

Last updated: 6 March 2020

6 March 2020 update: links added to agencies for Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland.

The health and safety of Rotary members is a top priority. The RI and Rotary GB&I offices are closely monitoring the outbreak of COVID-19 (coronavirus disease) and continuously assessing its potential impact on our operations, meetings, trainings, and other events.

Due to the rapidly changing nature of this situation world-wide, the information contained herewith is for guidance and direction only and the links to the various information resources should be used by Rotarians to gain the most up to date information from the appropriate agencies. Many of these websites are updated daily.

Whilst we have focused information based on Public Health England and the www.gov.uk website, reference should also be made to the equivalent regional agencies for Scotland (www.gov.scot), Wales (www.gov.wales), Northern Ireland ([Public Health Agency NI](http://PublicHealthAgencyNI)) and Republic of Ireland (www.gov.ie).

What does Rotary recommend?

Rotary International is recommending that Rotary members and participants follow the guidelines set by the World Health Organization (WHO) and our national, regional, or local health authorities to protect the health and safety of our members and program participants.

In this respect, the Rotary GB&I Support Centre recommends that Rotarians, clubs and districts within GB&I follow the guidance of the **Department of Health & Social Care** and **Public Health England** announcements made on the gov.uk website and the [World Health Organisation](http://WorldHealthOrganisation).

The gov.uk website is updated at 2.00pm daily. The website gives information for the public on the outbreak of coronavirus, including the current situation in the UK and information about the virus and its symptoms. It also includes the current situation

regarding the number of cases, risk level and comprehensive information regarding travel, including maps of lockdown areas/countries.

Should we cancel our meetings and events?

Currently (as of 5 March 2020) the advice is for most people to continue to go to work, school and other public places.

District and club leaders are encouraged to use their discretion when it comes to club and district meetings and events, and Rotary programs and activities. Cancelling or postponing meetings or Rotary-related travel might be appropriate. Even if events are held as scheduled, some people may choose not to take part.

IF the guidance from [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) or the [World Health Organisation](https://www.who.int) **discourage or prohibit gathering or traveling** because of the risk of spreading COVID-19, **follow their recommendations**. If it is recommended, then postpone or cancel in-person meetings or hold them online or by phone. If there are travel restrictions, exercise caution during district or club travel. If you have any questions about travel related to a global grant, contact your regional grants officer.

If your district or club is planning events which will bring together large numbers of people, keep your plans under review. If your events depend on volunteers, be aware that some may prefer to stay home. Have contingency plans in hand should you need to cancel an event at short notice. Event cancellation insurance protection is not provided as standard through Rotary's insurance policy. If you had extended cancellation cover in place for an event, check the terms as communicable disease is rarely included.

If you hold an office, or incoming office, in which international travel is required for your training or participation, the Rotary International office will contact you direct regarding any special arrangements/cancellation.

General Information:

What is the coronavirus?

A coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, 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.

The incubation period of COVID-19, is between 2 to 14 days. This means that if a person remains well 14 days after contact with someone with confirmed coronavirus, they have not become a case.

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** (a good measure of 20 seconds is to hum the 'happy birthday' song twice) or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser. The thorough handwashing technique instructions given in the NHS [handwashing techniques](#) poster takes 40-60 seconds. Handwashing is particularly important after using the toilet, taking public transport, before food preparation and eating.
- 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. You can [download a 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' poster](#) (PDF, 940KB) from the NHS.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in the home and at meeting venues (wipe over tables and door handles – don't leave it to the venue to have done this before you arrive).

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

NHS National Patient Safety Agency have produced clear and printable instructions on [handwashing techniques](#) for display.

What do we need to do to protect ourselves, volunteers, visitors and participants?

- Information: Provide clear information using communication channels including posters and email.
- Handwashing facilities: Handwashing facilities should be available and well supplied. More regular handwashing may require more supplies. Provide hand sanitiser, tissues and cleaning products around the meeting rooms/venues you use and encourage their use at every meeting/event.

GOV.UK has published clear and printable instructions on [handwashing techniques](#) (PDF, 130KB) which can be displayed at hand washing/sanitising points for your meetings/events.

- Cleaning regimes: Viruses can live on hard surfaces. Frequently clean key areas including keyboards and door handles.
- Consider holding meetings/training events etc via conference call/webinar facilities.
- When holding meetings and events, ask participants in advance if they have visited any of the countries listed on [gov.uk](#) website or feel unwell to notify you so that you can assess whether it remains appropriate for them to attend.
- Manage travel risks: Keep up to date on current travel advice on [gov.uk](#). The Foreign Office has published [information and advice on travel safety](#) and the World Health Organisation is providing updated [covid-19 travel advice](#).
- Review travel arrangements. Is travel necessary? Are there possible alternatives such as video conferencing? Maintain updated and clear advice for those travelling.
- If UK volunteers are working overseas consider what access they have to health care services.
- Ensure emergency contact details are up to date.

Resources

Key up-to-date information from the government and WHO:

- [UK: COVID-19 latest information and advice from gov.uk](#)

- [UK: COVID-19 travel advice from gov.uk](#)
- [UK: COVID-19 specified countries and areas with implications for returning travellers or visitors arriving in the UK](#)
- [NHS coronavirus advice](#)
- [World Health Organisation – Coronavirus outbreak](#)

Key up-to-date information from Rotary International:

- [Rotary International website – coronavirus](#) Keep in context that Rotary International will be issuing advice for their global responsibilities and guidance for UK and Ireland should be referenced to the information on [gov.uk](#)

Additional resources:

- NHS printable [instructions on handwashing techniques](#)
- NHS '[Catch it-Bin it-Kill it](#)' poster
- Rotary GB&I Template [Information Sheet](#) – in Word for clubs and districts to use to inform members and adapt to regional circumstances