metres away from other people. If someone is known or suspected to have Covid-19, they must stay in self-isolation at home. See current public</p>

	<p>health guidance at https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c36c85-covid-19-coronavirus/</p> <p>If you have a home carer or PA they are classed as essential workers and can still travel more than 2 km to come to your home.</p>
<p>What happens if a person with a disability or a family carer gets Covid-19?</p>	
<p>9. I'm a family carer. What plans or supports are in place to look after the person I care for if I am unwell, or have to self-isolate or go into hospital?</p>	<p>Each HSE Community Health Organisation has an Area Crisis Management Team and all services have plans for providing supports during Covid-19.</p> <p>If the person you are caring for is at high risk, you may already have received a call from a 'Key Point of Contact' in your regular service. If not, you should ring your regular service provider to discuss an emergency plan. If you don't have a service provider, contact your Public Health Nurse or Disability Manager (HSE Disability Service). You may also ring one of the helplines above on page 1 for advice.</p> <p>If the person you care for is not at high risk, you should contact your regular service provider to find out how they can help you. Services are exploring together how they can reach out to people with disabilities and their family carers, and provide them with support in different ways - telephone helplines, practical supports such as help with shopping and, when essential, help at home.</p> <p>You could complete Family Carers Ireland's Emergency Care Plan with your family member's needs, their likes and dislikes and routines. This will help if someone needs to take over caring. It is available at www.familycarers.ie. If you need help in developing your care plan, you can contact Family Carers Ireland Careline (see number on page 1).</p> <p>You can also complete the HSE Health Passport for people with an intellectual disability. https://healthservice.hse.ie/filelibrary/onmsd/hse-health-passport-for-people-with-intellectual-disability.pdf or short version: https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/</p>
<p>10. I have a disability. What happens if I get sick or test positive for Covid-19 and have to self-isolate or go to hospital?</p>	<p>You should call your regular service provider to find out how they can help you. If you don't have a service provider contact your Public Health Nurse or local Disability Manager (HSE Disability Services). You may also ring one of the helplines on page 1 for advice.</p> <p>Services are exploring together how they can reach out to people with disabilities and their family carers, and provide them with support in different ways such as telephone support and, when it is essential, help at home.</p>

	<p>It may be helpful to write down your needs, medication and routines and keep it handy. This will help the staff if you need to go to hospital.</p> <p>You could complete the HSE Health Passport for people with an intellectual disability. A friend or support person can help you to fill this in. You might be confused if you get sick, and this will help healthcare staff to understand your needs if they don't know you already.</p> <p>https://healthservice.hse.ie/filelibrary/onmsd/hse-health-passport-for-people-with-intellectual-disability.pdf or short version: https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/</p>
11. If someone in my house has or may have Covid-19, will I continue to receive home care?	If you think someone in your house has or may have Covid-19, it is important that you contact your home care or health service provider immediately so that they can put a home care plan in place.
12. I am caring for someone at home and someone in the household has or may have Covid-19. Where can I get Personal Protective Equipment to use?	If someone in your house has or may have Covid-19 infection, immediately call your GP or PHN for advice. Tell them if the person that you care for is at high risk.
13. Where can I get guidance on how to use Personal Protective Equipment?	There is information about how to put on and take off PPE on www.hseland.ie . You need to register to access this site, but that's very easy. You don't need to be a member of staff, you can register as a volunteer.
14. Will I be allowed to go with the person I support if they are admitted to hospital with Covid-19?	<p>Each Hospital looks at this case by case, and the HSE are looking for solutions.</p> <p>You could complete Family Carers Ireland's Emergency Care Plan with your family member's needs, likes and dislikes and routines, which will help the healthcare staff if they need to go to hospital. The Emergency Care Plan is available at www.familycarers.ie.</p> <p>You can also help the person you support to complete the HSE Health Passport for people with an intellectual disability.</p> <p>https://healthservice.hse.ie/filelibrary/onmsd/hse-health-passport-for-people-with-intellectual-disability.pdf or short version: https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/</p>
15. Where can I find guidance on caring for a person diagnosed with Covid-19, especially about infection control?	<p>The Covid-19 Information Booklet is being sent to all households. This gives you information on what to do. The booklet is also in Easy Read and other languages on https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/</p> <p>Courses in infection control and putting on and taking off PPE are available on www.hseland.ie. You</p>

	need to register to access this site, but that's very easy. You do not need to be a member of staff, you can register as a volunteer.
Assistance with everyday tasks	
16. Can I get help such as collecting prescriptions or grocery shopping while I am self-isolating or cocooned at home?	<p>You can call the ALONE help line, 0818 222024. It is linked to a national network of volunteers who can provide practical supports, such as collecting shopping or medications for those unable to leave home.</p> <p>Community Support Fora are now set up in each Local Authority to provide supports such as:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection and delivery of food and essentials, fuel and medication • Transport to testing centres, assessment hubs, GPs and hospitals • Helping with loneliness and isolation • Garda related matters • Other medical or health needs <p>Helplines for Local Authority Community Support Fora are listed on page 1.</p>
17. I'm due to attend a hospital medical appointment but haven't heard if it will go ahead. Should I still attend?	<p>Many non-urgent hospital appointments have been cancelled. You can see a list of public hospitals with information on appointments at https://www2.hse.ie/services/hospital-service-disruptions/hospital-service-disruptions-covid19.html.</p> <p>If you have a hospital or other medical appointment which you think is urgent or essential, talk to your GP or specialist about whether you should attend.</p>
18. I find it hard to understand what I read about Covid-19. Is there information which is easy to read?	<p>The Covid-19 Information Booklet is being sent to all households. This gives information on what to do. The booklet is also in Easy Read and other languages at: https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/</p> <p>Many organisations who work to support people with disabilities and their families have produced easy to read information guides on Covid-19. See Inclusion Ireland, Enable Ireland and National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers websites for easy read information on a range of Covid-19 topics which can be printed off. https://www.inclusionireland.ie/content/page/corona-virus http://www.fedvol.ie/ https://www.enableireland.ie/</p> <p>The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is also providing help with understanding health information. You can visit their website to find Covid-19 words and terms explained. https://www.nala.ie/covid-19-supports/ You can also Freephone 1800 20 20 56 to talk through the information with a NALA tutor or you can text LEARN to 50050.</p>
COVID -19 Financial Supports	

19. What social welfare supports are available to support people during the Covid-19 pandemic?	<p>You can find answers to all these questions on the Family Carers Ireland website https://familycarers.ie/a-guide-to-covid-19-social-welfare-supports-for-family-carers/ where you can also select the option of transferring to Family Carers Ireland Careline.</p> <p>You can also phone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) Income Support Helpline for Covid-19 1890 800 024 or - Family Carers Ireland Freephone Careline 1800 240724
20. I'm a family carer and receive Carer's Allowance. I also work part-time for less than 18.5 hours per week. I've just lost my job due to Covid-19. Can I apply for the Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment?	
21. I receive Disability Allowance and work part-time. I've just been laid off by my employer due to Covid-19. Can I apply for the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment?	
22. I can't make it to the post office to pick up payments. How long does the post office keep the payments for?	
23. Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak I earned less than €350 per week. If I apply for the Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment it means my weekly income will increase. How does this work and will the increase have to be repaid when the crisis is over?	
24. Our household costs including electricity and fuels bills have gone up because we are now all at home. Is there any financial supports we can claim to help with these increased costs?	
25. I haven't lost my job, but I'm worried that if I continue to work, I will be at risk of contracting Covid-19 and infecting another vulnerable household member. If I give up work, rather than being formally let go by my employer, am I eligible for Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment?	
26. Where will my Covid-19 Unemployment Payment be paid?	
27. How should I apply for Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment?	
Disability services and supports	
28. Will our respite or home care service be suspended during the Covid-19 crisis?	This will be decided locally, taking into account the risks of infection. Contact your regular respite or home care service to find out more.
29. My family member usually lives in a community group home or residential care. Because of Covid-19 they have come to live with me. Do they still have to pay for their residential service?	If someone is not currently living in a community group home or residential care setting they cannot be charged. If this has happened, you should contact the service provider immediately, and ask them to repay the money that is owed.
30. What help is there for families who are caring for someone with a disability at home?	Contact your regular service provider to find out about what they have put in place and how they can advise and support you. If you don't have a regular service provider phone your Public Health Nurse or Disability Manager, HSE. You can also ring one of the helplines above on page 1 for information.
31. I am a family carer and without our normal supports and services I am struggling to	If you need help in developing a care plan or routine, you can contact Family Carers Ireland (see

<p>cope. Where can I get help?</p>	<p>phone number on page 1).</p> <p>The HSE and government departments who are planning measures in this pandemic are very aware of the additional stresses Covid-19 puts on people with disabilities and family carers. HSE and voluntary agencies providing disability services for children, adults and families are working hard to find different ways to provide support during the pandemic.</p> <p>The HSE is working in partnership with umbrella groups who represent service providers and family groups, including Inclusion Ireland, Family Carers Ireland, LEAP and Alone, to plan supports and information for families. Work is also taking place to ensure that the needs of people with disabilities and their families are included in all of the planning being undertaken by the National Public Health Emergency Team, which has a Vulnerable Persons Working Group.</p>
<p>32. I hear lots of people talking about stockpiling - should I be worried about running out of essential supplies such as continence pads or special diet supplements?</p>	<p>There are no reported shortages of continence products at present. If you usually receive continence products from the HSE this should continue. Contact your local HSE Continence Officer if you have any questions.</p> <p>Dietary supplies which are on prescription appeared to have been temporarily in short supply when people filled prescriptions earlier than usual in March. However, the HSE is not aware of any shortages.</p>
<p>33. If I stop or reduce my home care service, because of the risk of infection or because other family members are now at home, will my service be fully restored when the crisis is over?</p>	<p>Yes, based on your assessed need at that time.</p>

**** 24/4/2020: This document will be reviewed regularly in light of updated Public Health guidance**