

Information

Sheet Number:
2020-1



for Councillors

From:	Cllr Clare Paul, Somerset County Council Cabinet Member for Public Health & Wellbeing and Climate Change and Trudi Grant, Director of Public Health
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Date:	Friday 6 March 2020
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To:	All Councillors (County, District and Parish/Town)
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Coronavirus Update

Having recently taken on the role of Somerset County Council's Cabinet Member with responsibility for Public Health, I am keen to provide you all with the latest update regarding COVID-19 (Coronavirus).

At the time of writing, there are over 160 confirmed cases in the UK, but none confirmed here in Somerset. I want to reassure you that Somerset County Council staff, along with our local health partners, have been busy preparing over the last few weeks for the now likely outbreak.

Currently we are following the Department for Health and Social's Care 'containment' guidance. This involves promoting a range of good hygiene measures via staff messages, social media, our partners and the website, which can help prevent its spread. Please help support the national message and promote the following through your own contacts.

- Washing your hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water
- Avoid touching your face (particularly your nose, mouth and eyes)
- Wipe down surfaces and objects regularly
- Use a tissue when coughing and sneezing, then binning it and washing your hands. If you don't have a tissue, use the crook of your arm rather than your hand.

The NHS website provides further information about Coronavirus (www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/) and if you or someone in your community thinks they may have symptoms (fever, dry cough followed by shortness

of breath up to a week later) then they need to self-isolate themselves away from others and contact NHS 111 via their new online service (<https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>) or by phone.

It's hard to predict what the next few weeks or months will bring, and I'm sure for many of you and your communities, these are concerning times. Be assured, our health colleagues see and react to outbreaks such as flu, TB and norovirus all the time and have well-rehearsed plans in place.

As you can imagine, it is a fast-evolving situation, but it's my aim to keep you informed of further developments as and when we receive them.

Many thanks

Cllr Clare Paul