

# Keeping Safe, Healthy and Happy

Handy information, contacts and tips for older residents in Herefordshire



**Herefordshire  
Council**

# Introduction

Everyone has the right to live happily and safely in their homes and to remain healthy and independent for as long as possible.

We sometimes need more support as we get older, and having some useful information about where we can get that help or just a few handy tips on what we can do ourselves, can make all the difference.

Many people are also carers and that can bring extra pressure and worry. Knowing where to go for information and support can help.

Herefordshire Council and some of its partners has pulled together key bits of information in this handbook that help you keep safe, stay healthy and be happy.

There are organisations you can contact and websites you can visit to find out more and we've given contact details for as many as we can.



You can also visit WISH, our new information and signposting service which will be opening early in 2016.

## These are for you to fill in -

Doctor

Dentist

Neighbour/help

Community pharmacy

## Emergency contact details

Always ring 999 in an emergency for Police, Fire or Ambulance. If the circumstances aren't an emergency but you need help...

POLICE

**0300 333 3000 (non urgent)  
or 101**

NHS

**111**

FIRE

**112**

Information is correct at time of going to press. However things do change so please let us know if any information is incorrect.

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## Here to help you stay well this winter.

Call 111. If you need medical help fast, but it's not life threatening or you're not sure where to go, a 111 adviser will assess you and direct you to the best placed service in your area. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Ask a pharmacist. They're highly trained healthcare experts, on everything from colds to long term conditions.

Visit a walk in centre. They're mainly run by nurses who can treat minor illnesses and injuries on the spot. You don't need an appointment and they're open outside office hours.

Contact your GP. Many GPs can offer advice over the phone and can arrange referral to a hospital specialist if you need it.

A&E departments. They're there for life threatening emergencies. But if you're not sure whether it is an emergency, call 111 first.

**STAY WELL  
THIS WINTER**

For more information  
and advice visit  
[www.nhs.uk/staywell](http://www.nhs.uk/staywell)

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# Staying safe

For most people, an emergency situation like a fire or a flood will never happen, but it pays to be prepared so that you can get help quickly, simply and safely in the event of an emergency.

## Be prepared...

- On your phone, or somewhere obvious nearby, save the number of a friend, neighbour or family member who can help if there is an emergency. Save the number under the name 'ICE' (in case of emergency) as emergency services will always look for this if they need to get hold of someone.
- Have a bag packed with some essentials like a torch, spare keys and important phone numbers so that if you need to leave your house you can quickly get hold of the things you will need.
- You might want to think about options like pendants or alarms that can alert family members and carers if you need help or if you have fallen ill. There are a number of options for this kind of support.
- Age UK (0800 9990400) and Herefordshire Housing (0300 7774321) offer a service or you may be eligible for a free service. Ring the advice and referral team to see if you are eligible 01432 260101 or ring the council's telecare service to see how technology might be able to help you 01432 261650.
- Some villages have good neighbour schemes and there are other community and church groups which are run locally and can help you quickly. You can find out about these in your local parish magazine. If there isn't a local scheme, you could think of starting one with neighbours.



## Avoiding accidents at home

More accidents happen at home than anywhere else. There's a lot we can do to avoid them and to stay safe.

- Make sure your carpets aren't worn, especially on stairs, and that mats and rugs are stuck down securely with rug tape.
- Have good lighting on stairs and in the bathroom, and emergency lighting in case of power cuts (torches and battery powered lamps, not candles).
- Don't overload plug sockets or have a tangle of trailing wires that could be a fire and trip hazard.
- Don't use step ladders without help – even better to get someone else to reach what you need.
- Make sure your slippers fit properly or wear comfy shoes that fasten instead – many accidents happen because of badly fitting footwear.



# Staying safe

## Home security

Thieves look for opportunities to prey on vulnerable and older people. Here are some things that you can do to take away that opportunity:

- Fit good quality locks to doors and windows – and use them. Keep windows and doors secure when you are elsewhere in the house. Fit a door chain and screen callers at the door carefully.
- Make sure spare keys are left with someone you trust rather than hidden away – burglars always know where to look.

## Burglaries are rare but most happen when your home is empty, so...

- Use timer switches (available from DIY shops) to turn on lights, radios and other appliances when you're out.
- Keep all valuable items away from view of passers-by.

- Don't advertise your absence when you're on holiday, or even when out at work or shopping.
- Get a friend or neighbour to look after your home when you're away, by collecting your post, drawing your curtains at night and generally making the place look lived in. Offer to do the same for them.
- Overwhelming evidence suggests that alarms are an effective deterrent against burglaries. Alarms work because they attract attention and buy you time, preventing the thief from taking their time to burgle your home. Modern alarms are really reliable and can be set when pets are in the house too.

Home safety assessments are available from the council's handyperson service. The team can also install smoke alarms, safety and security items and undertake small household repairs. NB there may be a small charge for this service depending on your circumstances (01432 260757).



## Keep your garden safe too

- Burglars could use any ladders or tools you have lying about to help them get into your home, so keep them locked away securely, and make sure your shed is secure. Theft from garden sheds is increasing.
- Make sure fences and garden gates are not easy to get access through. For example don't have bolts at the top of a gate and make sure the gate is as high as the fence around it. Ideally, rear fences should be at least six feet tall.
- Planted protection is also helpful: thorny shrubs planted over or against potential access routes such as walls and fences, make an effective and attractive barrier.

## If someone calls at your door

- Check to see who it is by using the spy hole if you have one, or look through a front window. If you have any suspicions at all, don't let them in.
- Always put the chain or limiter on before you open the door. (If you don't have one it's a good idea to get one – they don't cost much.) With PVC

doors, it can be difficult and costly to fit a door chain or limiter, so check with the manufacturer that one will be fitted before you purchase it.

- Genuine callers often ring first to make an appointment and will always carry an identity card. If they have no identity card and you don't know them, don't let them in – don't be fooled by a sob story or made to feel bad. Never agree to an unrequested appointment for a sales presentation of any kind, whether it is for goods or property repairs. Often they might claim it is just a survey or no obligation quote-but this is likely to be untrue.
- Check the identity card carefully and keep the chain on while you do this. Genuine callers won't mind if you close the door while you check. You can always ask them to call back later to give you time to check with their organisation that they are who they say they are.
- Watch out for anyone who says they're in a hurry. Don't let them pressure you.
- Bogus callers sometimes work in pairs. Beware of one distracting you at the front door while the other gains entry at the back of your property and tries to steal your property. The best practice is not to let them in and keep your back door locked at all times.



# Staying safe

- If in doubt, call a neighbour or friend. If you can't contact anyone or have any worries, phone the police – dial 999 – and tell them what's happened. And tell your neighbours.

## Doorstep sellers

**Never deal with any cold callers.** Cold callers for any property repairs will invariably charge excessively high prices for unnecessary and poor quality work. Whether it is for roofing, driveways, security alarms, wall coatings, walk in showers, gardening, double glazing, fascias and guttering, solar panels - if it is a cold caller at the door or on the phone, they will usually be looking to rip you off. The same is likely to be true of cold callers for the sale of goods; in particular, disabled aids and mobility equipment as many residents mistakenly believe the caller is from Social Services or the NHS.

## Fire, electricity and gas

### Fire safety in the home

The number of accidental fires in people's homes has been reducing over the past ten years, however, there is always a potential risk that an accidental fire could start in the home.

## Home fire safety checks

A member of Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service can visit your home and offer a range of fire safety advice to keep you and your family safe. Fire service personnel will also install smoke alarms if required, and will help you work out an escape plan specific to your home and circumstances.

This can be as simple as heading down the stairs, knowing where your keys are, unlocking the door and leaving the property, but can make a huge difference if a fire breaks out in your home, particularly at night.





## Who can have a home fire safety check?

Home fire safety checks are offered free of charge and are targeted at the more vulnerable groups in the community.

This includes the elderly, people living alone and those with reduced mobility or other issues.

Many referrals for home fire safety checks are made through other agencies, but Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service would urge anyone who thinks they or an elderly family member, friend or neighbour might benefit from a visit to get in touch and request one on their behalf.

If you would like to see if you qualify for this service or if you would like to speak to someone for some advice then please telephone 0800 032 1155 or go to [www.hwfire.org.uk](http://www.hwfire.org.uk) quoting reference number HH14.

## Smoke alarms

If you do not have working smoke alarms there will be nothing to alert you to a fire. Please ensure that if you have smoke alarms that they are tested every week and change the battery every year.

## Where should the smoke detector be sited?

Alarms should be sited on each floor of your home preferably in the hall way and on the landing and should be fitted onto the ceiling, but not too near the kitchen or bathroom as it may go off accidentally due to cooking fumes or steam.

A strobe light can be supplied and fitted as a visual warning and a vibrating pad which is placed under your pillow to raise the alarm.

Make an action plan today – plan a safe escape

- Fitting a smoke alarm is the first crucial step to protecting yourself from fire.
- Plan an escape route and make sure everyone knows how to escape.
- The best route is the normal way in and out of your home.
- Think of a second route in case the first one is blocked.
- Make sure exits are kept clear.



# Staying safe

- Make sure you have a bag of useful things, including a supply of emergency medication if appropriate, is stored along that route and, if possible, that a phone is on hand nearby.
- Keep door and window keys where everyone can find them.

## What to do in the case of a fire?

- Keep calm and act quickly.
- Get everyone out as soon as possible.
- Don't waste time investigating what has happened or rescuing valuables.
- If there is smoke, keep low where the air is clearer.
- Before you open a door check if it's warm. If it is, don't open it – fire is on the other side.
- Call 999 as soon as you're clear of the building. 999 calls are free.

**get out,  
stay out  
and call  
999**

**top tip**

## Kitchen safety

- Never leave food which is cooking unattended.
- Keep cooker and grill pans clean – burnt food and fat can cause a fire.
- Turn off all electrical appliances and pull out the plug when not in use.
- Keep kitchen paper and towels away from your cooking area.
- Pull your toaster clear from overhead cupboards.
- Chip pans can be deadly – consider using a deep fat fryer or oven chips.

## Chimney fires

- Chimneys should be kept clean to prevent fires.
- Regular cleaning of your chimney eliminates the build-up of soot and clears obstructions such as bird nests, leaves and debris.
- Always use fire guards when leaving fires unattended.
- Chimneys should be swept every year if burning smokeless fuels and every three months for wood.

# Staying safe

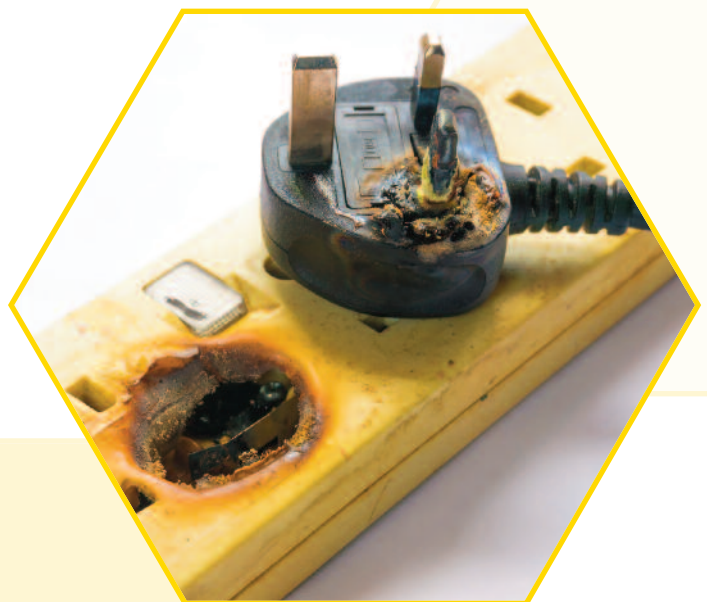
- Never use flammable liquids to light your fire.
- Never burn rubbish or over load the fire with fuel.
- Occasionally ask someone to check in the loft for smoke from cracks, defective brickwork or mortar joints.

## Electrics

- Contact qualified electricians for advice and repair. Never repair or re-join cables yourself.
- Do not run cables under the carpet.
- Keep cables away from the cooker.
- Never use more than one adaptor per socket.
- Make sure toasters, microwaves, hairdryers and kettles, are plugged into their own socket and not used with an adaptor.
- When going to bed make sure all TVs are switched off properly and not left on stand-by.
- Do not leave washing machines, tumble dryers or dishwashers running whilst in bed or when the property is empty.
- Always unplug phone chargers when not in use.
- If buying appliances look out for the Kitemark.

## Danger signs to look out for

- Hot plugs and sockets.
- Fuses that blow for no obvious reason.
- Lights flickering.
- Brown scorch marks on sockets or plugs.
- Never place clothes on to electric heaters to dry.
- Never put aerosols near a fire or heater, they could explode.
- Keep portable heaters away from furniture and clothes, and out of bathrooms.
- Always keep portable heaters out of bathrooms.



# Staying safe

## Electric blankets

Always follow manufacturers instructions for using your blanket. This will help you use and store it safely and prolong the life of your blanket. Store it flat or rolled and do not store other objects on top of it.

- Electric blankets should be replaced every 10 years and tested every two years. Check with your local Age UK Office (0845 688 1298) office to see if anyone is testing in your area.
- Always check your blanket for scorch marks, water damage, mould or exposed wires. If you see any of these on your blanket **do not use it**, replace it.
- Never use a hot water bottle or drink fluids in bed when you have your electric blanket fitted to it. If you spill your drink or the water bottle leaks you will be mixing water and electricity and there will be a high risk of electrocution.

For more information or if you would like to speak to someone please ring us on 0800 032 1155 or go to [www.hwfire.org.uk](http://www.hwfire.org.uk)

## Carbon monoxide

Every year about 30 people die from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning caused by gas appliances and flues that have not been properly installed or maintained, whilst many others also suffer ill health.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning could be tiredness, drowsiness, headaches, dizziness and chest pains.

When gas does not burn properly, as with other fuels such as coal, wood or oil, excess CO is produced which is poisonous.

You are at risk from CO poisoning if:

- your appliance was poorly installed;
- your appliance is not working properly;
- your appliance has not been checked for safety or maintained regularly;
- there is not enough fresh air in the room;
- your chimney or flue gets blocked up;
- you allow non-Gas Safe registered engineers to install or maintain your appliance(s).



## Cigarettes

- Never smoke in bed.
- Use a proper ashtray – never a waste paper basket.
- Make sure your ashtray can't tip over and is made of a material that won't burn.
- Don't leave a lit cigarette, cigar or pipe lying around – they can easily fall over and start a fire.
- Take extra care if you smoke when you're tired, are taking prescription drugs or if you have been drinking – you might fall asleep and set fire to your clothing or furniture.
- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children.
- Never smoke near someone who is on oxygen.

If you want to stop smoking altogether there is a national Stop Smoking support line 0300 123 1044 or local support can be found on the [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/health-improvement](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/health-improvement).

**put them  
out, right  
out!**

**top tip**

## Food safety

Be aware of use-by dates and following storage instructions on the food we buy. There are some simple rules on storing, preparing and cooking food that can reduce the risk of illness:

- Keep your fridge temperature below 5°C.
- Cool down leftovers as quickly as possible (within 90 minutes), store them in the fridge and eat them within two days.
- Never put open cans in the fridge, as the metal may transfer to the can's contents – place the contents in a storage container or covered bowl instead.
- Store raw meat and poultry in clean, sealed containers on the bottom shelf of the fridge, so they can't touch or drip onto other food.
- Keep cooked meat separate from raw meat.

It's safe to freeze meat and fish as long as you:

- freeze it before the use-by date;
- defrost meat and fish thoroughly before cooking – lots of liquid will come out as meat thaws, so stand it in a bowl to stop bacteria in the juice spreading to other things.

# Staying safe

- Don't wash poultry – cooking it properly will make sure there are no harmful bacteria, and washing poultry can spread any bacteria present into your sink and onto surfaces, increasing the risk of contaminating other food.
- Defrost meat and fish in a microwave if you intend to cook it straightaway, or put it in the fridge to thaw so it doesn't get too warm.
- Cook food until it's piping hot all the way through.
- Never re-freeze raw meat (including poultry) or fish that has been defrosted. It is possible to re-freeze cooked meat once, as long as it has been cooled before going into the freezer. But if in doubt, don't re-freeze.



## Re-using bags

With more and more people re-using carrier bags, whether for environmental reasons or to avoid paying for new ones, the following tips will help prevent bacteria spreading to ready-to-eat food:

- Keep raw meat and fish separate from ready-to-eat foods in separate bags.
- If you use re-useable bags, keep one or two just for use with raw meat and fish and don't use the same bags for ready-to-eat foods.
- Re-useable bags (and single-use carrier bags) should be disposed of if there are spillages of raw meat juices.

## Cleaning up

- Wash all worktops and chopping boards before and after cooking, as they can be a source of cross-contamination.
- The average kitchen chopping board has around 200% more faecal bacteria on it than the average toilet seat.
- Damp sponges and cloths are the perfect place for bacteria to breed. Studies have shown the kitchen sponge to have the highest number of germs in the home. Wash and replace kitchen cloths, sponges and tea towels frequently.

## Trading Standards - your rights

### Your legal rights for doorstep selling

If you do purchase goods or services from the doorstep seller, you still have rights:

- If the goods and services you buy cost more than £42 you have 14 days to cancel the contract. The trader has to give you a written statement of your right to cancel, and a cooling off period starts when you have that - if you don't receive one, your cooling off period continues indefinitely.
- It does not matter whether you invited the trader into your home or not.
- The trader must not start work until after the cooling off period.
- However most cold callers will either not give you the cooling off period or will coerce you into signing away this right and allowing them to do the job straight away. This is to prevent you from having the opportunity to think about it.

If you think work needs to be done then get quotes from other local companies, don't be pressured and always ask friends and relatives for a recommendation. Use the council's Handyman Service, 01432 260757 or the council's Trader Register

this consists of a wide variety of traders who have been vetted by us. For further information see [www.traderregister.org.uk/herefordshire](http://www.traderregister.org.uk/herefordshire), or you ring the Trading Standards team on 01432 261761.

It is a sad fact of life that rogue traders and fraudsters will deliberately target the elderly and vulnerable in order to rip them off. They will buy databases of names, addresses and telephone numbers of older folk, especially those who have in the past responded to prize draw mail or been previous victims of rogue trading. Often the elderly become repeat victims, and are subject to numerous cold calls at the door and especially on the telephone on a daily basis together with being bombarded with scam mail. Do not even enter into a conversation with a cold caller - just say NO.

To report a rogue trader or obtain a free 'no calling' card to display at home, please contact the Trading Standards team on 01432 261761.



# Staying safe

## Top tips to avoid being scammed

- Never deal with any cold callers who visit or phone. Always get several quotes and recommendations to compare and check out details and addresses first.
- Put all unsolicited mail in your green recycling bin. It is highly likely to be a scam.
- Never reply straight away to an offer. Speak to a relative, friend, neighbour or your carer before you do anything.
- Never send money to anyone who says you've won a lottery or a big prize. It is a scam.
- Never give out your bank account details or other personal information to people you don't know.
- Never ring an 090 number unless you're certain how much the call will cost and know what you are likely to receive.
- Always get a quote and appropriate independent advice before you sign a credit agreement especially on trade premises.
- Never send money off in response to bogus psychic mailings or for so called miracle health cures.

## How to report a problem when things go wrong

Herefordshire's Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) has an agreement with Trading Standards to help you report a problem to them. Before you contact CAB, gather as much information as you can to support your problem. This will help the adviser decide if your problem can be passed on to Trading Standards: they can also help you work out what to do next.

Try to give details of:

- what the problem is;
- what you know about the trader;
- paperwork, including bills, invoices, quotes and estimates or contracts;
- notes of any conversations you've already had with the trader, including dates;
- witnesses who can confirm what you're saying;
- photos or video evidence of the problem.

You can receive advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week on:

[www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk). Or you can ring Herefordshire's Citizens Advice Bureau on 0844 826 9685 (Mondays and Wednesdays 10am-3pm).

You can also get in touch with your local Age UK who will be able to offer support and advice (0845 688 1298).



## Tackling anti-social behaviour together

Anti-social behaviour relates to an action that causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to another person, not of the same household.

Examples of anti-social behaviour include:

- verbal abuse, harassment;
- excessive noise;
- vandalism, graffiti and fly posting;
- dumping rubbish, fly tipping and dog fouling;
- alcohol related behaviour;
- large groups using threatening or intimidating behaviour;
- abandoned vehicles, illegal parking, joy riding;

Tolerance is expected to a certain degree, so for instance children playing in the street or young people gathering are unlikely to cause harassment, alarm or distress unless they are being intimidating to an individual or household.

If you are experiencing anti social behaviour you might consider talking to the person involved who may not realise they are causing you distress. You should only do this if you feel safe and confident to do so. If the problem continues or

worsens, or you are worried about confronting the person, you should contact the relevant agencies – see below.

As a rule, the more serious or urgent a matter is, the more likely it is to be a job for the police. All crime should first be reported to West Mercia Police. The police will then contact other organisations if they need to.

### Contacts

West Mercia Police: 101

Herefordshire Council: 01432 261761 (noise nuisance, flytipping, dog fouling, abandoned vehicles).

If you have any information about criminal damage, graffiti, or any other crime you can also call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

For more information about anti social behaviour go to the council's website [www.herefordshire.gov.uk](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk) and use the search box at the top of the page.

In an emergency always call 999.



# Staying safe

## Mate crime

Mate crimes happen in many different relationships. They are perpetrated by an individual or small group of individuals who are friends or befriend an often vulnerable and friendly person. These 'mates' then use your friendship to steal and take advantage of the trust you have in them.

- A 'mate' may be a new friend, an old friend, a family member, a neighbour, a person paid to help you in your home or another person you meet and talk with on a regular basis.
- Mate crime is always done by someone you know.

All suspected mate crimes should be reported to West Mercia Police (tel 101).

## Safeguarding adults from harm

Herefordshire Council has a duty to keep adults safe with care and support needs.

That means protecting them from all forms of abuse, whether it is:

- physical
- financial
- emotional
- organisational
- domestic
- psychological
- neglect
- modern slavery
- discriminatory
- sexual
- self neglect



## What to do if you suspect abuse

Abuse of any description is wrong. By reporting abuse you can bring it to an end.

If you suspect an incident of abuse has taken place you should raise the alert and report it. If you have a concern relating to anyone, be it a friend, family member or neighbour, gather and write down all facts, such as where the incident took place, what time and who was involved.

Call: 01432 260715 (office hours)

Police (non urgent): 0300 333 3000

Out of hours: 0330 123 9309

In an emergency call: 999



## Domestic abuse

Everyone has the right to live in a safe and secure environment. If you are a victim of domestic abuse or know someone who is, there is help available:

- West Mercia Women's Aid Helpline operates 24 hours a day: 0800 783 1359 (free from a landline).
- In an emergency phone 999
- Mankind Initiative.  
[www.mankind.org.uk](http://www.mankind.org.uk) 01823 334244



# Staying safe

## Falls

Falls can be extremely serious – possibly fatal – and can destroy your confidence. In particular, healthcare professionals take falls in older people very seriously because of the serious impact they can have, so it's worth asking your doctor about what support is available to help you avoid falling.

There are lots of simple things that you can do to help you stay steady on your feet.

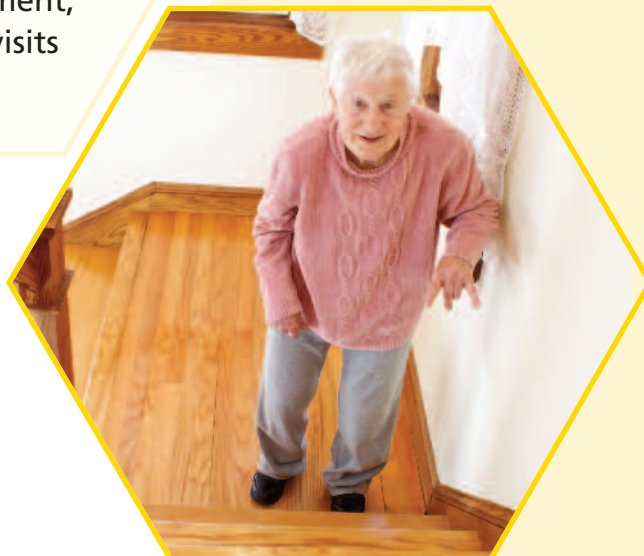
Your doctor may carry out some simple tests to check your balance. They can also review any medicines you are taking in case their side effects may increase your risk of falling.

Your doctor may also recommend:

- having a sight test if you are having problems with your vision, even if you already wear glasses;
- requesting a home hazard assessment, where a healthcare professional visits your home to identify potential hazards and offer advice;
- doing exercises to improve your strength and balance.

Age UK's *Staying Steady* guide has information for everyone, whether you're fit and active, have difficulty walking and getting around, or are worried about falling. You can get a copy of this by ringing 0845 6881298.

Our handyperson team may be able to help with small adaptations like ramps, half steps, handrails, home safety and security work, and a wide range of small repairs to help you remain independent or to ensure you can return home from hospital. Telephone: 01432 260500





# Staying safe

## Preventing falls

Adults at risk of falls, such as people with weak legs, poor balance and some medical conditions, can improve their balance and co-ordination by exercising on at least two days a week. This could include yoga, tai chi and dancing.

As you grow older, regular physical activity will help you keep strong, co-ordinated and flexible and give you more confidence.

It helps if you can limit or break up the time you spend sitting still. Local *walking for health groups* are a good way of aiming to meet the 150 minutes of physical activity you need a week, and can be fun too, being outside in the countryside can have a positive effect on your mental wellbeing. You can find out about *walking for health groups* in your area by visiting [www.walkingforhealth.org.uk](http://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk) or by ringing Brightstripe 01432 358232.



## What should I do if I have a fall?

If you have a fall, it is important to keep calm.

If you are not hurt and you feel strong enough to get up, do not get up quickly. Roll onto your hands and knees and look for a stable piece of furniture, such as a chair or bed.

Hold on to the furniture with both hands to support yourself and, when you feel ready, slowly get up. Sit down and rest for a while before carrying on with your daily activities.

If you are hurt or unable to get up, try to get someone's attention by calling out for help, banging on the wall or floor, or using your aid call button (if you have one). If possible, crawl to a telephone and dial 999 for an ambulance.

Try to reach something warm, such as a blanket or dressing gown, to put over you, particularly your legs and feet. Stay as comfortable as possible and try to change your position at least once every half an hour or so.

If you are worried that you are at risk of a fall, you can contact the Herefordshire Falls Prevention Service – it is free for older people who have fallen, are at risk or are worried about falling. Ask your doctor to refer you to the service, or ring them direct on 01568 617309.

## Physical activity

Physical activity and exercise can help you stay healthy, energetic and independent. There's strong scientific evidence that people who are active have a lower risk of heart disease, stroke, type-2 diabetes, some cancers, depression and dementia.

If you want to stay pain-free, reduce your risk of mental illness, and be able to go out and stay independent, you need to keep moving.

It's that simple. There are lots of ways you can get active, and it's not just about exercising.

While some activity is better than none at all, to get the maximum health benefit, you should aim to do at least two and a half hours of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week.

Aim to do something every day, preferably in bouts of 10 minutes of activity or more. The more you do, the greater the health gains.

One way of achieving your weekly physical activity target is to do 30 minutes on at least five days a week.

On at least two days a week, activities should include those that strengthen muscles and bones, such as weight training, carrying heavy loads and heavy gardening.

Examples of moderate-intensity aerobic activities include:

- walking briskly
- doing water aerobics
- swimming
- dancing
- riding a bike on level ground or with few hills
- playing doubles tennis
- pushing a lawn mower

Daily chores such as shopping, cooking or housework don't count towards your 150 minutes because the effort isn't hard enough to raise your heart rate, but they are all good ways of keeping active.

## Join a club or a gym

There are a number of health and leisure clubs in Herefordshire that offer group classes and can offer specific programmes to meet individual needs. Here are just a few:

Halo Leisure (0300 012 1222)

Wye Valley Leisure, Fownhope (01432 860860)

Holmer Park (01432 370222)

Brightstripe (for details of community-based activities 01432 358232)

# Keeping healthy

## Be inspired by sport

Local sports clubs like archery, bowls, tennis and golf can also be a great way of getting more active and meeting new people. Most sports now have a programme aimed at getting people back into sport and Herefordshire's local clubs are always keen to help. Ask about getting back to sport at your local sports club or ring Brightstripe (01432 358232) There's also some information on the web – [www.morethan.sport.com](http://www.morethan.sport.com).





## Healthy eating

It's important to eat a healthy, balanced diet which should include:

- fruit and vegetables – aim for at least five portions of a variety of fruit and veg a day;
- bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods – choose wholegrain varieties if you can;
- some milk and dairy foods;
- some meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein – try to eat at least two portions of fish a week, including a portion of oily fish;
- just a small amount of foods and drinks that are high in fat or sugar.

As we get older, it's natural to eat less or be less interested in food. This is partly because we're not as active as we used to be, and also because we lose some muscle so our bodies burn fewer calories.

However, it's important to get all the energy and nutrients that your body needs to be able to keep fit and active and do the things you want to do. This will also prevent problems such as osteoporosis and constipation by making sure we have a good balance of the nutrients we need.

If you can't eat as much as you used to, eat smaller meals more often and supplement them with nutritious snacks, such as fruit, vegetables and wholegrain toast.

You may eat less because you find it more difficult to buy or prepare food, or because you find it harder to get around if you have a condition such as arthritis. There are lunch clubs across the county ([www.herefordshire.gov.uk/lunchclubs](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/lunchclubs)) and the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) offers lots of services, including meals on wheels and lunch clubs (01432 273590). Many supermarkets also deliver prepared meals on request.

Eat regularly, at least three times a day. If you don't feel like cooking from scratch, have a tinned, chilled or frozen ready-prepared meal instead. It's a good idea to have a store of foods in the freezer and cupboard in case you cannot go out.

## Don't get thirsty

Aim to drink about 1.2 litres (or two and a half pints) of fluid every day to stop you getting dehydrated. This is about six 200ml or eight 150ml glasses, cups or mugs. When the weather is warm or when you are active, you'll probably need more than this.



# Keeping healthy

## Alcohol

NHS guidelines say we should stick to the following daily limits when it comes to drinking alcohol:

Women 2-3 units a day - that's not much more than a standard 175ml glass of wine (ABV 13%)

Men 3 -4 units a day - that's not much more than a pint of strong lager, beer or cider (ABV 5.2%)

Cutting down on alcohol improves mood, balance and helps to keep weight down.

Recommended tips:

- Try having 2 alcohol free days per week.
- Swap your usual drink for a drink with less alcohol.
- Have your first drink after starting to eat.
- Drinkline – national, free, information and advice line for people who are worried about their own or someone else's drinking 0800 917 8282.

## Keeping warm and staying cool - tips

- Try to keep your home warm. Keep your main living room at around 18-21°C (65-70°F). If you can't heat all the rooms you use, heat the living room during the day and the bedroom just

before you go to sleep. You can also use a hot-water bottle or electric blanket (but not both at the same time) to keep warm while you're in bed.

- Eat well. Food is a vital source of energy, which helps to keep your body warm. Try to make sure that you have hot meals and drinks regularly throughout the day and keep active in the home if you can.
- Wrap up warm, inside and out. Layer your clothing to stay warm and wear shoes with a good grip if you need to go outside. If possible, stay inside during a cold period if you have heart or respiratory problems.
- Draw your curtains at dusk and keep your doors closed to block out draughts.
- Winter Fuel Payments of up to £300 are available if you were born on or before July 5 1952.

To find out more about Winter Fuel Payments, call 08459 151515 (8.30am-4.30pm Monday–Friday, textphone 0845 601 5613) or visit <https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment>.

Cold Weather Payments may be available to you if you receive certain benefits or care for a child who is disabled or under the age of five.

# Keeping healthy

To find out more about Cold Weather Payments contact Jobcentre Plus 0845 604 3719 or visit <https://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment>.

The Energy Saving Trust (EST) has advice on how to reduce bills and make your home more energy efficient. The Trust can also advise on grants and schemes available around the UK. Find out more online from the EST website or call 0300 123 1234 (9am-8pm Mon-Fri and 10am-2pm Sat). Your local Age UK office can provide you with information and help you (0845 688 1298).

## Tips for coping in hot weather

The following advice applies to everybody when it comes to keeping cool and comfortable and reducing health risks:

- Shut windows and pull down the shades when it is hotter outside. If it's safe, open them for ventilation when it is cooler.
- Avoid the heat: stay out of the sun and don't go out between 11am and 3pm (the hottest part of the day) if you're vulnerable to the effects of heat.
- Keep rooms cool by using shades or reflective material outside the windows. If this isn't possible, use light-coloured curtains and keep them closed (metallic blinds and dark curtains can make the room hotter).

- Have cool baths or showers, and splash yourself with cool water.
- Drink cold drinks regularly, such as water and fruit juice. Avoid tea, coffee and alcohol.
- Plan ahead to make sure you have enough supplies, such as food, water and any medications you need.
- Identify the coolest room in the house so you know where to go to keep cool.
- Wear loose, cool clothing, and a hat if you go outdoors.
- Check up on friends, relatives and neighbours who may be less able to look after themselves.

## Coming home from hospital

Age UK has produced a leaflet '*Going into Hospital*'. It's very useful and you can get a copy by ringing 0845 688 1298.

If you've had a stay in hospital and are ready to be discharged, getting extra support at home is likely to help boost your recovery, re-build your confidence and skills so that you can live safely at home again.

The local council and health services will together provide a range of services, sometimes referred to as re-ablement, to help you get home quickly and regain your skills so that you can live independently as soon as possible.

## Staying healthy for longer

### Health checks

Once you reach the age of 65 you'll continue to be invited to a variety of NHS health checks, and there will also be some new ones.

As you get older, you're more likely to develop conditions that are rare in younger people. Because of this, you'll be invited for some new screening and health tests. Some screening will no longer happen and some screening you've already had will continue.

### Cervical cancer screening

From 65, women will no longer be sent an invitation for cervical cancer screening unless they've had a previous abnormal screening result from any of their last three screening tests. If you've never been screened for cervical cancer, you're entitled to request an examination, regardless of your age.

### Breast cancer screening

Breast cancer screening continues up to the age of 70 (this is being extended to 73 from 2016). Once you're over the screening invitation age, it's a good idea

to make your own screening appointments every three years. This is done by contacting your local screening unit and your doctor can give you the contact details.

### Bowel cancer screening

Men and women over the age of 65 are offered bowel cancer screening by using a kit that can be sent in the post every two years until the age of 70. From 70 onwards, you can request bowel cancer screening, but you won't be offered this automatically.

### Skin checks

Whether you check yourself or visit a specialist clinic, keeping an eye on moles can help you to spot the early signs of skin cancer. Most moles are harmless, but sometimes they can develop into a rare form of skin cancer called malignant melanoma.

A change in the colour, size or shape of an existing mole is the most common symptom of melanoma and if you spot this your doctor can check it out for you and will refer you for further help if needed.

## Top Ten Tips - to get the most from your GP appointment

1. Consider if the issue could be treated or resolved by seeing someone other than a GP – for example the practice nurse, health care assistant or your local chemist instead.
2. Consider whether the issue could be resolved by telephone. Most GP surgeries are happy to make arrangement to discuss simple problems over the telephone, saving you a visit and freeing up an appointment for someone else.
3. If you make an appointment, be sure to write it down and arrive on time. Arriving late will mean less time for you to speak to your doctor or nurse.
4. Make a list of the main problems that are worrying you. If your list is longer than is manageable in ten minutes, a GP can prioritise your concerns with you and suggest a further appointment if necessary.
5. Think about your symptoms and prepare to tell the doctor what symptoms you are experiencing (write them down in advance if that helps). Some questions you may be asked:
  - What are the specific symptoms you are experiencing?
  - How long have you had these symptoms and any pattern you might have noticed?
  - Tell the doctor what you think might be wrong. If are worried it is a particular diagnosis then say so. The doctor can then address your concern.
6. If you don't understand, ASK.  
It does not help you if you leave the consultation confused. Ask the doctor to explain anything that you do not understand fully. Also, bring someone with you if you need another set of ears.
7. Don't be afraid to ask other questions about your illness or treatment.
8. Summarise your discussion before you leave.
  - Do you understand about your illness?
  - Do you understand any instructions you have been given about prescribed medications?
  - Do you have to go for any tests?
  - Do you need a further follow-up appointment?
  - Do you need any written information to remind you later?



## Keeping healthy

9. Be straight with the doctor. If you don't want to take the tablets or go for a test for example, it is best to say so at the time. Your doctor will not be offended as they are used to their patients having varying views. They offer advice but they will respect your own opinion about your treatment.

10. If you are unable to make it to your appointment, please contact the surgery with as much notice as possible, that way someone else can use your appointment time.

If you follow these simple steps, you will make the maximum use of the appointment time with your doctor.



# Keeping healthy

Deaths from melanoma among the over-65s have tripled in the last 30 years with particularly high levels in men in that age group. Melanoma is linked to cumulative sun exposure over a lifetime, which means that older people are more likely to develop the disease especially as the risks of sun exposure were less well-known a few decades ago



## Eyesight checks

Because our eyesight changes as we get older, almost all of us will need to wear glasses or contact lenses by the time we're 65. If you have regular eye tests, wear the right lenses and look after your eyes, there's a better chance your sight will remain clear.

An eye test is not just good for checking your glasses are still the right prescription. It's also a vital healthcheck. An eye test can pick up eye diseases, such as glaucoma and cataracts, as well as general health problems, including diabetes and high blood pressure

If you're 60 or over, you can have an NHS eye test every two years. You can have a free test every year if you're 70 or over.



# Keeping healthy



## Hearing

Gradual hearing loss is a natural part of ageing, although you may not notice it until you are in your 60s or 70s. More than half of people over the age of 60 have some sort of hearing loss, but most people who could benefit from a hearing aid don't have one. Hearing problems can make it difficult for us to communicate, lead to feelings of frustration, and make us feel lonely and isolated.

Your doctor can arrange a hearing test for you. You could also check your hearing using Action on Hearing Loss' telephone hearing check by calling 0844 800 3838.

## Teeth

To ensure your teeth and gums stay healthy, it is important to brush your teeth effectively and see a dentist regularly. If you have false teeth, regular check-ups with a dentist are just as important and dentures are likely to need replacing every five years as the shape of your mouth changes.

Dental access centres have been introduced across the county for urgent dental care where it is difficult to find a dentist offering NHS treatment. An appointment is needed but some have evening and weekend drop-ins.



# Keeping healthy

As with all medical problems, if you are bleeding heavily or have difficulty breathing, phone 999.

## Dental Access Centres

Hereford  
Gaol Street 01432 378920  
Asda 01432 382180

Leominster  
Leominster Dental Centre 01568 619380

Ross-on-Wye  
Community Hospital 01989 561114

Ledbury  
Community Health & Care Centre 01531 637615

Kington  
Kington Court Community Care Centre  
01544 232511

Ewyas Harold  
Dental Access Centre 01981 241393

## Common health worries

### Prostate disease

The prostate often enlarges as men get older. For two-thirds of men aged 50 or over this doesn't cause any problems, but prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men in the UK, with more than 30,000 men diagnosed annually – the majority of whom are over 50. As with many health problems, reducing your intake of saturated fats and eating plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables is believed to reduce your chances of contracting prostate cancer.

### Watch out for ....

- needing to urinate often, especially at night;
- difficulty starting to urinate;
- straining to urinate or taking a long time to finish;
- pain when urinating or during sex.

These symptoms need not mean you have cancer - in some cases, an enlarged prostate can press on the tube carrying urine from the bladder and cause urinary problems. Inflammation of the prostate could be caused by infection and be treated simply – it's always best to get checked early.



## Influenza

Flu is different from a heavy cold and can be dangerous for people who are very young, elderly, asthmatic or have other long-term illnesses. Your doctor and some community pharmacies (chemists) provide NHS flu jabs to protect you against flu. You need to have a flu jab every year as each jab will be targeted at the strain of flu that's around that year. Contrary to common belief, you won't get flu from the jab itself.



## Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a body fat in the blood. It plays a vital part in normal body function, but if your cholesterol levels are too high, you are at risk from heart disease. This is because fatty deposits build up and clog your arteries.

To check if your cholesterol levels are healthy, cholesterol charity Heart UK recommends that all adults over 40 undergo a blood test at their local surgery. This is particularly important if there is a history of high blood pressure or heart disease in your family. You can ask your doctor for this test at any time.



# Keeping healthy

## Incontinence

If you have a bladder or bowel control problem it's important get medical advice as early as possible. Incontinence can feel humiliating and frustrating and can make you feel very low, but a health professional will be able to help you overcome the problem.

You can visit your doctor or you can contact the continence service at Wye Valley NHS Trust. The service is based at the Gaol Street Clinic in Hereford (01432 378933).

The Bladder and Bowel Foundation can also give you advice (Tel: 0845 345 0165 (helpline)  
[www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org](http://www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org)



## Dementia

Dementia is not a disease but a group of symptoms that may accompany conditions that affect your brain.

The most common of these is **Alzheimer's disease**. Another is **vascular dementia** which can develop following a stroke or blood vessel damage. Dementia is not a normal consequence of growing old.

In most cases, the symptoms that characterise dementia come on gradually and get worse over time, often over a number of years. They can vary according to the condition causing them but the symptoms of dementia include:

- struggling to remember things that happened recently, even though you can easily remember things from longer ago;
- struggling to follow conversations, particularly in groups;
- forgetting the names of people or things;
- struggling to follow a story on television or in a book, or understand magazine and newspaper articles;
- having trouble remembering the day or date;
- having trouble remembering where you put something, or where things are kept;

# Keeping healthy

- repeating yourself or losing the thread of what you are saying;
- finding your thinking is fuzzy;
- struggling to do things you used to find easy;
- feeling confused even in a familiar place;
- having problems controlling your mood, or controlling your emotions.

Both the person with dementia and those around them may not even notice the signs or take them seriously for quite some time.



As a first step, you should discuss your concerns with your doctor – it may be that other medical conditions you have or medication you are taking is affecting your memory. Your doctor may refer you to a memory clinic where they can assess your condition in more detail.

If you are diagnosed with dementia, there are treatments and support that are available to you and your health professionals will be able to help you and whoever cares for you to manage your condition and plan for the future.

The Alheimers Society also has a helpline to give you any advice and support you need (01432 371137).

## Community Pharmacists and Medicines

### Stocking a safe medicine cabinet

There are some everyday medicines that you can stock up on and keep handy in your home for example, paracetamol, an anti-histamine for allergies or insect bites, a thermometer and oral rehydration salts for diarrhoea or vomiting. Remember to keep these medicines together in a safe place, out of the reach of children to help you and your family deal with a range of minor illnesses. Please read the instructions and cautions on all medicines before you decide to use them and ask a pharmacist for advice if in doubt.

For a list of suggested medicines, have a look at the NHS Choices website, or ask your local pharmacist.

### Getting the most from your medicines

- Keep medicines in a cool dark place, away from direct heat or light sources.
- Do not keep medicines in the bathroom (even in a cabinet) as they can become hot, humid or damp.
- Always read the patient information leaflet or labels. Keep medicines well out of the reach of children.
- Keep medicines in their original container, so that you know what the medicine is, how to take it, any extra instructions and the expiry date.
- Only order the medicines you actually need: tick the repeat slip to order only what you need and tell the doctor or pharmacist if you have stopped taking any medicine.
- Take all your medicines with you if you go into hospital, including any vitamins or health supplements you buy over the counter.
- If you have medicines you don't need, take them to your pharmacy and they will dispose of them safely. Don't hold on to old medicines – prescribed medicine is intended for a particular purpose for a particular person and shouldn't be shared, and all medicine has a use by date.



# Keeping healthy

## Pharmacy opening hours and prescription charges

There are 27 community pharmacies throughout Herefordshire which are open in excess of 1400 hours per week in total. Community pharmacies have long opening hours, including Saturdays and Sundays and so access to a healthcare professional for general advice on staying healthy, or to discuss specific medicines or symptoms is easy, with no appointment needed. Simply pop in and ask to talk to the pharmacist.

There are a number of reasons why people might get prescriptions for free, such as reaching the age of 60, or having a specified medical condition or disability which means you are eligible for an exemption certificate. Your pharmacist or surgery can help you to find out more about help with paying prescription fees

Please discuss a "prepayment certificate" with your pharmacist if you pay for your prescriptions and have to have regular prescriptions since you may be able to save money.

If you, or someone you care for, use the same medicines regularly, you may not need to get a new prescription every time you need more medicine. This service is called "repeat dispensing" and means you won't have to visit the surgery

or make an appointment to see the doctor or practice nurse every time you need more medicine.



## Understand your medicines

A "Medicines Use Review" is an appointment with a pharmacist to focus on how you are getting on with your medicine. It usually takes place in your local pharmacy. It is an NHS service - you don't need to pay for it. The meeting is to:

- Help you to find out more about the medicines you are taking
- Pick up any problems you are having with your medicines
- Improve the effectiveness of your medicines - there may be easier ways to take them or you may find you need fewer medicines than before
- Get better value for the NHS - making sure that your medicines are right for you helps prevent unnecessary waste (more than £1m worth of medicines are not used each year and end up being wasted).

# Being happy – dealing with worries and planning for the future

## Having enough to live on

### Planning your finances

It's good to have a clear idea of the level of income you will need to be able to live well when you retire. If you were previously working outside the home, you might need to think about increased heating and water bills and don't forget to consider things you will want to do to enjoy life.

You can add up all your pensions provisions and get a prediction of what your state pension will be at the YouGov website [www.gov.uk/calculate-state-pension](http://www.gov.uk/calculate-state-pension). You will be sent a pack with all that information by the Department of Work and Pensions four months before you are due to retire, but it's good to know a lot earlier than that so you can plan.

You may have other needs which make you eligible for additional support from the council, or you may be able to access grants that improve your home's efficiency and therefore reduce costs.

Money Advice Service is a government website that provides advice on how best to manage your money – [www.moneyadviceservice.org](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org)

Society of Later Life Advisers (SOLLA) can help you find a reputable independent financial adviser. 0845 303 2909 or [www.societyoflaterlifeadvisers.co.uk](http://www.societyoflaterlifeadvisers.co.uk).

You may be eligible for an assessment from Herefordshire Council's welfare and financial assessment team. They can advise you and make sure you are claiming all the benefits you are entitled to: 01432 383444.



## What are you entitled to?

There are a number of benefits and allowances you can apply for to make life easier and support you to stay in your own home. Herefordshire Council also has a Local Welfare Provision fund if you are in financial crisis and unable to buy food or fuel or access goods after an emergency – for example after a fire or flood or if your income suddenly reduces. ring 01432 383838.

Each year up to £5.5bn Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction goes unclaimed by older people. About four million older people could get Pension Credit, yet about one in three of those eligible are still not

claiming it. If you're one of them, you could be missing out on hundreds or even thousands of pounds a year. The table below gives some more information on the different benefits and allowances available:

Certain benefits can help you with travel costs, dental treatment, paying for fuel in cold weather or to support you as a carer. If you have recently moved to Herefordshire from outside of the UK and you want to know more about benefits, visit [www.welcometoherefordshire.com](http://www.welcometoherefordshire.com)

Name of benefit / concession	Type of benefit	Description
Attendance Allowance	Not income based: for those aged 65 or over	Intended to help with the cost of care
Bereavement Benefit	National Insurance based	For widows and widowers
Carer's Allowance	Not income based, but can be affected by earnings and other benefits	Paid to the carer of someone who gets Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance, care component at middle or high rate
Disability Living Allowance	Not income based	Intended to help with the cost of care and/or mobility
Employment Support Allowance	National insurance / income based	Paid if your ability to work is limited by ill health or disability
Housing and Council Tax Reduction	Income based	Intended to help with the cost of rent and council tax
State Retirement Pension	National Insurance based	Intended to provide basic pension during retirement
Pension Credit (Guaranteed)	Income based for those State Pension age and over	To top up basic pension to meet minimum level set by government
Pension Credit (Savings)	Income based for those State Pension age and over	A bonus element to provide extra income for those who have saved
Personal Independence Payment	Not income based	Intended to help with the cost of care and/or mobility

# Being happy

Further information and advice can also be found from the following organisations:

Your local Age UK office can provide you with information and help you (0845 688 1298)

Age UK Advice: 0800 169 6565

Lines are open seven days a week from 8am to 7pm.

[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

Blue Badge for parking – contact Herefordshire Council customer services on 01432 260500 or visit [www.herefordshire.gov.uk](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk)

Carer's Allowance Unit (provides information regarding Carer's Allowance, including

eligibility and how to make a claim)

Tel: 0845 608 4321, [www.gov.uk/carers-allowance-unit](http://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance-unit)

Carers UK (information and support for carers)

Tel: 0808 808 7777, [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)

Christians Against Poverty 0800 328 0006  
Free help with debt and advice and support on budgeting [www.capuk.org](http://www.capuk.org)

Citizens Advice: 0844 826 9685 Visit [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk) for online information.

Disability Benefits Helpline

Attendance Allowance Tel: 0845 605 6055 (or 0345 605 6055 for a cheaper call from a mobile phone)

Disability Living Allowance

Tel: 08457 123 456

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

0845 850 3322 claimline 0800 917 2222

[www.gov.uk/disability-benefits-helpline](http://www.gov.uk/disability-benefits-helpline)

Gov.uk (official Government website that provides information on public services such as benefits, jobs, pensions and health services)

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Help with health costs

Tel: 0300 330 1343,  
[www.nhs.uk/healthcosts](http://www.nhs.uk/healthcosts)

Jobcentre Plus (provides information on services like benefits, loans and grants, and help with finding a job)

Benefits claim line: 0800 055 6688,  
[www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus](http://www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus)



NHS Choices (provides information about health conditions, treatments and services)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) (England)

Pension Service (for further information about State Pension, Pension Credit and how to apply)

State Pension claim line: 0800 731 7898

Pension Credit helpline: 0800 99 1234

National helpline (general queries): 0845 60 60 265

[www.gov.uk/browse/working/state-pension](http://www.gov.uk/browse/working/state-pension)

Welfare and financial assessment team, Herefordshire Council (sometimes referred to as welfare rights) 01432 383444

Winter Fuel helpline (for information and application forms to claim the payment).

Winter fuel payment team

Tel: 08459 15 15 15

[www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment](http://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment)

## Social Care

You can get advice and guidance from the council about services which can help you to keep living in your own home and remain independent. Telecare and reablement are examples.

If you think you or someone you care for needs support from social care, you can ask the council for a care assessment. The council may help arrange support to help you live independently in your own home or provide information on residential care, where that is the best option.

The care assessment is completely free, although there may be charges for services, depending on eligibility which is worked out nationally.

# Being happy

A social care worker will work with you and your carer or family member to assess your care needs and determine whether or not you are eligible for council support. We will talk to you about your needs and work with you to find out what services will best help you to live a more independent life, even if you aren't eligible for support from us, and can signpost you to other organisations who may be able to help.

We aim to complete assessments within 28 days but in an emergency we can get help for you within 24 hours.

The supported self assessment might include questions about:

- your health, and whether you have any medical conditions, or are receiving treatment or taking medication;
- your mental health, including your memory, your mood and motivation;
- your mobility around the house and outdoors, including any difficulties with steps and being able to use transport;
- your hearing, sight and speech;
- your personal care - how you are managing with washing, dressing, bathing, eating, drinking and toileting;

- your domestic arrangements - how you are managing with cooking, cleaning, ironing, laundry, shopping and looking after your finances;
- your home - whether the accommodation is suitable for you, or needs adapting?
- your lifestyle, and the support you receive from other organisations, family and friends;
- your carer (if you have one) - your carer is a member of your family, a friend or a neighbour who regularly supports you with daily living;
- your finances - so that we can work out how much your services will cost, and whether you will have anything to pay.

The advice and referral team is - your first point of contact

- Telephone: 01432 260101
- Email: [ASCAviceandReferralTeam@herefordshire.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:ASCAviceandReferralTeam@herefordshire.gcsx.gov.uk)
- Fax: 01432 261666

The advice and referral team manages all new referrals and will forward them, where appropriate, to social care teams based around the county.

## Help with housing

There are a number of options available to help you adapt your current home so that you can carrying on living there if you wish.

### Home improvement and adaptations

You at Home is a free advice service which can help homeowners and private tenants remain safe, secure, comfortable and independent in their own home. It has an experienced team of surveyors, technicians, administrative staff and case workers who specialist in helping people who are vulnerable, disabled or over 60, with support and guidance for all home improvements and adaptations. They can also sometimes provide financial assistance for small scale emergency repairs. You can contact the service on 01432 260500.

### Disabled facilities grant

If you or someone you live with has a disability, a Disabled Facilities Grant may help pay for adaptations like showers and stair lifts. These grants are awarded for adaptations which help people access their home, and for adaptations which improve comfort, safety and independence. Ring 01432 260500 for more information. If you need an assessment from an occupational

therapist, contact the advice and referral team on 0132 260101.

### First stop advice for older people

FirstStop Advice is an independent, free service provided by the national charity Elderly Accommodation Council (EAC) in partnership with other local and national organisations. The service is for older people, their families and carers. It aims to help you get the help or care you need to live as independently and comfortably as possible. Ring 0800 377 7070 or visit [www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk](http://www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk).

### Extra care schemes

Extra care schemes help elderly people live as independent a life as possible within the community, whilst at the same time providing them with a degree of support tailored to their needs. Ring The Rose Garden, Hereford for more information: 02476 506 011.

# Being happy

## Further Housing Advice

The housing solutions team at Herefordshire Council can provide advice, signposting and assistance to help you resolve your housing concerns. They can be contacted on 01432 261600, email: [housing.enquiry@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:housing.enquiry@herefordshire.gov.uk) or by visiting Franklin House, 4 Commercial Street, Hereford.

## Paying for care

The cost of care in your own home or in a residential or nursing home depends on the type of care that you need.

How much you pay for your care will depend upon your finances. If you have enough money to pay for yourself, you will make your own arrangements with the care provider but Herefordshire Council can help and advise you of the options available. If you can't afford to get pay for your care, you may be able to help with some of the costs from the council. The council's welfare and assessment team will carry out a financial assessment to work out whether you are entitled to help.

For more detailed information on paying for care either in your own home or for residential care, contact Herefordshire Council on: 01432 383444.

Herefordshire Council's website has a lot of information and contacts on its adult care – information and advice pages. In addition organisations such as AgeUK (Hereford and Localities) and Herefordshire Citizens Advice Bureaux will be able to support you.





## Bereavement

When someone close to you dies, grief can manifest itself in many ways. Anger, depression, fear, relief and a feeling of hopelessness are all common and people often experience all of them at different times. Friends and family can be a great support but if you don't live near them or don't get on, this can make things feel worse. You may also be supporting relatives through their grief as well as coping with your own – perhaps supporting grandchildren when you have lost a child.

There are groups you can turn to for support. Often, talking to someone who doesn't share the grief you feel seems easier, especially if they have had similar experiences. Your local faith group or Church may also provide someone to listen. Often at times of bereavement people find they need spiritual help and comfort. A hospital, care home or hospice chaplain is also there to support you.

You may find you have physical symptoms like tiredness, insomnia, nausea, aches and pains, and you may be more susceptible to viruses. So it's important to take care of yourself – get as much rest as possible and eat well even though you may suffer appetite loss. Whilst all these symptoms are normal, they should get better over time. Don't forget to go and see your doctor if you are feeling ill or the sadness continues or is hard to cope with.

There may be practical issues to deal with: there may be less money as a result of your bereavement. You may be living alone for the first time in many years, perhaps dealing with practical things you have never dealt with before. You may be eligible for benefits that you weren't previously.

There are a number of organisations that provide bereavement support:

- Cruse Bereavement Care offers free information, advice and support to bereaved people. It provides a telephone helpline and face-to-face support.

Tel: 0844 477 9400 or the local line 01432 359 469

*Email: [helpline@cruse.org.uk](mailto:helpline@cruse.org.uk) or the local email [herefordshire@cruse.org.uk](mailto:herefordshire@cruse.org.uk)*  
*[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)*

- The Diocese of Hereford 01432 373330 – The Diocese will have contacts for most faith groups in the area.

*[www.hereford.anglican.org](http://www.hereford.anglican.org)*

*[www.achurchnearyou.org](http://www.achurchnearyou.org)*

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- Herefordshire Council has a bereavement service where you can get advice and information on all aspects of cremation and burial as well as registering a death. Phone 01432 383200.
- The Department for Work and Pensions Bereavement Service carries out eligibility checks on surviving relatives to see what benefits they are entitled to. It also takes claims for bereavement benefits and funeral payments. Tel: 0845 606 0265
- The Diocese of Hereford can put you in contact with a priest local to you at the time of your loss or at any time in the future to support you and your family through the grieving process. Telephone 01432 333700.
- Compassionate Friends supports people who have lost a child or grandchild.

Tel: 0845 123 2304,  
email: [helpline@tcf.org.uk](mailto:helpline@tcf.org.uk),  
[www.tcf.org.uk](http://www.tcf.org.uk)

- Phoenix Bereavement Support Services is unique in Herefordshire and is one of very few specialist bereavement support services across the country. They support children, young people and their families when someone close to them dies. Tel: 01432 264555, [www.phoenixbereavement.org](http://www.phoenixbereavement.org)



## Carers

### Who are carers?

A carer is someone who provides unpaid support to a family member, partner, friend or neighbour who may be ill, frail, elderly, have a disability or long-term health issue, or have mental health issues.

Perhaps you don't think of yourself as a carer. You may see yourself as the mother, husband, daughter or friend of someone who needs care, simply trying to do your best for someone you love, or perhaps doing what no one else can or will do.

Carers undertake a wide range of support, including:

- practical help, cooking, cleaning, washing, shopping;
- watching out, making sure the people being cared for are safe;
- arranging and taking people to and from appointments;
- helping with paperwork and finances;
- providing emotional support;
- personal care, including help with bathing, washing dressing;
- help with mobility, lifting.

Carers don't necessarily live in the same home as the person they care for and may themselves be unwell, have a disability or long-term illness.

Caring is a really important and challenging business and if you find yourself caring for someone then you need to make sure that you also look after your own health and wellbeing.

### Herefordshire Carers Support (HCS)

HCS is a local organisation offering advice, information and support specifically to unpaid carers. It is important to register as a carer with HCS so that you can find out what support is available to you across the county. HCS can help you:

- To make positive changes to your caring role by helping with support planning, back care advice, finding equipment short-breaks information and signposting to condition-specific support services.
- By giving you the opportunity to learn from others in similar situations through support groups, social activities and events, websites, social media and quarterly carers' magazines.

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- To increase your confidence by giving you strategies to be more assertive – confidentiality training, membership of a forum, awareness of consultations and how to respond, hints and tips on how to access local services and support.
- To build on your existing skills by providing access to a varied training programme and help with emergency planning.
- To explore ways to manage your time and achieve a balance between caring and the other things you need or want to do in your life – one to one support, counselling services.

Ring Herefordshire Carers Support on 01432 356068, email: [help@herefordshirecarerssupport.org](mailto:help@herefordshirecarerssupport.org) or visit the website at [www.herefordshirecarerssupport.org](http://www.herefordshirecarerssupport.org).



## Getting out and about

Becoming involved in local groups and activities helps us stay healthy for longer, remain independent and enjoy life more. Volunteering and physical activity can help and there are plenty of local groups and events you can join which may spark old interests or give you a chance to try something you've never had the time to try before.

Local parish magazines are a good way of finding out what's on, and some communities have good websites which are updated all the time to give you information. There are also a number of organisations across Herefordshire such as AgeUK (0845 6881298), British Red Cross (01432 265315) and the Royal Voluntary Service (01432 273590), who run activities and schemes that you might be interested in.

We all have skills that we can offer to our local communities – perhaps there's something you do (crafts, performing, local history) that other people might be interested in too. You could even consider getting a group started in your local community hall or school.



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## Driving

Once you reach the age of 70, your licence expires, but this doesn't automatically mean you have to stop driving. You just need to renew your driving licence if you want to continue driving and then every three years afterwards. The DVLA should send you a D46P application form 90 days before your 70th birthday. Renewal is free of charge.

If you have a medical condition or just feel you're unsure of your driving ability, you will have a driving ability assessment at a Mobility Centre. However, just because you have a medical condition doesn't mean you can't drive – there are adaptations you can buy for your car and you may be given a Blue Badge (01432 260500) to allow you to park in disabled parking bays to make it easier for you.

If you don't drive, are no longer able to drive or decide it's no longer for you there are other alternatives which are often free.

## Bus concessions

When you reach state pension age or if you have a disability, you are entitled to a bus pass. This pass gives you free off-peak travel on a local bus anywhere in England. For more information about applying for your bus pass, ring the council's customer services team on 01432 260500.

## Visit somewhere new

You can use your bus pass to travel free to places all over the county and beyond. Don't get stuck in a rut by just going to the same places, why not visit somewhere new and discover parts of the county you didn't know about, or go shopping somewhere new. Other bus companies such as National Express have concessions on their fares and there are deals for older people on day trips and mini breaks ([www.nationalexpress.com](http://www.nationalexpress.com))

## Rail concessions

The Senior Railcard and Disabled Persons Railcard are annual savings cards that can be purchased for a one-off cost that allow you to make big savings on most rail fares in the UK.

The Senior Railcard is available to anyone aged 60 or over who has a valid passport or UK driving licence. You can order online from the Senior Railcard website ([www.senior-railcard.co.uk](http://www.senior-railcard.co.uk)) or buy your railcard from most staffed railway stations.



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## Community Transport

Many people feel isolated by poor mobility and this often means travel can be frustrating and very tiring. Just getting to a bus stop can feel like an insurmountable journey. Some communities have car share schemes, advertised in parish magazines, where volunteers who are going into town can give someone a lift and help them get to where they need to be.

If there isn't a scheme like that near you, there will be a Community Transport scheme. These offer transport from your house to wherever you need to go and they will wait for you and bring you back. You might choose to ask them to get you to a bus stop which gives you access to public transport. There is a charge for the mileage but it is often much cheaper than a taxi service, and the drivers are all volunteers who are thoroughly checked and used to helping people with mobility problems.

You need to plan a bit - at the moment you have to give 48 hours notice to book a journey.

- Bromyard Community Transport: 01885 488452 (09.30 - 12.00 Monday to Friday)
- Dore Community Transport: 0845 2020144 (09.00 - 12.00 Monday to Friday)
- Hay and District Dial-a-Ride: 01497 821616 (09.00 - 12.00 Monday to Friday)
- Hereford Car Scheme: 01568 615785 (09.30 - 12.30 (Monday to Friday)
- Hereford Dial-A-Ride: 01432 277622 (09.00 - 14.00 Monday to Friday)
- Ledbury Ring & Ride: 01531 635503 (09.30 - 12.30 Monday to Friday)
- Leominster Community Wheels: 01568 615785 (09.30 - 12.30 Monday to Friday)
- Ross Area Transport: 01989 765595 (09.30 - 12.30 Monday to Friday)

## Shopmobility Service

Hereford city has a shopmobility scheme where you can borrow scooters and other mobility aids to help you get around the city (01432 342166).

## Going digital

You can get access to all sorts of information if you can use a computer. It makes life simpler to be able to use a computer to fill in forms or be able to do your banking and shopping from your own home or local internet point.

Technologies like Skype help you talk face to face with friends and family all over the country and abroad from your computer - it's just as easy as picking up a phone, and is another way in which you can keep in touch with people you might otherwise lose contact with.

If you don't have access to a computer, laptop or tablet or are unsure about digital technology, help is at hand. There are introductory courses or activities out there to help you get started run by organisations like AgeUK or Fastershire. To find out what's available near you, you can look in your local parish newsletter, contact Fastershire on 01432 260691 or go to the Learn Herefordshire website [www.learnherefordshire.co.uk](http://www.learnherefordshire.co.uk) where these courses and many others are advertised. Don't forget you can get help to access online information like this at your local customer services centre in market town libraries, the Masters House in Ledbury or Franklin House in Hereford.

## Volunteering

Whatever your abilities might be, volunteering is a really good way of getting involved in your local community, meeting new people and keeping up with interests. It takes as much or as little of your time as you like and there is something for everyone. For some people it can even lead to a paid job.

There are plenty of opportunities for people with all kinds of interests and skills – often your local parish magazine or community website will ask for volunteers for particular events or activities.

If you want to volunteer but don't know how, or want some volunteering ideas that meet your interests, there are two volunteer centres in the county where you can receive advice. Ledbury Volunteer Centre (01531 635339) covering Ledbury and surrounding area, and Herefordshire Volunteer Centre (0800 912 2339) covering the rest of the county. There's also Do-It, [www.do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk) a national website that advertises volunteering opportunities.

You can expect to get expenses paid for your travel or anything you are asked to buy as part of your volunteering, and the volunteer centres can help you with this.

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## How do I find out what's happening in my community

Parish magazines and community websites are invaluable sources of information.

In many places parish magazines are delivered free to your door or you can pick them up at local garages, shops or other community facilities.

There's a list of parish magazines on Herefordshire council's website, as well as details for who to contact to get one.

Churches also have magazines with activity listed.

Herefordshire council also has a list of all community halls, and their websites will also tell you what's going on near you. The council's website is being further developed so you can find out more about what's available to you, and you can get help to explore the website at the council's customer service centres.

Visit [www.herefordshire.gov.uk](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk) or telephone 01432 268430.

You can also visit customer service centres in person:

Ross - library

Leominster - library

Bromyard - library

Ledbury - Master's House

Hereford - Franklin House

Kington - library





# Useful contacts

Age UK (Hereford and localities)  
0333 006 6299

Alzheimers Society  
01432 371137

Bereavement services (HC)  
01432 383200

## **Bereavement Services**

Compassionate Friends  
0845 123 2304

Cruse Bereavement Care  
01432 359469

Department for Work and Pensions  
0845 606 0265

Sands  
020 7436 5881

Winston's Wish  
08452 03 04 05

Phoenix Bereavement Support Service  
01432 264555

Brightstripe (community-based activities)  
01432 358232

Bladder and Bowel Foundation  
0845 345 0165

Blue badge  
01432 260500

Bus concessions  
01432 260500

Citizens Advice Bureaux (Hereford)  
0844 826 9685

## **Community Transport**

Bromyard Community Transport  
01885 488452

Dore Community Transport  
0845 2020144

Hay and District Dial-a-Ride  
01497 821616

Hereford Car Scheme  
01568 615785

Hereford Dial-a-Ride  
01432 277622

Ledbury Ring & Ride  
01532 635503

Leominster Community Wheels  
01568 615785

Royal Voluntary Service Ross Area  
Transport (9.30am-12.30pm Mon-Fri)  
01989 765595

Crimestoppers  
0800 555 111

## **Dental Access Centres**

Gaol Street Hereford  
01432 378920

Asda Hereford  
01432 382180

Leominster Dental Centre  
01568 619380

Ross-on-Wye Community Hospital  
01989 561114

Ledbury Community Health & Care Centre  
01531 637615

Kington Court Community Care Centre  
01544 232511

Ewyas Harold Dental Access Centre  
01981 241393

# Useful contacts

Energy Saving Trust

0300 123 1234

Falls Prevention Service (Herefordshire)

01568 617309

Fastershire (Herefordshire) project

01432 260691

Financial Advice (SOLLA)

0845 303 2909

Gaol Street Clinic

01432 378933

Handyman Service

01432 260757

Hearing Loss (Action on Hearing Loss)

0844 800 3838

Herefordshire Carers Support

01432 356068

Herefordshire Housing

0300 777 4321

Home Fire Safety checks

0800 032 1155

Advice and referral team

01432 01432 260101

Housing solutions team

01432 260500

## Pensions and Benefits

Welfare and financial assessments

01432 383444

Advice – Age UK

0800 169 65 65

Attendance Allowance helpline

0845 605 6055

Carer's Allowance Unit

0845 608 4321

Carers' UK

0808 808 7777

Disability Benefits helpline

08457 123 456

Help with health costs

0300 330 1343

State Pension claim line

0800 731 7898

Pension Credit helpline

0800 99 1234

Pension Service National helpline

0845 60 60 265

Police (non urgent)

0300 3333000

Royal Voluntary Service

01432 273590

# Useful contacts

## Safeguarding

Raising concerns (HC)  
01432 260715

Out of hours (HC)  
0330 123 9309

Samaritans  
0845 790 90 90

Shopmobility  
01432 342166

Telecare support (HC)  
01432 261650

Trading Standards (HC)  
01432 261761

Volunteer Centre (Ledbury)  
01531 635339

Herefordshire Volunteer  
Centre  
01432 343932

Winter Fuel Payments  
08459 151515

Women's Aid helpline  
0800 7831359

## Useful websites



**Age UK**  
[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)



**Brightstripe**  
[www.brightstripe.co.uk](http://www.brightstripe.co.uk)



**Community Pharmacies**  
[www.herefordshireccg.nhs.uk/community-pharmacies](http://www.herefordshireccg.nhs.uk/community-pharmacies)



**Fire Service**  
[www.hwfire.org.uk](http://www.hwfire.org.uk)



**FirstStop Care Advice**  
[www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk](http://www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk)



**Herefordshire Carers Support**  
[www.herefordshirecarerssupport.org](http://www.herefordshirecarerssupport.org)



**Herefordshire Citizens Advice Bureau**  
[www.herefordshirecab.org.uk](http://www.herefordshirecab.org.uk)



**Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group**  
[www.herefordshireccg.nhs.uk](http://www.herefordshireccg.nhs.uk)



**Herefordshire Council**  
[www.herefordshire.gov.uk](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk)



**Newton Farm Community Association**  
[www.newtonfarmcommunity.com](http://www.newtonfarmcommunity.com)



**NHS Choices**  
[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)



**Police Service**  
[www.westmercia.police.uk](http://www.westmercia.police.uk)



**Royal Voluntary Service**  
[www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](http://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk)



**WISH** Wellbeing, information and signposting for Herefordshire  
[www.WISHerefordshire.org](http://www.WISHerefordshire.org)



**Wye Valley NHS Trust**  
[www.wyevalley.nhs.uk](http://www.wyevalley.nhs.uk)

[www.herefordshire.gov.uk](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk)