

Coronavirus – guidance from Remap 09/03/20

In common with other organisations we have started to think about the implications of coronavirus COVID-19. A couple of panels have asked for guidance and we need to consider business continuity and risks to events such as our AGM. This document provides current official guidance from the relevant authorities and will be kept under review.

1. Guidance for panels

What is the coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are common across the world. This strain, covid-19, is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China in January 2020.

What are the symptoms?

The following symptoms may develop in the 14 days after exposure to someone who has covid-19 infection:

- A cough
- A high temperature
- Shortness of breath

If you are worried about symptoms, please call NHS 111 [or go to the NHS 111 coronavirus advice website](#). Do not go directly to your GP or other healthcare environment.

[The latest advice and developments on the covid-19 situation can be found on the GOV.UK website.](#)

What's the best way to prevent the spread of covid-19?

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser. This is particularly important after taking public transport.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a bin.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in the home and work environment.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

What do we need to do to protect volunteers and the people we help?

- Information: share clear information with all panel members.
- Generally, infections can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease. As a result some of Remap's clients may be more at risk or highly concerned about the virus.
- You can play a role in providing clear and updated information to raise awareness of prevention measures like handwashing, but at this stage the most important message may simply be one of reassurance.
- There is government advice on [social care](#) settings. This gives detailed guidance on working with people living in a care home or receiving care at home. Please read this guidance when dealing with those clients.
- Whilst the Coronavirus is a cause for concern at this time, it is worth remembering that some of our clients are particularly vulnerable to disease and infection at all times too. We have a duty of care to all our clients to ensure we maintain high personal standards of hygiene, the same as healthcare professionals and carers. Clients who are struggling to look after themselves may also present a risk to our members. So it would be good practice for Remap volunteers to use a hand sanitiser when on client visits.
- Travel risks: be aware that the Foreign Office has published [information and advice on travel safety](#) and the World Health Organisation is providing updated [covid-19 travel advice](#). If panel members have recently travelled please take account of this guidance.
- Panel meetings. If you decide to avoid holding panel meetings, do consider phone or video conferencing. At central office we use a free phone conferencing service <https://whypay.net/>

Should we cancel our events?

- Currently the advice is for most people to continue to go to work, school and other public places. See more on the Remap Awards Day and AGM below.

2. National issues

Remap office staff

- We have reviewed emergency contact details to ensure they are up to date.
- There is no need for most staff to avoid the workplace. However, most staff members have the facility to work from home and we will encourage this whenever appropriate.

Business continuity

- We will think about how Remap would be affected if a significant proportion of staff or volunteers were unavailable. (There is a checklist from [Zurich Insurance](#) to work through some of the issues and plan for them. The Charities Facility Management Group has more [information on how to develop a business continuity plan.](#))
- We will check with our insurers, but we are probably not covered for associated risks such as the cost of having to cancel the Awards Day and AGM, should we need to replace it with a much smaller EGM for business only.
- The board will consider potential financial impacts of the virus's spread continuing, and what steps we might need to take.
- We will keep our plans for the Awards Day and AGM under review. After 28th May we will start to incur costs if we subsequently decide to cancel this big event and hold a smaller EGM for the purposes of business only. The costs of the event are linked to the hiring of rooms in central London, providing refreshments etc. Under company law and our constitution we are required to hold an AGM every year within 15 months of the previous AGM. Depending on the ongoing virus situation trustees might decide to hold a 'formal' AGM along the lines of the current EGM process with no physical presence needed and hold the Awards Day later in the year.