



Bracknell Forest Winter health and wellbeing advice 2021/2022



Introduction

Even though restrictions have eased, COVID-19 and other viruses are still very much with us. So far, Bracknell Forest residents have generally been doing a great job of staying safe, and we encourage everyone to keep up this hard work to protect yourself, your family and your friends.

If we can work together to do all we can to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other winter viruses, we can all have a safer winter. This includes preventing infection through some very basic hygiene routines, having the vaccines and boosters when offered and testing and registering the results regularly, even if you have had the vaccination and have no symptoms.

Also, by working with NHS Test and Trace to help identify close contacts if you test positive for COVID-19, we will ensure the right people are self-isolating when necessary to try and stop the spread.

While restrictions have eased, please remember to be courteous to others by giving each other space, wearing a face covering in busy public spaces, and following guidance when pinged by the NHS app.

This booklet provides advice and guidance to help you stay as safe as possible this winter.

Infection prevention

It is normal and expected for respiratory viruses to circulate every year.

After a season of low numbers of respiratory viruses such as flu, it is expected that we will see higher numbers of respiratory viruses as restrictions ease and people mix more. The good hygiene habits we have developed during the pandemic will help protect us this winter too.

Good respiratory and hand hygiene behaviour will prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other seasonal illness. This behaviour includes washing your hands regularly, using a tissue to catch coughs or sneezes and washing your hands afterwards, and staying away from others if you feel unwell.

Safer behaviours and actions



Get vaccinated.



Meeting outdoors is safer. If you meet indoors, let fresh air in.



Wear a face covering in crowded and enclosed settings where you come into contact with people you do not normally meet.



Get tested, and self isolate if required.



Stay at home if you are unwell.



Wash your hands.



Download and use the NHS COVID-19 app.

For more information, visit: [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

Where to go if you are feeling unwell

There are many services available if you are feeling unwell and knowing which one is right for your needs will help you get the advice and care you need.

Know where to go when feeling unwell

Download the NHS App to:

- view your Covid-19 vaccination details
- book appointments
- view your health record and more
- order repeat prescriptions
- get health advice

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|  Self Care <p>Be prepared to care for yourself with a well-stocked medicine cabinet and plenty of rest if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• an upset tummy• pain or headache• sore throat (but if for two weeks or more contact your GP) <p>For health advice, visit www.nhs.uk</p> <p>For self care advice, visit www.frimleyhealthandcare.org.uk and search 'stay well'</p> <p>Not sure what to do when your child is unwell? If you are worried about a child, visit the Frimley Healthier Together website: frimley-healthiertgether.nhs.uk</p> |  Pharmacists <p>are qualified healthcare professionals, who can offer clinical advice and over-the-counter medicines. Ask for help with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• minor aches and pains, burns and scalds, head lice, etc• bites and stings• queries about medication dosage, type or suitability plus urgent requests• medication related to hospital discharge• repeat prescriptions |  GP surgery <p>Visit your GP surgery website and click on eConsult to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• get help for a condition that has not improved after seeking help from your pharmacy• to report urgent conditions that are not life threatening• to report a deteriorating chronic condition <p>Please continue to use usual routes, including online patient access, to order repeat prescriptions. If you do not have access to the internet, you can continue to phone your surgery</p> |  Visit 111.nhs.uk or call NHS 111 <p>when the situation is not life threatening and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• if you think you need to go to hospital• if you don't know the most suitable place to go or call• if you don't have a GP to call or if your GP practice is closed• if you need advice or reassurance about what to do <p>Available 24 hours a day, every day. If needed, an NHS advisor will help you to be seen quickly and safely.</p> |  Minor injuries <p>A minor injury service is only for conditions such as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• sprains and strains• suspected broken limbs• minor head injuries• cuts and grazes• minor scalds and burns• skin infections <p>Whether you're booked into the minor injury service via your GP, NHS 111 or you decide to walk-in, the service is available 7 days a week, from 8am-8pm.</p> <p>The minor injury service is located at Bracknell Urgent Care Centre.</p> |  Emergency department or call 999 <p>Only for very serious or life-threatening situations. This can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• loss of consciousness• an acute confused state• fits that are not stopping• chest pain• breathing difficulties• severe bleeding that cannot be stopped• severe allergic reactions• severe burns or scalds <p>Call 999 immediately if you or someone else is having a heart attack or stroke.</p> <p>Also call 999 if you think someone has had a major trauma, such as after a serious road traffic accident, a stabbing, a shooting, a fall from height, or a serious head injury.</p> <p>If you are unsure, call NHS 111 or go on-line at 111.nhs.uk</p> |
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For urgent help for your mental health, use the NHS 111 online service, or call 111 if you are unable to get help online.

If you've injured yourself, taken an overdose or are in an emergency and believe that your life is at risk, please dial 999. www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters provides NHS-approved expert advice and practical tips to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing.

You can also text **Shout 85258**. Shout is a free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging support service for anyone who is struggling to cope.

For mental health services local to you, please visit [Mental health services \(frimleyccg.nhs.uk\)](http://Mental health services (frimleyccg.nhs.uk))

Not sure what to do when your child is unwell? If you are worried about a child, visit the Frimley Healthier Together website: frimley-healthiertgether.nhs.uk

For more information visit www.frimleyhealthandcare.org.uk



Vaccinations

Vaccinations are a safe and effective way of protecting yourself from infections.

Millions of people have had a COVID-19 vaccine and the safety of the vaccines continues to be monitored. Reports of serious side effects are very rare.

First and second dose COVID-19 vaccine

Everyone over the age of 16 is now able to have their COVID-19 vaccinations. If you have not had your first or second COVID-19 vaccine, visit: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/vaccinations for information on how to book an appointment or where your nearest walk-in clinic is.

COVID-19 and flu vaccines for children

The school vaccination programme will be offering children aged 12 to 15 a COVID-19 vaccine, as well as the flu vaccination. The programme will also be offering the flu vaccine to primary school aged pupils. These vaccinations will be carried out via schools.

More information about who is eligible for vaccination is available at: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/who-can-get-the-vaccine.

Flu and COVID-19 booster vaccinations

Over the winter, people who are eligible for flu jabs and COVID-19 boosters will be invited by the NHS or their GP to attend vaccine clinics. The COVID-19 booster is for people over 50 who will be eligible for it six months after their second dose. If you are eligible for your COVID-19 booster at the same time as your flu vaccine, they will be given together. However, it is important not to delay your flu vaccine if you are not yet eligible for your COVID-19 booster.

To find out more about the COVID-19 vaccine including where to get the vaccinations and who is eligible, visit: www.frimleyhealthandcare.org.uk/living-here/covid-19-vaccination.

Testing

Alongside vaccinations, regular testing is the best way to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

WHICH TEST DO YOU NEED?

| If you have COVID-19 symptoms or a positive lateral flow test | If you have no symptoms - twice weekly lateral flow tests | If you are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 | |
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| Any adult or child with COVID-19 symptoms. | All adults and children over 11 years old (Year 7). | Fully vaccinated* or under 18 years old. | Not fully vaccinated. |
| Book a PCR test at GOV.UK or by calling 119. | Rapid test centre at One Lexicon. | Get a PCR test. | Get a PCR test and self-isolate until you have the result. |
| While awaiting your results you must self-isolate and only leave home to attend a test centre or escape harm. | Or Collect home test kits from your school or college, mobile community collect sites or pharmacy collect. | If positive , you must self-isolate and your close contacts must book a PCR test. | If positive , you must self-isolate and your close contacts must book a PCR test. |
| If your PCR test result is positive you must self-isolate for 10 days. Your close contacts must get a PCR test. | Or Order a home kit at GOV.UK . | If negative , no need to self-isolate. | If negative , you still need to self-isolate for 10 days. |
| | | Continue doing regular lateral flow tests. | After 10 days continue to do regular lateral flow tests. |

If you need a test for travel visit: GOV.UK/find-travel-test-provider

For details of where to book your COVID-19 vaccine visit: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/vaccinations

*Fully vaccinated is two weeks after your second dose.

Self-isolation

Self-isolation is key to stopping the spread of COVID-19. If you have tested positive, it is essential that you self-isolate for 10 days.

If you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive or have been contacted by NHS Test and Trace, it is important that you follow the guidance and book a PCR test to confirm if you too are positive.

If the test is negative and you have had both doses of the vaccine (over two weeks prior to the contact) or are aged 18 and under, you do not have to isolate.

Anyone who is not vaccinated must self-isolate for 10 days even if their PCR test is negative.

From 16 August the rules around self-isolation changed.

August 16

If you have come into contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 either outside the home or a member of your household:

| Fully vaccinated* or under 18 years old. | Not fully vaccinated. |
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| Get a PCR test. | Get a PCR test and self-isolate until you have the result. |
| If positive , you must self-isolate and your household must book a PCR test. | If positive , you must self-isolate and your household must book a PCR test. |
| If negative , no need to self-isolate. | If negative , you still need to self-isolate for 10 days. |
| Continue doing regular lateral flow tests. | After 10 days continue to do regular lateral flow tests. |

For details of where to book your COVID-19 vaccine visit:
www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/vaccinations

*Fully vaccinated is two weeks after your second dose.

You might not get much notice that you need to self-isolate, so you need to be prepared.

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| <p>Getting tested: Bookmark the NHS symptomatic test booking system. www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test</p> | <p>Medical needs: Stock up on first aid supplies and have pharmacy delivery set up if required.</p> |
| <p>Who can help: Have a contact of someone who can provide support, including care for others if needed.</p> | <p>Mental wellbeing: Keep fit and active: check out what exercises can be done at home, stay connected, and understand what help is available for you.</p> |
| <p>Readying supplies: Prepare a self-isolation kit e.g. food, cleaning products, batteries. Please don't panic buy.</p> | <p>Financial help: Know what financial support might be available and how to apply.</p> |
| <p>Education: Find out how you, or your child will be taught if you need to self-isolate. Plan for someone appropriate to take your child to school/college.</p> | <p>Pet care: Arrange someone who can walk your dog for you, or take your pet to the vets if they become unwell.</p> |
| <p>Work: Find out how to report self-isolation at work, and if you can work remotely.</p> | <p>Avoid boredom: Plan for entertainment during self-isolation e.g. books, online activities, art supplies.</p> |

If you have to self-isolate and do not have support available from friends or family, the Bracknell Forest Community Response is available seven days a week to help with things like:

- food shopping
- collecting prescriptions
- dog walking
- information and advice

Contact the Bracknell Forest Community Response by:

- Email: community@theark.org.uk
- Phone: 01344 266911 Monday to Friday 8am and 6pm, Saturday 10am to 4pm, Sunday closed.

Clinically extremely vulnerable

The Government has not advised people to shield since 1 April 2021, and since 19 July, people previously identified as clinically extremely vulnerable have been advised to follow the same guidance as the rest of the population.

The decision to end shielding was not taken on the basis that there are no longer people who remain at higher risk from COVID-19. Instead, the decision was taken because advising people to stay at home and limit all contact is no longer the best or most proportionate way of keeping them safe.

The situation is now very different to when shielding was first introduced:

- we know a lot more about the virus and what makes someone more vulnerable to COVID-19
- the vaccine continues to be successfully rolled out
- other treatments and interventions are becoming available

This, coupled with the fact that evidence shows significant variation in protection levels for those who have responded less well to the vaccine, means a one-size-fits all approach is no longer appropriate.

The Government therefore no longer considers it appropriate to advise people to follow restrictive, centralised guidance. Instead, individuals should assess their own risk, supported by their NHS clinician where necessary.

More details and advice for those who are clinically extremely vulnerable can be found at: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/clinically-vulnerable.



Staying warm and well

Keep warm



Heat your home to at least 18°C



Ensure you have adequate food, medication and warm clothes



Check if you are eligible for help to keep your home warm

Keep well



Stay as active as you can, any exercise can bring health benefits



Make sure you get your COVID-19 and flu vaccine



Follow COVID-19 guidance

Keeping yourself and your home warm will reduce your risk of becoming unwell this winter. Heating your home to at least 18 degrees is sufficient. Try using an electric blanket or hot water bottle to stay warm in bed and try to eat at least one hot meal a day; eating regularly and staying hydrated will keep you energised and your body warm.

Exercising regularly will keep your blood circulating and your body warm. Try not to sit still for more than an hour, get up and stretch your legs. If you can get outside, try walking regularly, but don't forget to wear enough layers.

The change in weather during winter months can often lead to accidents and falls. If you are out walking, be careful of wet leaves and mud and be sure to wear sensible footwear when doing so. When venturing out in the dark evenings, wear something reflective and take a torch with you so you can be seen by motorists and other pedestrians.

For more tips on staying safe and well this winter, visit:

<https://health.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/year-self-care/november-winter-wellbeing>.

Many residents could increase the insulation in their lofts, the recommended depth is now 300mm, and add cavity wall insulation, both of which help to reduce heat loss. Often this work is free. Contact Instagroup on 0800 51 7654 for a survey to take advantage of this offer.

If you are not on mains gas we can also investigate to install a full gas central heating system. Please go to: www.heatthehomecounties.org.uk for information.

If there is someone suffering from major health problems, we can also offer a contribution towards other work. This may include a replacement boiler, or safety work such as a step or handrail if needed. Please contact Hazel Hill, Sustainable Energy Officer: hazel.hill@bracknell-forest.gov.uk or call 01344 352536.

Warm home discount scheme

You may be eligible for a discount of £140 over the winter on your energy bill. Those on the guarantee credit or pension credit will automatically be sent a letter between now and 31 December. However, those on low income may also be eligible but will need to apply for this directly through their energy supplier. To find out more about the warm home discount scheme, visit: www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme.

Stop smoking

For those wanting to quit smoking, Smoke Free Life Berkshire is on hand to help. A team of fully trained advisors can help you access the support you need to live a smoke free life.

- Phone: 0800 622 6360
- Text: QUIT to 66777
- Web: www.smokefreelifeberkshire.com
- Install: Quit with Bella

Drink or drug issues

If you feel that you are drinking more than you should or have drug issues, New Hope is available to provide confidential, non-judgemental advice and support to help you to take back control. You can access more information about the support that New Hope provides at:

- Web: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/drugs-and-alcohol-advice
- Phone: 01344 312360
- Email: New.hope@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Help is available

Help for those who are having to self-isolate, including with shopping and prescription collection, is available from the Bracknell Forest Community Response in partnership with The Ark.

- Phone: 01344 266911
- Email: community@theark.org.uk

Foodbanks

If you are having financial difficulties and are unable to pay for food, Bracknell or Crowthorne Foodbanks may be able to help you.

Contact Bracknell Foodbank by:

- Email: foodbank@kerith.church
- Phone: 01344 862699 or 07923 400138
- Web: www.bracknell.foodbank.org.uk

Contact Crowthorne Foodbank by:

- Email: info@crowthorne.foodbank.org.uk
- Phone: 01344 780087
- Web: www.crowthorne.foodbank.org.uk

Financial worries

Benefits

You can contact our benefits team by:

- Email: benefits@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
- Phone: 01344 352010

Alternatively you can check if you are eligible for benefits by visiting:

www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators.

The Local Welfare Scheme

The Local Welfare Scheme can provide one-off payments in emergencies and help with the cost of essential items that are difficult to budget for. It helps to ease the financial pressure for residents in Bracknell Forest, who have low income and are most in need. The scheme can offer support for basic living costs including: the cost of food, utilities, essential clothing, essential cooking items and white goods, furniture, carpeting and flooring and removal or delivery costs. To check eligibility and to apply for this scheme, please visit:

www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/benefits/bracknell-council-local-welfare-scheme and complete the financial assessment.

Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice Bracknell and District is a local charity providing free, independent, impartial and confidential advice on a range of issues, including finance, legal, employment and housing:

- Web: www.citizensadvicebracknell.org.uk
- Phone: 03 444 111 306

Housing

The council's welfare and housing team can provide you with support and advice to help you keep your home or find another home. Get in touch as early as possible if you are struggling to pay your rent.

You can get in touch by:

- Email: Housing.Options@Bracknell-Forest.gov.uk
- Phone: 01344 352010

Mental health and loneliness

Looking after your mental health is essential. If you feel you are struggling with mental health issues, there is help available.

Mental health

The Every Mind Matters website www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters is available to everyone, with advice and practical steps that you can take to support your wellbeing and manage your mental health during this pandemic. (visit: www.nhs.uk)

Anyone concerned about their mental health should speak to their GP or existing care team, or visit nhs.uk. Online self-referral options are commonly available for some services, including children and young people's mental health services, and psychological therapies services for adults with common mental health problems such as anxiety and depression.

Mental health trusts in England have been instructed to put in place 24/7 crisis lines for all ages so people can get urgent help whenever they need it. A national service finder for local urgent mental health telephone lines is now available on the nhs.uk website.

If you or someone you care for is experiencing a mental health crisis, we urge you to make contact with a local health professional immediately.

You can ask your GP to refer you to the community mental health team. If you need urgent help, but it's not an emergency, you can contact the Mental Health Crisis Team by:

- Phone: 111 and ask to speak to the Mental Health Crisis Team
- Phone: 0300 365 0300 or 0300 365 9999
- www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/mental-health-and-wellbeing/community-mental-health-team-cmht
- If there is an emergency, please call 999.



Samaritans

The Samaritans provide emotional support for people in crisis. Call Samaritans for free anytime on 116 123 or visit: www.samaritans.org/branches/bracknell.

Social prescribers

The council's social prescribers can support people who are feeling lonely and socially isolated. They can help you to stay connected by helping you find community groups and activities to try. They can also give you information and guidance, support with practical issues including access to online resources, and help you to identify home based activities and goal setting. Speak to a social prescriber or make an online self-referral by visiting the Social Prescribing Service - Public Health Portal: _ or phone 01344 352000.

Domestic abuse: how to get help.

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone. It is often brushed under the carpet by society and minimised by those experiencing it.

If you, a friend, family member or work colleague is experiencing domestic abuse, support is available. The National Domestic Abuse Helpline is free to call 24/7 on 0808 2000 247, or if you are in immediate danger call 999 and ask for the police.

Additionally, pharmacies showing the 'Ask for ANI' symbol can get you help straight away. Simply ask for ANI, which stands for Action Needed Immediately.

You can find more information at: www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help.



Age UK

Age UK offers a free confidential advice line for older people, their families, friends, carers and professionals.

- Phone: 0800 055 6112 from 8am to 7pm
- Web: www.ageuk.org.uk

British Red Cross

The British Red Cross provides information on the latest COVID-19 updates or support if you just want to share your worries over the phone.

You can contact the British Red Cross by:

- Email: ilcrsouthciadmin@redcross.org.uk
- Phone: 01235 552 665
- Web: www.redcross.org.uk

Talking Therapies

Talking Therapies is an NHS service offering support if you're coping with challenges like depression, stress, anxiety or phobias.

Contact Talking Therapies by:

- Email: talkingtherapies@berkshire.nhs.uk
- Phone: 0300 365 2000
- Web: talkingtherapies.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk

The Silver Line

The Silver Line is a free confidential helpline providing information, friendship and advice to older people.

- Phone: for free anytime on: 0800 4 70 80 90
- Web: www.thesilverline.org.uk

Mind

Mind offers a wide range of information and practical suggestions for those living with poor mental health and for those supporting them.

- Web: www.mind.org.uk
- Phone: Mind from 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday on 0300 123 3393
- Web: www.mind.org.uk

Bracknell Forest Council's adult social care team

The council's adult social care team can help provide support for older people with things like getting dressed, staying safe in your home or help with caring for someone.

You can contact the team by:

- using the online enquiry form available at: bit.ly/onlineenquiryform
- Phone: 01344 351500.

If you need this booklet in an alternative format, or would like to speak to us about the contents please call: 01344 351187 or email comms@bracknell-forest.gov.uk