

Richmond Council statement on Coronavirus (COVID-19)

19 March 2020

Richmond Council's Interim Director of Public Health, Shannon Katiyo, said:
"Over the past few days I have tried to give regular updates on the health advice and precautions that we all need to take. This includes what to do if you or someone in your household are showing symptoms of coronavirus, or if you are in a vulnerable group. You can [see this here](#).

"Now that it has been announced that our schools, libraries, sports centres, activities in our parks and open spaces, children's centres and a host of other events are going to be closed or cancelled, I want to turn our attention to mental health and wellbeing because our lives over the coming weeks and months will be quite different.

"The Government has advised us to avoid all but essential social contact and this could mean that more of us will be spending a lot of time at home and some people will be spending more time alone without the level of interaction they are used to, leading to isolation or feelings of loneliness.

"We know that staying at home for a prolonged period can be difficult, frustrating and lonely for some people and that you or other household members may feel low. It can be particularly challenging if you don't have much space or access to a garden. I also know that watching the wall-to-wall coverage about Coronavirus can be relentless and for some people cause stress and anxiety.

"There are some things you can do to support yourself [here](#)

"It's important to remember to take care of your mind as well as your body and to get support if you need it. Stay in touch with family and friends over the phone or on social media. There are also sources of support and information that can help, such as the [Every Mind Matters website](#).

"Think about things you can do during your time at home. People who have not minded staying at home for a week have kept themselves busy with activities such as cooking, reading, online learning and watching films. If you feel well enough you can take part in light exercise within your home or garden.

"Many people find it helpful to remind themselves why what they are doing is so important. Hopefully, none of your family will suffer more than flu-like symptoms. But some people are badly affected by coronavirus, and particularly the elderly and those with certain medical conditions. By staying home, you are protecting the lives of others, as well as making sure the NHS does not get overwhelmed.

“Why not use this time to reach out to others and support people around you. Keeping in touch with your friends and family may ease the stress caused by Coronavirus. Talking through your concerns and feelings may help you find ways of dealing with challenges. Be in touch with other people regularly on social media, e-mail or on the phone, as they are still good ways of being close to the people who matter to you

“If you feel overwhelmed, stressed, anxious or upset, allow yourself time to express what you’re feeling. This could be by writing them down, talking to others or doing something creative. For those people who need that little bit more help, a chat with someone who is trained to provide support can be helpful. [Our website](#) has information about all the local groups and organisations who can help.”