

Looking after your wellbeing at home

A customer guide

This guide has been put together to support Orbit customers who are following Government guidance to stay at home, including those who are working from home at this time. **This guide has been developed by Orbit colleagues as a support tool for customers.**

On Monday 23 March 2020 Boris Johnson, the Prime Minister, introduced a period of confinement that means you should remain at home unless you are classed as an “essential or key worker”. It's vital that you follow the Government's social distancing guidelines for your safety - explicitly that you maintain a two metre (six feet) distance between yourself and people outside of your home.

We hope that you and your families remain safe and well.

Orbit Housing

Introduction

It's important to take care of your mind as well as your body during uncertain times. You may feel bored, frustrated or lonely. You may also be low, worried or anxious, or concerned about your finances, your health or those close to you. Just know it's okay to feel like this, everyone reacts in their own way to challenging events and uncertainty. It's important to remember that staying at home may be difficult, but you are helping to protect yourself and others by doing it.

Self-care, your wellbeing matters

Below are ten helpful tips to maintain a sound frame of mind whilst social distancing. NB first and foremost follow current government advice – click [here](#). Your health and wellbeing should be number one priority in this given situation:

1. Form good habits

Your health is key during this time, from the moment you wake up be kind and realistic with yourself to start the day with a positive mindset. Many of us lead by example at home to our families or in our roles, therefore prioritising your own physical and mental health is imperative. Here are a few things you can do to help yourself:

- A warm glass of water in the morning can help metabolise the body quicker, wake up the cells and hydrate the brain. Warm you ask? Because, its easily absorbed by the body and provides you with a real boost. Keep water at hand as it is found to increase productivity, a 5% drop in hydration can have approx. 35% drop in productivity.
- Breathe, by taking deep breaths in the morning for 3-5 minutes, in through the nose and out through the mouth, reducing cortisol levels and helps us to de-stress.
- Empower yourself with the 3GVIP formula. By writing down 3 things you are grateful for it instantly gets you thinking deeper and positively. Include your core values and your purpose in terms of what is important to you personally, remind yourself of these every day. Set your personal intentions and progress by looking back and reflecting on how far you have come daily.

2. Think about where to set up your work environment

- Do you have an office space or area where you know you'll work well at home? Somewhere quiet where you can focus (avoid your bedroom, it should be used for sleeping!)? Do you need to invest in any additional office furniture to make your day easier i.e. foldable desks if limited for space, a supportive chair? Is there enough light in the room? Any distractions? If you would prefer not to stay where you usually do, consider whether there are other options available. Having your own work space also helps to differentiate work and family life providing a balance.
- Start and finish the day with a routine – make sure you change out of pyjamas, for example, to get into work mode. Remember to take regular breaks throughout the day too.
- Think about batch cooking and prepping food for the week, including healthy snacks. Make sure you get outside at least once a day for some fresh air, too.
- If you live with other people, think about or discuss with them what challenges you might all face if you all need to stay at home or one of you gets coronavirus. If there are problems with your housing conditions, there is help and support out there.
- Remember, it's important to follow social distancing and stay at home guidance when it comes to seeing and being around others. If a customer does not follow this advice, our employees are within their rights to remind them of the Government guidelines and move away to maintain a two metre distance.

3. Plan for practical scenarios

- Work out how you can get any household supplies you need. If you are not able to go out, you could try finding a delivery service or ordering online.
- Continue accessing treatment and support for any existing physical or mental health problems where possible. Let services know you are staying at home and discuss how to continue receiving support.
- If you need regular medicine, you might be able to order repeat prescriptions by phone, or online via a website or app. Contact your GP and ask if they offer this. You can also ask your pharmacy about getting your medicine delivered or ask someone else to collect it for you.
- If you support or care for others, either in your home or by visiting them regularly, think about who can help whilst you are staying at home. Carers UK has further advice on creating a contingency plan if this is your current state.

4. Connect with others

Maintaining healthy relationships with people you trust is important for your mental wellbeing. Think about how you can stay in touch with friends and family whilst at home i.e by phone, messaging, video calls or online, whether it's people you usually see often, or reconnecting with old friends. Lots of people are finding the current situation difficult, so staying in touch could help them too.

5. Talk about your worries

It is quite common to feel worried, scared or helpless about the current situation. Remember, it is okay to share your concerns with others you trust, doing so could help them too.

6. Look after your body

Our physical health really affects how we feel. Try to make sure you and your family eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water and exercise regularly. It can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour that end up making you feel worse so aim to keep your mind busy. Get outside for a walk or a run if you can, technology now brings us the likes of YouTube where you can search for workouts to do at home at any level in the comfort of your home.

7. Stay on top of difficult feelings

Concern about the coronavirus outbreak is perfectly normal. However, some people may experience intense anxiety that can affect their day-to-day life. Try to focus on the things you can control, such as how you act, who you speak to and where you get information from. It's fine to acknowledge that some things are outside of your control, but if constant thoughts about the situation are making you feel anxious or overwhelmed, there are some things you can try to help manage your anxiety - here are some ideas below:

- Listen to a free podcast
- Download the Headspace app
- Speak to a friend or family member
- Put some music on and have a boogie!
- Pull out the photo album to take you back to a memory that takes you away to that exact moment
- Start a journal and write down all the things you are grateful for
- Start your day on a positive by repeating positive affirmations i.e. I am healthy, capable and valuable

8. Do not stay glued to the news

Try to limit the time you spend watching, reading or listening to coverage of the outbreak, including on social media, and think about turning off breaking-news alerts on your phone. You could set yourself a specific time to read updates or limit yourself to checking a couple of times a day. Finally, use trustworthy sources such as [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) or the [NHS website](https://www.nhs.uk) and fact-check information from the news, social media or other people.

9. Carry on doing things you enjoy

If we are feeling worried, anxious, lonely or low, we may stop doing things we usually enjoy. Try to focus on your favourite hobby if it is something you can still do at home. If not, picking something new to learn at home might help, there are lots of ideas online. Why not try learning a new language or picking up yoga for beginners (great for the body and mind!)

10. Stick to your daily routine

Think about how you can carry on your normal routines, try to do things that are useful or meaningful. For example, if you are working from home, try to get up and get ready in the same way as normal, keep to the same hours you would normally work and stick to the same sleeping schedule. If you cannot do this, think about how you can create new routines and set yourself goals. You could set a new alarm for the morning, do a daily home workout, and pick a regular time to clean, read, watch a TV programme or film, or cook.

Please note that information contained in this guide has been sourced from external websites which are free to use for the general public. Further details are available upon request.

Useful Mental Health and Wellbeing Support

-  **Samaritans** <https://www.samaritans.org/> or call free on 116 123
When life is tough, Samaritans are here to listen at any time, day or night. You can talk to them about anything that's troubling you, no matter how difficult.
-  **Shout** <https://www.giveusashout.org/> or text "SHOUT" to 85258
Shout offers confidential 24/7 crisis text support for times when you need immediate assistance.
-  **Childline** www.childline.org.uk call 0800 1111
A private and confidential service for children and young people up to the age of 19. You can contact a Childline counsellor for free about anything – no problem is too big or too small.
-  **NHS Every Mind Matters** <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters>
Information about mental and physical conditions, with lots of advice about how to cope with the problems you are facing.
-  **Mind for Better Mental Health** <https://www.mind.org.uk/> Have an online chat through the website, call 0300 123 3393 or text 86463 Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm. Provide advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem.
-  **CALM (The Campaign Against Living Miserably)** <https://www.thecalmzone.net/> Call 0800 585858 daily from 5pm to midnight or for a free anonymous webchat with trained staff click <https://www.thecalmzone.net/help/get-help/> For people in the UK who are down or have hit a wall for any reason.
-  **Young Minds** <https://youngminds.org.uk/> Young people can text the Crisis Messenger free 24/7, text YM to 85258. Parents can also call for advice on 0808 802 5544. Provide online advice to young people, with links to help in more urgent situations.
-  **SANE** www.sane.org.uk Call 0300 304 400 from 16:30 to 22:30 every evening, or you can sign up for confidential text care online. There is also an online supportive forum where anyone can share their experiences. Support for anyone affected by mental illness, including families, friends and carers.
-  **SupportLine** <https://www.supportline.org.uk/> Hours vary so ring for details on 01708 765200.
Provide a confidential telephone helpline offering emotional support to any individual on any issue.
-  **The Silver Line** www.thesilverline.org.uk Their helpline is open 24 hours a day every day of the year. Please call 0800 470 8090. Aimed at people over 55.
-  **The Mix** <http://www.themix.org.uk/> Their helpline is open between 4pm and 11pm, 7 days a week, call 0808 808 4994. They also run a crisis text service which is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, text THEMIX to 85258. Aimed at people under 25.
-  **Rethink Mental Illness** <http://www.rethink.org/about-us/our-mental-health-advice> Call 0300 5000 927 Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 4pm. Advice line provides expert advice and information to people with mental health problems and those who care for them, as well as giving help to health professionals, employers and staff.
-  **Mood Swings** www.moodswings.org.uk Their helpline is open 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday, call 0161 832 3736. Aimed at anyone affected by a mood disorder, including friends, families and carers.
-  **Elefriends** <http://elefriends.org.uk/> Elefriends is run by Mind. A supportive online community where you can be yourself. If you're a carer needing support, you can sign up to their online community.