

Updated guidance on exercising for people with medical conditions and disabilities

In these unprecedented times in relation to the current Coronavirus (COVID-19), it is important that the guidance being published / advised by Public Health England is followed, to ensure that everyone is implementing the necessary measures to promote health and safety.

However, for some individuals who have learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, dementia and / or additional mental health needs; social isolation, a reduction in physical activity, unpredictability and changes in their routine, can all contribute to increased anxiety and undue stress.

The Government guidance in relation to exercise, includes the following response within the frequently asked questions:

'Can I exercise more than once a day if I need to due to a significant health condition?'

'You can leave your home for medical need. If you (or a person in your care), have a specific health condition that requires you to leave the home to maintain your health - including if that involves travel beyond your local area - then you can do so. This could, for example, include where individuals with learning disabilities or autism require specific exercise in an open space two or three times each day - ideally in line with a care plan agreed with a medical professional.'

This would also apply to those people experiencing dementia, additional mental health needs or other neurological conditions, where a pragmatic stance is needed to avoid an increase in anxiety and cause further stress.

Here are the links to the guidance and one of the many press reports on the revised guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>

<https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/government-clarifies-outdoor-exercise-limit-following-jr-threat/5103839.article>

Your current care plan may not have been agreed by a medical professional. This is still okay. You are still able exercise and go outside in line with these guidelines and you can use the following documents to support your need to be able to do so:

- A letter confirming a relevant diagnosis
- An individual's Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, or Personal Independence Payment letter
- A copy of an individual's assessment or care and support plan from health or social care services

As indicated in the guidance, we advise that individuals remain as close to their homes as possible and utilise additional exercise on a needs-led basis to minimise risks and continue to follow all guidance relating to social distancing. This includes:

- Staying 2 metres (6ft) away from other people (within the community setting) at all times
- Washing their hands before they leave the property and upon return to the property (and wherever else necessary)
- Not meeting others whilst out in the community

This may mean in some circumstances that individuals may require a higher level of supervision whilst outdoors, to ensure that the likelihood of risk and safety measures being implemented as appropriate.



**Dr. Ed Garratt,
Chief Executive of the NHS Ipswich & East Suffolk, NHS West Suffolk and NHS North
East Essex Clinical Commissioning Groups**



**Sue Cook,
Director of People Services,
Suffolk County Council**

**Detective Superintendent David Giles
Suffolk Constabulary**

Other sources of useful information, help and support:

Coronavirus Easy-Read Online

<https://www.easy-read-online.co.uk/media/53192/advice-on-the-coronavirus-v1.pdf>

Emotional Wellbeing, Mental Health and Learning Disabilities COVID-19 Information Hub

<https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/covidhub>

Website of resources for adults, carers, and professionals

First Response 24/7 Mental Health crisis line: Tel: 0808 196 3494.

<https://www.nsft.nhs.uk/Find-help/Pages/Help-in-a-Crisis.aspx>

First Response is a 24/7 helpline offering immediate advice, support and signposting for people with mental health difficulties.

Dementia Together: Tel: 08081 688 000

<http://www.dementia-together.com>

For advice, information, and support for people living with dementia and their carers

Suffolk Family Carers: Tel:01473 835477

<https://suffolkfamilycarers.org/>

For advice, information, and support for family carers

Alzheimer's Society resources:

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/coronavirus-supporting-person-dementia-home>

ACE Anglia Tel: 01449 678088

<https://www.aceanglia.com>

The Learning Disability Partnership Board: <https://suffolkordinarylives.co.uk>

Advocacy (Easy Read):

<https://qualityadvocacy.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Easy-Read-Coronavirus-Facts-About-Advocacy-and-Rights.pdf>

Suffolk Parent Carer Network: 01473 345375

<https://spcn.org.uk/>

Suffolk User Forum: 01473 907087

<https://www.suffolkuserforum.co.uk/>

SCIE guidance for people with a learning disability and autism

<https://www.scie.org.uk/care-providers/coronavirus-covid-19/learning-disabilities-autism/carers-family#social-distancing>

Adult Social Care (Customer First): Tel: 0800 917 1109

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/how-social-care-can-help/contact-adult-social-care/>

Email: customer.first@suffolk.gov.uk

Home but Not Alone Service:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/show/home-but-not-alone>

The telephone number for those in genuine need of help is freephone **0800 876 6926** and will be staffed from **9am to 5pm**, seven days a week.