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Central Bedfordshire Council  
[www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Central  
Bedfordshire

# Safeguarding adults

Preventing harm to  
yourself and others



# Welcome

## **Abuse is everybody's business, safeguarding is our responsibility**

This handbook is intended to provide some guidance about keeping yourself safe and looking after yourself as well as focusing on the protection of those adults who may find themselves at risk or in vulnerable situations.

For many people the experience of abuse, maltreatment or neglect can be isolating, painful, terrifying and even fatal. Abuse, maltreatment or neglect can happen to anyone but it is often the most vulnerable in society who suffer. Abuse of any kind is never acceptable.

This handbook has been produced by the Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire multi-agency Safeguarding Adults Board. The organisations which make up the Board can provide support and put in measures to protect those who have been abused. However abuse can be hidden and go unreported. It is important to recognise the signs of abuse and also to know who can help if you suspect it is happening.

This essential handbook gives vital information and is a practical guide for anybody who is being abused or suspects that somebody they know may be the victim of abuse, maltreatment or neglect.

It is everybody's responsibility to report abuse wherever it is seen or suspected. Safeguarding is a vital part of our responsibilities. It is more than just adult protection. It is about protecting the safety, independence and wellbeing of vulnerable people.

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# Who can help you?

In Bedfordshire there are many different professionals and organisations who can offer you help. Some of these are listed in the Useful contacts section at the back of this handbook. Some of the emergency numbers you may need are listed opposite.

Don't be afraid to ask for help or advice. We are here to help.

Write your postcode here. The emergency services often ask for this to help them locate you.


**Postcode**.....

## Health Services

For advice and information

 **NHS Choices**  
[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
**NHS Direct**  
0845 4647  
[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

### Putnoe Walk-in-Centre

 **01234 292969**  
8am-8pm  
Out of Hours  
call your GP

### NHS Bedfordshire Emergency Dentist

 **0800 032 3026**

## Adult Services

For advice and  
information contact  
**Bedford Borough Council**

 **01234 267422**

### Central Bedfordshire Council

 **0300 300 8000**

### In an emergency Out of Hours

 **0300 300 8123**

## GP/Doctor

You will need to register  
with a local Doctor.

**Telephone number  
of your GP**

.....

## Police

In a non-emergency  
please call your local  
**Police Station**

 **01234 841212**

### In an emergency

 **999**

## Keep yourself safe

### National 24 hour Domestic Violence Helpline

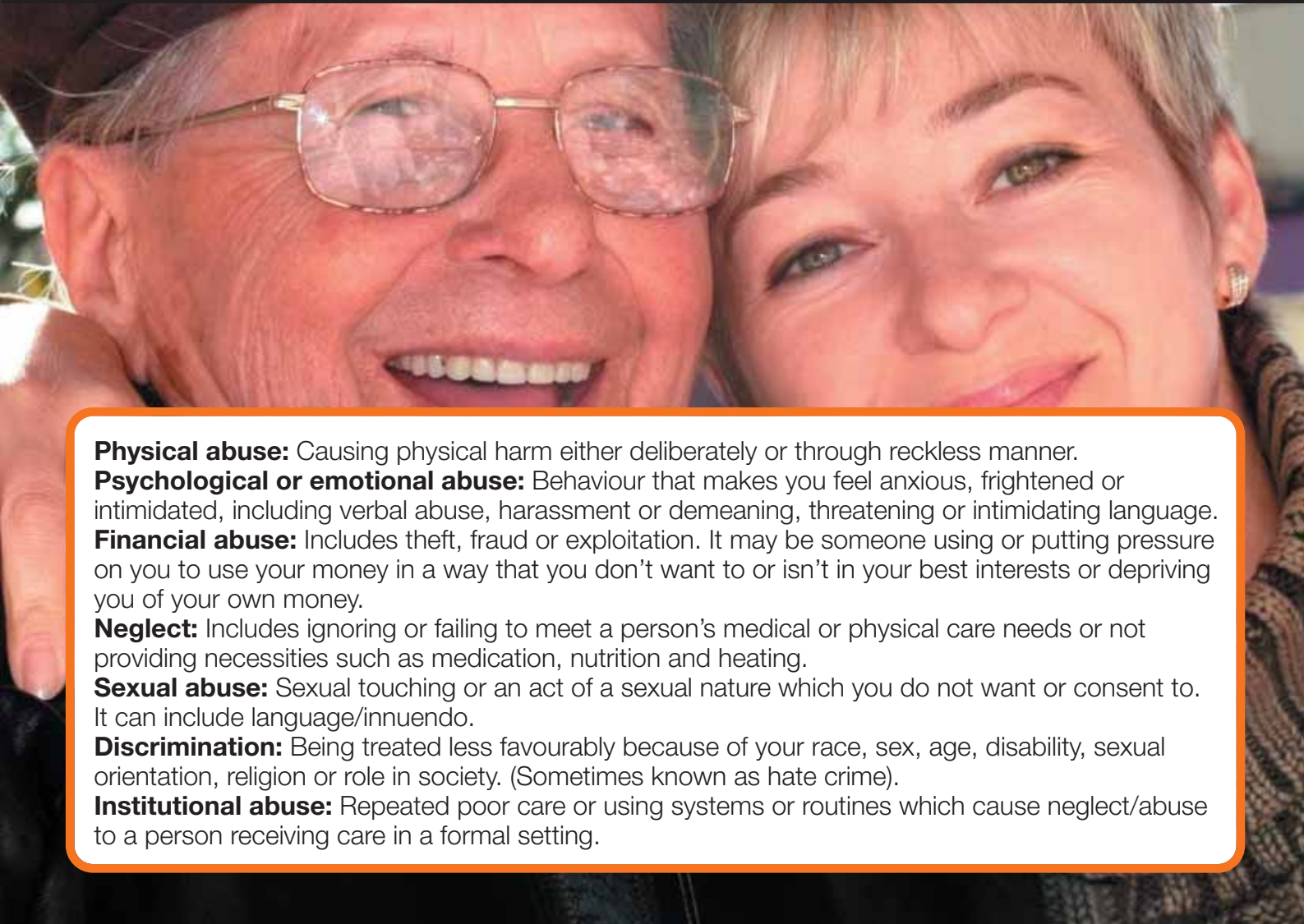
 **0808 2000 247**

### National Gas Emergencies

 **0800 111 999**

### Electricity Emergencies

 **0800 195 4141**



**Physical abuse:** Causing physical harm either deliberately or through reckless manner.

**Psychological or emotional abuse:** Behaviour that makes you feel anxious, frightened or intimidated, including verbal abuse, harassment or demeaning, threatening or intimidating language.

**Financial abuse:** Includes theft, fraud or exploitation. It may be someone using or putting pressure on you to use your money in a way that you don't want to or isn't in your best interests or depriving you of your own money.

**Neglect:** Includes ignoring or failing to meet a person's medical or physical care needs or not providing necessities such as medication, nutrition and heating.

**Sexual abuse:** Sexual touching or an act of a sexual nature which you do not want or consent to. It can include language/innuendo.

**Discrimination:** Being treated less favourably because of your race, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or role in society. (Sometimes known as hate crime).

**Institutional abuse:** Repeated poor care or using systems or routines which cause neglect/abuse to a person receiving care in a formal setting.

# Keeping yourself safe in vulnerable circumstances

People can be vulnerable or at risk for many reasons. Often it is because they are unable to look after or protect themselves or are dependent on others to meet their needs. They may not be able to get away from the situation in which they are being harmed, maltreated or abused.

Abuse of people who are vulnerable may not always be deliberate, but sometimes happens when others try to do their best but do not know the right thing to do. Whatever the reason for abuse, it still causes harm to the person who has been abused and is wrong.

Sometimes people are abused by those they trust or those who are providing care for them so it can be hard to speak out. They may be worried about what will happen if they tell someone. Everyone has the right to be safe and if you tell us about what is happening to you or someone you know, we will help.

If you are being abused or you suspect that someone you know, may be the victim of abuse you should call Adult Services as soon as possible. Your concern will be taken seriously and you will receive prompt attention. If the abuse is also a crime such as assault, racial harassment, rape or theft, you should involve the police to prevent someone else from being abused. If the police are involved, Adult Social Services will work with them and you to support you.

## Useful contacts

- **Bedford Borough Council Adult Safeguarding Team**  
01234 276222  
Email: [adult.protection@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:adult.protection@bedford.gov.uk)
- **Central Bedfordshire Council Safeguarding Adults Helpline**  
0300 300 8122 or you can call the Emergency Duty Team out of hours on 0300 300 8123  
Email: [adult.protection@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:adult.protection@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)



### **Staying in control of an emergency situation**

- Stay calm and don't panic. Make sure your safety is your number one priority.
- Know where and how to turn off water, gas and electricity supplies in your home.
- Keep essential items in a place you can easily locate them, such as a torch, essential telephone numbers (family/friends/GP/insurance company), small first aid kit, keys and cash.
- Know your postcode - it will assist emergency services in locating you.

# What to do in an emergency

### **If you smell gas**

Open the windows and doors to clear the air. This should reduce the smell, as well as any danger. If it's dark don't turn on lights (to avoid the risk of sparks) and never use a naked flame or smoke. Check your gas appliances have not been accidentally turned on. If not, shut down all your gas appliances and turn the gas off at the mains supply. Call National Gas Emergencies on 0800 111 999.

### **If your pipe bursts**

Turn off your stop tap (it may be under the sink) by turning it clockwise. It could take a few moments for the water to stop.

### **Burns, scalds and electrocution**

An emergency is a critical or life-threatening situation - Call 999 for an ambulance. Contact your GP, pharmacist or NHS Direct for non-urgent medical attention.

### **Useful contacts**

- **Emergency Services**  
999 (Police, Ambulance, Fire Brigade)
- **National Gas Emergencies**  
0800 111 999
- **Electricity Emergencies**  
0800 195 4141



**High quality services that respect people's dignity should:**

1. Have a zero tolerance of all forms of abuse and neglect.
2. Support people with the same respect you would want for yourself or a member of your family.
3. Treat each person as an individual by offering a personalised service.
4. Enable people to maintain the maximum possible level of independence, choice and control.
5. Listen and support people to express their needs and wants.
6. Respect people's right to privacy.
7. Ensure people feel able to complain without fear of retribution.
8. Engage with family members and carers as care partners.
9. Assist people to maintain confidence and positive self-esteem.
10. Act to alleviate people's loneliness and isolation.

# Dignity in care

Everyone is vulnerable at various times in their lives. At these times, you might receive help and treatment in hospital, care or nursing home, or in your own home.

Care services are regulated by the Care Quality Commission and you can complain or seek advice from them or the Council Adult Services team if you are concerned about care standards.

The Dignity in Care Campaign is about ordinary people taking simple actions to ensure that care services treat people with compassion, kindness and respect.

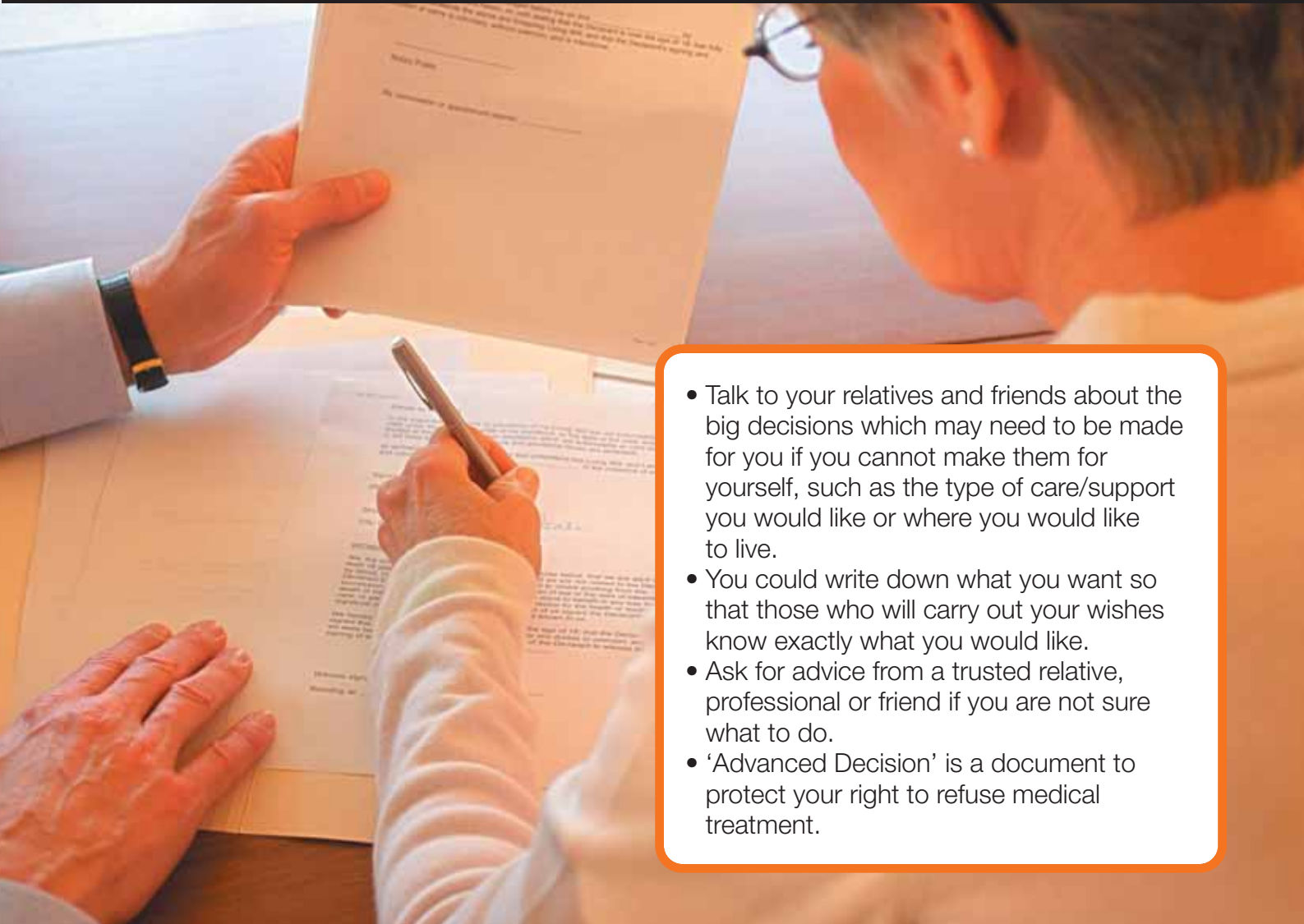
Dignity Champions are people who believe that ensuring dignity and respect for people using care services is a cause worth pursuing. To Dignity Champions, being treated with dignity isn't an optional extra, it's a basic human right. They believe it is not enough that care services are efficient. They must be compassionate too. Champions aim to work in partnership with care providers to improve the quality of services.

Dignity Champions include health and social care managers and staff. They also include MPs, councillors, members of local action groups and people from voluntary and advocacy organisations. People who use care services, their relatives and carers, as well as members of the public, are also becoming Dignity Champions.

**Useful contacts**

- **Care Quality Commission**  
03000 616161

**To sign up as a Dignity Champion, visit**  
[www.dignityincare.org.uk](http://www.dignityincare.org.uk)



- Talk to your relatives and friends about the big decisions which may need to be made for you if you cannot make them for yourself, such as the type of care/support you would like or where you would like to live.
- You could write down what you want so that those who will carry out your wishes know exactly what you would like.
- Ask for advice from a trusted relative, professional or friend if you are not sure what to do.
- 'Advanced Decision' is a document to protect your right to refuse medical treatment.

# Making decisions

Every individual should be able to make decisions for themselves about their own lives. The ability to make decisions is called 'mental capacity'.

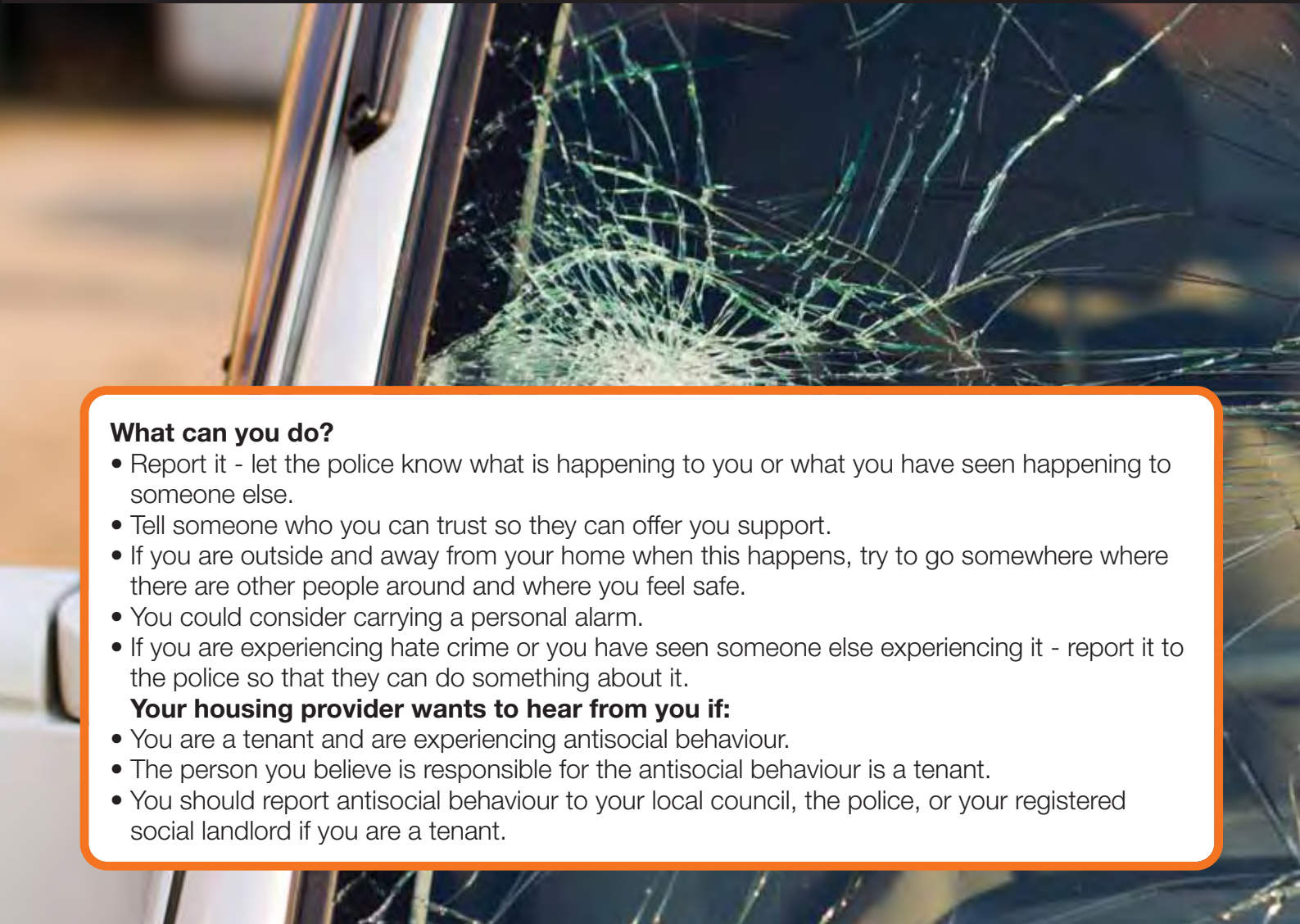
Sometimes it is not possible for people to make decisions for themselves so the Government introduced The Mental Capacity Act 2005 to help make sure people who cannot make decisions for themselves are protected and safe.

Someone who 'lacks mental capacity' may still be able to make some decisions such as what they would like to eat or drink or which clothes to wear but is unable to make other decisions such as how to manage their finances or the most appropriate place for them to live when they have additional care needs.

Sometimes people want to make sure that those who look after them in the future know what they would like to happen in certain circumstances. This can be done by arranging for a Lasting Power of Attorney. Visit [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) for further advice.

## Useful contacts

- **Bedford Borough Council Adult Safeguarding Team**  
01234 276222
- **Central Bedfordshire Council Safeguarding Adults Helpline**  
0300 300 8122
- **PohWer (Independent Mental Health Advocacy Service)**  
0300 456 2370
- **Citizens Advice Bureau**  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)
- **Living will**  
[www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights)
- **Age UK** [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)
- **Mencap**  
[www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)



### What can you do?

- Report it - let the police know what is happening to you or what you have seen happening to someone else.
- Tell someone who you can trust so they can offer you support.
- If you are outside and away from your home when this happens, try to go somewhere where there are other people around and where you feel safe.
- You could consider carrying a personal alarm.
- If you are experiencing hate crime or you have seen someone else experiencing it - report it to the police so that they can do something about it.

### Your housing provider wants to hear from you if:

- You are a tenant and are experiencing antisocial behaviour.
- The person you believe is responsible for the antisocial behaviour is a tenant.
- You should report antisocial behaviour to your local council, the police, or your registered social landlord if you are a tenant.

# Hate crime and antisocial behaviour

Hate crime is an incident or crime carried out where you or anyone else has been targeted because you are believed to be different.

It may involve assault, harassment or intimidation, damage to property such as smashed windows or paint thrown at your car, someone sneering at you or making abusive remarks, hitting you, spitting at you or throwing things at you.

Sadly there are sometimes a small minority of people who don't like who we are or what we do and can cause us a lot of upset as a result. Many different people may experience an incident or be the victim of a crime carried out because of hate or prejudice. This may be because of sexual orientation (gay, lesbian, bisexual), sex, age, race, disability, religion, beliefs or lifestyle.

Everyone has the right to feel safe and protected.

### Useful contacts

- **Crimestoppers**  
0800 555 111  
[www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)
- **Stop Hate UK**  
0800 138 1625
- **Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams**  
01234 841212 or in an emergency call 999
- **Central Bedfordshire Council Antisocial Behaviour Team**  
0300 300 8002
- **Bedford Borough Council Community Safety Team**  
01234 276037



- Domestic abuse - can be physical, psychological, sexual or financial and is never acceptable. If you, or someone you know, is suffering domestic abuse call the National 24 hour Domestic Violence Helpline on 0808 2000 247.
- If you, or someone you know may be at risk of being forced into a marriage or at risk of honour based abuse, contact Bedfordshire Police on 01234 841212, the Domestic Violence Unit on 0300 300 5168 or the national Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151. In an emergency call 999.

# Domestic abuse

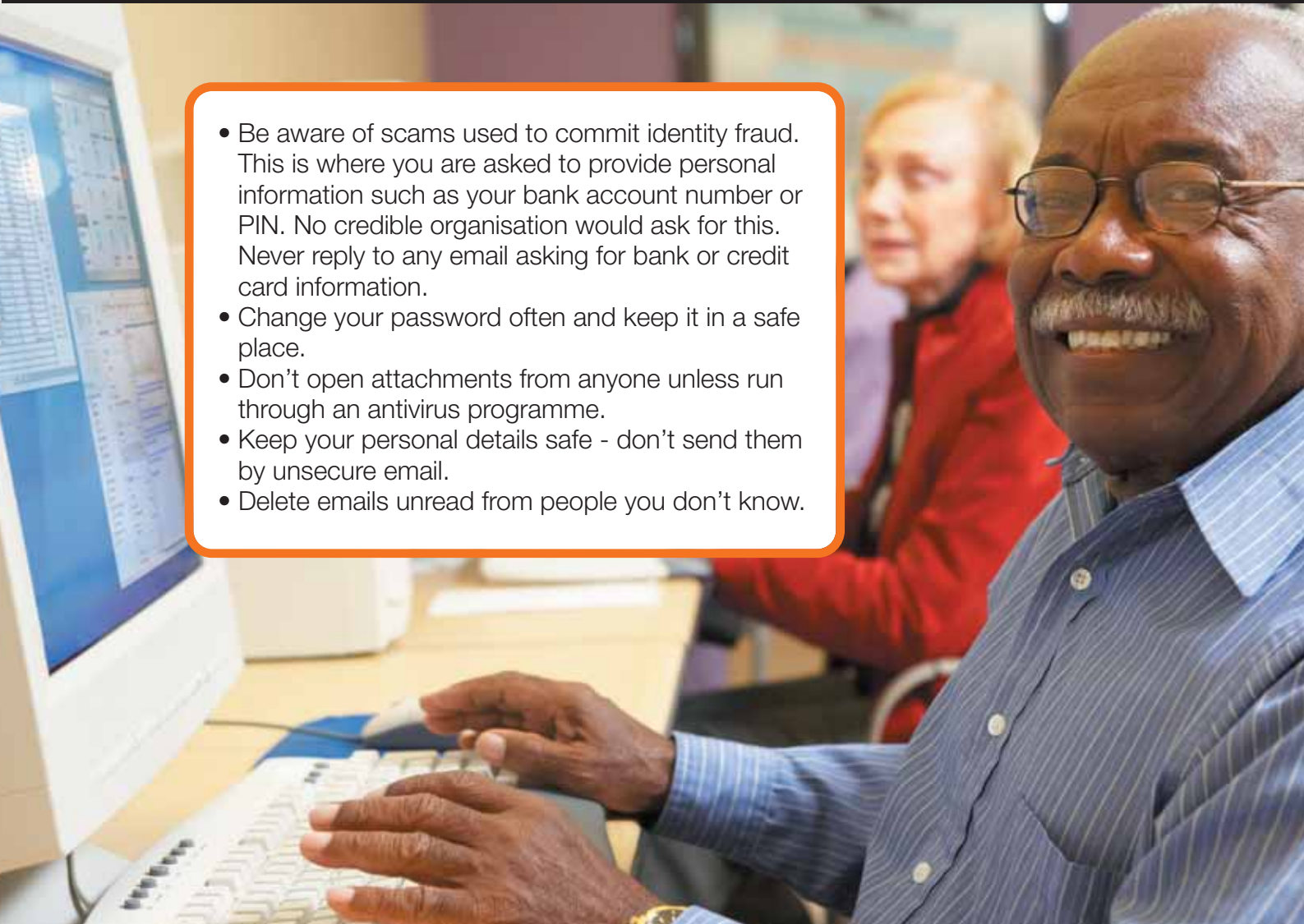
**Domestic abuse** is any violence, abuse or threats (whether psychological, physical, sexual or financial) between adults who are, or have been, in a relationship or family members, regardless of gender and sexuality. It can affect victims in many ways including isolation from family and friends, lowered self-esteem, mental health problems such as anxiety and/or depression and reduced physical health.

**Forced marriage** is when a person is made to marry someone against their will. The pressure put on them to do this may include emotional, physical and/or financial pressure. Forced marriage can never be justified; a person has the right to make their own choice and should not be forced into anything against their will. Forced marriage is different from an arranged marriage where there is a choice and agreement between both parties.

**Honour based abuse** is a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the family honour or community honour. It is often carried out by family members and can be very dangerous, possibly leading to an honour killing.

## Useful contacts

- **National 24 hour Domestic Violence Helpline**  
0808 2000 247
- **Domestic Abuse Men's Advice Line**  
0808 801 0327
- **Bedfordshire Domestic Violence Partnership**  
0300 300 5168  
[www.bedsdv.org.uk](http://www.bedsdv.org.uk)
- **Victim Support Bedfordshire**  
0845 456 5995



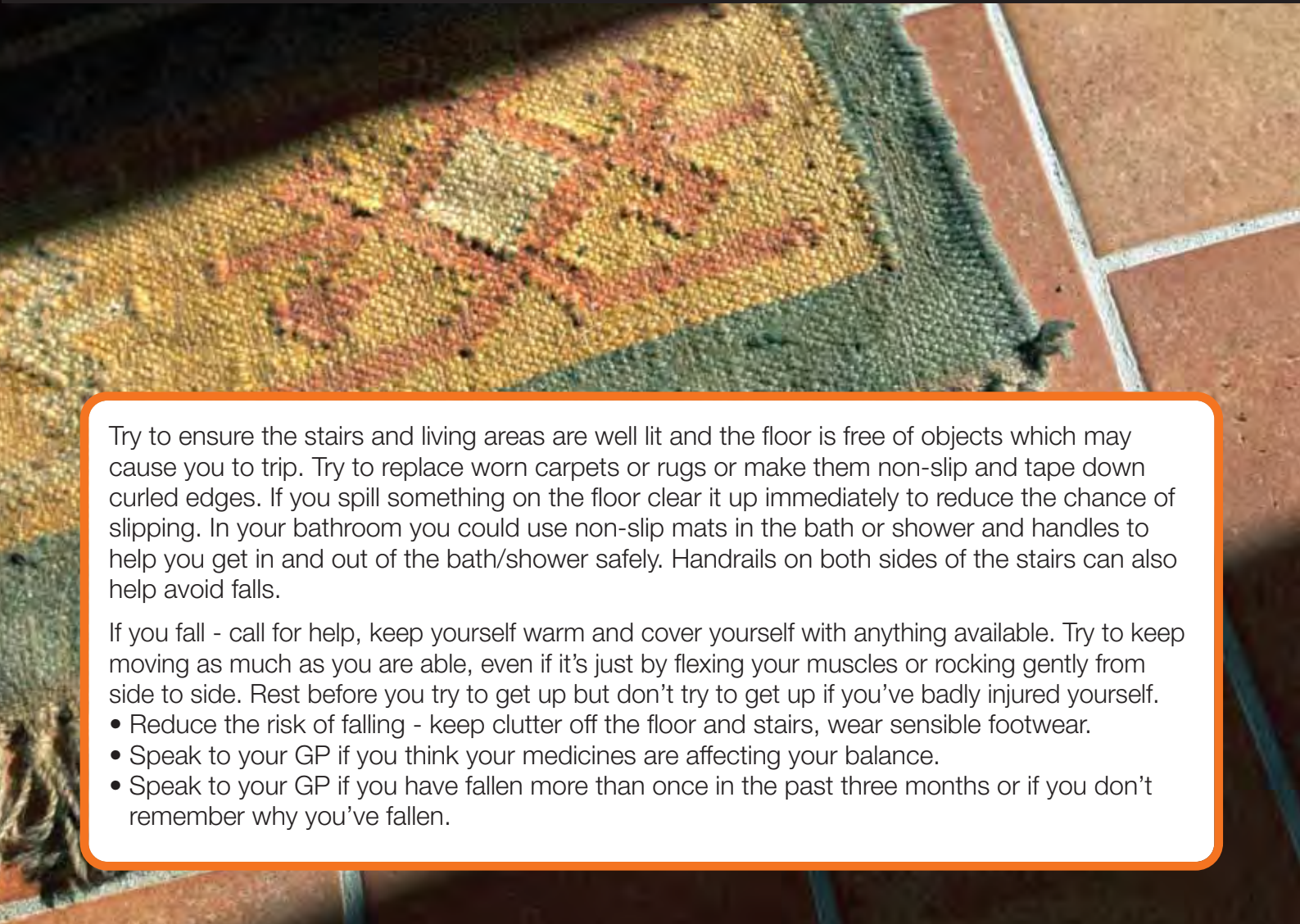
- Be aware of scams used to commit identity fraud. This is where you are asked to provide personal information such as your bank account number or PIN. No credible organisation would ask for this. Never reply to any email asking for bank or credit card information.
- Change your password often and keep it in a safe place.
- Don't open attachments from anyone unless run through an antivirus programme.
- Keep your personal details safe - don't send them by unsecure email.
- Delete emails unread from people you don't know.

## E-safety

- Always read a website's privacy policy before giving personal details such as mobile number, date of birth, address or a club you attend - little bits of information can be put together and used in identity fraud.
- When shopping online, ensure that the company you are ordering from has a real address and phone number. Ensure there is a secure connection before you give credit card information, and when making purchases ensure the URL begins with 'https'. Make sure you check your credit card statement for any irregularities.
- Most secure sites have a small padlock symbol in the task bar.
- If you use chatrooms or network sites, understand the importance of protecting your privacy online. Remember that not everyone you chat to is who they say they are.
- Look for parental controls on internet browsers.
- The internet can be fun and useful.
- Use an anti-virus programme.
- Keep your personal details safe. Always read a website's privacy policy before giving personal information.
- The internet can be used for child abuse. If your children or grandchildren use your computer ensure they also know about the risks and only visit websites that are suitable for their age.

### Useful contacts

- **Internet Watch Foundation**  
[www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk)
- **Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)**  
0870 000 3344  
[www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)
- **[www.chatdanger.com](http://www.chatdanger.com)**  
(advice on staying safe in chatrooms)
- **[www.fraudwatchinternational.com](http://www.fraudwatchinternational.com)**  
(advice on internet safety, protecting your computer, latest scams and frauds)



Try to ensure the stairs and living areas are well lit and the floor is free of objects which may cause you to trip. Try to replace worn carpets or rugs or make them non-slip and tape down curled edges. If you spill something on the floor clear it up immediately to reduce the chance of slipping. In your bathroom you could use non-slip mats in the bath or shower and handles to help you get in and out of the bath/shower safely. Handrails on both sides of the stairs can also help avoid falls.

If you fall - call for help, keep yourself warm and cover yourself with anything available. Try to keep moving as much as you are able, even if it's just by flexing your muscles or rocking gently from side to side. Rest before you try to get up but don't try to get up if you've badly injured yourself.

- Reduce the risk of falling - keep clutter off the floor and stairs, wear sensible footwear.
- Speak to your GP if you think your medicines are affecting your balance.
- Speak to your GP if you have fallen more than once in the past three months or if you don't remember why you've fallen.

# Keeping yourself safe - preventing falls

- Check your home for any hazards.
- Keep your phone within easy reach and near to a list of useful numbers for use in an emergency.

Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association offer a Carelink community alarm service and Age UK can provide a personal alarm with a push button pendant or wristband connected to their 24 hour emergency response centre.

Aragon Housing Association provides assistive technology or 'telecare' services for Bedfordshire residents. The aim of the service is to enable you to remain living in your home safely for as long as possible and to give you, your relatives and carers peace of mind.

The main piece of telecare equipment is called the Lifeline unit, which links to your existing telephone line to enable you to contact the control centre. Additional equipment works with the Lifeline unit to raise the alarm if required. This is a range of high tech safety devices including detectors for falls, temperature extremes, carbon monoxide, flood and movement, whilst a special bed occupancy sensor can automatically switch on your lights when you get out of bed.

## Useful contacts

- **Aragon Housing Association**  
01525 840505 or  
01767 685800  
Email [enquiry@aragon-housing.co.uk](mailto:enquiry@aragon-housing.co.uk)  
[www.aragon-housing.co.uk/telecare](http://www.aragon-housing.co.uk/telecare)
- **Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association Retirement Services Manager**  
01234 716420
- **Age Concern Bedfordshire**  
01234 215995
- **Age UK**  
0800 77 22 66  
[www.ageuk.org.uk/alarm](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/alarm)



- Secure your home so you feel safe.
- Don't let strangers into your home and check identification thoroughly.
- Don't buy from doorstep callers - get quotes for work on your home and use recommended contractors. Do not part with money before any work has been satisfactorily completed. You could use the council's Trading Standards Approved list.
- Keep your keys safe.
- Don't leave money or important things by the window or leave doors unlocked.
- Don't borrow money from doorstep lenders - it's expensive and stressful. The Bedford Credit Union may be able to help.

# Keeping yourself safe - reducing the risks at home

## **Secure windows and doors**

Make sure windows or doors are not unlocked when you are out or sleeping. All external doors should be fitted with five-lever mortice locks. Window locks can be fitted by a qualified locksmith or in some circumstances, through a Home Improvement Agency such as 'Care and Repair' or the Bedfordshire Police Partnership Trust Bobby Van Scheme. Make sure you have a chain on your front door and ensure it is in place when you open the door.

## **Bogus callers and doorstep sales**

Sometimes people may try to gain entry to your property by pretending they are from a reputable organisation. Always ask for identification and check it carefully. Telephone their company to confirm their identity if you have any doubts or call the police. Areas within Bedfordshire are designated as a 'No Cold Calling Zone' to discourage door to door calling and offer protection.

Don't feel pressurised into paying for things sold at the door. By law you must be given time to think about any purchase made on the doorstep. You could ask them to come back when someone else is with you.

## **Useful contacts**

- **Consumer Direct**  
08454 04 05 06
- **Bedfordshire Police**  
01234 841212
- **Central Bedfordshire Trading Standards**  
0300 300 8136
- **Bedford Borough Trading Standards**  
01234 267422
- **Bogus caller hotline**  
08454 04 05 06
- **Bedford Credit Union**  
01234 346352  
[www.bedfordcreditunion.org.uk](http://www.bedfordcreditunion.org.uk)
- **Bobby Van Scheme**  
01234 842619



- Reduce your risk of an attack by sticking to main routes.
- Keep your house keys separate from your other possessions so that if your bag or wallet is stolen, the thief doesn't have your address, keys and personal information.
- Keep your possessions with you and do not leave them unattended. Don't resist if someone tries to snatch your things - you could get hurt.
- Never keep your PIN with your bank card.
- Don't give your bank card/PIN details to anyone.
- Other information about personal safety is available from the police.
- Consider having a mobile phone for use in an emergency.

## Keeping yourself safe - when out and about

When making any journey it is best to let someone else know what your travel details are and what your destination time is likely to be and let them know as soon as you arrive. That way if there is a problem they could raise an alarm.

### **Cash points**

When you need to withdraw money from a cash point, try to do this in daytime when it is light and more people are around. Ensure no one can see you enter your PIN number and put your money away before you leave the cash point.

### **Parking**

Try to avoid parking in isolated places and at night, park in well-lit areas. Do not leave any items or valuables in sight within your vehicle, always put items in the boot or where possible take valuables with you.

### **Walking**

Always keep to the pavement where possible and stick to well-lit areas. Keep your possessions close to you and be aware of what is happening around you. If you are walking in the dark, reflective or light coloured clothing will make you more visible.

### **Useful contacts**

- **Bedfordshire Police**  
01234 841212
- **Always call 999 in an emergency**

### **Using a taxi**

When travelling by taxi make sure it is a licensed taxi or a private hire vehicle. Ask to see the driver's badge as this will prove they are a licensed driver and have been vetted.



The councils' websites and offices can also provide details of voluntary schemes including The Villager and Roadrunner in Bedford Borough and Wanderbus, Flittabus and the Ivel Sprinter in Central Bedfordshire.

Visit: [www.bedford.gov.uk/timetables](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/timetables)  
[www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/bustimetables](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/bustimetables)

# Keeping yourself safe - on public transport

## Planning your journey

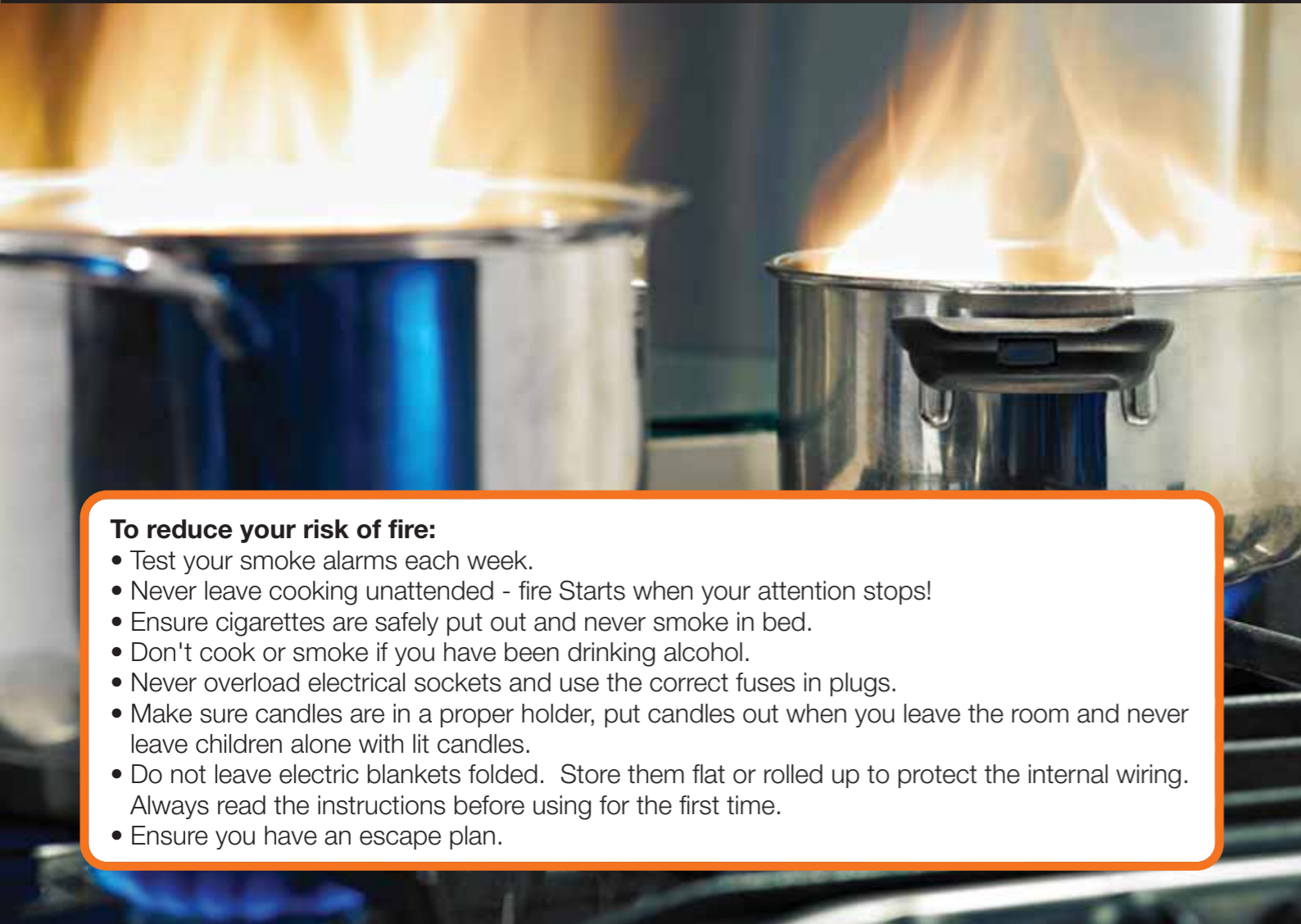
Try to plan your route in advance. To plan a journey by public transport or walking, visit the national Traveline website [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info) or call 0871 200 22 33.

You can reduce the amount of cash you need to carry by obtaining a free concessionary bus pass. If you are of state retirement age, or you have a qualifying disability, you are entitled to apply for a pass which offers free off-peak bus travel throughout England, as well as discounted travel on some train and coach services. Contact your local authority for details of how to apply.

Have your ticket or change handy and your purse/wallet in a safe place. If you are travelling in the dark try to avoid using isolated bus stops or sitting in a train carriage alone. On a bus sit near the driver and on the train try to sit in a compartment with other people. In addition to services operated by commercial bus companies, there are a number of community transport services for people who are unable to use public transport.

## Community Transport Services

- **Door to Door (Bedford)**  
01234 345327
- **The Buzzer (Leighton Buzzard and Linslade)**  
01525 853566
- **South Bedfordshire Dial-a-Ride**  
01525 222331
- **Link-a-Ride (Mid Bedfordshire)**  
01525 840511



**To reduce your risk of fire:**

- Test your smoke alarms each week.
- Never leave cooking unattended - fire Starts when your attention stops!
- Ensure cigarettes are safely put out and never smoke in bed.
- Don't cook or smoke if you have been drinking alcohol.
- Never overload electrical sockets and use the correct fuses in plugs.
- Make sure candles are in a proper holder, put candles out when you leave the room and never leave children alone with lit candles.
- Do not leave electric blankets folded. Store them flat or rolled up to protect the internal wiring. Always read the instructions before using for the first time.
- Ensure you have an escape plan.

# Keeping yourself safe - protecting your home from fire

Always ensure that you:

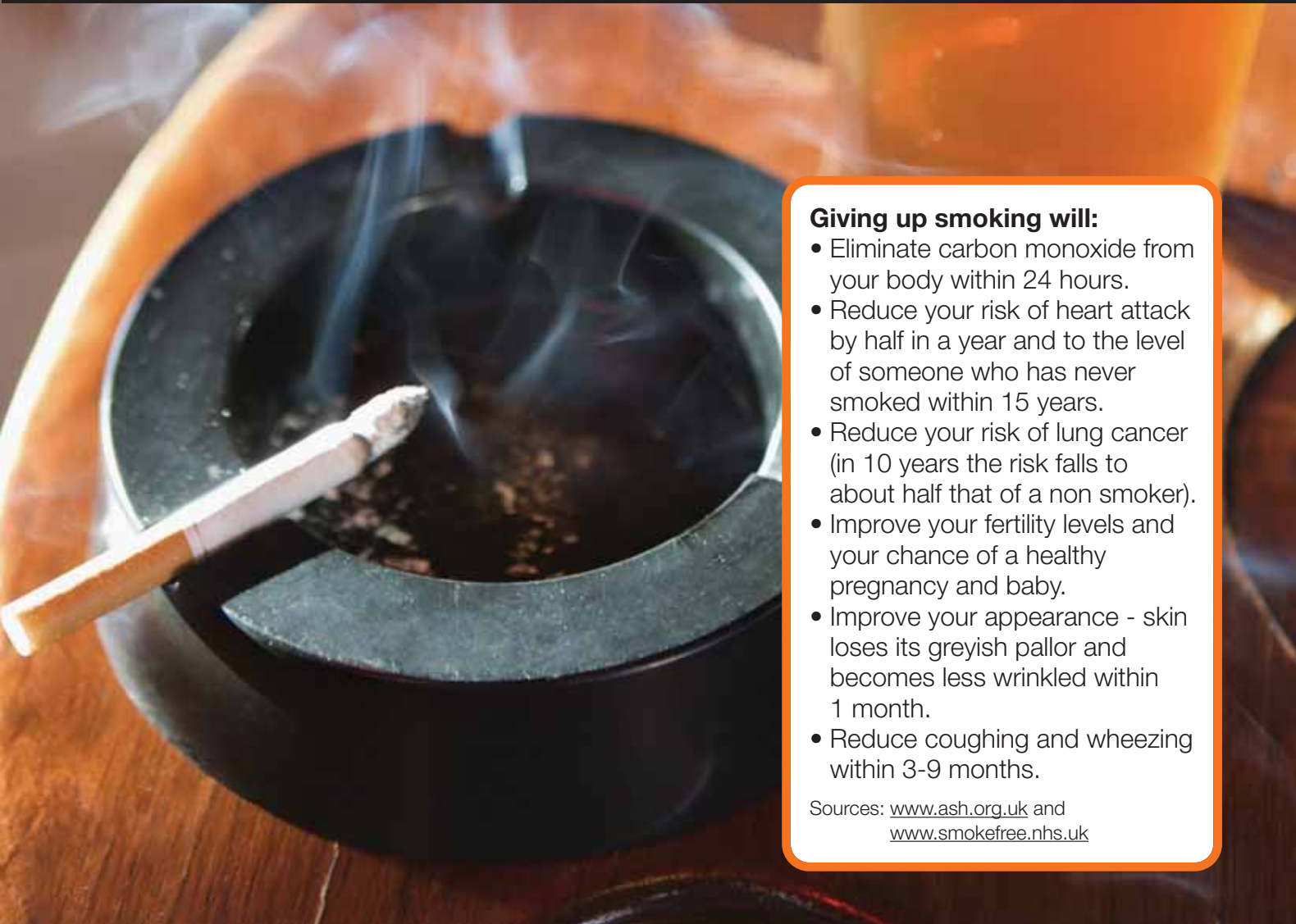
- Check your home for any hazards;
- Keep your phone within easy reach and near to a list of useful numbers for use in an emergency;
- Have a carbon monoxide alarm (if you have gas appliances or a gas boiler); and,
- Have a working smoke alarm on every floor of your home.

Try to use a kettle with a coiled flex, and only boil enough water for your immediate needs. Always run cold water first when having a bath or shower. You may want to consider having thermostatically controlled taps fitted. Keep saucepan handles on cooking appliances away from the reach of children.

You should ensure that you have working smoke alarms fitted to your home with a minimum of one smoke alarm per floor. Bedfordshire & Luton Fire & Rescue Service provide free Home Fire Safety Checks and FREE smoke alarms. To request a FREE Home Fire Safety Check call 0800 043 5042.

**Useful contacts**

- **Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service**  
01234 845000
- **For a Home Fire Safety Check contact**  
0800 043 5042



**Giving up smoking will:**

- Eliminate carbon monoxide from your body within 24 hours.
- Reduce your risk of heart attack by half in a year and to the level of someone who has never smoked within 15 years.
- Reduce your risk of lung cancer (in 10 years the risk falls to about half that of a non smoker).
- Improve your fertility levels and your chance of a healthy pregnancy and baby.
- Improve your appearance - skin loses its greyish pallor and becomes less wrinkled within 1 month.
- Reduce coughing and wheezing within 3-9 months.

Sources: [www.ash.org.uk](http://www.ash.org.uk) and [www.smokefree.nhs.uk](http://www.smokefree.nhs.uk)

# Looking after your health - general wellbeing

**Healthy eating**

Balance is the key to getting your diet right. Your diet should include starchy foods such as rice and pasta, protein such as meat, fish, soya products and dairy products such as milk and cheese and fruit and vegetables. Try to avoid too much fat and sugar. Avoid processed foods and fast food, eat sensible sized portions and drink plenty of water.

**Exercise**

Maintaining good physical fitness will help you maintain your independence and wellbeing. All adults should try to fit in 30 minutes of physical activity every day. This can be all at once or in 10 minute sessions. The type of activity you do can depend on your age, general health and your current fitness.

**Smoking**

Giving up smoking has huge health benefits. It is never too late to give up smoking. Just because you've tried to go smoke free before and not succeeded, does not mean you can't do it. Many people make several quit attempts before they succeed long-term. You can do it. Sometimes the thought of stopping is actually much worse than stopping itself.

**Useful contacts**

- **Your GP**
- **NHS Direct**  
0845 4647  
[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)
- **Diabetes UK Careline**  
0845 120 2960
- **Bedfordshire Stop Smoking**  
0800 013 0553
- [www.ash.org.uk](http://www.ash.org.uk)
- [www.smokefree.nhs.uk](http://www.smokefree.nhs.uk)



### **Sexual abuse and rape**

Everyone has the right to say no to unwanted physical and sexual activity. This may be the unwanted penetration of any bodily orifice, sexual harassment (verbal, physical or via text and email), forced to have body photographs or videos and/or forced to look at others.

Sexual abuse can be by people you know well as well as strangers.

- Look after yourself - it's your right to say no at any time.
- Avoid being alone with people you do not know well.
- Avoid being alone in places that you do not know well.
- Always let someone know where you are going and when you are due back.

# Looking after your health - sexual health and abuse

Sexual health is important. A sex life free from exploitation is essential to most people irrespective of age or disability. Protecting yourself from unwanted pregnancies or Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) is part of good sexual health.

### **Contraception**

Contraception is available to all women and men who are sexually active and wish to avoid unwanted pregnancy. A full range of contraceptive services is offered by specialist sexual health services at your GPs surgery. This service is confidential.

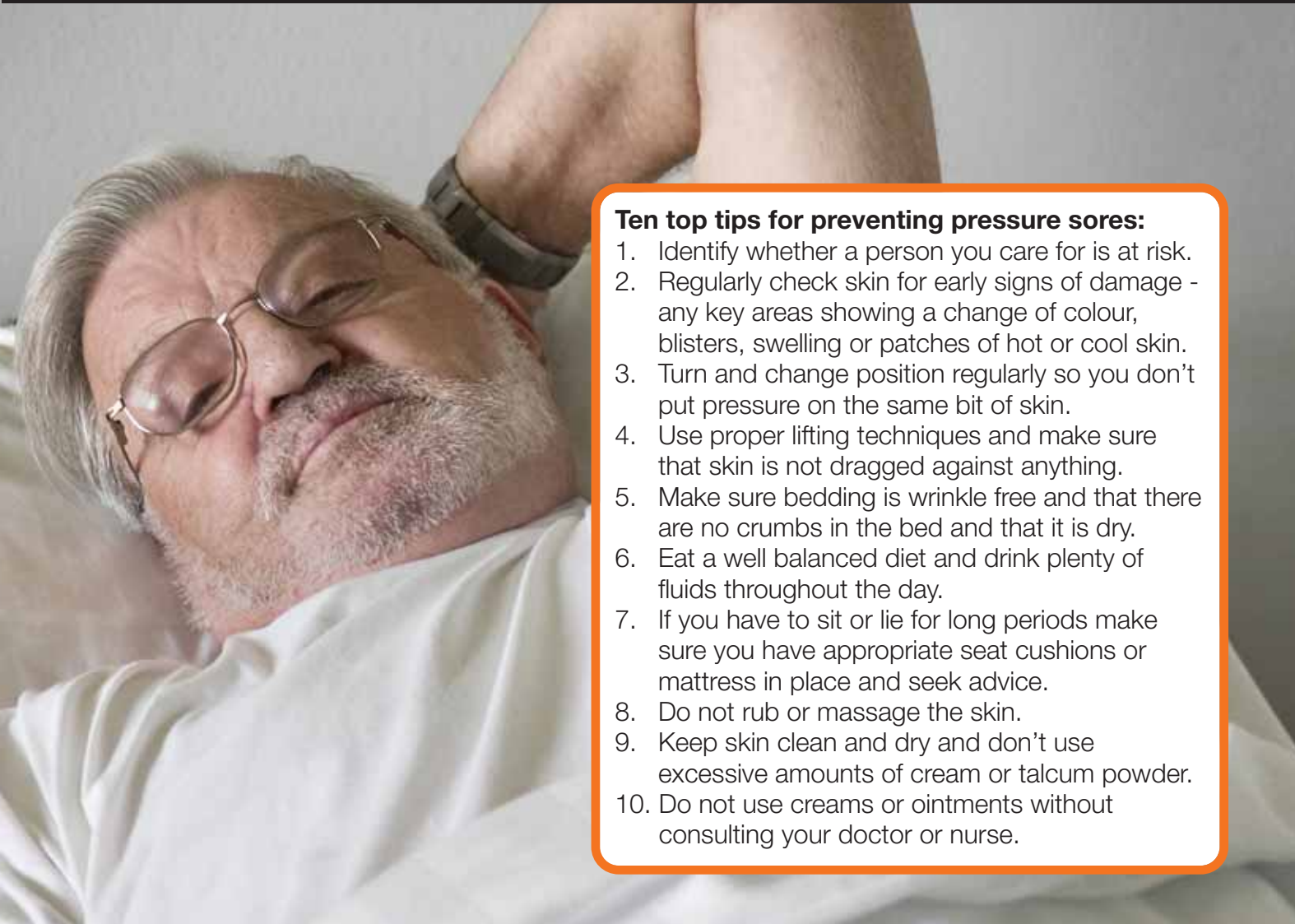
### **Screening and treatment for Sexually Transmitted Infections**

As well as the risk of unwanted pregnancy, unprotected sex, for example not using a condom, can result in common Sexually Transmitted Infections such as Chlamydia. Screening and treatment is also available from your local Health Centre.

- Look after yourself - use a condom to help prevent unwanted pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).
- Go for regular cervical and testicular screening.

### **Useful contacts**

- **Rape Crisis**  
0808 802 9999
- **Your GP**
- **NHS Direct**  
0845 4647  
[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

**Ten top tips for preventing pressure sores:**

1. Identify whether a person you care for is at risk.
2. Regularly check skin for early signs of damage - any key areas showing a change of colour, blisters, swelling or patches of hot or cool skin.
3. Turn and change position regularly so you don't put pressure on the same bit of skin.
4. Use proper lifting techniques and make sure that skin is not dragged against anything.
5. Make sure bedding is wrinkle free and that there are no crumbs in the bed and that it is dry.
6. Eat a well balanced diet and drink plenty of fluids throughout the day.
7. If you have to sit or lie for long periods make sure you have appropriate seat cushions or mattress in place and seek advice.
8. Do not rub or massage the skin.
9. Keep skin clean and dry and don't use excessive amounts of cream or talcum powder.
10. Do not use creams or ointments without consulting your doctor or nurse.

# Looking after your health - preventing pressure sores

Pressure sores are painful sores which occur when the blood supply to parts of the body is interrupted and skin and underlying tissue become damaged. In very serious cases, the underlying muscle and bone can also be damaged. People who are unable to move some or all of their body due to illness, paralysis or advanced age often develop pressure sores.

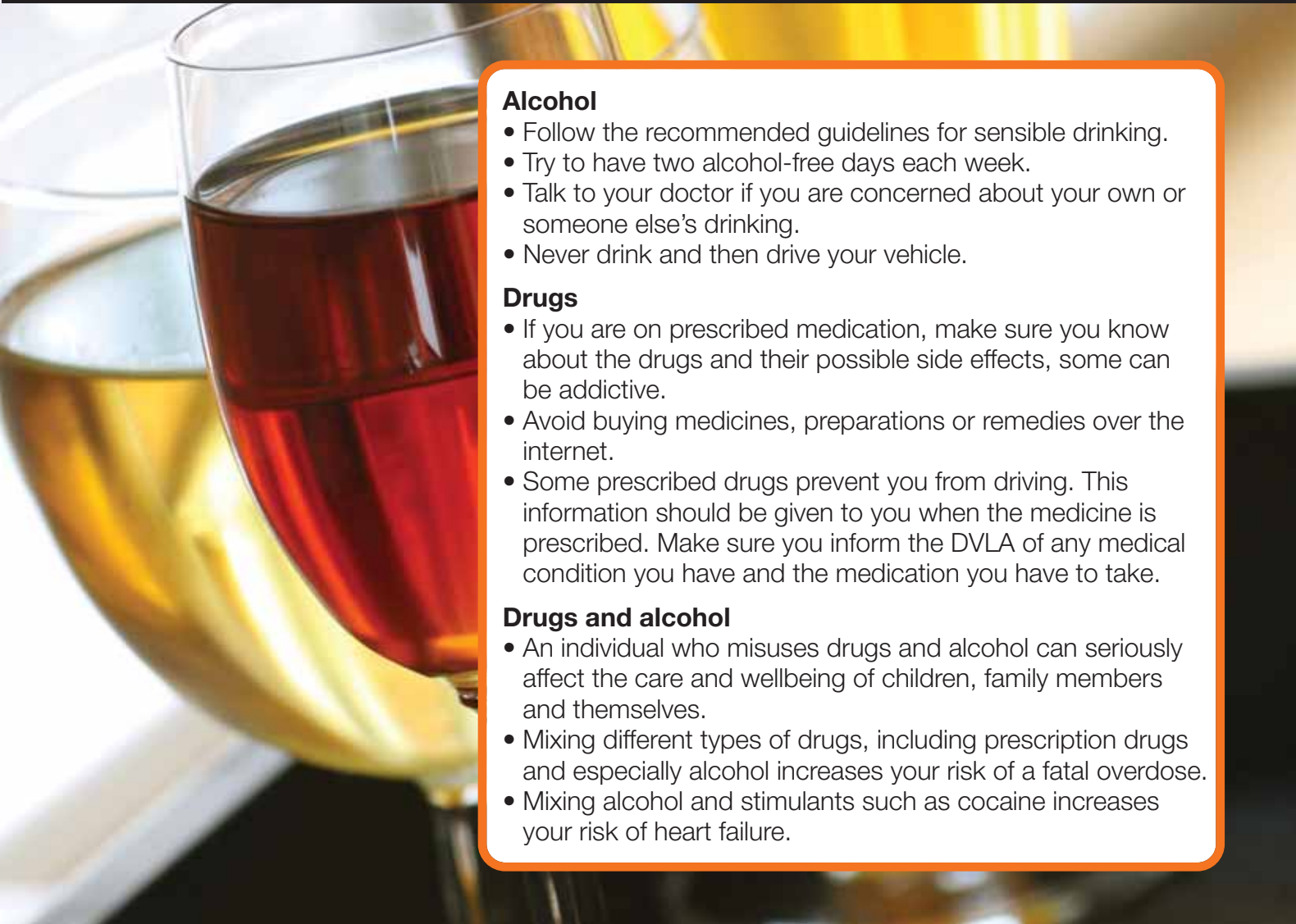
If a person is unable to move regularly, for example due to illness, injury, or paralysis, pressure sores can quickly develop, sometimes over the course of a few hours.

If you notice any possible signs of damage such as areas of discolouration and patches of skin that feel unusually spongy, or tough to the touch, you should contact your GP or your healthcare team.

Making regular and frequent changes to your position is one of the most effective ways of preventing pressure sores. If you are unable to change position yourself, a carer, or relative, will be required to assist you.

**Seek medical advice if more than two of these conditions apply:**

- You are over 65.
- You can't move easily.
- Is your skin dry, sweaty or red?
- Are you heavy or thin?
- Are you eating well or have you lost weight?
- Have you had a recent blood test?
- Are you diabetic?
- Do you use a wheelchair?
- Are you bedridden?
- Do you have another health condition such as dementia or chest problems?



### **Alcohol**

- Follow the recommended guidelines for sensible drinking.
- Try to have two alcohol-free days each week.
- Talk to your doctor if you are concerned about your own or someone else's drinking.
- Never drink and then drive your vehicle.

### **Drugs**

- If you are on prescribed medication, make sure you know about the drugs and their possible side effects, some can be addictive.
- Avoid buying medicines, preparations or remedies over the internet.
- Some prescribed drugs prevent you from driving. This information should be given to you when the medicine is prescribed. Make sure you inform the DVLA of any medical condition you have and the medication you have to take.

### **Drugs and alcohol**

- An individual who misuses drugs and alcohol can seriously affect the care and wellbeing of children, family members and themselves.
- Mixing different types of drugs, including prescription drugs and especially alcohol increases your risk of a fatal overdose.
- Mixing alcohol and stimulants such as cocaine increases your risk of heart failure.

# Alcohol and drugs - useful things to know

### **Drugs**

Substance or drug misuse is not just about illegal drugs such as heroin and cocaine. A person can become addicted to prescribed medication such as painkillers and sleeping tablets, when there is no clinical need for the individual to take them.

### **Alcohol**

Many people enjoy drinking alcohol but it is important to think about the effects on your health. One unit of alcohol is the equivalent to roughly one pub measure of spirits, a half pint of lager, a small glass of wine or a small sherry. However, the measures that you pour at home are likely to be larger than pub measures, and contain more units of alcohol.

It is recommended that men drink no more than three to four units of alcohol a day and women no more than two to three units of alcohol a day (with two days off per week). Older people may be more susceptible to the effect of alcohol, so drinking less is recommended.

Sometimes tablets and medicines cause problems with alcohol and you may need to stop drinking altogether. Always check with your doctor or pharmacist before drinking if you are taking medication.

### **Where can I get help?**

#### **Alcohol**

- **Your GP**
- **Drinkline** (24 hour confidential advice)  
0800 917 8282

#### **Drugs**

- **Bedfordshire Drug and Alcohol Information Line**  
01234 332901



- Try to find support from your family, friends and other carers.
- A carers assessment by Social Services is a way of finding out what help you need with caring, help to maintain your own health and wellbeing with your life, work and family commitments.
- Financial support may be available.
- Looking after yourself - your health (emotional and physical) and wellbeing are very important.
- Try to keep doing your hobbies and meeting friends.
- Let your GP know you are a carer so they can support you by looking after your health.
- You are not alone. Ask for help.

# Caring for someone else - you are not alone

You are a carer if you are looking after someone else because of age, illness or disability. This could be your spouse, partner, parent, another relative or a friend.

Being a carer can be very rewarding, but it is also hard work. You will face issues you may not have had to deal with before and it can be hard to adjust to having someone dependent on you for support.

Being a carer can mean major changes in your life as well as the life of the person you are caring for. You may need to make practical changes with adaptations and improvements to your home such as bath rails or making a home suitable for wheelchair access.

If you feel under pressure there are people who can help (see Useful contacts).

You may be entitled to a carers assessment by Social Services if you are providing a substantial amount of care on a regular basis, (see Useful contacts).

## Useful contacts

- **Carers in Bedfordshire**  
01234 214914  
[www.carersinbeds.co.uk](http://www.carersinbeds.co.uk)
- **Carers UK Advice Line** 0808 808 7777
- **Benefit Enquiry Line** 0800 882 200
- **Central Bedfordshire Council Carers Helpline** 0300 300 8303
- **Bedford Borough Council** 01234 267422



- Share your loss - talking can help ease the pain.
- Loss or death affects everyone differently.
- Expect your emotions to change from one moment to the next. Grieving takes time and you will have good days and more difficult days.
- Look after yourself in your grief and seek support.
- Understand the process of grieving.

# Coping with loss - your changing emotions

Loss can take many forms such as divorce, separation or the death of someone you love and it is difficult for everyone to cope with. It is important to ensure that people who have experienced a loss in their life have as much support as possible and are reassured that others understand what they are going through.

If you have experienced bereavement, ask someone to help you with the practical tasks such as letting people know what has happened and making any necessary arrangements. Many people find that doing something practical can help them cope and come to accept what has happened.

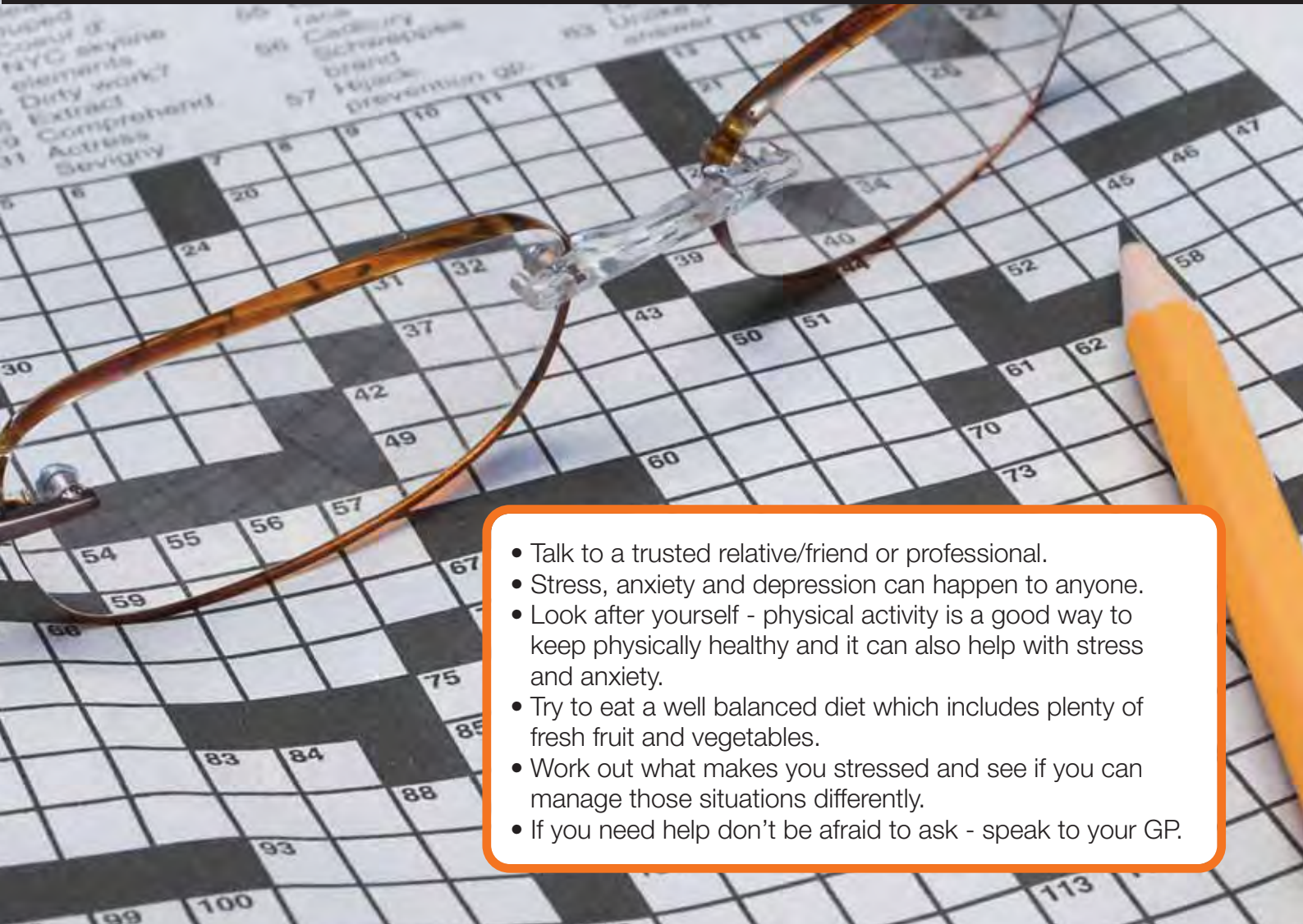
Loss can lead to people experiencing different feelings at different times. They may feel numb as they try to grasp the full impact of what has happened. There may be times when they are angry with themselves, perhaps because of something that they said or left unsaid, or with others and even the person they have lost. Sometimes there is a sense of relief that the person is no longer suffering, perhaps mixed with guilt at feeling this way. People go through many different emotions and this is normal and part of the grieving process.

## How you can help

- Listen - talking to others can help ease the grieving process.
- Access other support - friends or a bereavement counsellor.
- Be there for them.

Remember, it is okay to laugh and have fun - it doesn't mean you are grieving any less!

- **Cruse Bereavement Care Bedfordshire**  
01234 841415  
[www.crusebedfordshire.org.uk](http://www.crusebedfordshire.org.uk)



- Talk to a trusted relative/friend or professional.
- Stress, anxiety and depression can happen to anyone.
- Look after yourself - physical activity is a good way to keep physically healthy and it can also help with stress and anxiety.
- Try to eat a well balanced diet which includes plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Work out what makes you stressed and see if you can manage those situations differently.
- If you need help don't be afraid to ask - speak to your GP.

# Mental health and wellbeing

## Recognising there's a problem

There are many changes in life that can lead to anxiety, loss of confidence and depression, such as bereavement, loss of health or mobility, moving home, problems at work or home, retirement or financial problems. It is normal to feel anxious sometimes but if your anxiety is affecting your daily life then it is a problem you need to address.

It can be difficult to tell the difference between feeling low or miserable and having a depressive illness. The symptoms of depression can include a loss of appetite, weight loss, difficulty sleeping and a lack of energy and motivation. It is normal to experience one or two of these at any time, but if you are affected by several, talk to your GP.

Dementia or progressive brain dysfunction is a common concern for many as they grow older. Symptoms such as forgetfulness, confusion and emotional outbursts may not be recognised as dementia at first but may gradually worsen. If you think you, your spouse or partner is being affected by dementia, speak to your GP.

## Useful contacts

- **Your GP**
- **Bedford Wellbeing Information Point**  
01234 343969  
Email: [infopoint@beds  
andlutonmind.org.uk](mailto:infopoint@bedsandlutonmind.org.uk)
- **Local Mental Health NHS Trust Patient Advice and Liaison Service**  
0800 0131 223
- **NHS Direct**  
0845 4647
- **SANE Helpline**  
0845 767 8000

## Useful national contacts

### Age UK

0800 169 6565  
[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

### Alcoholics Anonymous

0845 769 7555  
[www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

### Broken Rainbow Helpline

Domestic Abuse Line for Lesbian,  
Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual  
0300 999 5428  
[www.broken-rainbow.org.uk](http://www.broken-rainbow.org.uk)

### Crime Stoppers

0800 555 111  
[www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)

### Crossroads

Caring for Carers 0845 450 0350  
[www.crossroads.org.uk](http://www.crossroads.org.uk)

### Cruse Bereavement Care

0844 477 9400  
[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

### Domestic Abuse Men's Advice Line

0808 801 0327  
[www.mensadviceline.org.uk](http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk)

### Drinkline

0800 917 8282  
24 hour Confidential Advice

### Emergency

Police, Ambulance, Fire and  
Rescue, Coast Guard, Mountain  
Rescue 999

### Family Lives

0808 800 2222  
[www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)

### Floodline

0845 988 1188  
[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

### Forced Marriage Unit (FMU)

020 7008 0151  
[www.fco.gov.uk/forcedmarriage](http://www.fco.gov.uk/forcedmarriage)

### National Domestic Violence Helpline

0808 2000 247  
[www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)  
[www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)

### NHS Direct

0845 4647  
[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

### NHS Smoking Helpline

0800 022 4 332  
[www.smokefree.nhs.uk](http://www.smokefree.nhs.uk)

### Respect

Helpline for Perpetrators of  
Domestic Abuse  
0845 122 8609  
[www.respect.uk.net](http://www.respect.uk.net)

### Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)

0121 248 2000  
[www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)

### Stop Hate UK

0800 138 1625

### Victim Support

0845 30 30 900  
[www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

### Other useful websites:

[www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)  
[www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org)  
[www.dofe.org](http://www.dofe.org)  
[www.rd4u.org.uk](http://www.rd4u.org.uk)

## Useful local contacts

### Age Concern Bedfordshire

01234 215995

### Aragon Housing Association

01525 840505 or 01767 685800  
Email: [enquiry@aragon-housing.co.uk](mailto:enquiry@aragon-housing.co.uk)  
[www.aragon-housing.co.uk/telecare](http://www.aragon-housing.co.uk/telecare)

### Bedford Borough Council Adult Safeguarding Team

01234 276222  
Email:  
[adult.protection@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:adult.protection@bedford.gov.uk)

### Bedford Borough Council

01234 267422

### Bedford Borough Council Community Safety Team

01234 276037

### Bedford Borough Council Trading Standards

01234 267422

### Bedford Credit Union

01234 346352  
[www.bedfordcreditunion.org.uk](http://www.bedfordcreditunion.org.uk)

### Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service

01234 351081

### Bedfordshire Domestic Violence Partnership

0300 300 5168  
[www.bedsdv.org.uk](http://www.bedsdv.org.uk)

### Bedfordshire Drug and Alcohol Information Line

01234 332901

### Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association Retirement Services Manager

01234 716420

### Bedfordshire Police

01234 841212

### Bobby Van Scheme

01234 842619

### Bogus caller hotline

08454 04 05 06

### Carers in Bedfordshire

01234 214914  
[www.carersinbeds.co.uk](http://www.carersinbeds.co.uk)

### Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Adults Helpline

0300 300 8122  
Email: [adult.protection@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:adult.protection@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

### Central Bedfordshire Council Antisocial Behaviour Team

0300 300 8002

### Central Bedfordshire Council Carers Helpline

0300 300 8303

### Central Bedfordshire Council Trading Standards

0300 300 8136

### Cruse Bereavement Care Bedfordshire

01234 841415  
[www.crusebedfordshire.org.uk](http://www.crusebedfordshire.org.uk)

### Local Mental Health NHS Trust Patient Advice and Liaison Service

0800 0131 223

### Victim Support Bedfordshire

0845 456 5995

# Central Bedfordshire in contact

## For more information

Për Informacion Per Informazione Za Informacija  
Za Informacije सार्वकारी लछी معلومات के ली  
তথ্যের জন্য برای اطلاع للمعلومات

on the telephone...

**0300 300 8303**

by email...

**customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk**

on the web...

**www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk**

Alternatively, you can write to:

**Central Bedfordshire Council,  
Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands,  
Shefford, Bedfordshire, SG17 5TQ**