

Factsheet for Northern Ireland Coronavirus (COVID-19)



Minister - please keep social distancing measures

Health Minister Robin Swann has warned of complacency over adherence to social distancing measures.

Mr Swann said people were becoming more relaxed, and he was concerned people are starting to ease up on their responsibility.

"We are asking people for goodwill and determination over the next few weeks to help save lives and to help our health service," he said.



Everyone must help stop coronavirus spreading

- **Stay at home** – only go out for food, medicine or medical equipment, one form of exercise or work (if essential)
- Stay **2 metres** (6ft) away from other people
- **Wash your hands**, often and well
- **Social distancing** will help reduce transmission of coronavirus
- **Avoid contact** with anyone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus – these symptoms include a high temperature and/or a new, continuous cough
- Use **telephone** or **online services** to contact your GP or other essential services

For the latest information and advice on social distancing visit: bit.ly/2KNzs2U

Community Response Plan

The Health and Social Care Board is delighted to support the community response plan developed by the Department for Communities to support grassroots projects for those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Supporting the community and voluntary sector, the plan focuses on providing additional funding, supporting the volunteering effort, a dedicated Community Helpline and co-ordinating the supply of emergency food parcels. Read more at: bit.ly/2SjPGVu

Eye care during pandemic

Optometrists have changed the way they care for patients.

Whilst they have reduced their opening hours, they are still available by telephone or email to provide emergency and essential eye care.

More at: bit.ly/2YIWtBN



Care homes support

Northern Ireland's care homes are to receive £6.5m as part of a series of measures to support them during the Covid-19 pandemic.

A further expansion of testing and publication of updated guidance for care homes is also being introduced.

For more information: bit.ly/2YiSW7s

Stay at home - Wash your hands - Keep your distance

Sign Language Service

A free remote interpreting service for British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL) users in Northern Ireland has been introduced to provide the Deaf community with access to NHS111 and all health and social care services during the pandemic, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

More about this free temporary service and to connect to a remote video interpreter at bit.ly/3f0RTPq



Virus testing expanded

Testing for the coronavirus has been expanded to include surveillance testing in GP surgeries and hospitals, as well as increased testing in care homes. It has also been extended to cover key workers in other sectors, as well as health and social care. More: bit.ly/35tO29r

The Public Health Agency has started a pilot programme of contact tracing which will help inform the planned roll out of a Northern Ireland wide initiative.

Contact tracing identifies clusters of infection and prevents further spread of COVID-19. More: bit.ly/2YiMH3I



Children's services open

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, children's services remain open and ready to help protect children and support families.

The Health and Social Care Trusts, Police Service and the Education Authority are continuing to work together to identify and provide extra support to children and families who need it at this time.

For contact details of your local Trust Gateway Service visit: www.safeguardingni.org

Read more: bit.ly/3f4b2QE

Different ways to provide information

The Health and Social Care Board is keen to ensure that everyone in Northern Ireland has access to appropriate information on COVID-19.

Currently information, which is available in alternative formats, is being sourced and added to the Board's website.

Here are some examples of the type of information:

- A new remote interpreting for members of the Deaf community - bit.ly/2ycZycW
- Government advice on coronavirus, in an easy read format, for people with a learning disability is available at: bit.ly/3d2YKpW
- A leaflet, translated into 11 different languages, providing advice on safer shopping during COVID-19 is available at: bit.ly/2yVMNDG



Search for Mental Health Champion



The Department of Health has started the process to appoint a new Mental Health Champion.

The role would be to champion and enhance mental health in all aspects of public life.

For more info: bit.ly/2y2FUQW

For more advice and information

- [Download previous HSC Factsheets](#)
- www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus
- www.nidirect.gov.uk/coronavirus
- www.hscboard.hscni.net/coronavirus
- www.gov.uk/coronavirus