

Where to go for help

HELP WITH DEALING WITH INDIVIDUAL HARDSHIP

- Circumstances will vary for each person but the **national charity turn2us**: turn2us.org.uk offers comprehensive and easy-to-understand online guidance (including a benefits calculator) which covers all aspects of potential support including search engines by postcode for localised agencies, groups and food banks
- Half-a-million people have applied for **Universal Credit** so there are long waiting lists for processing but it is important to start the process if you think you are eligible. You can find information on how to claim at gov.uk/universal-credit
- As well as State Welfare, **many charities offer non-repayable grants** and, again, people can access local contacts through the above universal charity portal: turn2us.org.uk
- **Bristol Citizens Advice**: bristolcab.org.uk are not currently holding face-to-face advice sessions but people can contact their advice line on Tel: 03444 111 444

ADDITIONAL HELP FOR THE HOMELESS

- **Emergency funding** is being provided to councils to find people accommodation (possibly in hotels) to get all rough sleepers off the streets to slow the speed of the spread of coronavirus
- **Bristol has secured 250 rooms** but more needed (there is an appeal for 450 ongoing at the moment) if anyone can help please email: covid19.accommodation@bristol.gov.uk
- Contact information for local **homelessness outreach** team with **St Mungo's** can be found at:
 - bristol.gov.uk/housing/sleeping-rough-housing-advice
 - Email: bristolspot@mungos.org
 - Tel: 0117 407 0330 - Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm
- The **Julian Trust** night centre can be contacted on Tel: 0117 924 4604 (evenings only)

HELP FOR THE VERY VULNERABLE

Advice on shielding and protecting the vulnerable: gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19

Suggested measures for those classified as above include:-

- Strictly avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (covid-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough.
- Do not leave your house.
- Do not attend any gatherings. This includes gatherings of friends and families in private spaces, for example, family homes, weddings and religious services.
- Do not go out for shopping, leisure or travel and, when arranging food or medication deliveries, these should be left at the door to minimise contact.
- Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media.
- Do use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services.

Online registration for support (in addition to contact details on the NHS letter sent to 1.4 million people): gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable or get coronavirus support as an extremely vulnerable person by telephone: **0800 028 8327**

Government food parcels are being distributed locally to people being shielded from the risk of serious illness through the council's voluntary service. People signed up on the council's volunteering can do Bristol website: <https://candobristol.co.uk/>

HELP FOR COUNCIL TENANTS

- Threat of eviction reduced with the **suspension in new eviction proceedings** in social (or private) accommodation from the start of the pandemic.
- Government has announced no **new possession proceedings** from the start of the crisis.
- Private landlords who benefit from three-month mortgage payment holiday **meant be sympathetic to tenants struggling financially** due to upheaval and explore ways to repay any arrears accrued after this period has elapsed. **The council is adopting a 'compassionate' approach** to this issue and will work with residents to establish a way to clear the arrears once the crisis is over.
- A lot of assistance will overlap with general advice and the best place to start is the latest government advice - gov.uk/coronavirus.
- Bristol city council has its own portal covering its services - bristol.gov.uk/crime-emergencies/coronavirus-covid-19-what-you-need-to-know
- General benefits advice is available here: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/benefits-financial-help>
- There is also a specific online contact form: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/benefits-financial-help/contact-the-benefits-service>
- Council services can be contacted on **0117 922 2200**.
- The latest news for Council tenants and leaseholders, to be posted on the BCC website at <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/housing/covid-19-guidance-for-council-tenants-about-what-we-re-doing>
- The citizen service point (CSP) at Temple Street will **only be open for emergency appointments** until further notice.

Help cont...

TOP TIPS FOR MAINTAINING WELLBEING AT HOME

NHS has produced comprehensive guidance during this isolation period - [nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/](https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/)

- Create a daily routine around work, rest and play
- Read, write, draw and pursue home hobbies, distance learning or take up a new skill
- Keep connected with others through phoning, messaging, skype, social media and other digital platforms
- Stick to a regular, healthy meals and sleep patterns
- Try to look after the body through moderate exercise to counter physical inactivity (lots of free workouts online)
- Practice relaxation techniques, also to be found on the NHS website above
- Aside from accessing important updates, do not stay glued to the news coverage

HELP FOR THE SELF-EMPLOYED

- A **self-employment income support scheme** (SEISS) will support most self-employed individuals (including members of partnerships) who have lost income due to coronavirus (covid-19).
 - This scheme will allow you to claim a taxable grant worth 80% of your trading profits up to a maximum of £2,500 per month for the next 3 months (representing average over three years accounting period). This may be extended if needed.
 - Full details can be found at: [gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme)
 - This is targeted at those with trading profits up to £50,000
 - HMRC will contact people directly and pay any grant directly into bank accounts
- Account filing deadline extended 4 weeks to capture most recent start-ups with less than 3 years tax returns

BUSINESSES FACING HARDSHIP

- Coronavirus **job retention scheme** which will cover 80% wage costs up to cap of £2,500 per month for 'furloughed' employees
- **Deferral of payments** for VAT (from 20 March 2020 until 30 June 2020) and income tax (due on the 31 July 2020 may be deferred until 31 January 2021)
- 12-month **business rates holiday** in retail, hospitality, leisure and nursery sectors
- SMEs eligible for **business grants of £10,000** are being made available with more details found at - [bristol.gov.uk/business-rates/budget-2020-new-rate-discounts](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/business-rates/budget-2020-new-rate-discounts)
- **Grant funding of £25,000 for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses** with property with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000
- Coronavirus **business interruption loan scheme** being made available through commercial lenders but backed by the newly created government-owned British Business Bank
- Full details can be found on the Government website - [gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses)

OTHER NATIONAL & LOCAL LINKS

- Government guidance (regularly updated) - [gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses)
- Bristol city council - [bristol.gov.uk/crime-emergencies/coronavirus-information-for-businesses](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/crime-emergencies/coronavirus-information-for-businesses)
- British business bank - [british-business-bank.co.uk/ourpartners/coronavirus-business-interruption-loan-scheme-cbils/](https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/ourpartners/coronavirus-business-interruption-loan-scheme-cbils/)
- For those active on social media an important safeguard against inadvertently spreading misinformation there is the very useful independent fact checking charity website - [fullfact.org/](https://www.fullfact.org/)

YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLORS



If you need us for anything then please just get in touch. No one is alone in this. Or at least they shouldn't have to be.

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