

## Service User Briefing COVID-19

### Latest Government Advice

The advice is to follow these main guidelines.

1. The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are the recent onset of a new continuous cough and/or high temperature. **If you have these symptoms, however mild, stay at home and do not leave your house for 10 days from when your symptoms started.** You do not need to call NHS 111 to go into self-isolation. If your symptoms worsen during home isolation or are no better after 7 days, contact [NHS 111 online](#). If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111. For a medical emergency, dial 999.
2. Wash your hands more often than usual, for 20 seconds using soap and hot water, particularly after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose, or after being in public areas where other people are doing so. Use hand sanitiser if there is no hot running water and soap..
3. To reduce the spread of germs when you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, or your sleeve (not your hands) if you do not have a tissue, and throw the tissue away immediately. Then wash your hands as directed above or use a hand sanitising gel.
4. Clean and disinfect regularly touched objects and surfaces using your regular cleaning products to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.
5. For anyone in the household who starts displaying symptoms, they should stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared.

### Social Distancing

Social distancing measures are steps you can take to reduce the social interaction between people. This will help reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

These steps are:

1. Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough
2. Avoid non-essential use of public transport, varying your travel times to avoid rush hour, when possible
3. Work from home, where possible
4. Avoid large gatherings, and gatherings in smaller public spaces such as pubs, cinemas, restaurants, theatres, bars, clubs etc.
5. Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media
6. Use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services

**The Government is advising those who are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) to be particularly stringent in following the social distancing measures.**

At the current time and based on understanding of what is known of COVID-19 and other similar respiratory viruses, it is likely that older people and those with chronic medical conditions may be vulnerable to severe disease. As more information emerges, recommendations may change.

This group includes those who are:

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (i.e. anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):
  - chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
  - chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
  - chronic kidney disease
  - chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
  - chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neuron disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
  - diabetes
  - problems with your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed
  - a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
  - being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
  - those who are pregnant

*Visit the website for Public Health England for further information:*

*WWW.GOV.UK*

## **Vulnerable Groups and Caring Responsibilities**

Please be reassured that we are working to protect service users and staff from any risks and following government guidelines. Careful consideration is being given to all staff work rota's to ensure nobody is put at any undue risk. Please ensure if you have symptoms that you contact our care team as soon as possible to alert us to your situation. Our staff have been asked to do the same should they have any symptoms.

### **Local offices**

Please be reassured at present your local care office will remain open. A number of office staff will be maximising working from home to encourage social distancing which is beneficial to others in the workplace. However all offices will be covered. The person you usually speak to may be working from home but there will always be a member of our team in your local office to talk to should you need support.

## **Home Visits**

All care staff will follow our updated guidelines for visits and will telephone service users before they visit them to assess any risk and to undertake the appropriate risk assessment.

We would like to reassure all service that we are continuing to deliver services in line with government guidelines and we are doing everything we can to avoid disruptions to the services you require. If any service user has any concerns you can still ring your local office as normal. If any service user requires extra support or essential shopping please contact us and we will do everything we can to support your request.

## **Finance Queries and Payments**

All back office functions of the business are now being carried out away from the office remotely. If service users have any financial queries or wish to make a payment then you can still call the Finance Team on 0333 323 1990 selecting option 3.