

## Christmas message 2020

On behalf of Warmfield -cum-Heath Parish Council I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for the New Year. If anyone needs any support over the festive period please see the information below from Wakefield Council.

Support available for vulnerable people this Christmas

This Christmas, it's more important than ever that people take care of themselves, no matter what situation they are in, and Wakefield Council is offering tailored support for those who might be struggling over the festive period.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected many people in lots of different ways, whether that be in their family life, work or wellbeing.

The Council wants to ensure that residents have access to as much information and resources as possible to support them through these difficult times.

Help and support is available for mental health and wellbeing, money and debt problems, as well as food parcels and vouchers.

Cllr Maureen Cummings, Wakefield Council's Cabinet Member for Environment, Communities and Poverty, said: "This year has been really tough on lots of people and with Christmas just around the corner, people might be finding it tougher than ever.

"We have been committed to supporting our residents throughout this pandemic and just because it's Christmas, this doesn't stop. If you are struggling in any way, please seek help, do not let the situation get worse. We are here to support you and together, we will get through this."

Some top tips for looking after people's mental health and wellbeing include:

\* Go for a walk

Many people may be concerned about spending time with family indoors this year and walking in the countryside provides a safer way to be able to spend time with loved ones. Under the current government restrictions, up to six people from different households can meet up outdoors. Find local walking routes at

<https://www.wakefield.gov.uk/sport-health-and-leisure/sport-and-activities/walking>

\* Form a 'Christmas bubble' The Government has changed some social restrictions so that families can spend time together on Christmas Day (25 December). Up to three households can form a 'Christmas bubble' on 25 December only. When following these new rules, responsibility should be taken to limit the spread of the virus and protect loved ones, particularly if they are vulnerable. Find out more about Christmas bubbles

at <https://www.wakefield.gov.uk/about-the-council/coronavirus-information/staying-safe/staying-safe-at-christmas>

\* Practice 5 ways to wellbeing

Things are different this Christmas, which is why mental wellbeing is more important than ever.

\* Connect – boost mental wellbeing by spending time developing relationships with family, friends, neighbours and colleagues.

\* Take notice – practice being aware of the present moment, including personal thoughts and feelings and family and friends to help boost mental wellbeing.

\* Be active – find an activity and allocate time to enjoy it.

\* Give – perform small acts, such as a smiling, saying thank you or giving kind words to boost personal wellbeing.

\* Keep learning – learn new skills to provide a sense of achievement and gain new confidence. This may be learning how to cook, about family history or a new language. Wakefield has a number of food banks, all of which require referral. The Council can make referrals, however the service over the Christmas period is very limited, due to being run by volunteers. If help is needed, the teams will do as much as possible to support. Call 0345 8 506 506 to speak to the Wakefield Council customer support team.

Wakefield Council are supporting families on low incomes this Christmas with a voucher scheme that will provide support to thousands of school children and their families. Families that are struggling financially who are eligible for support will receive a letter to confirm their entitlement to food vouchers during the Christmas holiday period.

Any family who has not received a letter by Tuesday 22 December and think they may be eligible will be directed to the revenue and benefits team on 0345 8 504 504 and will be considered under the existing council tax support process.

Anyone who is struggling with money and debt can get help and advice at their local community hub, where they will be put in touch with a range of organisations who can give tailored support. Get Help at the Hub – visit

<http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/hub>

to find a local community support hub

For further help and support or to find a list of the local and national helplines and their Christmas opening arrangements, visit

<https://www.wakefield.gov.uk/about-the-council/coronavirus-information/support-at-christmas>

Regards

*Tracy Johnson*

**Clerk to Warmfield-cum-Heath Parish Council**