

WINTER WELLBEING RESOURCE



*Digital Communications Pack
Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Suicide
Prevention Campaign group*

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MENTAL WELLBEING & THE FESTIVE PERIOD



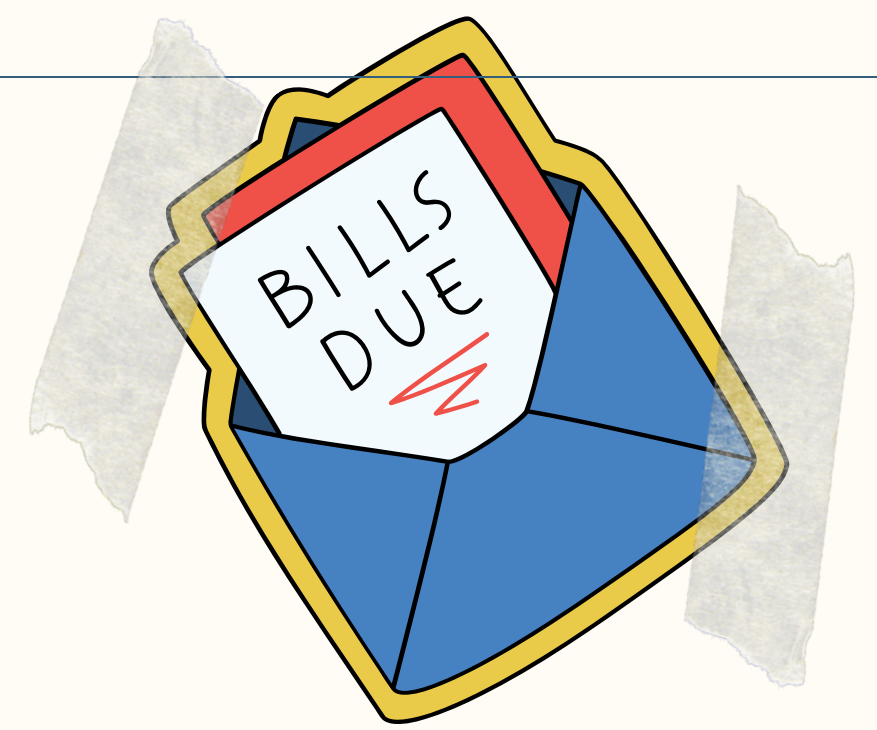
The festive period, can be difficult for many people. The cold weather, dark nights and pressure to feel festive can all take a toll. This time of year, which is supposed to make us happy can have a big impact on mental health and it is easy to lose track of when mental health is really starting to suffer. For many, Christmas can bring a sense of anxiety and stress, even more so with the extra financial pressures many people are currently facing and other events happening in the world. For those on their own it can exacerbate feelings of loneliness. It is important to check in on ourselves and others during this time. There is lots of support out there to help if you or someone you know is struggling. It is ok not to be ok.

For tips and information on coping with this time of year:

- [Every Mind Matters](#)
- [Mind](#)
- [Samaritans](#)
- [Student space](#)



COST OF LIVING SUPPORT- MESSAGES



- As the cost of living continues to increase, so has the pressure on people's mental wellbeing.
- In these uncertain times, the worry of how to pay our bills on top of all of life's other worries, is having a serious effect on mental health. It is important to reach out to each other and talk about how we are feeling. Let someone know you are there for them or reach out if you need support.
- Getting control of our finances will help with feelings of stress and anxiety. The Mental Health & Money Advice service can provide support with this and lots of tips supporting your mental health in relation to the cost of living crisis. There are also some useful tips on how to support your mental health on the Mental Health Foundation webpages.
- Uncertainty can increase our stress and anxiety levels, which can lead to feelings of low mood, and in some cases depression and panic attacks. We may also look for unhealthy ways to block out our feelings. It is important that if you or someone you know is really struggling with mental health and it is disrupting everyday life seek encourage them to professional help and talk to their GP.

Looking after your health

There can be more pressure over the festive period to drink alcohol, especially while attending Christmas parties or get togethers.

Family and life pressures can also trigger you into drinking more at this time of year, so it is important that we try to look after ourselves.

If you think you may be using drugs or alcohol to cope with difficult feelings, it could help to be aware of it. It can help to talk with someone you trust. This could be a friend or relative, a colleague, a person working for a charity helpline, your GP, a counsellor or local services.

Support & Advice Services:

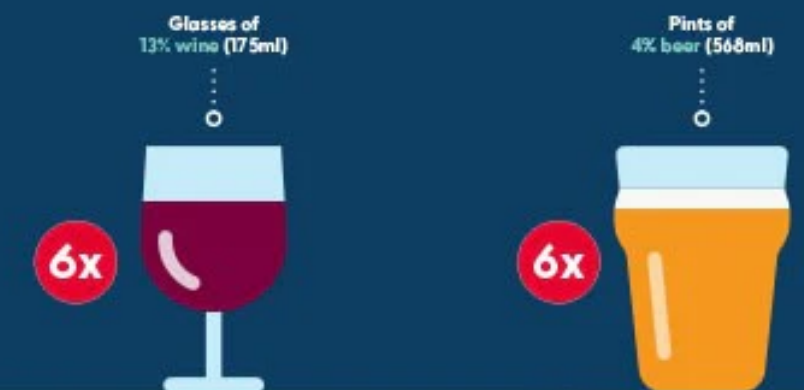
- [Advice and support | Drinkaware](#)
- [Alcohol advice - NHS](#)
- [Luton Alcohol Helpline](#)
- [Path 2 Recovery Bedford Borough](#)
- [Path 2 Recovery Central Beds](#)
- [ARC Milton Keynes](#)

Tips

- **Keep track of how much you're drinking.**
- **Make sure to have at least 3 drink free days a week**
- **Intersperse alcoholic drinks with soft drinks and eat while your drinking**

What does 14 units of alcohol look like?

To keep health risks from alcohol low, it is safest to drink **no more than 14 units a week**, spread over three or more days with several drink-free days, and no bingeing.



Suicide Prevention Support

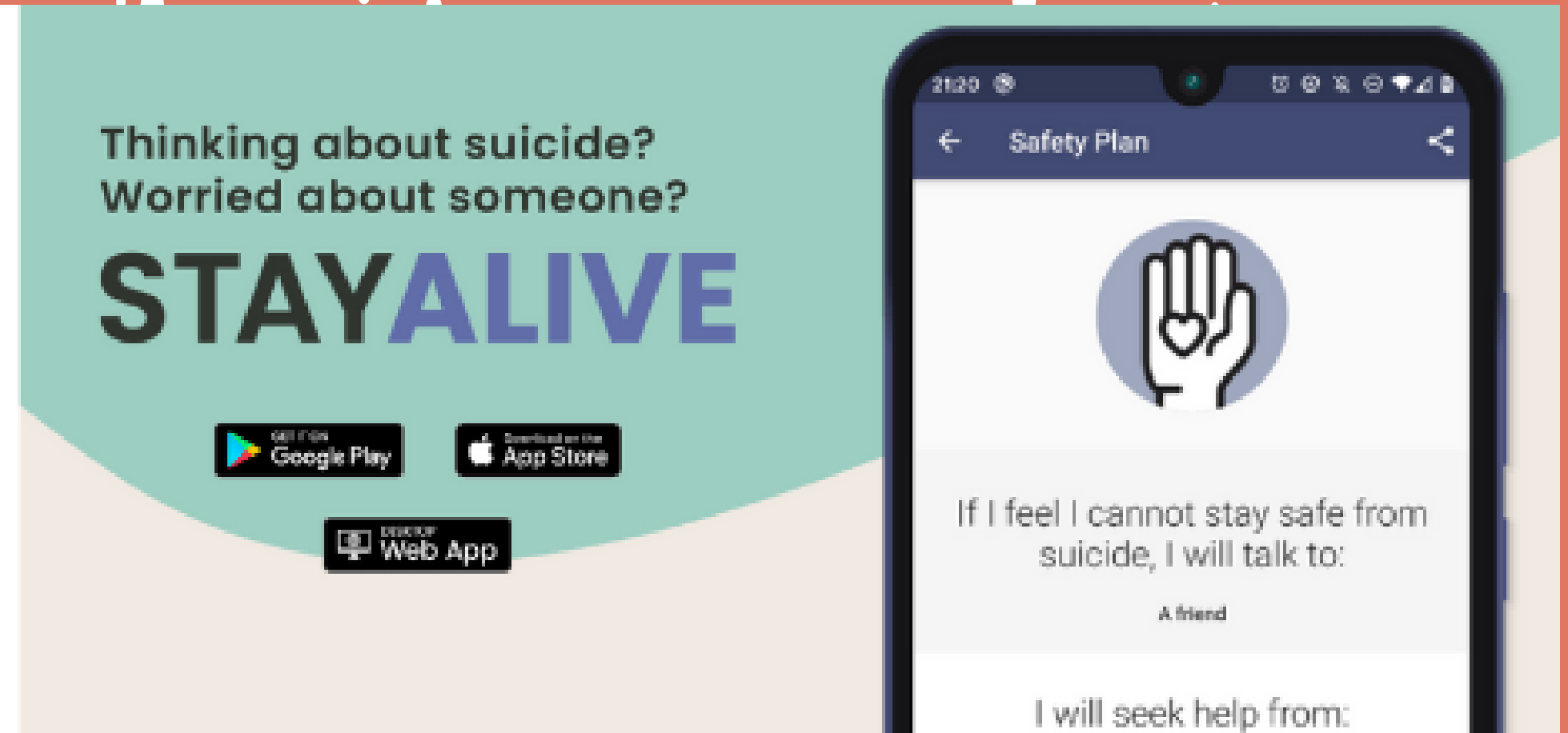


The Stay Alive app is a suicide prevention resource for the UK, packed full of useful information and tools to help you stay safe in crisis. You can use it if you are having thoughts of suicide or if you are concerned about someone else who may be considering suicide.

The app includes:

- A safety plan with customisable reasons for living
- A LifeBox where you can store photos and memories that are important to you
- Strategies for staying safe and tips on how to stay grounded when you're feeling overwhelmed
- Guided-breathing exercises and an interactive Wellness Plan

The app also links you directly to local and national crisis resources, with space to add in your own as well. Please share information about the app widely.



DIRECT SUPPORT OVER THE FESTIVE PERIOD

Samaritans- Samaritans' volunteers are available to listen to anyone who is struggling day or night, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Anyone can contact Samaritans for free from any phone on 116 123, even a mobile without credit, or you can email: jo@samaritans.org

Shout – Shout is the UK's first 24/7 text service, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. It's a place to go if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help. Text REFLECT to 85258. free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere.

Mental Health Crisis – Milton Keynes .If you or someone you know needs urgent mental health support, you can call the CNWL crisis line Tel: 0800 0234650

Mental Health Crisis – Bedfordshire & Luton. 24hr Mental Health Crisis support for all ages Call NHS 111 Option 2

Mind BLMK Crisis Café –If you find yourself or someone you know needs urgent or crisis support with mental health in the evening, Mind BLMK Crisis Cafe are here to listen and help you in your time of need. Operating 7 days a week between 5pm and 11pm and can be contacted by telephone 01525 722 225

Support for Young People – Mind BLMK

Mind BLMK Young Person's Sanctuary's –

- Luton – ResoLUTiONs, 89 Castle Street, Luton LU1 3A . Open 7 days
- Bedford – CAMHS, 5-7 Rush Ct, Bedford MK40 3JT
- Leighton Buzzard – Leighton Buzzard; Meadow Way Community Centre, Leighton Buzzard LU7 3FS
- Houghton Regis – Houghton Regis Children's Centre, Tithe Farm Neighbourhood Centre, Tithe Farm Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5JB
- Sandy – Sandy Children's Centre, Laburnum Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 1HQ (OPENING SOON!)
- Milton Keynes – Milton Keynes CAMHS, Eaglestone Health Centre, Standing Way, Milton Keynes, MK6 5AZ (OPENING SOON!)

Mind BLMK Young Person's Wellbeing Navigator Service

This service supports young people aged 16–25 in Central Bedfordshire to navigate challenges and life transitions with 1:1 support of up to 8 x 1 hour sessions. Enabling them to positively manage their own mental health and wellbeing, whilst promoting independence and resilience.

Drop-in sessions: every Thursday 4 pm – 6 pm at Flitwick Hub in Dunstable Street.



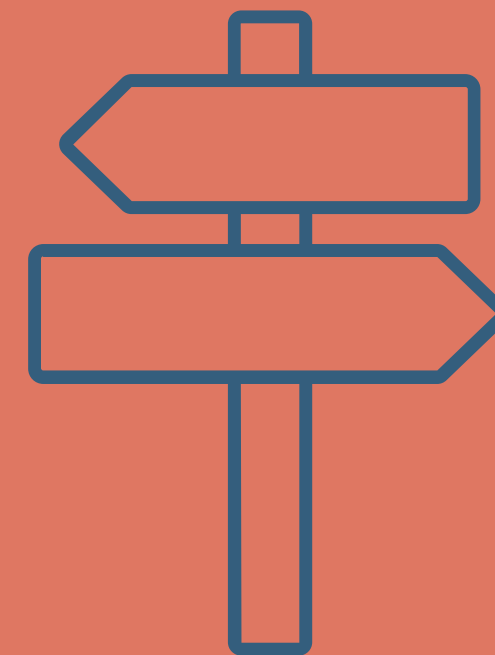
HOW TO SHARE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE



Share the prepared wellbeing, support and mental health crisis messages in this pack on social media or other comms



Put information on local services, campaigns and support in newsletters and email briefs.



Signpost to local support and campaigns on your website. Or display information on notice boards.

Messages to share – Wellbeing

Take care
OF
YOURSELF

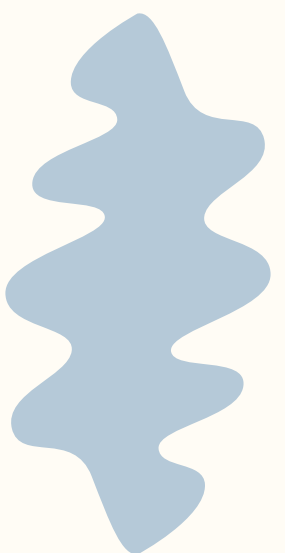
- Be kind to yourself – the festive period can be a difficult time. It is important to try and create a wellbeing routine. Every Mind Matters can help with this
- Christmas can be a very difficult time for those who are on their own. Every Mind Matters provides some tips on how to combat loneliness and stay connected.
- The cost-of-living crisis has affected many people financially, which can have an impact on your health and wellbeing. For support this festive period visit Money Advice Services
- If you find Christmas or New Year a particularly difficult time to manage your mental health try to take time out to do something you enjoy, whether it's reading a book, painting, crafting, phoning a friend, relaxing or doing physical exercise. Every Mind Matters



Messages to share - Support



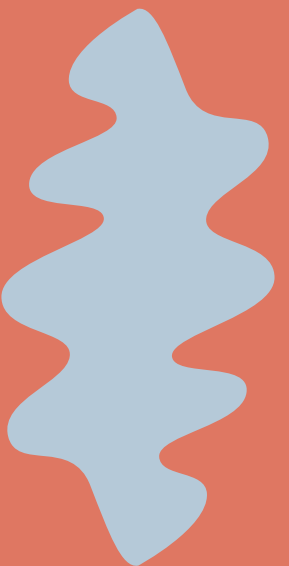
- Christmas can be a particularly difficult time of year for people suffering from an addiction, and some may struggle to cope. Visit the [NHS](#) pages to start getting the support you need.
- If you think someone isn't OK – Samaritans can give you some tips and guidance:
- If you feel like there is nobody you can talk to, Samaritans are there to help.
- A cup of tea (or your brew of choice) can bring us back to basics and help break down barriers. Talk to your local Samaritans branch [#BrewMonday](#)
- Have you heard of the [Stay Alive app?](#) The app is a pocket suicide prevention resource packed full of useful information and tools to help you stay safe in crisis or if you are concerned about someone else who may be considering suicide.



Messages to share – Mental Health Crisis



- MK – This Christmas, if you or someone you know needs urgent mental health support, you can call CNWL Crisis Line on 0800 0234650.
- Bedfordshire and Luton – This Christmas if you or someone you know needs urgent mental health support call 111 option 2.
- Mind BLMKs Crisis Café is here for you over Christmas if you or someone you know needs urgent or crisis support with their mental health. You can call 7 days a week, 5pm-11pm on 01525 722 225
- If you are worried about someone over Christmas contact Suicide Prevention Pathways Service for access to relevant voluntary services call: 01525 203 778 or email: spps@mind-blmk.org.uk
- If you are struggling this festive period remember you are not alone. Samaritan volunteers will be on duty throughout the Christmas and New Year period every day, 24 hours a day. Telephone for free 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org



Useful Links –

- Every Mind Matters – for expert advice and practical tips to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing
- SHOUT – Text REFLECT to 85258 24/7. The service is focused on supporting young people aged 11-25. However, there is no age limit on who can use reflect across Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes.
- Heads Up – Men Mental Health support and information <https://thisisheads-up.uk>
- Mind BLMK – Mental health support across BLMK Phone: 0300 330 0648 www.mind-blmk.org.uk
- Samaritans – offers a listening service which is open 24 hours a day, PHONE on 116 123 www.samaritans.org/
- THE HUB OF HOPE – is the UK's leading mental health support database

URGENT & CRISIS SUPPORT

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis for the first time you should contact your GP or call NHS 111 if you are in Bedford or Central Bedfordshire. If you are in Milton Keynes you can, call the CNWL Urgent advice line on 0800 0234 650 or by emailing cnw-tr.spa@nhs.net; they also take calls from 111. The Samaritans are there 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to listen. Call them any time on 116 123 if you need somebody to talk to. Mind BLMK's Crisis Cafés are a free service available 365 days of the year, 5.00pm-11.00pm. To speak to a member of the team, please call 01525 722 225 , or visit www.mind-blmk.org.uk/how-we-can-help/crisis-support

In an emergency if you or somebody else's life is in danger contact the emergency services on 999 or go to A&E

Thank you for your support

This toolkit has been produced by the BLMK
Suicide Prevention Campaign group and
Public Health. For further information on the
toolkit please email [Sophie.Jordan@milton-
keynes.gov.uk](mailto:Sophie.Jordan@milton-keynes.gov.uk)