

Communication from Deafblind Scotland during the COVID-19 Pandemic

22nd June 2020

As we enter Deafblind Awareness week with our theme of 'Dare to Dream' this briefing is about trying something new or challenging yourself – “waking up to smell the roses’ – so taking pleasure in new and sometimes small challenges or just stopping to notice things you might not have before.

Lost in the garden by Izzy McGrath

As someone who was born severely Deaf and then went completely blind a number of years ago, one of the side-effects of all of this with that my garden slowly turned into a jungle.

I didn't realise how bad it had got until I actually got lost in it! Lost in my own back garden how humiliating!

On frequent occasions I had to call on my retired guide dog and get her to guide me back to my gate or shout for my husband who would come and rescue me.

When lockdown came into being, I realised I was going to be spending a lot more time getting lost in the garden.

So, I decided to do something about it. Now I get lost in my own wee world of gardening and know that I can find my own way home.



Picture of Izzy holding a pink rose in bloom.



Picture of Izzy smiling with hanging basket and her well-tended to garden in the background.



Picture of Izzy tending to a large bush with white flowers.

If you would like a new challenge then please join us during **Deafblind Awareness week**. We will happily post pictures of your achievements or the fun you or your families have trying out new things so please send to us.

Deafblind Awareness Week is from 21-27 June. We would like to invite you to get involved in one of our activities and help us raise awareness. Our theme this year is Dare To Dream! So, if you're feeling more daring why not take part in our Blindfolded Bake Off or take on the 7 for 7 Challenge. You can also show your support by dressing in Deafblind Scotland colours of red and white and tag us on social media @dbscotland. Or have a relaxing day reflecting on your impression of Dare to Dream and enter our Arty Anne Picture Competition, email your picture to communityfundraiser@dbscotland.org.uk.

However you decide to support Deafblind Awareness week, we thank you for celebrating with us. For more details please see our website www.dbscotland.org.uk.

Many thanks to Rona MacKay MSP for submitting a parliamentary motion to highlight Deafblind Awareness Week.

Please view the motion on the Scottish Parliament website here:

<https://www.parliament.scot/msps/currentmsps/rona-mackay-msp.aspx>

EASING OF LOCKDOWN

First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon announced some gradual easing of lockdown, moving us into Phase 2.

We must still be very careful and follow social distancing of 2 metres at all times. We also need to keep washing our hands and wear face coverings in enclosed spaces where there are crowds such as shops. We are also advised to stay locally and avoid busy places as much as we can. Only travel on public transport if it can't be avoided and wearing a face covering on public transport is now a rule we **must** all follow.

Current shielding rules for people who have been told to stay inside by their doctor will be fully reviewed on 31st July but there are some changes now.

- People who are shielding due to health conditions can now go out for exercise and non contact outdoor sports like golf, tennis or fishing. They can also meet friends or family from one other household in small groups no more than 8 people, **outdoors** like a park or go for a walk. If meeting in a garden they cannot use the other persons toilet.

For people that are **not** shielding the changes in phase 2 include:

- People living alone or single parent families can include one other household in an 'extended family group'. So a grandparent can now stay with their grandchildren (if in a single parent family). Also

partners that don't live together can see each other inside each other's homes and extended family group members can stay overnight if they want to.

- Households can meet up to 2 other households outdoors in groups of up to 8 people. If meeting in a garden you can now use the person they are visiting's toilet with strict hygiene procedures.

From Monday 22nd June:

Dentists will open for urgent appointments

Places of worship will reopen for private prayer

Professional sports will start to return without spectators

Face coverings mandatory on public transport. This includes taxis and subway. You will be fined if you do not wear a face covering.

From Monday 29th June:

Outdoor markets, playgrounds, zoos etc will reopen

Shops will open but **not** indoor shopping centres – face coverings recommended and may become mandatory

Weddings & civil ceremonies can take place outdoors with limited numbers

Community optometry practices re-open for face-to-face emergency and essential eye care

Test and Protect

If you have symptoms of Coronavirus: temperature over 37.8C, new & continuous cough or loss of taste and smell you **must** self isolate and book a test by contacting NHS at **www.nhsinform.scot** or phone:

0800 028 2186

Anyone you have been close to will be contacted and asked to self isolate for 14 days

Scottish Fire and Rescue - Make The Call

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's new campaign is called "Make the Call" - aimed at preventing further fire deaths in homes across Scotland.

They are encouraging people to "Make the Call" – help save a life by putting those at risk in touch with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service for a free Home Fire Safety Visit or advice from their local station.

Those at risk are identified as people who are over 50 and smoke, who also either live alone, have mobility issues or are using medical oxygen.

Assistant Chief Officer Stuart Stevens said: "These tragic deaths, and the injuries suffered by others, are often completely preventable.

"But the greatest challenge for us has always been reaching the most vulnerable people in our communities to make sure they have the life-saving advice and support that they need.

“Make the call to us and we can ensure that the people who may be at risk get the fire safety advice and support that they need to help them stay safe in the home during the coronavirus pandemic and beyond.”

“Each visit will be subject to a risk assessment first, and where a visit is not possible, due to coronavirus guidelines or other reasons, we can offer tailored advice over the phone and guide a carer, family member or the person themselves through a virtual home fire safety visit.

“But to do that, we need you to Make the Call, and put them in touch with us.”

Anyone who wants to book a free Home Fire Safety Visit can call **0800 731 999** or text **'fire' to 80800.**

Glasgow Helps

This website is a directory of help and support available from various organisations throughout Glasgow.

www.glasgowhelps.org or text **07451 289255**

Deafblind Scotland helpline during office hours:

07715 421399 Phone for a chat if you are lonely or to order free washable face coverings.