

## Community Impact Bucks' COVID-19 Briefing #24

### Mental health guidance and funds

*Short regular briefing from Community Impact Bucks*

28th April 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

Experts are predicting that the pandemic will have a 'profound' effect on people's mental health – both now and in the future ([BBC](#)).

We have collated some information on the support available to charities and community groups below, including information on Government funding and advice, mental health support facilities in the county, and funds available for groups helping to address the mental health problems in Buckinghamshire's communities.

#### GOVERNMENT SUPPORT TO VOLUNTARY SECTOR TACKLING LONELINESS

The Government has launched a [plan](#) to tackle loneliness and social isolation during the pandemic and period of social distancing.

Here are some key points from the cross-sector and cross-Government plan:

- Smaller, community-based organisations in England which are helping people to stay connected in local communities will be 'a priority category' of the £750 million package for the voluntary sector (announced 8th April)
- National loneliness organisations will be allocated a guaranteed £5 million worth of funding to continue and adapt their critical work at this time
- As part of the national effort, loneliness charities including Age UK will be supported to work with NHS Volunteer Responders in their communities.

#### MENTAL HEALTH GUIDANCE

- **Support for staff and volunteers:** Staff and volunteers may also have increased mental health and wellbeing needs. You will find some guidance in our [COVID-19 advice for running your organisation during the pandemic](#).
- **Support for staff and volunteers during traumatic situations:** NAVCA has shared some helpful advice for anyone taking distressing calls as part of their work, summarised from the Helplines Partnership guidance on vicarious trauma. Go to [NACVA](#) for further information.
- **Government mental guidance for the public:** read the [guide](#) on how to look after your mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- **Government mental health guidance for children and young people:** read the Government's [advice](#) for adults on how to look after the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people, including those with additional needs and disabilities, during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

#### MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT IN BUCKS

- **Buckinghamshire Mind** is continuing to support people during lockdown and is keen to promote its Safe Haven crisis support service. This has temporarily moved to phone 1:1 support but is available seven nights a week for people who need mental health support and signposting. More information can be found on [Bucks Mind's website](#) - please share with your networks.
- A **mental health helpline** has also been launched to take pressure off 111 for mental health advice in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. The round-the-clock helpline will make it quicker and easier to get the right advice. Adults should call 01865 904997, children and young people should call 01865 904998. More information can be found on [NHS Oxford Health's website](#).
- Support can also be found at [Healthy Minds Bucks](#) and on the [NHS Every Mind Matters](#) website. [Mental Health at Work](#) is also offering help for all those involved in the effort including the many thousands of charity staff and volunteers.

#### FUNDS TO HELP MENTAL HEALTH WORK

- Voluntary organisations which are **increasing the availability of mental health support services** for people experiencing, or at risk of developing, mental health problems can apply for grants through a new £5m fund, Coronavirus Mental Health Response Fund. Organisations can apply for small grants of up to £20,000 or large grants of up to £50,000. For application details, go to [Mind's Coronavirus Mental Health Response Fund](#).
- As part of [The Coronavirus Mental Health Response Fund](#), [NSUN](#) (National Survivor User Network) is administering a smaller fund to support user-led organisations (ULOs) and smaller community groups in England which might not otherwise be eligible for the main Fund. Grants of up to £1000 will be available to **support community action, peer support, mutual aid** and other activities that will make a direct difference to the lives of people living with mental ill-health, trauma and distress during the COVID-19 pandemic. To apply, you will need to be a member of NSUN (membership is free for ULOs and community groups: sign up [here](#)). For more information, go to [NSUN's COVID-19 Fund](#).

#### OTHER MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

The [Chiltern Sound Spa](#) is providing virtual holistic events to help with people's mental health, wellbeing and sleep. It is currently working with charities, including Wycombe Rape Crisis, to provide free access to vulnerable groups in need and volunteers. For more information and to gain a free booking code, contact [hello@thechilternsoundspa.com](mailto:hello@thechilternsoundspa.com).

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