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PATRONS: Ethel Armstrong MBE  
Ken Jarrold CBE

NHS Retirement Fellowship Central Office  
Weymouth Community Hospital  
Melcombe Avenue  
WEYMOUTH  
Dorset  
DT4 7TB

Dear branch

### **Corona Virus – advice**

Our advice has been sought by a number of members regarding holding meetings following the outbreak of coronavirus. We understand how seriously you take this issue and want to do everything we can to advise and support branches appropriately.

We are also very aware that our members are very much in the 'at risk' category and therefore we need to be extra cautious about helping our members stay well. We also know however, that branch meetings are an important part of many people's lives and that there could be a detrimental impact to people's wellbeing if their social life is curtailed unnecessarily.

With this in mind, our advice at the moment is as follows:

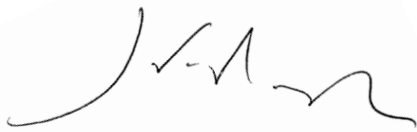
- \* Any branch which has a member with diagnosed coronavirus/ Covid-19 should cancel or postpone all branch activities for two weeks - please advise Central Office of this too
- \* Any branch member who has travelled to one of the affected countries with a travel ban in place (China, South Korea, Iran or Italy) within the last three weeks is respectfully asked not to attend a branch meeting or event
- \* We do not feel that you need to proactively cancel meetings or events at this stage but check with your venue (whether that is a community based setting or an NHS building) what their current rules are.
- \* Members attending meetings should be advised to wash their hands with soap and water regularly and if branches can obtain hand sanitiser, then this should be made available at the meetings.

We will, of course, update this advice to reflect the latest Government information. We have attached the latest NHS information and if you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact the Central Office.

You will be aware that newspaper headlines suggest there will be significant measures introduced soon and we will update advice as necessary following any announcements. This is a very unusual time and I would like to reassure you that the Fellowship takes the health and wellbeing of its members very seriously and we want to do all that we can to support you.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. A. M.', is centered on a light grey rectangular background.

## **NHS Advice Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

### **Symptoms of coronavirus**

The symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a cough
- a high temperature
- shortness of breath

But these symptoms do not necessarily mean you have the illness.

The symptoms are similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as cold and flu.

### **How coronavirus is spread**

Because it's a new illness, we do not know exactly how coronavirus spreads from person to person.

Similar viruses are spread in cough droplets.

It's very unlikely it can be spread through things like packages or food.

### **Do I need to avoid public places?**

Most people can continue to go to work, school and other public places.

You only need to stay away from public places (self-isolate) if advised to by the 111 online coronavirus service or a medical professional.

### **How to avoid catching or spreading coronavirus**

#### **Do**

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- always wash your hands when you get home or into work
- 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
- put used tissues in the bin straight away and wash your hands afterwards
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell

## Don't

- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

## Check if you need medical help

NHS 111 has an online coronavirus service that can tell you if you need medical help and advise you what to do.

Use this service if:

- you think you might have coronavirus
- in the last 14 days you've been to a country or area with a high risk of coronavirus – see our [coronavirus advice for travellers](#)
- you've been in close contact with someone with coronavirus

### Use the 111 coronavirus service

Information:

Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Call [111](#) if you need to speak to someone.

## How to self-isolate if you're asked to

If there's a chance you could have coronavirus, you may be asked to stay away from other people (self-isolate).

This means you should:

- stay at home
- not go to work, school or public places
- not use public transport or taxis
- ask friends, family members or delivery services to do errands for you
- try to avoid visitors to your home – it's OK for friends, family or delivery drivers to drop off food

You may need to do this for up to 14 days to help reduce the possible spread of infection.

Read more [coronavirus self-isolation advice](#).

## Treatment for coronavirus

There is currently no specific treatment for coronavirus.

Antibiotics do not help, as they do not work against viruses.

Treatment aims to relieve the symptoms while your body fights the illness.

You'll need to stay in isolation away from other people until you've recovered.

## **More information**

- [GOV.UK: coronavirus action plan](#)
- [GOV.UK: information on coronavirus and the situation in the UK](#)
- [NHS England: coronavirus information for health professionals](#)

Page last reviewed: 3 March 2020

Next review due: 5 March 2020