

Dear Users and Supporters of the Cancer Support Centre

Coronavirus (COVID-19) and cancer

We are all being made aware of the situation in the UK and worldwide about the spread of Coronavirus. People with cancer and their families might feel especially worried about the virus, as cancer and its treatment can lower your ability to fight infection. We will aim to provide links to key information from official sources and keep you up to date with the steps the Centre is taking so you are in the best position to look after yourselves.

Using the Cancer Support Centre Safely

16/3/2020 17:30 The government has updated the guidance this evening on Coronavirus.

Now the general public are being advised to avoid non-essential contact including pubs and restaurants and social gatherings.

Households are being asked to self-isolate for 14 days if anyone in the household has symptoms

We await more details, but vulnerable people are now being told shielding for 12 weeks from this weekend will be advised. This includes over 70s and people with underlying conditions.

Our position earlier today; of intending to remain open if possible, now needs to be revisited in light of these changes and once the NHS website has been updated we can look at this in more detail. We will update the website again once we have considered the new advice and will continue to keep matters under review. We will advise you of our alternative non face to face services and support options along with timing of closure of the services at the Centre when that decision has been finalised.

We will continue to offer all the help and support we can during this difficult time.

Please make sensible decisions in line with your health condition. Look after yourselves and take necessary precautions advised by the NHS.

16/3/2020 10:30 Following the guidance provided nationally to date the Centre is currently intending to stay open with some key steps to protect our users supporters and workers. This will remain under review.

**If you have you travelled to the UK from abroad
in the last 14 days**

DO NOT ENTER THE CSC PREMISES

This is a precaution to protect our vulnerable clients

do you have any of these symptoms?



If yes, to protect yourself and others please go home and search 'nhs coronavirus' for advice and to access the 111 online coronavirus service or call NHS 111.

Update 16/3/2020 17:30 –

If you are in the household of someone with symptoms

stay at home for 14 days- self isolate.

If you choose to attend the centre you will be asked to:

Please wash your hands to keep yourself and others safe:

- When you arrive and when you leave
- Before treatments
- Before eating or drinking

Please do not hug or kiss the people in the centre

People are normally quite tactile here, but in these circumstances, we want to maintain space to be on the safe side and minimise contact. Thank you for your help in this.

Support should coming to the Centre not be possible

We are working on back up plans to offer services that can be done remotely for clients who would prefer not to, or are unable to attend the Centre.

- For some treatments; as an alternative to face to face therapies, we can speak on the phone or send healing remotely. This will become a wider option should the Centre need to close as circumstances develop.
- We will be strengthening the resources on our website so there will be more help available 24 hours a day.
- We will be asking you to book in ahead for groups; so we know if there are sufficient attendees for them to run. We can advise you if they need to be cancelled.
- We will continue to give a reminder call the day before a 1:1 therapy and will advise you if a therapy is cancelled for any reason.

Below you will find advice about the Coronavirus and Cancer. You should check the advice and if you have any concern talk to your cancer team to be clear if; at this stage in your journey, your immune system is weakened and its best to limit or stop

social contact. For some people with Cancer this is necessary for others you just need to take sensible precautions.

In the meantime we wish you all well and ask that you follow the guidance for using the Centre.

We will be updating the guidance and links to information as it changes so please check our website www.suttoncancersupport.org

Regards

Marie Moore
Chair of Trustees

The Coronavirus and Cancer - Advice

Cancer Research UK have provided the following explanation and the key information is also readily available on the NHS website (link included).

What is coronavirus?

The coronavirus is a flu like virus. It causes an illness called COVID-19 which can affect your lungs and airways. For most people, the virus won't cause serious problems. But for some people, the virus can have serious complications. People with cancer are among those at higher risk of complications. This is because cancer and treatment can weaken their immune systems.

How can cancer and treatment weaken immunity?

The immune system protects the body against illness and infection caused by viruses like coronavirus. Some people with cancer have a weak immune system which reduces their ability to fight these infections.

This is because some treatments, like chemotherapy, can stop the bone marrow from making enough white blood cells. White blood cells are part of your immune system. This is most likely to happen during a course of cancer treatment, but the effects can last for some time afterwards.

Some types of cancer can also lower your ability to fight infection. *This is usually cancer that affects your immune system like leukaemia or lymphoma.*

When your ability to fight infection is lowered the symptoms of any infection can be much more severe and may become dangerous.

What's the advice for people with cancer?

Talk to your cancer team if you have any questions or worries about the coronavirus.

It's especially important that you follow NHS advice to reduce your risk of catching the coronavirus if you:

- are having or recently had cancer treatment
- have a type of cancer that lowers your immunity

Read the NHS advice here <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

You should also follow the NHS advice if your relative or friend is having or has recently had cancer treatment. Or if, for any reason, a relative or friend might have a lower ability to fight infection.

Frequently asked questions

One Cancer Voice have produced some guidance about coronavirus for people with cancer. This includes some frequently asked questions and answers about coronavirus. One Cancer Voice is a group of cancer charities working together to give consistent advice and information.

Read the One voice advice on coronavirus for people with cancer

www.cancerresearchuk.org/sites/default/files/one_cancer_voice_advice_on_coronavirus_for_people_with_cancer.pdf

Latest guidance

The government is constantly reviewing the advice about coronavirus and will update it as necessary. We will update the information on this page if new guidance is issued.

The NHS website has all the latest information about the coronavirus and how to protect yourself.

Visit the NHS website

Further information about the UK government response is available on the GOV.UK website.

Visit the GOV.UK website