

CROYDON EPILEPSY SOCIETY

Spring NEWSLETTER

The society would like to start with a message to all our members and their families to hope that they are all keeping well and staying safe during the current **Coronavirus (Covid19) crisis**. The society is very aware that this is a very difficult time for everyone especially for those members who are classed as key workers and are still working on the front line. These key workers include those employed in social care, schools and other essential services that have been kept open to the public.

Since our last newsletter the **general election** took place on Tuesday 12th December resulting in an increased majority for the Conservative Government led by Boris Johnson. In April, due to the defeat of the Labour Party, Keir Starmer became the new leader of the Labour Party.

Brexit finally took place at the end of January after a number of years of heated discussion although the finer points of how this will be carried out, has been put on hold until the current crisis is over.

Since then the Coronavirus Pandemic has taken the world by storm originating in China at the end of 2019 and reaching us in England in February and March. Sadly it has resulted in over 17,000 deaths and despite the daily number of deaths and new recorded cases having decreased over the last week it is still too early to say that it has reached its peak.

We are also aware that not all our members may still be working and may be classed as “**vulnerable**” by the government and may have been sent an official letter advising them to stay indoors for the next 12 weeks and self isolate.

Other members may be working at home or some may have been furloughed by their employers and are worried how long their jobs will stay open. For those in furlough the government has extended the date until the end of June to provide financial assistance.

Other members may have some first hand experience of the virus by either catching themselves or in self-isolation because a family, friend or work colleague may have come down with it. I have had a number of friends and colleagues who have experienced the virus themselves and others who have actually lost a loved one to the virus.



It is important to keep positive and not dwell too much on the daily coronavirus news updates. If you are living on your own and are unable to get out to buy food and other essentials like medications please contact local help agencies such as Help the Aged or your local council. See below for Croydon Council details.

Other information can be found on-line:

<https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/info/daily-life/safety/coronavirus-covid-19>

The UK government has told everyone, regardless of age or health condition, **to stay at home**. You should only go outside for food, health reasons ie to pick up a prescription or a daily walk or work but only if you cannot work from home.

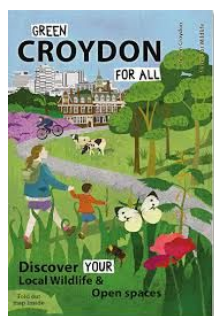
Does having epilepsy put me at increased risk from coronavirus?

At the moment, there is no evidence that having epilepsy alone makes people more likely to catch coronavirus or have more severe symptoms. For most people, coronavirus causes mild symptoms, and they recover quickly after a few days.

Mental Health

It is important to look after our mental health during the current situation with increased pressure on all of us. This may be while working on the front line, in self-isolation due to being in contact with someone with the virus, or working at home without any other direct contact from family members, friends or colleagues. Please refer to the Mind web site which gives advice.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>



It is important to have a daily walk as recommended by the government rather than sit indoors all day watching the television. The Croydon Council have kept their parks open and the borough has a wealth of countryside so there should be various green areas that you can walk to without needing a car or public transport to get to. Look on line for the Green Croydon Map.

<http://www.accs-croydon.co.uk/green-croydon-map>

Also indoor exercise is another option with many online exercise classes available or make up your own exercise routine.

Other pastimes while at home could include catching up with gardening, taking up a new hobby like painting or even just listening to music which may lift your spirits. I find I need a break from listening to the news stations like LBC and put some music on instead which is quite relaxing.

If you are missing your daily newspaper and have a library card and password look on line at the Croydon Libraries web site to have access to daily newspapers and magazines.

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/leisure/libraries/online-library/digital-newspapers>



Marco, our Chairman has produced this drawing and we wanted to share it with you all. He has been busy delivering meals on wheels for those people in Sutton unable to get out to buy their own food. Hopefully it may inspire some of you to create a picture yourself.

Croydon Council support during the Coronavirus Pandemic

The council has collected together a range of services and schemes that will help you get the support you need during this difficult time.

Register on GOV.UK for support

If you've been identified as high risk and have received a [letter from the NHS](#) you will need to register for support to get essential food deliveries and medical supplies.

Call out box: If you have a medical condition that makes you extremely vulnerable to coronavirus, please [register on GOV.UK](#) or call 0800 0288327.

You will then be offered support such as essential food deliveries.

If you need urgent support

The council has a dedicated helpline for residents who need urgent help as a result of COVID-19. Call: 020 8604 7787 – open Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm.

If you're having trouble getting through, please [complete this form](#).

Depending on your needs, the council will arrange a call after you've submitted the form to talk through your most urgent needs – such as food, medicine or other requirements.



Purple Day 2020 took place on the 26th March 2020. I was unable to promote it at the Croydon Libraries as all libraries closed on the 20th March 2020 and will remain shut for the foreseeable future. If you are missing your regular trip to the library don't forget you can download all the latest books using the following link.

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/leisure/libraries/online-library/digital-library-audio-and-e-books>

AGM 2020 Please note our **AGM** which was due to take place on the 19th May 2020 during **National Epilepsy Week** has been put on hold for now until government restrictions are relaxed on social gatherings.

The **200th anniversary** of the **birth of Florence Nightingale** will take place this year on the 12th May. She was born on the 12th May 1820 and died on the 13th August 1910. She was an important social reformer and was the founder of modern nursing. Her work in helping the sick and others that followed her led to the setting up of the NHS in 1948 by Aneurin Bevan. The new NHS Nightingale Hospital that recently opened in East London dedicated to treating patients with the coronavirus was named after her.



Useful Information:

Croydon Health Services Neurology Department:

If you are a local support group requesting more information on epilepsy and for a speaker to come to your group to talk about epilepsy and the support available to those who may have epilepsy or be a carer for someone who has the condition - please email for general enquiries ch-trspecialistmedicine1@nhs.net.

There is an Epilepsy Nurse Hotline/Advice telephone number which is open to GP's and patients (who are already known to the Epilepsy Service). If you are registered with a Croydon GP and under the care of a Croydon Neurologist and feel this service would benefit you please discuss with your GP who would be able to provide you with the telephone number.

The Croydon Carers Support Centre drop in, in George Street, Croydon is currently not open to provide support to carers. However they can still be contacted by phone on 020 8649 9339,option1 or email at info@carersinfo.org.uk
<https://www.whitgiffoundation.co.uk/content/carers-support-centre>

Croydon Age UK normally offers a range of practical home services for everyone living in the local area, especially those in later life. However, these services may be reduced at present due to the corona virus so please contact Tel no: 0208 683 7120, or email homeservices@ageukcroydon.org.uk, www.ageukcroydon.org.uk
There is also a Helpline no 0208 686 0066 for general enquiries.

Croydon Epilepsy Society Contact Details

Please contact us by phone or email. Please leave a message on our mobile no or text us and we will get back to you asap.

Further information can be provided by the following national support groups if you need urgent support:

Epilepsy Action www.epilepsy.org.uk Helpline 0808 800 5050
Epilepsy Society www.epilepsysociety.org.uk Helpline 01494 60140

Address: 64 Newlands Woods, Bardolph Avenue, Croydon CRO 9JR.
Mobile No: 07926372711

Email Address: croydonepilepsy@gmail.com
Visit our Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/croydonepilepsysociety
Web Site: www.croydonepilepsysociety.org
Twitter: Follow us @croydonepilepsy (<https://twitter.com/croydonepilepsy>)

Elected Members

President

Professor F M C Besag, FRCP, FRCPsych, FRCPCH.

Vice - Presidents

Yvonne Green

Honorary Vice - Presidents

Dr P B C Fenwick
Mrs Rosemary Aselford
Mrs Rita Richmond

Committee Members

Mr Marco Valencia Chairman
Ms Dawn Gibbons Honorary Secretary
Mr Richard Ruffell Honorary Treasurer



Stay Safe and Keep Well. Protect the NHS and Save Lives.