

Groundswell

Out of homelessness



CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

For people who are sleeping rough

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**:

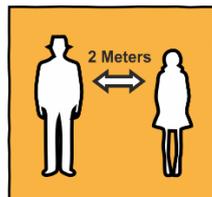
- People aged 70 or over
- People with a long-term health condition
- Pregnant women
- People with a weakened immune system

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** – to provide care or help to a vulnerable person

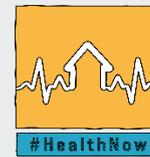


- You must always **stay 2 metres apart** from anyone you aren't living with – this includes people you do not usually sleep near or share shelter with
- **Do not gather in groups of more than two people** - the police can fine you if you do not follow these rules

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.

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.



How do I look after myself and my community?

- Follow the **social distancing rules** (see guidance on previous page)
- In most areas Local Authorities are providing **hotel accommodation for people rough sleeping**. Services are different in different towns and cities. Try to contact your local homelessness services to find out more.
- **Don't bed down near to people or share tents with people** that you have not already been sleeping near to
- 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**
- **Wash your hands with soap and water often** for at least 20 seconds. Use public toilets and if there is no soap available use hot/warm running water. It may be useful to carry a bottle of water and soap
- Always wash your hands when you go into and leave buildings or public spaces
- Use **hand sanitiser gel** if soap and water are not available
- **Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve** (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze. Toilet paper will do so try and collect some.
- Put **used tissues in the bin** immediately and wash your hands afterwards.
- **Do not touch** your eyes, nose or mouth unless your hands are clean



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.

What should I do if I have coronavirus symptoms when rough sleeping?

The NHS recommends isolating yourself for 7 days if you have either:

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

If you are rough sleeping, **we realise self-isolating will be a challenge**. We recommend that you contact support staff from a day centre, outreach team or local support service and let them know your situation.

Do not go to the service in person as this will increase risks for yourself and other people.

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

If you are in a situation where you or someone around you is suffering from coronavirus symptoms but you cannot self-isolate inside, try to follow these steps:

- **Stay 2 metres away from anyone**, do not share tents and bedding
- **Stay in contact** with friends, family and support services by phone or online if you can
- Can someone bring food and drink to you? Could you ask a support worker?
- Can your **pharmacy or prescriber make arrangements to get medication or script to you?** Could a support worker collect for you?
- Do you need **alcohol or drugs?** Can someone bring them to you?
- **Stay in contact** with friends, support services and family by phone.
- Can someone bring you **books, music or a newspaper** to entertain you?

