

# Groundswell

Out of homelessness



## CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

For people in hostels or temporary accommodation

## What is Coronavirus?

Coronavirus or COVID-19 is an illness that can **affect your lungs and airways**. The symptoms include:

- a high temperature – you feel hot to touch on your chest or back.
- a new, continuous cough – this means you've started coughing repeatedly



In almost all cases people will make a full recovery. However, **it is particularly important for the following people to be extra careful:**

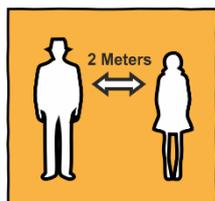
- People aged 70 or over
- People with a long-term health condition
- Pregnant women
- People with a weakened immune system

**Version 2:** The information in this document is correct as of the **26/03/2020**. Guidance keeps changing, will update as frequently as possible.

## What does social distancing mean?

The Government have told everyone to practice **'social distancing'** to limit the risk of catching or spreading coronavirus, this is difficult if you are homeless. Social distancing means you should only go outside:

1. **To shop for essentials** – food and medication, only when you really need to
2. **To do one form of exercise a day** – alone or with other people you live with
3. **For any medical need** – for yourself or to provide care/help to a vulnerable person



- You must always **stay 2 metres apart** from anyone you aren't living with - this includes people you do not share living spaces with in your accommodation
- **Do not gather in groups of more than two people when outside** - the police can fine you if you do not follow these rules

All NHS services for coronavirus are **free for everyone – whatever your immigration status**. This includes coronavirus testing and treatment, even if the result is negative. You will not be reported to the Home Office for coronavirus testing or treatment.

NHS 111 is a **free service** you can contact if you are **unsure about your symptoms**. You can contact it through: **111.nhs.uk** or call **111**. You can call NHS 111 free from a mobile or a pay phone. There may be a wait to speak to someone.

## Using day centres & support services

Most day centres and support services across the country are impacted by the coronavirus so they are **changing how they work**. Each **local area will have different support in place for people who are homeless**, so you will need to speak to a support worker, the outreach team or your local authority to find out more information.

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) Hostels & Temporary Accommodation



## How do I look after myself and my community?

To limit the risk of catching or spreading coronavirus follow these steps:

- Follow the **social distancing rules** (as explained on previous page)
- **Wash your hands with soap and water** often for at least 20 seconds. If there is no soap in the hostel talk to a member of staff immediately. Turn the tap off with a tissue.
- Always wash your hands when you go in or out of your hostel and other buildings.
- **Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve** (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze. Toilet paper will do - if this is not available in your accommodation, then ask staff.
- Put **used tissues in the bin** immediately and wash your hands
- **Do not touch** your eyes, nose or mouth unless your hands are clean.
- **Do not have visitors to your room** – if you need something get them to leave it at the door
- **Do not shake dirty laundry** – this can spread the virus.
- Use your elbows, arms and shoulders to **open doors** instead of your hands.
- If you have a dog or another pet, keep it away from other people and other pets.
- **Don't share cigarettes, pipes or drink from the same bottles and cans**



**Self-isolation means you cannot leave your accommodation, other than to exercise once a day – staying 2 metres away from other people at all times.**

## What should I do if I have coronavirus symptoms?

If you have the following symptoms the NHS say you must self-isolate:

- a **high temperature** – you feel hot to touch on your chest or back.
- a **new, continuous cough** – this means you've started coughing repeatedly.

**Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.**

- **Let staff in your hostel or temporary accommodation know if you are feeling unwell.** Staff should make arrangements for you to isolate yourself in your accommodation or help you to find alternative arrangements.
- **Where possible, stay in a separate area behind a closed door, with an open window for ventilation**
- If someone you live with has symptoms you must **self-isolate for 14 days** (because it can take time for symptoms to appear)
- **Do not have visitors to your room** – ask people to you leave things at the door
- If you have a shared bathroom/kitchen **speak to staff about how best to use these spaces.** Could you **assign slots** to avoid coming into contact with others? Make sure the bathrooms/kitchen are **cleaned** after using them with normal cleaning products.
- **Stay in contact** with friends and family by phone or through the internet.
- Can someone bring **food and drink** to you? Could you ask a support worker?
- Do you need **alcohol or drugs**? Can someone bring them to you?
- Can your **pharmacy or prescriber make arrangements to get medication or script to you**? Could a support worker collect for you?
- Can someone bring you **books, music or a newspaper** to entertain you?

