

Gareth Johnson MP for Dartford



March 2020

Special Bulletin

Coronavirus - Covid-19

During the Coronavirus crisis, my regular bulletins will be suspended and I will instead be providing you with updates on the situation as and when I have more significant information to share. This is a fast-moving situation where the advice could change quickly.

This crisis will continue for many months to come and will be this generation's greatest challenge. Older people and those with serious health conditions are the most vulnerable and the protection of these people will need to be our priority.

My office has been able to assist Dartfordians caught up in the outbreak abroad and on many other issues that have been raised in relation to it.

My office will remain functioning throughout this crisis and will aim to respond to any queries you have. Although we may not have all the answers now, we will do our best to help you. On occasions, you may need to leave a message on an answerphone but if that happens, someone will call you back as soon as possible. We will prioritise urgent issues affecting the most vulnerable people during this time.

If you have an issue with any government services then please get in touch.



Click on the photo to view the UK's Chief Medical Officer on the Government's updated advice on Covid-19.

If you have: a new continuous cough OR a high temperature (37.8 degrees or higher), you should stay at home for seven days.

[Latest NHS advice for those with symptoms](#)

[Health Secretary outlines the steps taken over recent days in the fight against COVID-19](#)



Please click on the button below for a link to an article by the Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance entitled: 'It's a national effort to win coronavirus fight, we all have crucial part to play'.

[Article by Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance](#)

Foreign Office advice for those planning on travelling abroad

Please find below a link for Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice.

You can also use the FCO hotline number which is:

0207 008 1500.

[Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice](#)

Advice from Age UK

The link below has information from Age UK about the symptoms of coronavirus and the steps to take to stop it spreading.

In addition, if you have concerns about anything else, including welfare, care or housing, you can contact Age UK's free advice line, 8am-7pm, 365 days a year: **0800 055 6112**

Age UK Charity Director has made the following statement on the virus:

"The official advice at the moment shows that if people are feeling well, showing no signs of symptoms, and have no reason to think they have been in contact with the virus, then they can carry on with their usual activities. But it's important for everyone to be completely vigilant about following the government's advice on thorough hand washing, catching coughs and sneezes, and disposing of tissues.

"Some older people, or those with underlying health conditions, have already or may decide to reduce their social contact. We should respect people's decisions and think about practical ways to support them, like picking up some shopping or help by running some errands. If it's safe to do so you can pop in, but you can also stay in touch over the phone, online or by post. It's also worth thinking about sensible steps that may need to be taken if the situation progresses.

"As this is an evolving situation and the advice may well change, it's important to keep up to date with reliable sources of information such as the NHS website or NHS111."

[Age UK advice](#)

Financial help during the crisis

The Treasury has been working over the weekend with banks and other financial institutions to assist people unable to pay their mortgage, credit card bill etc because of the Coronavirus crisis. These organisations have been willing to accommodate people in difficulties and an announcement on this will be made shortly.

If you run a business or are self-employed and concerned you will not be able to pay your taxes due to Coronavirus, call HMRC on 0800 0159 559.

Guidance for residential care, supported living and home care

Below is a link to guidance for providers of residential care, supported living and home care.

The guidance sets out:

- how to maintain delivery of care in the event of an outbreak or widespread transmission of COVID-19
- what to do if care workers or individuals being cared for have symptoms of COVID-19

[Guidance for providers of residential care, supported living and home care](#)

Emergency Legislation

Emergency legislation will be published this Thursday in the House of Commons. These provisions will be debated in the House the following week. Opposition parties have been consulted on this and it is hoped we can achieve cross party consensus.

Access to Parliament

In light of the pandemic, access arrangements to Parliament have changed as follows:

- Members of the public are still able to watch debates in both Chambers from the public galleries and to attend select committee meetings.
- Mass lobbies (which usually take place in Westminster Hall or in the larger committee rooms) will not be facilitated during the period.
- No new commercial tour bookings will be accepted. Existing bookings taking place from Monday onwards are to be cancelled but tickets will be refunded. Members of the public wishing to enter the Parliamentary Estate solely to view Westminster Hall will not be permitted.

School tours and Member-sponsored democratic access visits are not affected by these changes i.e. if you have booked a tour with my office, this will still go ahead.

BBC Licence Fee for over 75s

The BBC has announced that it will postpone the licence fees for over 75s until August and will review further at that time.

Surgeries

My next surgery appointments will still go ahead but will be held by telephone. This will be reviewed as the situation changes. Please contact my office if you would like a telephone appointment.

Please note the majority of enquiries can be dealt with by email/letter.

Surgery dates are as follows:

17th April

15th May

12th June

10th July



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