

BRIEFING FOR PARISHES AND TOWNS – CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

This briefing provides you with a current summary of the guidance and advice with regard to Coronavirus (Covid-19). There is a lot of information being released with guidance changing daily. Please see our dedicated webpage for updates

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/coronavirus-covid-19-information-and-advice/>

Here are the key points from recent Government briefings:

- Everyone should avoid gatherings with friends and family, as well as large gatherings and crowded places, such as pubs, clubs and theatres
- People should avoid non-essential travel and work from home if they can
- All "unnecessary" visits to friends and relatives in care homes should cease
- People should only use the NHS "where we really need to" – and can reduce the burden on workers by getting advice on the NHS website where possible
- By next weekend, those with the most serious health conditions must be "largely shielded from social contact for around 12 weeks"
- If one person in any household has a persistent cough or fever, everyone living there must stay at home for 14 days
- Those people should, if possible, avoid leaving the house "even to buy food or essentials" – but they may leave the house "for exercise and, in that case, at a safe distance from others"
- Chancellor Rishi Sunak has unveiled government-backed loans worth £330bn to prop up the UK economy

- All non-urgent operations in England will be postponed from 15 April to free up 30,000 beds to help tackle coronavirus

For information about the virus and how you can look after your health, visit www.nhs.uk

For the latest information about Coronavirus in the UK, click [here](#)

For the latest information for employers and businesses, click [here](#)

What is the latest advice?

Stay at home if you have either:

- a high temperature – you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- a new, continuous cough – this means you've started coughing repeatedly

Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. You do not need to contact 111 to tell them you're staying at home. Testing for coronavirus is not needed if you're staying at home.

If you have symptoms, stay at home for 7 days

If you live with other people, they should stay at home for 14 days from the day the first person got symptoms. If you live with someone who is 70 or over, has a long-term condition, is pregnant or has a weakened immune system, try to find somewhere else for them to stay for 14 days.

Read NHS [advice about staying at home](#).

This link will take you to the 111 Coronavirus service - [Use the 111 coronavirus service](#)

Somerset West and Taunton:

- *SWT has well prepared plans in place to preserve critical services, safeguard the public, and ensure our most vulnerable residents are supported.*
- *It is important to stress to communities that the delivery of council services continues and our business continuity plans are already being implemented.*
- *We would encourage people to contact us via our website <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/> or by telephone 0300 304 8000 and not come into the council offices unless absolutely necessary.*
- *We have set up a page for the public to signpost people to relevant information, provide reassurance, and provide key messages to our residents - <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/coronavirus-covid-19-information-and-advice/>*
- *We have made a Community Pack available to all elected members. This is also available for members of the public on our website.*

In addition:

- *There are no immediate plans to cancel statutory committee meetings but the situation is subject to change based on the latest advice from PHE.*

- We have activated a live-streaming service (also known as webcasting) of Council meetings. This can be accessed at <https://somerwestandtaunton.publici.tv/core/portal/webcast/interactive/483298>

FURTHER GUIDANCE:

What to say if you are approached by a member of the community concerned about Covid-19 (Coronavirus)?

Please help support the national message and promote the following through your own communities and contacts.

If they are concerned about the risks to their health, advise that they should:

- *Wash your hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water*
- *Avoid touching their face (particularly the nose, mouth and eyes)*
- *Wipe down surfaces and objects regularly*
- *Use a tissue when coughing and sneezing, then bin it and wash their hands. If they don't have a tissue, use the crook of your arm rather than your hand. 'Catch it, Bin It, Kill It.'*

If they are concerned about symptoms or want more information, visit the NHS site at www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/. If they are unable to access the internet, then 111 is still the point of call.

What to say if you are approached by a member of the community concerned about how has Somerset West and Taunton Council will function if affected by Covid-19 (Coronavirus)?

If you receive a call from a member of your community who is worried about our services, please provide reassurance that the Council is still open and extensive planning is in place to ensure the Council is able to continue to provide essential services in the event of disruption caused by Covid-19 (Coronavirus). We will keep residents updated on our website,

our social media channels,
information on our phone lines, and through our locality teams.

How is the COVID-19 coronavirus 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.

How can you 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

Useful links for public facing information

NHS information – the first port of call for the public:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

households

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

UK Government response:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

Guidance on social distancing:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people>

Travel advice for those travelling and living overseas:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus>

Advice for businesses:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19>