



Ageing Well Guide

Looking after yourself or someone you care for

COVID-19 pandemic and vaccine

It is vital we all keep following the guidance to keep you and your loved ones safe and stop COVID spreading. **Even if you've had a vaccination, remember:**

- **Hands** – Wash your hands regularly and for 20 seconds.
- **Face** – Wear a face mask indoors if social distancing may be difficult.
- **Space** – Stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with.

You can get a [free NHS test](#) (by booking online or calling 119) if you have a high temperature or new, continuous cough or your sense of smell or taste changes.

The COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective and give you the best protection against the virus. They have been tested on a lot of people around the world and are proven to help reduce the risk of getting seriously ill or dying from COVID-19. The vaccines are available to all adults in the UK. Many people aged 65+ already have had at least their two doses.

The latest national COVID information and advice and the Haringey and Enfield information pages can be found at:

- [NHS Information and Advice on COVID-19](#)
- [Haringey COVID-19 News, Advice and Support](#)
- [Enfield's Response to COVID19](#)

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This Guide is for everyone who's 50+ or for those who know or care for someone who is.

You may be fit and well and want to know what you can do to look after yourself. Or you may have had a crisis like a fall or visit to hospital.

In both cases, you might find this Guide useful.

Ageing Well

We all want to feel as well, active and able to cope as possible as we get older. The good news is there are many things you can do for yourself and people who can help, even if you feel you're struggling. The Guide talks about:

- Things you may face as you get older, and opportunities for you;
- Tips and hints on looking after yourself;
- Contacts and people who can help.

If you want to feel better, remind yourself:

- **Everybody's starting point and what you want to do is different.** Don't try to do too much too quickly, set small goals daily or weekly to keep you going if you need to.
- **There's lot of things you can do.** What helps is different for everyone but the first step is often with you.
- **Small things matter.** Simple changes you can make – things at home (e.g. removing trailing wires), going for a walk or making a call to someone – add up to a big difference quickly.
- **Asking for help shows strength.** Talk to someone. Don't be afraid to ask questions, it's your life.
- **If you've had a crisis**, such as a fall, your health gets worse suddenly or the death of a loved one, things will often get better over time, and **you can cope and recover.**
- Many of us care for someone who's older. **It's important to look after yourself as a carer, too.** Many of the tips and hints in this Guide may be useful for you, too and help is available for you as a carer.

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Using this Guide

There are lots of things you can do for yourself, or with those you live with or care for, that will make a real difference to staying as healthy, well and independent as you or they can be.

You can get help, advice and support from others, or get involved to help others. You can find a list of useful contacts and websites on each page and at the end of this Guide

You can find out more things and services to help you at:

- Visit [Haringey Council's Health and Social Care webpages](#)
- Visit [Haricare Haringey](#)
- Visit [MyLife Enfield: Social Care and Health webpages](#)

This Guide has been developed between many different organisations including:

- North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group
- North Middlesex University NHS Trust
- Whittington Health NHS Trust
- Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust
- Haringey GP Federation (Federated4Health)
- London Borough of Enfield
- London Borough of Haringey

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Someone could help you work out which pages are most useful for you:

- [Staying Steady and Falls](#)
- [Keeping Active](#)
- [Managing Pain](#)
- [Eating and Drinking Well](#)
- [Skin care](#)
- [Needing the Toilet](#)
- [Feeling Low](#)
- [Memory and Confusion](#)
- [Home Life](#)

Recovering Health:

Ageing Well and Frailty

Most people over 65 are generally fit and well. But the older you get, the more likely you are to start to have issues with your health or problems with daily living. We know some people under 65 have the same problems.

Few of us want to be called 'frail', but it is a medical term. It's about the impact of different conditions or symptoms on your life. For example, you might be struggling with things like getting around or about.

'Frailty' is also about the way you might struggle to bounce back quickly after illness, accident or stress. Sometimes relatively small things, like a minor infection, can lead to a crisis.

You CAN recover health, well-being and independence after a crisis.

This includes your mental well-being, too. **Being on the mend after a crisis is often about re-building confidence and peace of mind.**

Everyone's starting point is different. Use the diagram to help you think about where you feel you are at the moment.

Your Starting Point

Where are you at the moment?
Remember you can often recover and get fitter.

Very Fit
No medical issues.
Active and energetic.
Highly motivated.



Well
No active medical issues.
Less fit, sometimes active.



Doing OK
Not regularly active beyond daily activities. Medical issues well-managed.



Coping
Health and symptoms limit activity and daily living but not dependent on others. Sometimes 'slowed up' or 'tired'.

Need Lot of Help
Medically stable but need help and could get worse. Need help with many daily living tasks. Not able to get out and about.



Need More Help
Health and symptoms really limit daily living. Need more help with tasks: getting out and about, using stairs, bathing and so on.



Need Help
Health and symptoms limit daily living. Slowing down. Need help with some tasks: getting out and about, housework, making meals and so on.



Staying Steady: Reducing Risk of Falls

Dizziness can make you fall. If you feel dizzy when you stand, move around a little.

Sight and sound help you keep your balance. Book **regular eye and hearing tests** with your optician and NHS and use prescribed glasses/equipment. You may be eligible for free NHS eye and hearing tests.

Alcohol and some medications affect balance. Try to cut down on alcohol and check with a pharmacist about medications.

Gentle **Strengthen and Balance Exercises** help improve leg strength, balance and co-ordination to avoid falls. Ask your GP or Age UK Enfield - exercise classes and therapies can help.

To stop slips and trips at home, remove hazards, like trailing wires. Watch out for slippery surfaces, loose carpets, mats or stair handrails.

Take care when walking outside, particularly in bad/icy weather. **Use footwear with good grips and walking aids if needed.**

Haringey and Enfield Councils have Community Alarm (see Contacts). These services can work with you to understand your needs and give you equipment to help you feel safe. For example, if you fall at home, help can be sent 24/7 at the press of a button.

Contacts

National Information

- [NHS: Improve Strength and Flexibility](#)
- [NHS: Eligibility for Free Eye Tests](#)
- [NHS: Hearing Tests](#)

Enfield Contacts

- [Fall Stop Service Age UK Enfield](#)
☎ 020 8375 4120
- [Safe and Connected Service](#)
☎ 02088031524 (LBE Alarms)
- [Enfield Disability Action: Deaf Project](#)
☎ 020 8373 6237
SMS: 07919 247 843

Haringey Contacts

- [LBH Accidents and Older People Page](#)
- [Safe and Sound Service](#) (LBH Alarms)
☎ 020 8489 2365
- [Haringey Deaf Service](#)
☎ 020 8489 2592
SMS: 07980 316 714

If you need help due to dizziness or falls, contact your general practice or pharmacist.

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Keeping Active

It's never too late to exercise!

Gentle exercises, even in a chair, builds your strength, coordination and mobility and can be fun. There are **online exercises** you can try, pick one that suits.

Group community classes are available, such as 'keep fit', dance, sports and so on.

Ensure shoes fit well, have enough grip and don't slip off. Discuss to a chiropodist or your GP about any foot problems.

You may need help to keep you active or get around. There's lots of **equipment**, such as grab rails, **that can help you**, check Enfield or Haringey's websites to find out more. Or ask health or social care staff.



If you're not in good health or have had a health scare, you should ask your GP or health professional for advice about what you can do, any exercise is better than none.

Returning Home from Hospital

If you've been admitted to hospital, Haringey and Enfield have **Home from Hospital** services to help you return home if you need it.

Some patients need **help from NHS and Council therapists and staff** for a few weeks to regain confidence in daily living or moving around. Talk to health or social care staff working with you about what you need.

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Contacts

National Information

- [NHS: Exercise as you get older](#)
- [Age UK: Active as You Get Older](#)

Enfield Contacts

- [LBE: Stay Independent and Well](#)
- [AskSara: Making Life Easier Tool](#)
- [Enfield Age UK: Fit for Life Classes and Fall Stop Service](#) ☎020 8375 4120
- [LBE: Healthy You](#)
- [LBE: Resource Directory/Events](#)
- [Enfield Carers Centre Activities](#)
- [Alpha Care: Home from Hospital](#)

Haringey Contacts

- [LBH: Living Independently](#)
- [One You Haringey](#) (Getting Active)
☎ 020 8885 9095
- [LBH: Services and Activities](#)
- [Bridge Renewal: Home from Hospital](#)
☎ 020 8442 7651

You can also discuss how to get active with your general practice or talk to a professional you're working with.

Managing Pain

It's not always to stop pain, but it may be possible to reduce it.

As you age, your body takes more wear and tear but long-lasting pain is not a natural part of ageing. If you're in pain, and it won't go away, **talk to your GP**.



What can help?

Try to **keep as active, mobile and take as much exercise as you can**. Keeping your mind occupied also helps.

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Over-the-counter painkillers like paracetamol or anti-inflammatories like ibuprofen can help. But always take carefully, read the box and watch out for side effects. **If in doubt, talk to a pharmacist.**

Depending on the reason for the pain, your GP may ask a **physiotherapist** to work with you. They will help you with stretches, exercises and pain-relief. This can also help you recover after illness or accident.

Gum or teeth problems can be painful. It is important to have regular dental check ups. Clean your teeth, and floss, at least twice a day. **Ask your dentist for advice.**

Contacts

National Information

- [NHS: Managing Chronic Pain](#)
- [NHS: 10 Ways to Reduce Pain](#)
- [NHS: Taking Care of Your Teeth and Gums](#)

Haringey and Enfield Information

- [Whittington Health: Managing Pain](#) (This has a lot of advice, leaflets and videos about managing pain in different areas of the body)

If you have concerns regarding a new pain or are struggling to manage a chronic pain contact your general practice, pharmacist or dentist.

You can also consider referring yourself to a physiotherapist if you have back/neck, joint pain or soft tissue injuries.

Haringey residents: [Whittington Health Patient Self Referral to Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy](#)

Eating and Drinking Well

As we get older, many of us put on weight and do less exercise. Others lose too much weight.

Vitamin D, which you get from being out in the sun, and calcium are vital in keeping your bones healthy. **Think about taking vitamin supplements as you get older.**

It's important you eat and drink well and take regular meals without bingeing.

Try to eat a balanced meal with:

- Protein like lean chicken meat, eggs, soya and skimmed milk;
- Carbohydrates such as oats, bananas and sweet potatoes;
- Unsaturated fats like olive or rapeseed oil.

Eat 5 portions of fruit and veg each day.

Try new recipes you can manage.

If you're struggling to prepare a meal, there's kitchen equipment that can help. If you can't go shopping or prepare a meal, there are shops, supermarkets and services that help.

Drink Well.

Make sure you drink water or a non-alcoholic drink to help avoid illness and keep your kidneys working, 6-8 glasses per day. If you have a heart condition, talk to your GP about the right intake for you.

Losing weight or appetite suddenly is not a normal part of ageing.

If you have lost weight suddenly, lost your appetite or can't eat properly (e.g. you find it difficult to chew or swallow), talk to your GP.

Contacts

National Information

- [NHS: Eat Well](#)
- [Age UK: Healthy Eating Guide](#)
- [One You: Eating Better](#)

Enfield Contacts

- [LBE: Keeping Well](#)
- [LBE: Eating Well](#)
- [AskSara: Making Life Easier Tool](#)

Haringey Contacts

- [LBH: Eat Well Web Page](#)
- [LBH: Shopping and Meals](#)

To discuss issues with eating, drinking or weight management, you can also contact your general practice.

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Skin Care

As you age, your skin gets thinner. Scratches, cuts or bumps take longer to heal. You may have dry and itchy skin, patches feeling rough and scaly on legs, elbows or arms. But there are things you can do to protect your skin.

What should I look out for?

Check your skin daily, particularly the places in the 'Body Hot-Spots' diagram, you can use a mirror for difficult places. Look for any red/purple patches, dry skin, wounds, blisters, sores or grazes. They may be itchy or painful.

Keep moving, change position often. A short walk between rooms or marching on the spot eases stiffness, reduces pressure on the skin and helps circulation.

What Helps?

Itchy skin is not usually serious, you can ask a pharmacist or your GP, and:

- Moisturise daily but use unperfumed products
- Take shorter warm, not hot, showers/baths
- Don't sunbathe or UV tan
- Stop smoking
- **DON'T SCRATCH!**

You need to be careful the area **doesn't get infected or form an ulcer**, this makes it more painful and causes problems. Avoid pressure on the area. Talk to your GP or nurse

What do I do if I'm worried?

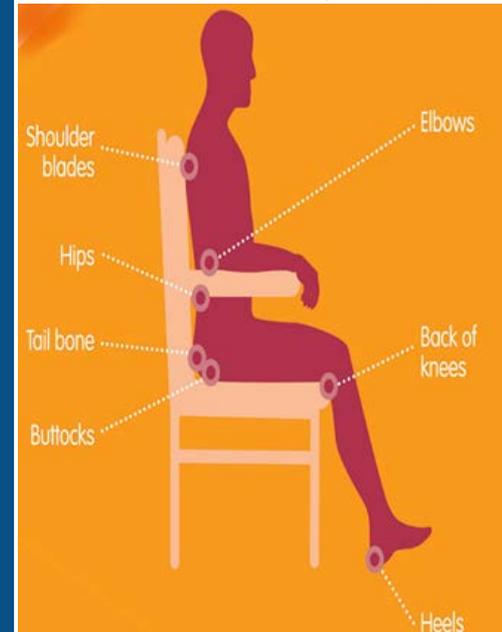
If you have any new or worsening skin issues, particularly wounds or a painful area, talk to your GP, a pharmacist or nurse.

Contacts

National Information

- [NHS: Itchy Skin](#)
- [NHS: Stop the Pressure](#)

Body Hot Spots



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Needing the Toilet

As you get older, you might feel you need the toilet more often, urgently or unexpectedly. Some people are so worried about being caught short, they don't go out.

Should I be embarrassed? No!

You might worry about talking about your bladder or bowel problems but it's a medical problem. **In many cases, it can be cured or managed, talk to your GP.**

Common problems include:

- Needing to wee or poo more often or urgently;
- Leaking wee or poo when coughing, exercising and so on;
- Difficulty starting to wee/straining to poo;
- Wetting the bed.

What should I look out for?

Watch out for changes in your need to use the toilet, particularly **blood in your wee or poo** or pain when weeing. **If you're worried, talk to a GP or a nurse working with you.**

What Helps? Tips are:

- Drink more water to make wee less concentrated;
- Drink less alcohol and caffeine drinks like coffee;
- Exercise to strengthen pelvic muscles;
- Keep skin clean, dry and moisturised if you're having bladder or bowel problems.

You may need products, like pads, simple aids or equipment to use the toilet. Your GP or professional working with you could advise. **Don't rush when you do need to go to the toilet particularly at night, you could fall.**

Contacts

National Information

- [NHS: Urinary Incontinence;](#)
- [Age UK: Incontinence](#)

Enfield Contacts

- [AskSara: Making Life Easier Tool](#)

Haringey Contacts

- [Whittington Health: Bowel and Bladder Care](#)



To discuss issues with bladder or bowel problems, talk to your general practice.

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Feeling Low

We all feel low sometimes when we're upset, angry, worried or sad, often after bad news or crisis, like an illness, accident, worries about money or family or death of someone close.

Low moods often lift after a few days, but if they go on, it could be a sign you're depressed – it's important to talk to someone.

What should I keep an eye on for in someone else?

Someone in your family or a friend may be low, upset or worried, not keeping in touch or not looking after themselves. They may be lonely or live alone, keep in touch and help them to talk about it or get help, particularly if they're very low.

What helps?

- ▶ **Connect:** Keep in touch with, and get help from family, friends or services.
- ▶ **Keep Busy:** As far as you can, keep your hobbies or interests going, try new things. Join in!
- ▶ **Be Active and Look After Yourself:** Make sure you manage any health conditions. Eat, drink and rest as well as possible. Try to keep active, go for a walk or do exercises seated.
- ▶ **Take Notice:** Find small things that cheer you.
- ▶ **Give:** Thank someone. If you have time and can do it, volunteer to help others, it helps you too!

What do I do if I need help?

If your mood won't go away and affects your life, there is help, particularly if you feel very low. **See the contacts list for further support and information and contact your GP or nurse if things don't improve.**

Contacts

National Information

- [NHS: Low Mood](#) and [Talking Therapies](#)
- [Age UK: Feeling Lonely](#)
- [Samaritans](#) ☎ 116 123

Enfield Contacts

- [LBE: Social Isolation; Mental Well-Being](#)
- [MIND Enfield](#) ☎ 0208 906 7506
- [Enfield Connections](#) ☎ 020 3960 0129
- [Let's Talk IAPT](#) ☎ 02087024900
- [Age UK Enfield ICAN](#) ☎ 02083754120
- [Enfield Carers Centre Counselling](#)
☎ 020 8366 3677

Haringey Contacts

- [LBH: Mental Well-Being](#) and [Family Life](#)
- [Haringey Volunteering](#)
- [LBH: Help in Mental Health Crisis](#)
- [Mental Well-Being Network](#)
☎ 0208 3402474
- [Let's Talk IAPT](#) ☎ 0203 074 2880

If your low mood continues, talk to the contact services above or your general practice.

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Memory and Confusion

As you get older, you might feel you can't remember things or solve problems as easily as you used to. For most of us, this is nothing to worry about. **Keep yourself as active and alert as you can**, exercise helps your brain, as do puzzles and games



What can cause problems?

Problems you have with memory loss, confusion, decision-making etc. could be linked to things like stress, an infection, a physical health condition or medications. **Talk to your GP about any issues.**

Sudden Confusion: Delirium

Someone with delirium has a sudden change in behaviour: they may be confused or hallucinate, often after an infection, surgery, change in medication or if they can't sleep. Delirium can last for days, but most people recover. **Get medical advice if you're worried about someone.**

Long-Term Memory Problems

Sometimes problems with memory and confusion are caused by problems in the brain itself. **Talk to your GP**, it's important to rule everything out first and get the right treatment as early as possible.

Remember: not all memory loss is caused by diseases of the brain and it may be temporary.

Contacts

National Information

- [NHS: Memory Loss](#);
- [NHS: Delirium](#);
- [NHS: Dementia](#);
- [Alzheimer's Society: Memory](#)

Enfield Contacts

- [Age UK Enfield: Dementia Services](#)

including [Memory Club](#) and [Navigators](#)

☎ 020 8375 4120

Haringey Contacts

- [LBH: Dementia](#)
- Haynes Dementia Hub
☎ 020 8489 5895
- [Whittington Health: Delirium](#),
- [Whittington Health: Dementia](#)
- [Haringey Circle](#)

To discuss memory loss, confusion or problem-solving, talk to your general practice.

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Getting better or fit and well isn't just about your health, but it is also about your home life – who you live with, your home and area.

▶ **Managing Health at Home**

Make sure you know how to manage your conditions, including what works for you, how to relieve pain or symptoms, your medications or how to make appointments.

▶ **Plan in advance what to do in a crisis**

If your condition got worse or you had a fall, who would you contact? If you want to use Council Alarm Services, you need to register.

Looking After Those Who Care

You may have family or friends who help you with your condition or daily living. It's important they know they can get help they need as a 'carer', this helps you too.

Plan for the Future

Think about and get advice about how you can:

- ▶ **Make your home safer** for you to move about. Get rid of things that risk slips/trips. Do you need repairs or changes to your home?
- ▶ **Make your home help you.** What equipment, aids and adaptations do you need to make life easier?
- ▶ **Plan the week.** Do you have enough food and drink? Do you need help getting out or about?
- ▶ **Keep in touch** with others and keep busy.
- ▶ **Get reliable advice about money, legal and housing matters.** Not all of us want to, but think about **planning with others what happens when you're very ill or gone.**
- ▶ **Plan for the winter** including heating, etc. and things like getting a flu jab.

Contacts

National Information

- [NHS: Social and Support Services](#)
- [NHS App - Carers UK](#)
- [Age UK: Information and Advice](#)

Enfield Contacts

- [LBE: Staying Well and Independent](#)
- [Age UK Enfield: Health and Well-Being](#)
- [Safe and Connected Service](#)
☎ 020 803 1524
- [Enfield Carers Centre](#) ☎ 02083663677
- [Enfield Connections](#) ☎ 020 3960 0129
- [AskSara: Making Life Easier Tool](#)

Haringey Contacts

- [LBH: Family Life - LBH: Carers](#)
- [LBH: Home Safety - Haringey Circle](#)
- [Safe and Sound Alarm](#) ☎0208 4892365
- [CarersFirst](#) ☎ 0300 303 1555
- [Connected Communities](#)
☎02084894431
- [Advice Partnership](#) ☎ 03003301187

Talk to your general practice about planning your health and well-being. The contacts above could help you plan other things.

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Useful contacts/websites

There are many organisations that can help you – here are some

For urgent, but not life-threatening, health issues ☎ 111

For life-threatening accidents or emergencies, go to A&E or ☎ 999

My GP Practice No. is: ☎

My Pharmacy No. is: ☎

General

- [Download NHS App \(not COVID App\)](#)
- [NHS Live Well](#)
- [NHS A-Z Conditions](#)
- [Age UK](#)
- **Tel:** 0800 678 1602 (Advice Line)
- [Silver Line – Helpline for Older People](#)
- **Tel:** 0800 4708090
- [Royal Osteoporosis Society](#)
- **Tel:** 0808800035
- [Samaritans](#)
- **Tel:** 116 123 (available 24/7)
- [Alzheimer's Society](#)
- **Dementia Connect Support Line Tel:** 0333 150 3456
- [North London Hospice](#)
- **Tel:** 02083436806
- [Coordinate My Care](#)
- **Plan for your treatment in a crisis**

Enfield

- [MyLife Enfield: Social Care and Health](#)
- [Advice for Vulnerable People: Enfield Connections](#)
- **Tel:** 020 3960 0129 (Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm)
- [Advice and Help for Older People: Age UK Enfield](#)
- **Tel:** 020 83754120
- **Advice and Support for Carers: Enfield's Carers Centre**
- **Email:** info@enfieldcarers.org
- **Tel:** 020 8366 3677
- **Equipment and Help with Daily Living:**
- [Ask Sara Enfield: Making Life Easier](#)
- [Help with Mental Well-Being: MIND in Enfield](#)
- **Tel:** 02089067506
- [Getting Healthier: Healthy Enfield](#)
- **Enfield Advocacy Service**
- **Tel:** 07523 272298

Haringey

- [Adult Social Care and Health](#)
- [Connected Communities - Help with Council/Voluntary Services](#)
- **Tel:** 0208 489 4431 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)
- [Reach and Connect - Advice and Help for Older People](#)
- **Tel:** 020 3196 1905
- [Carers First - Advice and Support for Carers](#)
- **Email:** hello@carersfirst.org.uk
- **Tel:** 0300 3031555
- [Mental Well-Being Network \(incl. MIND\)](#)
- **Tel:** 020 8340 2474
- [Getting Healthier: One You Haringey](#)
- **Tel:** 020 8885 9095
- [Haringey Circle: Over 50s Help and Support](#)
- **Tel:** 020 3196 1894