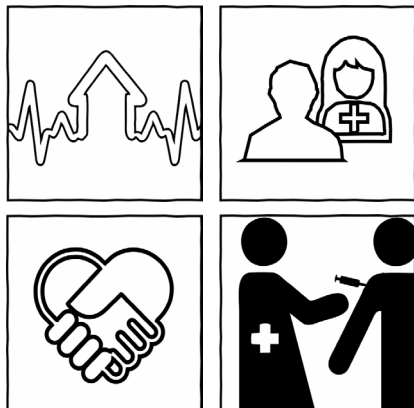


Groundswell

Out of homelessness



Top tips for looking after your health this winter

November 2021



Top tips from staff with experience of homelessness

- “Remember COVID-19 is still here”
- “Get vaccinated for flu and COVID-19”
- “Keep warm”
- “Keep dry”
- “Register with a GP”
- “Let someone know if you feel unwell”
- “Get an advocate or support worker to help”
- “Keep engaging with services”
- “Let people know what you need”
- “Flu can be as bad as COVID-19”
- “Find out where to get warm clothing”
- “Have your property checked for energy efficiency if you’re indoors”
- “Check out the warm home discount scheme if you’re indoors and get £140 off your energy bills”
- “Wear a mask”
- “Find out where your local services are. In some areas, the list in the Pavement Magazine is a great help.”



Top ways to look after yourself and protect your health

1. If you have a health problem or worry you can talk to your GP about it

Everyone has the right to register with a GP:

- You don't need a fixed address
- You don't need to show identification
- Your immigration status doesn't matter

If you're struggling to get a health appointment, ask a support worker for help.

2. Try to attend any health appointments you have

You have the right to access your healthcare appointments.

If you have a GP or hospital appointment you can ask your support worker about help getting there or to accompany you to the appointment.

3. Free COVID-19 tests

COVID-19 tests are freely available to everyone.

They involve gently swabbing your nose and your throat. About 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 do not have symptoms but can still infect others, so getting tested is the best way to know whether you have the virus.

Lateral flow tests

- It's possible that your accommodation or a local service will have lateral flow tests available to you. Ask a support worker for more information.
- Other ways to get free tests are at a pharmacy, testing site or online here: www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests.

PCR tests

You should get a free 'PCR test' as soon as possible if you have any of the following COVID-19 symptoms:

- A high temperature
- A new, continuous cough
- The loss of/change to your sense of smell or taste.

You can order a PCR test online here: www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test.

Speak to a support worker for help. You should try and self-isolate until you get your test result.





Top ways to look after yourself and protect your health continued

4. Protect yourself against flu and COVID-19

Both winter flu and COVID-19 can cause serious illness and death. Vaccination significantly reduces this risk.

Protect yourself and others against flu

You can get a flu vaccine free on the NHS:

- if you are homeless in London, whatever your age.
- if you are not in London ask your pharmacy or GP if you are eligible for a free vaccine. Those eligible include people:
 - aged 65 or over
 - with long-term health conditions
 - who are pregnant
 - with a weakened immune system.

Where you can get a flu vaccine:

- Your GP.
- Some pharmacies.
- Walk-in clinics.
- Some hostel or day centres will arrange a special day for flu vaccines. Ask a support worker for information on whether they are coming to your service.

Protect yourself and others against COVID-19

Anyone in the UK aged over 16 can get a COVID-19 vaccines free on the NHS.

Where you can get COVID-19 vaccines:

- Attending a walk-in vaccination site (available for those not registered with a GP).
- Visit the local vaccine website or walk-in sites in your local area.
- Booking an appointment at a local pharmacy or a mass vaccination site (for those registered with a GP).
- A vaccination service may come to your accommodation or a local service - check whether this is happening with a support worker.

If you cannot book appointments online, you can call 119 free of charge. You can speak to a translator if you need to.

The vaccine is offered to people in two doses:

- The first dose gives you a good level of protection.
- The second dose is generally offered about 12 weeks after the first. It makes your protection against the virus even better.
- Having both first and second doses of the vaccine ensures you have the best level of protection.

COVID-19 booster vaccine:

- A COVID-19 booster vaccine dose helps improve the protection you have from your first two doses of the vaccine. It helps give you longer-term protection against getting seriously ill from COVID-19.
- Booster vaccine doses will be available soon on the NHS for people most at risk from COVID-19 who have had the vaccine second dose at least 6 months ago.

It is still possible to catch and spread COVID-19, even if you are fully vaccinated.

Therefore, keep looking after yourself and others by following the COVID-19 advice in your area such as regular testing, regular hand washing, wearing a face mask and social distancing.



More information

More information on looking after your health is available online.

If you don't have access to the internet you could ask a support worker to print off information for you.

- Find more COVID-19 guidance created for people experiencing homelessness on the Groundswell website here: www.groundswell.org.uk/coronavirus. The guidance is available in a number of different languages. It includes answering questions about how the COVID-19 vaccine works and possible side effects.
- Groundswell also have more health guides about a variety of health issues available here: www.groundswell.org.uk/health-guides
- Access guidance from the NHS on flu and COVID-19:
 - www.nhs.uk/conditions/flu
 - www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19

