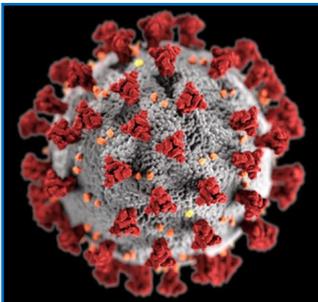




West Sussex Mediation Service Internal Newsletter

Coronavirus

Issue No: 141
Special
Edition -
Covid-19



*Extraordinary
Edition of our
Newsletters.*

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(March Edition
will follow, as
normal).*

At the time of going to press, it is business as usual at West Sussex Mediation Service. New cases of the Coronavirus are reported in the press, each day, but numbers are not as high as those in countries such as Italy and Iran. South Korea, meanwhile, are reporting a decrease in the number of new cases diagnosed, which must be good news.

At WSMS we are currently drawing up contingency plans, in case our activities are influenced by government directives or by client demands.

If necessary, we are capable of providing full office functions by way of remote working. We use Office 365 and have a secure, cloud based, Case Management System. Our telecom provider is also able to divert our phone calls to another landline or mobile phone.

We haven't had any concerns raised by either clients or volunteers, as yet. We will of course respect their views. We are already in the habit of risk assessing home visits and joint mediation sessions. We will be enhancing those and carrying out more in depth questioning of clients. Without being too intrusive, this will include recent travels and confirmation that no coronavirus type symptoms are being presented. If a case were to be diagnosed, associated with someone who works in, or frequents the building we have our offices in, we would have to react as directed by our landlord and the authorities.

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Advice

> **Provisions of services** — If any of our mediators feel uncomfortable about visiting clients homes or attending joint meetings, under the current situation, please speak to the office. If/when the number of confirmed coronavirus cases escalates we may well take the decision to restrict/suspend services.

> **Masks** — this from an article in The Guardian:

Wearing a face mask is certainly not an iron-clad guarantee that you won't get sick – viruses can also transmit through the eyes and tiny viral particles, known as aerosols, can penetrate masks. However, masks are effective at capturing droplets, which is a main transmission route of coronavirus, and some studies have estimated a roughly fivefold protection versus no barrier alone (although others have found lower levels of effectiveness).

If you are likely to be in close contact with someone infected, a mask cuts the chance of the disease being passed on. If you're showing symptoms of coronavirus, or have been diagnosed, wearing a mask can also protect others. So masks are crucial for health and social care workers looking after patients and are also recommended for family members who need to care for someone who is ill – ideally both the patient and carer should have a mask.

However, masks will probably make little difference if you're just walking around town or taking a bus so there is no need to bulk-buy a huge supply.

> **Safe distances** — The coronavirus may be able to linger in the air for at least half an hour, last for days on some surfaces, and travel almost 15', a new study has found. The research by Chinese government epidemiologists challenges the advice of health authorities who have suggested staying a "safe distance" of between 3' and 6' apart in public spaces to avoid catching COVID-19, according to the South China Morning Post. **This contradicts current NHS advice.**

"It can be confirmed that in a closed environment with air-conditioning, the transmission distance of the new coronavirus will exceed the commonly recognized safe distance," the researchers wrote in a paper published in peer-reviewed Chinese journal Practical Preventive Medicine last Friday, per the newspaper.

> **Number of cases** — As at 9am on 9th March there were 319 confirmed cases. There have been 3 in West Sussex, 8 in Brighton but none in East Sussex.

We will keep all our volunteers updated. Business as usual for now.