

Media Release

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Mental health and wellbeing over the festive period

Christmas can be a time of enjoyment, relaxation, and being together with families. But it can also bring stresses, and for many people it is a challenging or even lonely time of year.

The impact of COVID-19 this year will again make the festive period especially difficult as some islanders will not be able to celebrate with loved ones.

Mental health doesn't take time off at Christmas, and with all the added stresses that can come with the festive season it's very important to care for your wellbeing.¹

If you, or a loved one, feels that your wellbeing has been affected please remember to look after yourself, talk to other people and, if needed, seek some support. The States of Guernsey has dedicated webpages which include advice and support for those who are alone this Christmas and for those who are struggling. [Mental health support | States of Guernsey - COVID-19 \(gov.gg\)](#)

The Committee *for* Health & Social Care has introduced an additional temporary service over Christmas and the New Year that will provide some wellbeing support for anyone who is feeling isolated or experiencing moderate levels of stress or distress.

This is not to replace any existing mental health service but is additional for anyone who feels they need additional support but who might not ordinarily either seek it or meet the clinical threshold for more acute support services. Anyone who requires support from the specialist secondary care mental health service should still seek referral through their GP.

The new support service over the Christmas period will work as follows:

- An individual experiencing isolation or with concerns relating to their general mental wellbeing, including moderate levels of stress and distress, can attend the Emergency Department where they will be triaged before being passed through to a

¹ taken from the ben.org.uk website

mental health professional who will be able to spend time listening and offer ways for individuals to find ongoing support.

- **This service will be available between the hours of 6pm and 10pm from 20th December up to and including 2nd January 2022.** The mental health professional will see individuals in the Oberlands centre.
- To ensure that no one is prevented from attending the Emergency Department to access this service at a time of need, the Committee has agreed that there will be no charge for either the wellbeing support or for being triaged through the Emergency Department for this purpose.

In addition to this temporary service, HSC mental health and wellbeing professionals have put together some tips help you over the Christmas period – whether that is about not over-indulging too much; coping with a bit too much time around family; feeling left out; or many other potential stresses.

Plan ahead

Avoid unnecessary stress over the festive season by planning as much as possible in the run up to Christmas and being careful not to take on too much. You're not being selfish by saying "no" to some things or asking for some help. For example, if you're hosting Christmas dinner, could you ask some of your guests to bring a starter or dessert?

Make time for you

At Christmas it can be all too easy to get swept up into other people's ideas of fun. It's important to make sure that you do something you want as well – this is your celebration too! If you know this will be hard, try booking something in advance or setting a free day or two aside just for you.

Avoid comparisons

If you do decide to use social media over the festive season, avoid comparing your experience to those of your friends. Remember that most people only share the best bits of their lives online and you don't know what's going on behind the smiling selfies and present pics!

Pace yourself

Give yourself time to relax over the Christmas period – don't be afraid to take time out to go for a walk, listen to music or have a nap if you need it. If you're hosting, try to plan this in advance.

Get outside

Going for a wintery walk – even if it’s just around the block – can be the perfect way to get some fresh air and exercise along with a change of place. Being in the same house for too long can get a bit intense, so a change of scenery will do everyone good!

Try to eat healthily

While it’s normal to overindulge a bit over Christmas, try to keep your diet as balanced as possible with lots of fruit and vegetables. This will help you to avoid energy lows that can have an effect on your mood.

Alcohol in moderation

While a bit of alcohol can make you feel relaxed, don’t forget that drinking too much can leave you feeling irritable and low. Drinking within the recommended guidelines means you’ll get to enjoy a Christmas tipples, while reducing the negative effects on your mood. Alcohol can also play a big part in arguments and disagreements, so it’s sensible to drink in moderation.

Get enough sleep

Feeling sleepy can also leave you feeling low, so try to keep to regular sleep patterns as much as possible over the Christmas period.

Talk to someone

If you’re worried about Christmas or feel overwhelmed or under pressure, don’t be afraid to talk to someone about it. Have a chat to someone you trust.

Keep active

Exercise can be great for mental health and there are still ways to keep it up over Christmas! Have a boogie to some festive classics or head outside for a walk in the fresh air.

Christmas alone

If you’re spending Christmas alone, have a think about what you want to do beforehand. You may decide to curl up with a favourite movie or arrange to go to a lunch.

Volunteer

It’s no secret – giving something back can help you feel good about yourself and there’s no more perfect time to volunteer than around Christmas.

There are also lots of resources you can use to keep you well during your time at home.

Here are some suggestions:

- Try not to be glued to the news
- Think about how you can adapt your daily routine and set new goals
- Borrow an e-book from the [Guille-Allès Library's online selection](#)
- [Learn how to meditate](#)
- Listen to a new podcast such as "Feel better, live more" with Dr Rangan Chatterjee, "Happy Place" with Fearne Cotton, Bryony Gordon's "Mad World" or perhaps the TED Radio Hour Podcast
- Experiment in the kitchen with [some new recipes](#)
- Challenge yourself with a [sudoku](#)
- Pick up an instrument or new craft to help focus your mind and pass the time
- Try a free online course from [Future Learn](#)

If you feel your mental wellbeing is suffering this Christmas, there are a number of organisations that can provide advice and support:

Organisation	Description
Every Mind Matters	Tips from the NHS on looking after your mental health while staying at home
GET.gg	CBT self-help therapy resources, including worksheets and information sheets and self-help mp3s
Mind	5 Ways To Wellbeing from the leading mental wellbeing charity
Action for Happiness	A movement aiming to help people take action for a happier and kinder world

The following organisations for support:

- Healthy Minds
- Philippi
- Bereavement counselling
- MIND
- Private counselling
- Secondary Mental Health Services

If you need to speak to your GP their contact details are as follows:

Healthcare Group

High Street Surgery tel 711237

Cobo Surgery tel 256404

Rohais Surgery tel 723322

St Martins Surgery tel 237757

Queens Road Medical Practice

Queens Road practice tel 724184

Longfrie Surgery tel 264185

Island Health

L'Aumone Surgery tel 256517

St Sampson's Surgery tel 245915

Town tel 724747

Island Medical Centre (Alderney)

IMC tel 822077

Healthy Minds offers short-term therapeutic interventions for adults who have mild to moderate anxiety and depression. Healthy Minds was previously called the Primary Care Mental Health & Wellbeing Service.

The primary aim of the service is to enable people to learn healthier coping strategies to improve their wellbeing and to manage their difficulties themselves.

You can self-refer to Healthy Minds by calling 707744 or emailing healthyminds@gov.gg

More information can be found here: <https://gov.gg/healthyminds>

Over the Christmas and New Year period services provided by the States of Guernsey will continue. If an urgent referral into these services is needed during this period, staff will be on call to carry out the necessary assessments.

The Duty and Intervention team is the gateway to secondary adult mental health services. They receive referrals from GPs, the Emergency Department, Prison, Police and wards at the PEH. This team will provide an assessment within 24 hours for emergency referrals.

Probation services will continue to work with offenders on release from prison. They also run domestic abuse programmes for convicted and non-convicted people.

The Community Drug and Alcohol team (CDAT) work with people over the age of 18 who are dependent on alcohol and or drugs.

Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) provide comprehensive assessments and treatments for children and young people with mental health problems.

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis this Christmas and already receive support from secondary care mental health services, please contact your keyworker or the staff member providing cover for them – outside of normal opening hours please call or attend the Emergency Department at the PEH.

If you are not receiving care and support, other than social support, talking therapies etc and are experiencing a mental health crisis you can the Emergency Department on 01481 220000 or contact one of the following:

Service	Contact details	Opening hours
Action for Children	01481 700218	9:00am to 5:00pm
Community Advice and Listening Line (C.A.L.L)	0800 132737 Text 'help' to 81066	24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Childline	0800 1111	9:00am to midnight
Guernsey Police	01481 725111 controlroom@guernsey.pnn.police.uk	24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Papyrus/Hope Line UK	0800 068 4141 07860039967 (text only) pat@staging.obscure-seminar.flywheelsites.com	9:00am to 10:00pm weekdays 2:00pm to 10:00pm weekends/bank holidays
Samaritans	Free call 116 123 01481 711030 guernsey@samaritans.org jo@samaritans.org	Monday 8:00am to 10:30am, 6:00pm to 10:30pm Tuesday 8:00pm to 10:30pm Wednesday 10:30am to 10:30pm Thursday 3:30pm to 10:30pm Friday 8:00pm to 10:30pm Saturday 5:00pm to 7:00pm
Social Services Assessment and Intervention Team and Multi Agency Support Hub (Swissville)	01481 723182 multiagencysupporthub@gov.gg	8:45am to 4:45pm Monday to Friday

Service	Contact details	Opening hours
<u>The Youth Commission, including The HUB</u>	01481 756099 <u>info@youthcommission.gg</u>	24 hours a day, 7 days a week

And don't forget:

- If you take medication for a mental health condition, please make sure you have enough or be aware that pharmacies may change their opening hours may change over the next 2 weeks (this also applies generally for anyone in the community who takes regular prescription medicines).

Ends