

Keeping safe during COVID-19

COVID-19 is a big unknown and we are all facing challenges. We may not have answers, but we can stand with you with some safety tips and possible financial support links see below as we explore options together.

COVID-19 is spread from person to person, when people are in close contact with one another (within two meters). Therefore, women involved in the sex industry should consider precautions similar to those advised for health care workers.

Symptoms / What to look out for

- Fever, cough & shortness of breath
- Symptoms of COVID-19 can appear remarkably quickly, so quickly that a client who appeared and felt fit and healthy at the beginning of a booking can become very unwell during the booking.
- Infected people cough, releasing minute virus-containing droplets into the air which are then breathed in by other people infecting their respiratory tract.
- Minute virus-containing droplets present on hands or on other surfaces transmit the virus by hand to the mouth, nose, or eye of another person.

Some lesser known symptom that suggest the virus may be on its way..

- Loss of sense of smell and taste
- Physical fatigue
- Mental fatigue
- Lack of appetite
- Tummy ache
- Sore eyes

What to do if you display any symptoms

NHS site- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19>

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

- Self-isolate for 7 days if you live alone
- If you do not live alone, all must self-isolate for 14 days from when their/your symptoms started.

Protection

- Consider stopping seeing clients immediately if you have an underlying condition or offer full sex and aged 55+.
- Wash hands and surfaces regularly.
- Try to avoid touching your face, particularly your nose, mouth and eyes with your own hands at all times.

- Avoid kissing and limit saliva/spit sharing - There is general agreement that it could be transmitted by kissing.
- Have clients wash hands after exchanging money.
- If bookings are indoors, wash your workplace and equipment both before and after a booking to protect both yourself and your next client against potential infection.
- Continue other regular hygiene measures: condom use, monitoring your symptoms, showers, mouthwash, wiping down surfaces, new sheets, etc.

Screening

- Screen clients for cold and flu symptoms and recent travel (including travel within the UK)
- If indoors, could you ask all clients to shower and wash on arrival and do the same yourself both beforehand and afterwards?
- Consider not allowing clients hands to touch your face or go in or near your mouth and don't touch their face or put your hands or fingers in or near their mouths
- Even if you feel totally well you should cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing (or cough and sneeze into the crook of your elbow) and dispose of tissues and encourage others to do the same.

Your mobile phone

- For most of us our mobile phones are with us and in use all the time, so we need to think about where we have been with our phones and where they have been. On a table then you had it in your hand, on a car seat, counters at the petrol station, on the bedside table, hotel lobby etc. Your mobile touches many surfaces during the day, and your hand touches many surfaces also and it picks up your mobile and then put it right next to your mouth often in direct contact with your face. **This is why it's so important to not only wash your hands and surfaces but disinfect your phone.**

What if I can't sell sex now? (need money)

Universal Credit - <https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/coronavirus>

If you need financial support rather than putting yourself at risk through selling sex, it seems the rules have changed so you may get financial support straight away by applying online. Please read full information and apply on the link above as it says you can receive up to a month's advance upfront without physically attending a Jobcentre and the standard allowance has been increased to £400 a month.

Glasspool - www.glasspool.org.uk

Glasspool provide grants 'Our vision is of a society where people in need receive sufficient support to over-come hardship'. To apply you will need to register www.grantsplus.org.uk.

Small Wood Trust - www.smallwoodtrust.org.uk

Enabling women to be financially resilient. 'Our mission is to enable women to become financially resilient'. Criteria guide and form to complete with women can be found at <https://www.smallwoodtrust.org.uk/flexible-response-fund>.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can also receive extra support by registering as 'vulnerable' on the Gov website.

On the website you can register if you have a medical condition, even if you are not sure if your condition puts you in the extremely vulnerable category. You will be asked for your NHS number (but you can still register if you do not have it).

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable>

Mental Health

This is a time like no other and it is OK to feel overwhelmed, bored, frustrated, lonely or at peace. Here are some tips on maintaining mental wellbeing relating to coronavirus.

- Create a daily routine – Wake up and do your usual routine, shower, lunch breaks.
- Sleep – staying up all night and sleep all day can disrupt our mindset
- Continue to do the things you love
- Physical exercise – We are currently allowed to leave the house for exercise, whilst also social distancing. There are also lots of free options online.
- Mental exercise – crafts, drawing, puzzles, crosswords.
- Connecting with others – phone calls, text, facetime
- Talk it out – be honest about how you are feeling. Others might not be able to solve it, but we can support each other in it.
- Try not to make assumptions
- Limit your news watching – it's important to stay on top of latest news but constant watching can be overwhelming. Maybe set a timer or reminder for updates. Rumour and speculation can fuel anxiety. Having access to good quality information about the virus can help you feel more in control.

Need to talk to someone?

Beyond Support is a free and confidential call-back service that supports women in the sex industry in the UK (excluding Scotland).

Call on 0800 133 7870 or email support@beyondthestreets.org.uk

www.beyonddsupport.org.uk

Freephone National Domestic Abuse Helpline, run by Refuge

0808 200 0247

www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

If you need immediate help but are unable to speak because of domestic abuse ring 999. When they answer press 55* this alerts the operator and the police will be sent to help you.

Keep your phone charged
Ensure phone credit is topped up
Keep away from the kitchen
First sign of abuse ring for help

This information has been collated for women we support and by no means official guidance. Please check Government websites for up to date information and official guidance <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>.