

Updated Information about COVID-19 – Novel Coronavirus (19th March 2020)

Current situation

As of late on Monday 16th March 2020, we have moved into the next phase of how we look to protect people in the UK from COVID-19 within the “delay” phase of the COVID-19 action plan, which can be found [here](#).

A press conference was held by the Prime Minister, and the Chief Scientific and Medical Officers on 16th March 2020, who set out the new enhanced approach and reasons for it. Please see [here](#) to watch the press conference in full. On 17th March, the Chancellor set out a package of temporary, targeted measures to support public services, people and businesses – see [here](#). Information about the new Coronavirus bill has also been published [here](#).

On 18th March, it was announced that schools would be closing after Friday 20th March 2020, with the exception of school provision needing to be made for children of “key workers”. Increases in testing were also announced.

There are 6 key actions identified as part of the current approach:

1) Washing hands regularly with soap and water is one of the best ways to prevent spread of the infection, and making sure we clean surfaces that are regularly touched with detergents and chlorine based disinfectants (1000 ppm chlorine)

2) Whole household isolation if someone in the household develops COVID-19 symptoms (see below section on Household isolation)

3) Stopping all unnecessary social contact with others and unnecessary travel - this advice is particularly important for people with certain health conditions, people over the age of 70 and pregnant women (see below section on Social distancing advice)

4) Those with the most serious health conditions will be contacted directly on Monday 23rd March about further restrictions, likely to be put in place for around 12 weeks

5) Advice against mass gatherings, as part of reducing social contact, but also ensuring critical workers can be used instead to support COVID-19 work.

6) School closure with the exception of school provision being made for “key workers”, to include health and care workers, supermarket delivery drivers, the police. Further details of the “key worker group” are to be published. Meals and vouchers will be provided for children who usually have free school meals.

Please see [here](#) for national advice documents translated into a range of languages, courtesy of Doctors of the World

Household isolation

Detailed information and advice for the public about what they, and their family contacts, should do can be found [here](#) on the NHS.uk website (and will be regularly updated). There is some very important detail in the Stay at Home guidance, including at what point people are able to come out of self-isolation, which can be found [here](#)

People do not need to phone NHS111 if their symptoms are mild but should do if their symptoms worsen/if they need medical care, or if symptoms do not get better after 7 days. There is also a [111 online service](#) that people are being asked to use in the first instance. Please call 999 in an emergency

Social distancing advice

Information for the public, and particularly for people aged over 70, people with certain health conditions and pregnant women can be found [here](#)

Please see PHE advice against use of COVID rapid tests that are being marketed [here](#)

Department of Education have a helpline up and running to answer questions about COVID-19 related to education:

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Email: DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk

Opening hours: 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday)

It is extremely important, as the national situation evolves, that we think about how we can best support the mental health and wellbeing of people affected by the outbreak – individuals, families, workplaces, schools, as well as people who are working hard to protect the health of our communities. The Mental Health foundation has some good advice [here](#). Also, following simple advice about washing our hands more regularly with soap and water really can make a difference.

Travel advice

Travel advice is changing regularly as the situation changes internationally. The Foreign Office now recommend against all non-essential travel worldwide - see [here](#).

Useful guidance, resources and communications materials,

A helpful list of all national guidance has also been published [here](#), and this contains guidance for a range of partners/sectors, including guidance for educational settings, adult social care settings (including guidance about returning health and care workers), the transport sector, guidance for employers and businesses (updated on 17th March 2020), and guidance for hostels or day centres for people who are rough sleeping. This list also contains advice for professionals advising the public and NHS guidance.

PHE have produced a “Finding the Evidence” collection of resources - [here](#)

Information about 5 things we can all do to protect ourselves and our community can be found [here](#)

A national handwashing poster can be found [here](#)

London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine has worked with Future Learn to develop a new free to access [online learning programme](#) on COVID-19

Imperial College London have just opened up a new [online COVID course](#),