

## **COVID-19**

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called coronavirus.

Stay at home if you have coronavirus symptoms – these are;

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)

Do not go to your Mental Health Team, GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.

Current NHS guidance states

- if you have symptoms of coronavirus, you'll need to stay at home for 7 days
- if you live with someone who has symptoms, you'll need to stay at home for 14 days from the day the first person in the home started having symptoms

## **Changes we need to make**

Given the very significant challenges the NHS now face we need to change the way in which we support service users who are under the care of our team.

Telephone consultations with individuals will generally replace face to face appointments. So, if you have forthcoming appointment at one of our centres, we will contact you to replace this with a telephone conversation. If your mental health needs are urgent in nature, we can still offer you a “normal” face to face appointment but please note our capacity to offer this is considerably reduced.

We hope also to use video consultations in the near future (this will require you to have access to a smartphone).

When we do plan to visit you at home, you will be called in advance in order to check that you will be home and that you (or any member of your family/household) aren't suffering from symptoms of COVID-19.

If you do have symptoms of COVID-19 we will still visit you at home if that is needed but will take the necessary precautions to do so as advised by the Department of Health.

## **Medication**

We will ensure that you can continue to access the medication that you need and our prescribing, or in some cases supply of medication will be largely unchanged.

If you are going to run out of medication, please let us know as soon as possible.

If you are on depot (by injection) medication or require regular blood tests these will continue. Our staff may need to wear gloves, aprons and masks to do this safely.

## **Additional Support**

We will continue to work alongside our partners from other agencies and organisations that provide valuable assistance to our Service Users. For example, some offer help with benefits, housing and employment. Please follow this link <https://www.the-waitingroom.org/> to see the full range of support available.

## **Contacting Us**

It is vital that we have up to date contact details for you and your carer, if you have one.

We are trying to make it as easy as possible to contact us during this period.

You can continue to call our team on the usual number during normal working hours.

## **And Finally**

If you want more information and the very latest guidance about COVID-19 please visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Yours sincerely,