

# Communication from Deafblind Scotland during the COVID-19 Pandemic

**12<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

As we are reaching a more settled phase this is our last COVID-19 briefing for the moment and for now we would like to highlight some important news and changes.



On 30<sup>th</sup> July First Minister of Scotland has announced that we will not move into Phase 4 of easing of restrictions and will stay in Phase 3 for the moment. Main points and proposed dates are:

1<sup>st</sup> August - Pause in shielding to allow people currently shielding to follow the same guidance as the rest of the population

3<sup>rd</sup> August - Routine eye care services can be provided within community optometry practices and in patients own homes

11<sup>th</sup> August - Schools will return full time

17<sup>th</sup> August - Urgent dental procedures involving aerosols can now be carried out  
24<sup>th</sup> August - Outdoor sports, bingo, fun fairs and live outdoor events with limited numbers can resume.

Gyms, swimming pools, indoor sports, theatres, soft play facilities remain closed for now.

To help the Scottish Government they want us to remember

## **FACTS**

<b>F</b>	<b>Face coverings</b>	
<b>A</b>	<b>Avoid crowded places</b>	
<b>C</b>	<b>Clean your hands regularly</b>	
<b>T</b>	<b>Two metre distance</b>	
<b>S</b>	<b>Self isolate and book a test if you have symptoms</b>	

## **Face coverings**

Must be worn on public transport, in shops, banks, post offices, places of worship, museums, cinemas and other indoor spaces or where social distancing is difficult. This is to keep yourself and others safer.

## **Avoid Crowded Places**

We should continue to avoid places with lots of crowds.

## **Clean your Hands Regularly**

Continue to follow guidelines regarding cleaning and washing your hands regularly.

## **Two Metre Distance**

Remember to keep physical distance of 2 metres from other people.

## **Self Isolate and Book Test if You Have Symptoms**

Remember to stay at home and get a test if you have symptoms. To book a test please contact **08000 282816** or [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot)

# **POLICE SCOTLAND – MESSAGE TO COMMUNITIES**

## **Message from Assistant Chief Constable Gary Ritchie – 27 July 2020**

Police Scotland is committed to keeping people safe and protecting all our communities. We understand that daily life adhering to COVID-19 guidelines continues to be challenging for everyone.

Although Scottish Government guidance has provided flexibility for the individual needs of disabled people some are fearful of going out into their communities. We are aware some disabled people have reported being unfairly challenged and, on occasion, abused about issues linked to social distancing and face coverings.

Physical distancing can be difficult due to sight loss, autism, a physical disability or other issues. People have reported being shouted at, made to feel uncomfortable or fearful.

We have also received reports of people who are exempt from wearing face coverings being inappropriately challenged in shops or on public transport.

Police Scotland wants to reassure disabled communities that we take reports of people being targeted seriously and want to prevent these incidents occurring to ensure disabled people feel safe in their communities.

Police Scotland has circulated guidance to frontline police officers and staff to ensure they consider disabilities when engaging with people, particularly given the impact of COVID-19 measures.

We understand some disabled people may choose to carry a card or wear a lanyard stating they have exemptions from wearing face coverings or to identify a disability. Individuals are under absolutely no obligation to carry information or to show it to anyone. Police Scotland officers will not ask you to provide any evidence of an exemption or disability.

In the coming weeks and months, we urge everyone to continue to work together, ensuring no person or group in Scotland feels marginalised or isolated.

Police Scotland does not tolerate the targeting of individuals or communities, or any form of hate crime. Should anyone experience or witness such an incident please report it by contacting Police Scotland:

- dial **101**, or **999** in an emergency
- via SMS 999 – you must register for this service before using it
- using Text Relay using the BT Relay UK app or textphone
- you can also use our online hate crime reporting form on the Police Scotland website.

## **COVID RELATED SCAMS**

Please be aware there are scams circulating at the moment targeting vulnerable people to gain access to their personal details or their money. Never give out your details, pin numbers etc over the phone, online or at your

door and do not allow anyone access to your home unless you know them or are expecting them to call. Always ask for ID. Do not click suspicious links on emails as this can lead to fraudulent sites. Delete them immediately.

Some of the scams are:

- Text or email from a “government department” offering council tax reduction
- Offers of free TV licence for 6 months because of pandemic
- “Free” money from government, offering grants
- Fake calls/emails from NHS Test & Trace encouraging you to go online and click a link
- Fake investment opportunities asking you to take advantage of financial downturn
- Fake adverts for sanitisers/face coverings – payment is taken but goods are not sent

If you have been affected by any of these please contact:

Action Fraud – **0300 123 2040** or

Citizens Advice Consumer helpline – **0808  
223 1133**

## **Changes in making wills**

The UK government has decided to allow wills to be witnessed via video link. By law, wills currently must be signed “in the presence of” two people who are not among the beneficiaries. However the government announced that wills witnessed via video link will be made legal. The change in law will be introduced in September but backdated to 31 January. It will remain in place at least until 31 January 2022. Although the changes announced are temporary measures, this could be a major step forward, making it easier for people to set out their final wishes

## **Deafblind Scotland**

As the centre reopens to staff on the 17th August we will be spending the next couple of weeks getting ready to welcome members back safely - for those that want to use activities. Due to social distancing these

activities will be smaller and it is anticipated that we will run a mixture of online and centre based activities if the virus transmission stays at low levels.

All members that normally use activities will be contacted directly in the coming weeks.

The mobile phone helpline number which has been available during the pandemic will no longer be in use. Instead you can phone us on **0141 777 6111** if you have any concerns or need any help.