

COVID-19 / Coronavirus UPDATE 23rd March 2020

INTRODUCTION

This note is for people who

- use our adult social care services or
- have a direct payment or
- use our public health services; and

their family and friend carers.

This information is up to date as of 23rd March 2020 – however, the situation is changing rapidly, so please follow reliable websites (North Yorkshire County Council, the NHS and Public Health England), as well as TV and radio stations for the latest information.

We know that there is a lot of worrying news at the moment and that many people will be feeling anxious for themselves and their families and friends.

We want to let you know what we are doing about COVID-19 at North Yorkshire County Council to support people who use services, and how we are supporting our teams and our service providers.

There is new information about COVID-19 every day. We are working with other organisations to make sure we are following the latest Government and scientific advice. We are also working closely with the NHS, other Councils and voluntary sector colleagues so that we can help each other.

We have a COVID-19 plan in place and we are working through it so that we can support the public and our staff. We have plans to manage specific problems including if there are fewer staff available. We are also working with providers we fund so they can also manage any problems.

This document includes answers to some of the more common questions we have been asked in our work so far.

Staying updated

This document includes links to information on the internet, which will be updated regularly.

If you don't have access to the internet, you can ask your support worker to show you the information on their smartphone or computer.

If you need information about COVID-19 in another format, ask your support worker, who will be able to arrange this for you.

If you live in North Yorkshire and need advice about your social care, call NYCC on 01609 780780 between 8am and 5.30pm Monday to Friday. Outside those hours, if it is an urgent social care issue you can contact the Emergency Duty Team on the same number.

To contact Public Health services such as smoking cessation services, sexual health services, drug and alcohol support and weight management, check the Public Health section at the end of this document for telephone numbers.

If you have an urgent medical problem and are not sure what to do, you can contact NHS 111 by dialling 111 or visiting 111.nhs.uk.

However, if you think your symptoms are related to COVID-19 please follow the guidance below in the section '*What do I do if I get symptoms*'.

If you have difficulties communicating or hearing, you can:

- call 18001 111 on a textphone
- use the [NHS 111 British Sign Language \(BSL\) interpreter service](#) if you're deaf and want to use the phone service

1. About COVID-19/coronavirus

What is a coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a group of viruses that affect people and animals. Some cause mild illnesses like the common cold, and others are more serious. COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new type of coronavirus.

How do people get COVID-19?

Because it's a new illness, we don't know exactly how it spreads from person to person. Similar viruses are spread when people cough or sneeze near each other. Viruses can also live on things that people touch, like tables, chairs or door handles.

What do I do if I get symptoms?

The two most common symptoms of COVID-19 are

- a fever (when your temperature is above 37.8 °C) and/or
- a new continuous cough – this means you have started coughing repeatedly.

The situation is constantly changing, so it's important to check for the latest guidance where possible on the gov.uk website. The current guidance (correct as of 20th March) advises that:

- If you **live alone** and you develop symptoms, however mild, you should stay at home for 7 days from when your symptoms started.
- If you **live with other people** and one of you has symptoms, everyone must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days.
- After 7 days, if the first person to become ill feels better and no longer has a high temperature, they can return to their normal routine.
- If a new person at home gets symptoms, they must stay at home for 7 days from when their symptoms started.
- Everyone who remains well can end household isolation after 14 days.

More information is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild infection, and following this advice about self-isolation will help us slow the spread of the virus.

Do I need to go to the Doctors?

If your symptoms get worse during home isolation or are no better after 7 days, then you should contact [NHS 111 online](#). If you have no internet access, call NHS 111.

You **don't need to call NHS111** to go into self-isolation.

What is social distancing and why is it important?

The Government has asked everyone to try and have less contact with other people, including with family and friends. This means only travelling if you have to, and not going to places like pubs, cinemas and theatres. This is called **social distancing**. Social distancing makes it harder for the virus to travel from person to person, and will help stop more people getting the virus. This will help the NHS and other services support people who are sick.

This means staying at home as much as possible, particularly if you:

- are over 70
- have an underlying health condition
- are pregnant

This advice is likely to be in place for 12 weeks as a minimum, starting from now.

For all of us, we need to minimise our face to face social contact and to keep 2 metres apart from other people outside of the home. At present, we can still take exercise but we need to keep to the social distancing rules and we need to make sure we do not overwhelm the countryside, our villages and market towns.

By following guidance on handwashing, self-isolation and self-distancing we can help keep the number of new cases below the level that the healthcare system can cope with.

2. Adult Social Care

You may be contacted by your provider to check how you are feeling and whether you have any symptoms. You should tell them immediately if you have any COVID-19 symptoms.

If you are experiencing or displaying any of the symptoms, you will still get the support you need. However, your care workers will wear protective clothing whilst visiting and will ask you to wear a face mask.

We know this might be difficult for some people, particularly people with dementia or some disabilities, and we will work with you, your family/friends and other people who know you well, to agree how we can best protect you and our staff.

How might my care be affected?

We may have to change the way that we deliver your care so that we are working in line with current national guidance, which is under constant review.

This means we may need to:

- change workers around so that people get the support they need
- change the length and times of your visits
- have fewer visitors to care homes and make sure they keep their hands clean
- stop some services where we need to keep people safe.

If these changes affect you, we will contact you or your family/carers to let you know.

I get my care from family / friends. What if they can no longer support me?

If your carer becomes ill but you also have paid support, you or your carer should contact your care provider.

If you do not have anyone else who can provide support, you or your carer should call Adult Social Care on 01609 780780

Support with my medication

We will continue to support you with your medication management as part of your care package. You should continue to order and collect your medication as you do now. If necessary, we may need to change how we support you with your medication. This might be getting more support from your family and friends, or organising our visits in a different way. If we need to do this, we will contact you or your family or carers to let you know.

I use direct payments – is there anything I need to do?

If you have any symptoms of COVID-19 you should follow the advice above. You should also contact your Personal Assistant or your care provider. If your care needs can't be met by your normal arrangements, for example your care provider can't deliver your care and support, or your Personal Assistant becomes ill, please contact us on 01609 780780.

If you need protective equipment such as masks or gloves, please use the contact details below:

Tel: 0800 915 9964

Email: supplydisruptionservice@nhsbsa.nhs.uk

More information about Direct Payments in North Yorkshire is available on the County Council's website <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/direct-payments> and has been sent to people, and we will continue to update this.

What if I go to a day service?

Because of social distancing, we have decided to stop day services we provide for older people in County Council care homes. If this affects you, we will contact you to discuss how this may impact you. Managers of the affected day services will also link with families, carers and the person with welfare checks on a regular basis.

At the moment (as of 23rd March), other County Council Learning Disability day services are continuing, and we will let people know if this changes.

What if I use the NYCC short breaks service?

At the moment we have no plans to change short breaks. We will let people know if there are any changes.

What about Paying for Social Care and Support?

If you are already paying for care and support, there will be no changes to the way you do this. There may be changes for people who start using services, and we'll explain these once these are clear.

If you are waiting to talk to someone about payment arrangements or a financial assessment, we will be in touch with you as soon as possible; you don't need to do anything at the moment.

Visiting friends or relatives in a care home

We are being careful to make sure people in care homes are safe. To help with social distancing, some care homes are not letting people visit friends and family. If this happens, there are other ways to keep in contact with people

- You can call by telephone;
- If you have the internet you can use video calls like Skype, WhatsApp, or FaceTime.

Contact the home to see how they can help you stay in touch with loved ones.

In the County Council provided care homes we are restricting visitors to a single nominated person, and will be following strict hygiene controls.

Extra Care services are provided by different housing providers, who have made individual decisions about arrangements for visitors. You will need to contact the relevant housing provider for a service to find out what these are.

3. Public Health Services

The following Public Health services will be communicating directly with people who use them about any changes in their service delivery, in consultation with the County Council. If you have any queries relating to these services and future appointments/clinics then please contact them directly.

Health Visiting and School Nursing Services - provided by Harrogate District Foundation Trust <https://www.hdft.nhs.uk/services/childrens-services/>

01609 780780

Young People's Service - Compass REACH www.compass-uk.org/services/north-yorkshire-compass-reach/

01609 777662 or 0800 008 7452

YorSexualHealth - 01904 721111 www.yorsexualhealth.org.uk/

North Yorkshire Horizons – Drug and Alcohol Service

01723 330730 <http://www.nyhorizons.org.uk/>

Living Well Smokefree (LWSF) Community Stop Smoking Service

01609 797272

Adult Weight Management Services

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/healthy-weight-and-eating-well>

4. Keeping Well

Staying at home for a long time can be difficult for some people, and you might feel bored and lonely. It's important to remember to take care of your mind as well as your body. Try to stay in touch with family and friends over the phone, using technology, or on social media. There are also sources of support and information that can help, including:

NHS "Every Mind Matters" – <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

Mind – Coronavirus and Your Wellbeing <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>)

WHO factsheet – https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf?sfvrsn=6d3578af_8

There is more information on how to stay fit and well on the NHS web pages <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/>

The BBC also has a range of useful stories, advice sheets and videos:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/explainers>

5. Keeping up to Date

The most up to date information is available from the gov.uk Coronavirus (COVID-19) page: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

This includes links to the NHS advice for the public, guidance for health professionals and other organisations, updates on the number of coronavirus cases in the UK, and guidance on staying at home and social distancing.

For information in North Yorkshire, more information can be found here:

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-and-information-0>

www.northyorks.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-community-support

6. Other Help

If you are self-isolating, ask for help from family, friends and neighbours. If you don't have anyone you can call, you can contact our hotline on 01609 780780, to find out what help and support is available, or go to the County Council's website <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-community-support>.

The type of help available from volunteers might include:

- collecting and delivering shopping, leaving it on your doorstep to avoid close physical contact;
- collecting and delivering prescriptions;
- delivering books and magazines or materials to support hobbies such as wool for knitting or art materials.
- caring for pets; and
- advice on where to go for other types of help

Watch out for fraudsters

Unfortunately, nationally, there have been reports of fraudsters exploiting the spread of coronavirus, including claiming to provide medical guidance, investment opportunities or a safe place to which to transfer money.

Make sure you:

- don't deal with cold callers at any time, either by phone or at the door
- don't respond to unsolicited emails.

You can report any examples of fraud to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040, or through their website www.actionfraud.police.uk