

## **Welcome to your winter letter from Adult Social Care and Public Health.**

Every year we write to those who get care and support from us, and the family and friend carers looking after someone who couldn't manage without their help. This year, we've got advice on how you can help yourself to stay well, get support with your financial wellbeing, and tips to keep connected to others and get involved in your local community. You can find contact details for everyone mentioned in the letter in the useful contacts at the end, as well as lots of other information about support and services.

### **How to stay well this winter**

Getting your vaccinations is one of the best things you can do to protect your health. If you're in a priority group for the free flu and COVID-19 vaccinations but haven't had them yet, do book once you're invited by the NHS.

Lots of people qualify for the free vaccinations, including those aged over 65, carers in receipt of 'carers allowance', and people who are the main carer for an older or disabled person who may be at risk if they get ill. Find out if you qualify for free vaccinations by looking at the useful contact pages later. If you aren't eligible for the free flu vaccination, you can pay for one at your local pharmacy.

Measles cases have risen recently so we're encouraging everyone in East Sussex to check they've had the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccination. Children and adults who have missed out can catch up with the vaccination at any time. Contact your GP practice if you haven't had it yet.

Sometimes the simplest things can be the most effective. Regularly washing your hands with warm water and soap, and catching coughs and sneezes in a tissue before binning it, can reduce the spread of germs. And if you don't feel well, stay at home if you can.

Keeping your home warm is important for your health too, and it's recommended you heat it to at least 18°C over winter. If you struggle to stay warm at home, you can contact the Warm Home Check Service for free advice and support. Visit [www.warmeastsussex.org.uk](http://www.warmeastsussex.org.uk), text WARM to 80011, or call 0800 464 7307.

## **Get support with your financial wellbeing**

An important step to look after ourselves is to seek practical help and support for money worries. If you're struggling with money issues, you're not alone. There is lots of help available with money matters, including mental health support to talk about how you are being affected by them.

Check out the useful contact pages for phone numbers and websites of organisations that offer practical advice and support. For example, this could be help to manage debt, access to all the benefits you qualify for, foodbanks if you are having difficulty affording food, and support to manage stress.

You can also find lots of information and advice in one place on our cost of living web pages: [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/costofliving).

## Tips for keeping connected and getting involved

Meeting up with our friends and making new connections is essential for our personal wellbeing, as is spending time doing things we enjoy, but we know that it can feel more difficult than usual to get out and about at the moment. Luckily, there are lots of fun ways in East Sussex to feel more involved in our communities and connect with other people, many of them free and low-cost activities.

Our 17 libraries are hubs of local activity, and they offer a range of free things to do. From author events to board games, help to use the internet, poetry readings, conversation groups and children's rhymetime, there's something for everyone. Feel free to come in, relax in the warm and find something that suits you. Connecting to knowledge and learning new things through our libraries can also really boost our sense of wellbeing. And if you can't get to your nearest library, there's plenty of e-books, e-audio and e-magazine to access at <https://eastsussex.spydus.co.uk/> or volunteers from the Home Library Service could come to you. Visit our website to find your nearest library [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/libraries), or phone 0345 60 80 196.

There are lots of local community groups, events and activities regularly taking place across East Sussex, while volunteering is also a great way to get involved and meet people. If you would like to find a new activity or hobby, start doing something you enjoy again, or find out more about volunteering, do look at the useful contact pages for how you can find out what is happening near you.

If you're finding it hard to leave your home to access the community, or to move around your home safely, then equipment and adaptations could help. To find out more see the useful contact pages, or get in touch with us by emailing [HSCC@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:HSCC@eastsussex.gov.uk) or phone 0345 60 80 191.

And if transport is an issue, travelling around the county recently got easier with the new FlexiBus. This runs in places that don't have a regular transport service. Visit [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/flexibus](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/flexibus) for more information or phone 01273 078 203.

## **Wishing you well for winter**

This letter and the useful contacts are based on what people who live locally have said is important and helpful to them. Even if you don't need this information now, we'd recommend keeping it somewhere safe in case you need it later.

Please do take care of yourself and ask for help if you need it. We'll finish by wishing you well for winter and a happy new year when it comes.

Best wishes,



**Mark Stainton**

**Director Adult Social Care & Health**



**Darrell Gale**

**Director of Public Health**

**Keep up to date with local health and social care news!**

Please subscribe to our monthly digital newsletter to find out what is happening locally with care and support: [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/hcn](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/hcn)

# Useful contacts

These pages include details of the support mentioned in the letter, as well as other care and support services that you may find helpful over winter. Wherever possible we've provided a contact phone number, but some of the information is only available online. If you don't have the internet at home, you can get help to access the website at your local library.

## How to stay well this winter

### Vaccinations

People who can get free flu and COVID-19 jabs this year are:

- Everyone aged 65+,
- carers in receipt of carers allowance or who are the main carer of an elderly or disabled person who may be at risk if you get ill,
- people in clinical risk groups,
- close contacts of people who are immunosuppressed,
- people in long-stay residential care homes,
- staff working in care homes for older adults,
- frontline health and social care workers,
- pregnant women (flu jab only), and
- children aged 2 and 3 and all school children up to year 11 (flu jab only).

For your flu jab, contact your GP surgery or local pharmacy. If you're not eligible for a free flu jab, you can pay for one at many local pharmacies.

Once you're invited by the NHS, book your COVID-19 vaccine by visiting [www.nhs.uk/coronavirusvaccination](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirusvaccination), using the NHS app, or by calling 119.

## **Staying warm and energy services**

During the colder months, it's important to ensure you're not at risk of health issues caused by poor conditions in your home. Citizens Advice across Sussex are working with the energy providers, Southern Gas Network and UK Power Network, and alongside the Warm Home Check Service to share some checklists and tips to help keep you and your home safe. To read about how to keep your home warm, avoid damp & mould, reduce fire risk and avoid the dangers of carbon monoxide, visit [www.citizensadvice1066.co.uk](http://www.citizensadvice1066.co.uk) and look for the 'Keep warm and well' leaflet.

If you struggle to stay warm at home, you can contact the Warm Home Check Service for money saving advice, and tips on how to stay warm at home for less. Eligible households may also be able to get a home energy efficiency assessment, more advice, and small home improvement measures. Visit [www.warmeastsussex.org.uk](http://www.warmeastsussex.org.uk), text WARM to 80011, or call 0800 464 7307.

Sign up for free cold weather warnings on the Sussex Cold Alert website at [www.coldalert.info](http://www.coldalert.info), by calling 01273 484 337, or email [information@coldalert.info](mailto:information@coldalert.info).

You can get extra help from your gas and electricity supplier by signing up to the Priority Services Register. People who may get this help include people receiving their pension, families with children under five, disabled people, those with a serious illness or mental health needs and people who rely on medical equipment or refrigerated medicine. Visit [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/costofliving) to find out more or call 0800 169 9970 to register.

## Wellbeing and lifestyle

For a range of information about health and wellbeing services visit our website [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/social-care/health-advice](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/social-care/health-advice)

The East Sussex Healthy Weight Partnership has launched a new activity campaign called Getting East Sussex Moving. It celebrates the places we can get moving across the county, and encourages everyone to be more active. Each month there will be a new focus and partners will be posting on social media using the hashtag #GettingEastSussexMoving.

One You East Sussex supports people who would like to make healthy lifestyle changes such as weight management, stopping smoking, getting active, drinking less, and eating a healthy diet. People who access the service receive a personalised health and wellbeing plan and tailored support packages to help them to make positive changes in a way that is most likely to work for them. Support is provided face to face, online or over the phone. Visit [www.oneyoueastsussex.org.uk](http://www.oneyoueastsussex.org.uk) or phone 01323 404 600.

## Support with parenting

If you have a child under 19 and you're worried about managing their behaviour, supporting their development or their emotional wellbeing, or you want support and advice to help build a positive relationship with them, Open for Parents can help. Visit the website for help and advice for families, and where to get support: [www.openforparents.org.uk](http://www.openforparents.org.uk)

## Making the right choice about NHS services

The NHS is asking people to 'Help Us Help You' this winter by making the right choice when it comes to health services:

- ❖ NHS website for self-care advice and service info: [nhs.uk](http://nhs.uk)
- ❖ Local pharmacy for minor health complaints
- ❖ Your GP surgery for new or ongoing health conditions
- ❖ NHS 111 for urgent medical help 24 hours a day

- ❖ Urgent Treatment Centres, Minor Injury Units, and walk-in centres for injuries or illnesses that are urgent but not life threatening
- ❖ 999, A&E and Emergency Departments for serious or life-threatening emergencies like severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pain

## Help with anxiety, low mood and your mental health

We've highlighted a couple of key services here, but you can find more about what's available locally at [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/mental-health-directory](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/mental-health-directory)

By texting the word SUSSEX to 85258, you can access a free, confidential, 24/7 service from Shout and have a text conversation with a trained volunteer. The volunteers offer real-time support if you are anxious, stressed, depressed, suicidal or overwhelmed. You may prefer this to speaking on the phone.

If you're experiencing non-urgent symptoms of stress, anxiety, or low mood you can refer yourself to Health in Mind (the East Sussex NHS Talking Therapies Service) by visiting [www.healthinmind.org.uk](http://www.healthinmind.org.uk) or by calling 0300 003 0130. Health in Mind is a free local NHS service offering a wide range of support including courses and 1:1 therapy for over 18s.

The Sussex Mental Healthline offers crisis care for people in urgent need of help with their mental health. Call NHS 111 and select option 2 or call 0800 0309 500 (free phone). Hearing and speech impaired callers can text on 0300 5000 101. If you are in a mental health crisis or having suicidal thoughts, you can also phone Samaritans for free on 116 123.

## Get support with your financial wellbeing

### Cost of living information

For a comprehensive list of cost-of-living information covering topics like money advice, benefits, your home, employment, food, and transport, please visit [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/costofliving)



## Money advice

The Welfare Benefits Helpline offers free, confidential advice and information to people living in East Sussex. Call 0333 344 0681 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, or email [benefitseastsussex@harcuk.com](mailto:benefitseastsussex@harcuk.com)

Citizens Advice provide free, confidential, and impartial advice on big issues affecting people's lives. Find online advice and your local branch at [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) or call the Adviceline on 0800 144 8848.

Pension credit can provide extra money to help with living costs if you're over State Pension age and on a low income. It can also help with housing costs such as ground rent or service charges. Visit [www.gov.uk/pension-credit](http://www.gov.uk/pension-credit) or phone 0800 99 1234.

## Household Support Fund

The Household Support Fund, funded through the UK Government Department for Work and Pensions, is to support households in the most need with food, energy and water bills and focussed upon helping households that will not benefit from other Government schemes such as Cost of Living payments. The fund will close on 31 March 2024 or when the funds are spent.

To find out more detail about the eligibility criteria and how to apply for the fund in your area please use the links to the district and borough websites:

- Lewes and Eastbourne Councils: [www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/HSF](http://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/HSF)
- Hastings Borough Council: [www.hastings.gov.uk/benefits/hsfund/](http://www.hastings.gov.uk/benefits/hsfund/)
- Rother District Council: [www.rother.gov.uk/benefits-grants-and-funding/financial-support-for-residents/household-support-fund-3/](http://www.rother.gov.uk/benefits-grants-and-funding/financial-support-for-residents/household-support-fund-3/)
- Wealden District Council: [www.wealden.gov.uk/benefits/household-support-fund/](http://www.wealden.gov.uk/benefits/household-support-fund/)

You can also call: Lewes and Eastbourne Councils on 01273 471 600, Hastings Borough Council on 01424 451 066, Rother District Council on 01424 787 000, Wealden District Council on 01323 443 322.

We also use the Household Support Fund to support local services, including

food banks, local charities and services for families and children. If you are struggling to pay for food, energy or other essentials the important thing is you reach out to an organisation or service you trust.

## **Community fridges and food banks**

Local community fridges offer surplus food, available for anyone to collect, often co-located in a community space offering a friendly welcome and refreshments, while food banks can provide food and other support to local people in crisis. You can find a list of food banks and other food services by searching 'food bank' on <https://1space.eastsussex.gov.uk/> or visit your local library for help.

## **Keeping connected and getting involved**

### **Make the most of your local library**

There are 17 libraries across the county, providing a range of resources, including books, audiobooks, large print, and computers. There are regular events and activities, including read aloud groups and IT support, with friendly volunteers who can help get online. You can learn to use email and the internet, stay safe online, and staying in touch with friends and family. Visit [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/libraries), or phone 0345 60 80 196 for more information or for other library services such as booking computers and the Home Library Service.

There are also six community libraries locally. These can be found in Ringmer, Langney, Pevensey, Eastbourne Old Town, Little Common and Willingdon. You can find details for these libraries on <https://1space.eastsussex.gov.uk/>

### **Find out about activities and events near you**

Sign up to get a monthly round-up from us by email about what's happening in East Sussex. Visit <https://your.eastsussex.gov.uk/> to sign up.

Use the East Sussex Community Information Service (ESCIS) to discover what's on in your area, including finding new activities, hobbies and community groups. Visit [www.escis.org.uk](http://www.escis.org.uk) or ask in your local library.

## Join the East Sussex Seniors' Association

There are seniors' forums across East Sussex for the 50-plus age group which are free to join. They are an opportunity to connect with other people; learn more about health and social care initiatives; attend events and be part of the annual celebrations of Older People in October each year. For details of your local forum visit <https://essaforums.co.uk/>, email [asc.equalityteam@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:asc.equalityteam@eastsussex.gov.uk) or phone 07783 847 944.

## Volunteering

Whatever your interests and expertise, there are many different organisations that exist to connect volunteers with a whole range of people and communities. We've included information about a few opportunities below and you can find out more about the topic by searching 'volunteering' on our website [www.eastsussex.gov.uk](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk), or by visiting your local library.

Tribe is a free app that connects people interested in volunteering with local organisations and their volunteering opportunities. Volunteering roles are regularly updated, and volunteers can choose to work in a way that suits their lifestyle, location, and skill. Download the app from Google Play or the App Store or find out more at [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/tribe](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/tribe).

If you've got lived experience of getting support from adult social care, or care for someone who has, we'd love you to join our Adult Social Care People Bank and add your voice to the mix of people helping to shape our services. Visit [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/peoplebank](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/peoplebank), email [consultation.ASC@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:consultation.ASC@eastsussex.gov.uk) or leave a message at 01273 335 267.

Healthwatch East Sussex are always looking for new people of any age to join their volunteer network. Healthwatch volunteers play a crucial role in ensuring they raise the profile of issues that matter when it comes to improving local health and social care services. Visit [www.healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk/get-involved](http://www.healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk/get-involved), or call 0333 101 4007.

Over 750 people have sponsored guests from Ukraine and provided them with accommodation and support. We are always looking for more sponsors to ensure we can support our Ukrainian residents. Many Ukrainians are not ready to live independently, but are coming to the end of their original hosting arrangements. We need more hosts, particularly people able to host families with children. For more information from existing hosts, details of host thank you payments, and other support available visit

[www.eastsussex.gov.uk](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk) and search 'hosting Ukrainian guests', email us at [ukraine@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:ukraine@eastsussex.gov.uk) or phone 01273 337 010.

## **Reducing your risk of falls, plus equipment & adaptations**

There are ways you can reduce your risk of having a fall, including making simple changes to your home and doing exercises to improve your strength and balance. Discuss any falls you've had with your doctor and let them know if falls are affecting your health and wellbeing.

Our website has information on the support that is available to help you keep living at home, including equipment and adaptations. There is a short online assessment form you can complete to help identify whether equipment or adaptations could make a difference for you. Visit the equipment and adaptations sections at [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/social-care/support-to-stay-at-home](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/social-care/support-to-stay-at-home) to find out more. If you aren't online you can contact Health and Social Care Connect on 0345 60 80 191 (see Care and Support Information & Advice later for more contact options).

## **See if the Flexibus can get you to where you need to go**

If transport is an issue, travelling around the county recently got a little bit easier with the new FlexiBus services, which run in places that either don't have a bus service or very limited bus services. Visit [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/flexibus](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/flexibus) or phone 01273 078 203. You can travel on Flexibus or any other local bus for free during off peak hours (after 9.30am on weekdays) if you are a concessionary bus pass holder. These are available to eligible older and disabled people. Find out if you are eligible and apply on the East Sussex County Council website: [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roads-transport/public/concessionary-fares/bus-pass](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roads-transport/public/concessionary-fares/bus-pass). You can also phone 0300 33 09 471 or visit your local library to pick up an application form.

## Support for friend and family carers

You're a carer if you look after someone. It could be a friend, family member or neighbour who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction could not cope without your support.

To find out about support from us at the Council visit [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/carers](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/carers) or call us on 0345 60 80 191 to request a copy of the leaflet 'Do you look after someone?'

Whether you are new to caring or haven't needed help before, please do consider getting in touch with local charity Care for the Carers. Their Carers Centre provides a one-stop shop for support, advice, and guidance to local carers. Visit their website [www.cftc.org.uk](http://www.cftc.org.uk), call them on 01323 738 390 from 10am to 5pm every weekday, email [info@cftc.org.uk](mailto:info@cftc.org.uk) or text on 07860 077300.

The support and services they offer include:

- **Carers Card:** This identifies you as a carer, offers discounts at local businesses and can be used to set up an emergency respite plan.
- **Activities and events:** There is a programme of activities you can take part in, as well as a range of carers support groups across East Sussex and online.
- **Healthcare appointments respite:** Grants are available to pay for respite services for carers to allow them to attend healthcare appointments.
- **Directions sessions:** These one-hour appointments are an opportunity to talk through any worries or concerns you have, discuss what you need, and get information, advice, and support with your caring role.
- **Counselling:** This free service supports carers to cope with the emotional impact of their caring role, through its Time to Talk counselling service.

## Care and support information and advice

For an online directory of care, support and wellbeing services visit East Sussex 1Space. You'll find information about residential services, care in the community, activities for the less active, support groups and organisations who can help with money and housing issues. Find what you need to live independently, safely and in good health at

<https://1space.eastsussex.gov.uk/>

### Contacting us about your care and support needs

If you need to talk to someone about your care and support needs, you can get in touch with your social worker or Health and Social Care Connect. Phone 0345 60 80 191 between 8am and 8pm, seven days a week including bank holidays, email [HSCC@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:HSCC@eastsussex.gov.uk) or text 07797 878 111. Minicom is available via type talk at 18001 0354 60 80 191

### LGBTQ+ support

The Council works with three services locally to support our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual community.

Switchboard helps you find the right support and services for you. Visit the website at [www.switchboard.org.uk](http://www.switchboard.org.uk) or call 01273 204 050.

MindOut provides specialist mental health and wellbeing support. Visit [www.mindout.org.uk](http://www.mindout.org.uk) or call 01273 234 839.

The Allsorts Youth Project provides support for children and young people under 26 who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, or exploring their sexual orientation and/or their gender identity, and their families. Visit [www.allsortsyouth.org.uk](http://www.allsortsyouth.org.uk) or call 01273 721 100.

## Keeping yourself and others safe

These are services which offer support if you're at risk of harm or abuse, or are worried about someone else. Remember that in an emergency you should call 999.

### **Be vigilant against scams**

East Sussex Trading Standards is encouraging people to **remain vigilant against scams**. If you think that you have been a victim of a scam or know someone who has and would like advice, contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0808 223 1133.

Action Fraud is the UK's **national reporting centre** for fraud and cybercrime where you should report fraud if you have been scammed, defrauded, or experienced cybercrime. Call 0300 123 2040 or visit [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk).

### **Support with safety concerns**

If you are worried about an adult who may be being neglected, abused, or exploited, call Health and Social Care Connect urgently to talk about your safeguarding concern on 0345 60 80 191.

For safety concerns about children and young people under 18, call the Single Point of Advice on 01323 464 222 between 8.30am and 5pm Mon to Thurs and till 4.30pm on Friday, or email [0-19SPOA@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:0-19SPOA@eastsussex.gov.uk).

### **Specialist support with abuse and violence**

For specialist, independent help and advice on sexual abuse and violence, call the Survivors Network on 01273 203 380.

For specialist and independent help, advice, or support with domestic abuse you can contact CGL (Change, Grow, Live) on 0300 323 9985.

For information and support for older people who are at risk of, experiencing, or recovering from any form of abuse or neglect, you can contact Hourglass on their 24/7 helpline 0808 808 8141, text the helpline on 07860 052 906, or email [helpline@wearehourglass.org](mailto:helpline@wearehourglass.org).

If you need to flee your home due to domestic abuse, you can email [referrals.eastsussex@clarionhg.com](mailto:referrals.eastsussex@clarionhg.com). Please include a safe contact number or email address and the best time to contact you. A member of the refuge team will then call you back. Alternatively, you can call the team on 07517 549 499.

You can also contact the National Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0808 2000 247. To ensure your safety, you can let Helpline staff know how to contact you and what safe time to contact you.