



Campaigning for the rights of older people

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE FOR NPC MEMBERS – March 18, 2020

Staying safe and in touch at a difficult time

The NPC understands that many of you are anxious, dismayed and in some cases angry at the latest Government guidelines on Coronavirus (Covid-19). The NPC's advice is - ***do not panic***. These are exceptional and worrying times, but our generation has come through worse. There is help out there and we will try to point you to that help wherever we can.

On Monday evening (16th) the Government announced that they are 'advising those who are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) to be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures*.'

This group includes those who are:

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition (i.e. anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds)

****NB: We are sending the full Public Health England social distancing measures as a pdf doc along with this statement – it's 6 pages of straightforward, easy-to-read advice.***

The possibility of long-term self-isolation for our age group is unprecedented and hugely concerning. The main feedback we have heard from our members covers multiple worries about the impact and indeed the feasibility of social distancing.

We know there is a lot of confusing advice out there about the Coronavirus. Please follow the Government guidelines and Public Health England advice wherever possible. Remember while it is just advice and guidance at this stage, do use your best judgement to keep yourself and others safe (especially if you are symptom-free and decide to go out for fresh air or to buy essentials!).

Apart from whether or not any of us catch the virus, the greatest fears we are hearing about from members in relation to the social distancing guidelines, are

loneliness and isolation, money worries, health care and the supply of food and medication. The NPC will be lobbying on your behalf to try and raise the awareness of the Government to these worries.

We are all aware that panic-buying has meant many supermarkets running out of food and medication essentials (assuming you feel safe to go to the supermarket, or have someone to go on your behalf). Ordering deliveries online is also only possible if you have a home computer, which many of our members do not.

***Some supermarkets have announced they are making special arrangements for older people (who are symptom-free!) to go shop in store and avoid the rush.**

Iceland and Lidl are arranging special shopping hours at some of their stores – you can either call your local store (telephone numbers can be found under the 'store locator' on their websites, or if you only have a landline, by calling directory inquiries).

Sainsbury's will set aside their first hour of opening tomorrow - Thursday, 19th March - for older and vulnerable customers at all their stores. If you and a family member or friend want to shop then, check your local store opening hours before you go. From Monday, 23rd March, Sainsbury's Online will also be providing priority access to delivery slots for over 70's or those with a disability.

For those older people who are live alone and are self-isolating, afraid to go out and perhaps only have a telephone, we have some extra advice below, and some suggestions for those NPC members who might be able to assist.

But please only do the following if you are fit and well and symptom free – or you know young relatives and friends who may wish to help.

Cornwall based copy-writer Becky Wass designed **the attached Viral Kindness Postcard to put through the letterboxes of isolated people***. The postcard will give them your phone number so they have someone to check they are ok, perhaps get any groceries or medication they need, and of course, offer a friendly chat on the phone! **(*Please note, only do this if the older person knows you!)**

As we say, these are exceptional and worrying times, but our generation are resilient. The NPC will do our best to keep you up to date with all the latest advice as and when it is updated.

Please contact, either your local NPC Regional Secretary who can point you in the direction for more help. (You can email our head office – info@npcuk.org for details if you don't have them).

If you do have a computer, there is good advice online from Public Health England (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>)

As well as our partners, Age UK (<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/conditions-illnesses/coronavirus/>)

If you have relatives and friends living nearby looking out for you, please keep in touch with them by telephone rather than face to face.

Please stay safe and well!

NB: *Coronavirus is officially an illness called COVID-19 which affects people's lungs and airways. For most people, it causes mild symptoms while for others – such as older people with pre-existing health conditions - it may be more serious and require hospital treatment. There are simple steps we can all take to reduce the risk of catching COVID-19 or transmitting the virus to other people. Everyone should note the main message from public health officials on personal hygiene to maintain good hand, respiratory and personal hygiene by employing the 'Catch It. Bin It. Kill It' ethos.*

ENDS

For further information or help please contact:

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