



# Festive Update

Seasonal Information for parents and family carers, December 2019



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by Sue on December 15th

First, I want to stress that we welcome parents and family carers of all faiths and none. In December many families will celebrate Hanukkah and Christmas is possibly the biggest annual celebration of all in the UK (whether for religious reasons or not). Let's face it, you can't miss Christmas because it's everywhere - lights and decorations in towns, adverts and shows on TV, in the shops (things to buy and the music!) and trees, decorations and lights both inside and outside homes.

So this seasonal update is all about the festive season - celebrating safely, coping, and technology presents. Before getting to all our links to information, a quick reminder that we can use your used postage stamps to boost funds - just cut them from the envelope (leaving 1 - 2 cm of paper around the stamp) and store them safely. We'll share details of how to get them to us when the Christmas rush has finished (you can collect them for us all year, not just December)!



Image by Gerhard Gellinger from Pixabay

## Celebrating safely

This is a time for celebrating but that can mean doing things we don't usually do or do very often (eg: lighting candles, having strings of lights, travelling to stay with relatives, going to parties). These links are to information which may help your family stay safe.

<http://bit.ly/1M55wFG> - seasonal fire safety

<http://bit.ly/HWFRelec2> - preventing electrical fires

<http://bit.ly/GOVXmassafe1> - 12 rules to shop safely (or check safety of presents?)

<http://bit.ly/CAPTxmas5> - keeping safe over Christmas (CAPT)

<http://bit.ly/CAPTLaser4> - laser pointers and children's eyes (**not** stocking fillers)

[bit.ly/AIChunits2](http://bit.ly/AIChunits2) - drinks calculator (units and calories)

<http://bit.ly/nhsalcfact> - Social drinking, the hidden risks (NHS alcohol facts)

<http://bit.ly/ALCchmap1> - alcohol and your body

<http://bit.ly/FLteenalc11> - Family Lives' advice about teens and drugs/alcohol

<http://bit.ly/ALCchpar2> - alcohol and parenting

<http://bit.ly/ytFIXmixer1> - Mixer, short film about underage drinking

<http://bit.ly/FIXifu2> - If you knew, short film about underage/binge drinking

<http://bit.ly/wmsarhmdry1> - Home & Dry - No More River Deaths (in one year 18 men drowned after drinking on a night out)

<http://bit.ly/m4mcarseat2> - child car seats and sleeping

<http://bit.ly/LLTmatt19> - babies' mattresses and bedding (including travel cots)

These links are to information related to illness, accidents and accessing health help during the festive period:

<http://bit.ly/NHScold19> - treating colds

<http://bit.ly/NHSnoro19> - norovirus (winter vomiting bug)

<http://bit.ly/nhssaf2chk> - how to help a choking child

<http://bit.ly/SJAasma> - asthma, symptoms and first aid

<http://bit.ly/219VMDG> - baby CPR song

<http://bit.ly/1WGde4j> - the Chokeables, how to save a choking baby

<http://bit.ly/llytbabychk2> - Lullaby Trust Baby Check App (Apple)

<http://bit.ly/llytbabychkg3> - Lullaby Trust Baby Check App (Google Play)

<http://bit.ly/BRC1AidApp> - first aid apps

<http://bit.ly/NHSpharm> - pharmacy opening times in the West Midlands

<http://bit.ly/2ewSLOL> - live info about waiting times/patient numbers at the county's A&E departments/minor injury units

## Coping with the festive season

Although this is a time when people can seem kinder than usual and many are generous, it can also be stressful and feel competitive (eg: who has the best decorated Christmas tree? how much did the presents cost? how many presents did your child get?). There are other reasons why many people find December a difficult month:

- it's the start of winter and anyone with Seasonal Affective Disorder may struggle;
- towns can be crowded with shoppers which can be challenging for those with anxiety;
- there's a general idea that everyone should be happy (whether they celebrate Christmas or not) - that can cause problems for those with depression or who are grieving;
- usual routines change and that can be difficult for anyone with an autistic spectrum condition;
- some people can [feel lonely](#) or isolated, eg: parents who are separated or divorced.

The following links may be useful for getting through the season; although many of the following mention Christmas, they should be useful generally at this time of year:

<http://bit.ly/FLxmassurv> - surviving Christmas (Family Lives)

<http://bit.ly/KNXmaswtd1> - what to do if you find Christmas difficult (Kind Natured/Young Minds)

<http://bit.ly/FLXmasbud14> - Christmas on a budget (Family Lives)

<http://bit.ly/mhfmanstr9> - how to manage and reduce stress (Mental Health Foundation)

<http://bit.ly/mhslp1> - how to sleep better (Mental Health Foundation - general advice!)

<http://bit.ly/BLFfestsc1> - self-care for the festive season

<http://bit.ly/pvymannx1> - how to help your child if Christmas makes them anxious (Young Minds)  
<http://bit.ly/MINDxmas7> - coping with anxiety and depression at Christmas (MIND)  
<http://bit.ly/mhxmas1> - mental health at Christmas (Mental Health Foundation)  
<http://bit.ly/anxtip1> - simple tip #1 (of 6) to reduce anxiety (Jane Evans)  
<http://bit.ly/MINDsad6> - Seasonal Affective Disorder (MIND)  
<http://bit.ly/BLsad16> - Getting through the winter months with SAD (Blurt Foundation)  
<http://bit.ly/BEATxm17> - coping with an eating disorder at Christmas  
<http://bit.ly/edxmas17> - support at Christmas for someone with an eating disorder  
<http://bit.ly/2edxmas1> - eating disorder recovery at Christmas  
<http://bit.ly/YMxmsfd19> - "My tricky relationship with food at Christmas (Young Minds)  
<http://bit.ly/YMbologcd> - What it's like to have OCD at Christmas (Young Minds)  
<http://bit.ly/Xmasdep1> - depression at Christmas  
<http://bit.ly/cwmtdep> - parent's guide to depression (Charlie Waller Memorial Trust)  
<http://bit.ly/CFXmas1> - coping with Christmas, bereaved parents (Compassionate Friends)  
<http://bit.ly/WWXmas2> - 10 ways to remember people at Christmas (Winston's Wish)  
<http://bit.ly/METxmas> - it's OK to grieve at Christmas (Metro article)  
<http://bit.ly/RELXmas1> - co-parenting at Christmas (Relate)  
<http://bit.ly/FLXmasdiv13> - coping with Christmas if you're divorced/separated (Family Lives)  
<http://bit.ly/PAPxmas1> - loneliness at Christmas (Loneliness is more likely to affect young people than older people!) (Papyrus Trust)

The Samaritans have a free helpline 24/7 - ring 116 123 at any time. Young Minds have a 24/7 [Crisis Messenger](#) for anyone under the age of 25 experiencing a mental health crisis, simply text YM to 85258 (texts should be free), You can read more about it here: <http://bit.ly/YMcrisis5>.

NSPCC's [Childline](#) will be open throughout the festive period for anyone up to the age of 19. The number is 0800 1111.

Cruse Bereavement Care's helpline will be open on Christmas Day until 8pm: 0808 808 1677.





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## Technology presents

Is your child getting a new phone or games console? Do you need some information about setting controls? Read on, these links are to lots of useful information about technology!

- <http://bit.ly/IMXmas7> - online safety tips for Christmas
- <http://bit.ly/SICnflix19> - setting up parental controls on Netflix
- <http://bit.ly/IMsmrtspk19> - smart speaker guide for families
- <http://bit.ly/NSPCcont12> - parental controls
- <http://bit.ly/IMsetup19> - set up children's tech safely
- <http://bit.ly/SICadfp10> - online safety for foster carers and adoptive parents
- <http://bit.ly/TUKjessie47> - Jessie and friends: online safety education for 4 - 7 year olds
- <http://bit.ly/IMxmas19> - top video games for children by age
- <http://bit.ly/2aMv3hM> - gaming (Family Lives)
- <http://bit.ly/IMgamtip6> - online gaming top tips for parents
- <http://bit.ly/IMamazgm1> - video games to play together
- <http://bit.ly/NAwRInst1> - Instagram: a guide for parents
- <http://bit.ly/BTsnap2> - using Snapchat safely
- <http://bit.ly/snapsafe1> - how to keep children safe on Snapchat
- <http://bit.ly/flsocmedgd9> - Family Lives' guide for parents to Snapchat, Instagram and more
- <http://bit.ly/2OCK6u6> - grandparents' guide to online safety
- <http://bit.ly/TuKund5saf> - keeping your under 5 safe online
- <http://bit.ly/IMapps19> - apps guide for parents

<http://bit.ly/IMforest19> - Forest app to manage screen time

If you're online before Christmas you can use Norad's site to track Santa -  
<https://www.noradsanta.org/>.

Merry Christmas!

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You are welcome to share this update (or parts of it) with your friends or groups, but please mention that it came from [Parents' Voice](#) if you do, thanks.

Thank you for your support throughout 2019, we really do appreciate it :)

Sue and the Parents' Voice Committee

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