

A rise in stress levels as a result of the coronavirus pandemic was a key factor in setting up an emotional health and well-being phone line for people aged 18 years and above at St Germain's Church in Birmingham.



The service, launched this week, offers a non-judgemental 'listening ear', self-help strategies and skills for managing difficult emotions and stressful situations and support accessing other services. It is run by trained practitioners and serves an area slightly larger than the parish in north Edgbaston. Vicar Revd Dr Sarah Hayes said the service had been in the pipeline for around a year but increased levels of stress because of the pandemic had been a catalyst to setting it up: 'In a time of such stress, we're aware that many people live alone, can't meet up with others, and don't have access to on-line resources. As a church community we've recognised the challenges to everyone's mental health that are likely to be with us for some time, and are pleased to be able to offer support to our wider community.'

The phone line, with only 15 weeks funding so far, is in addition to a hot meal and food parcel service provided by the parish that has been running for the past eight weeks. Eight weeks ago St Germain's started by providing about 20 hot meals a week to isolating and shielded members of its congregation. This has risen this week to provide 300 hot meals and more than 1000 meals from food parcels to the wider community, These support those self-isolating or shielding during the pandemic, as well as anyone who has lost income or has been put out of work. The number of food parcels being given out increases significantly each week also. Click [here](#) to find out more about the church including how to donate to its work.

Explore the Church of England website to read the [mental health reflections](#) and explore further support available.

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