



## A Message from Thera's Executive Team

24 March 2020

As many of you will know, Thera supports over 3,000 people across the UK and employs over 3,300 members of staff.



announcement

Each and every one of you is being affected in some way by the current Covid-19 situation, especially since the Prime Minister's announcement yesterday (Monday) evening.



thank you

Firstly, can we express our thanks to you as we try to ensure your continued support or to those of you working or volunteering for us in what seems like an increasingly challenging environment.



heroes

We are seeing many members of staff and volunteers go above and beyond what is expected of them, showing, with their commitment, creativity and dedication, that they are our very own "social care heroes"!



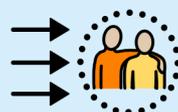
volunteer

We have been overwhelmed by family, friends and the wider community joining our emergency plans and volunteering their time.



risk

Those of you with a learning disability, and some of you who work for us, may be at higher risk from the virus.



protect

Our priority is to ensure that we protect as far as possible those of you who are vulnerable, ensuring that we can continue to provide sufficient staff and other resources to maintain essential day to day support.



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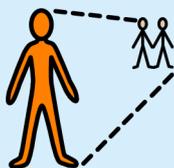
difficult

For organisations like Thera therefore, as with the NHS, this is an exceptionally challenging and difficult time. In particular, we have a responsibility to support those of you who may find it difficult to understand or to cope with the circumstances and restrictions that we all now face.



decisions

We want to help you to consider the risks that you may face and to take appropriate decisions to protect yourselves and others with whom you may live.



self-isolate

We are now seeing individuals - people we support, members of staff or family members - displaying symptoms associated with Covid-19 and needing to self-isolate, albeit thankfully so far in small numbers.



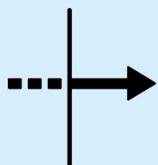
impact

We are also seeing the impact on all of you from decisions taken by other organisations - difficulties paying for things using cash or the availability of sufficient and appropriate personal protective equipment.



difficult

Those of you who work for Thera know that social care organisations went in to this situation already experiencing the difficulties of working in a sector of the economy that is over-stretched.



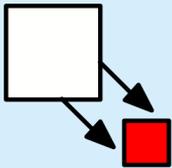
continue

We are therefore putting considerable resource towards the range of practical planning matters required to ensure the continued delivery of care, support and services over an extended period of time.



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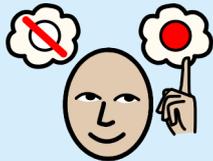
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reduce



steering group



decisions

This work in particular seeks to reduce the risk of severe staff shortages as a result of progress of the disease across the country in the coming weeks.

A steering group is co-ordinating our efforts. Policy and practice is being updated in line with Government guidance and appropriate decisions taken. That guidance is changing frequently as the situation develops.

However, so far we have:

- undertaken assessments of risks posed to you and to our work to make sure that we can tailor our support to you in the current circumstances
- closed those venues we operate where people congregate during the day time
- in line with latest Government guidance, closed social enterprise cafes
- scaled back the day to day operations of The Quality Company, with Dosh financial advocates cutting back face to face work
- ensured that staff continue to follow appropriate infection control practices and are aware of the latest guidance from the NHS in relation to Covid-19
- made sure we are aware, as far as possible, of those staff at greater risk from the virus and provided specific guidance to them



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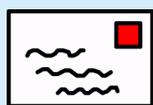
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- worked with local statutory agencies and the NHS to ensure that they are aware of vulnerable individuals who may need extra help



review

For many of you who work for us, we are also hoping to finalise a pay review in the coming weeks.



letter

Over the weekend we have made sure that all of you working for the organisation have a letter confirming that you are designated as “key workers”. This should provide continued access to childcare in schools and, in some cases, priority access to supermarkets for essential supplies.



amazing

As you would expect, we are now hearing about some of the amazing work that those of you who work or volunteer for Thera are doing to support people - those who are needing to self-isolate, who are finding this situation difficult to deal with or those who simply need their usual support to navigate their way through more difficult day to day life.



best

Situations like this should bring out the best in people and we are seeing that in abundance.



help

As well as formal communication, we have heard from many individuals with concerns, ideas or offers of help - from members of staff, from people we support and their families as well as from others who know the organisation and wish to help out.



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help

You may be somebody who is supported by Thera and you also want to know how you can help.



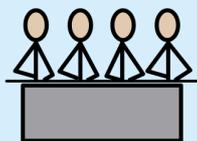
handwash

Now that the whole country has been asked by the Government to stay at home to help stop the spread of the virus, please do your best to work with staff who are supporting you to stay at home and follow the guidance on hand washing, cleaning and on keeping your distance from people. You will be helping massively to support services like the NHS looking after people who get sick. We can all be “stay at home heroes”!



thank you

Thank you to each and every one of you; and especially to each of you who works or volunteers for Thera for your hard work and dedication.



group executive  
team

**Jenny, Karen, Matthew and Simon**

**Group Executive Team**