

## UTASS Briefing 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear UTASS members

When the coronavirus epidemic began, the situation felt in some ways similar to the FMD crisis. As it has developed, it has become clear that it is sadly even worse, and I fear will go on for a considerable time.

As you would expect, the virus has meant that UTASS has had to change its working practices, as so many other organisations have had to do. However, UTASS' fantastic staff are working to do what UTASS does best- provide support and help to those who need it.

So, if you or someone you know needs support or help, whether practically or emotionally, please do let us know. We have a wonderful band of willing volunteers ready to help out.

In the meantime, stay safe and healthy and here's to happier healthier times.

Your safety and wellbeing are of huge importance to us.

With very best wishes



Richard Matthews

UTASS chair

### Coronavirus COVID-19 Government Update

The single most important action we can all take, in fighting coronavirus, is to stay at home in order to protect the NHS and save lives. Anyone can spread the virus. On 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 the government introduced the following measures that we must all comply with:

- Requiring people to stay at home, except for very limited purposes
- Closing non-essential shops and community spaces
- Stopping all gatherings of more than two people in public

## What to do if you have coronavirus symptoms

Continue to stay at home if you have either:

- **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)

To protect others, do not go to places like a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Stay at home.

Keep up to date to help keep yourself and others safe at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> and [www.nhs.gov.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.nhs.gov.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19) and watch out for regular news updates on television and in the papers. Do check in with friends and neighbours and make sure they understand the guidelines.

## Update on UTASS Support

The UTASS premises is now closed in accordance with to government guidance, with the acceptance of the Post Office service which is limited for essential customers between 9.45am and 1.30pm on a Tuesday and 1.45pm and 3.30pm on a Friday. A strict limitation of 1 customer into the premises at any one time will be in place.

Please do know however that although we are not in the usual place, we are still here for you, to offer advice, support and help when you need it. Further information is available on the enclosed sheet and do not hesitate to get in touch if you need us.

## BPS 2020

Potential Coronavirus control measures, particularly “lockdown”, made it essential for us to maximize the number of BPS applications completed at the start of the application period. Many thanks to all who have helped us achieve this before the new Government restrictions have required us to close the office.

There are still a significant number of claims yet to be made. UTASS staff will still be available to make applications but from now on they will need to be completed “remotely” with your permission over the phone. We will be contacting you by phone to seek your authorization and discuss any changes. This is not ideal but we have to do our best to protect both you and our staff. It is still essential that a valid application is made by the **15<sup>th</sup> May 2020 deadline**: we will do our best to ensure that this happens for all our members.

## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

The deadline for annual management claims is **midnight 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020**. All Countryside Stewardship annual claims have to be made on line. HLS claim form are now being emailed or posted out. We intend to continue our recorded postal service for completed claims if they can be delivered to UTASS. The onus is on the applicant to make sure that an annual claim is submitted: failure to do so can result in no payment.

Various groups in the Durham Dales have come together to provide help and support to people at this time

If you are **self-isolating** we would encourage you to contact us so we can keep touch to make certain you are safe.

Or **if you need other support** please contact us and we will try help with shopping, prescriptions, dog walking or anything else you may need.

Please contact us either

- on our **help line 01833-641010** staffed 9am to 5pm, 7 days a week.
- **E-mail** [initttogether@utass.org](mailto:initttogether@utass.org) giving your
  - Name
  - Address
  - Telephone number
  - E-mail address if you have one

We will call you as soon as possible

Contact us at our **facebook** page

**Facebook.com/groups/InItTogetherTeesdale**

If it's an emergency outside of office hours as above please ring the **emergency number 07917304685**

Cont. over

If you need **Medical Help**,

**use the NHS 111 online coronavirus website if**

You feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home

Your condition gets worse

<https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/>

**Only call 111 if you cannot get a help line**

**We need volunteers to assist others in need** with things like,

- Keeping in contact and checks on peoples safety
- Delivery of shopping or medicines
- Dog walking
- Assistance with meals

**If you can help**, please go to **bit.ly/inittogether** and complete the questionnaire or **ring 01833-641010** and someone will do it for you.

**If you are already helping others** please let us know what you are doing, that way we can **support you** and also **co-ordinate the response** to ensure resources are not wasted

In it together, we can be stronger and give better support to our friends and neighbours.

We began planning for this eventuality some months ago, we don't have all the ideas or know all the problems, but we do have a team committed to support and finding the solutions.

Please help us to help others.