

DEWSBURY & DISTRICT THIRD AGE

Member Guidelines After COVID

While we have all been waiting in anticipation of all restrictions being lifted, there is a general feeling, particularly among the more vulnerable, that this is a little premature and is continuing to cause anxiety.

As a Group, we could just choose to go along with no restrictions, but we have a duty to try and safeguard you, our members, as much as possible but we all attend at our own risk. We have therefore taken the decision to adopt a more cautious approach to opening our classes and we will continue to review the statistics and consult with you to see when we can lift all restrictions. Many of our venues have also indicated that they would like to proceed cautiously and, as we contract with them, we are obliged to observe their requirements.

As a Group, we therefore ask you to co-operate where possible with the following.

1. **Symptoms**: If you feel at all unwell or suspect that you may have symptoms, please do not attend class until you are confident that you are symptom free or have tested negative. We assume that testing will continue to be readily available and that home testing kits will be available free of charge from the NHS.

2. **Vaccination**: We hope that you have all been able to access your double vaccinations unless medically advised not to do so. The Government have said that, since 16th August, anyone who has had both their vaccinations will no longer be required to self-isolate but will be required to have regular testing if they come into contact with someone who has tested positive. Test and Trace or the NHS will specify what that person needs to do. As we all know, things can change at short notice, and we will adhere to whatever the Government recommends. Anyone who has not been vaccinated out of choice, poses a higher risk to the group and we please ask you to consider this if thinking of returning to class.

3. **Masks/Face Covering**: While we would all like to dispense with wearing masks, we recognise that some members may prefer to continue to wear them. Masks do not provide protection for the wearer but prevent others from being exposed to potential transmission from the wearer. We cannot insist that masks are worn unless there is a specific instruction from the venue, and this may only be in the “shared areas” rather than the actual room that we are using. We can only leave it to your discretion and suggest that, if the class is divided on this, then perhaps mask wearers and non-mask wearers arrange to sit apart from each other. Again, the Government may change national policy on this if the situation dictates.

When a tutor is giving any instructions, they will position themselves at an appropriate distance but will not be expected to wear a mask while speaking, unless they choose to do so. A minimum of one metre now seems to be the recognised and practical safe distance to prevent transmission, at the moment.

4. **Hygiene Precautions:** Where venues are not providing hand sanitiser, then we suggest that members either carry their own or we will ensure that a bottle is available, if needed. We will have to observe whatever requirements are set down in the venue risk assessment, including the use of kitchens and toilets.

We are hoping that we can enjoy refreshment facilities again, but members may prefer to provide their own cup or mug or provide their own refreshments. The venue risk assessment will help to guide best practice.

Where equipment is shared between members, it would be courteous if the last person to use it sanitises it ready for use by the next person.

5. **Ventilation:** The venue risk assessment will help to determine what can be done to improve ventilation, but under no circumstances should any member attempt to open any window that cannot be reached from ground level unless a suitable step ladder is available that can provide three safe points of contact.

6. **Class Registers:** As well as serving as a fire register, members should be aware that their personal details may be requested by the Test and Trace service if one of the members should test positive for COVID. It may also be advisable for one nominated person to take the register, e.g., Tutor Support, so that handling is minimised.

7. **Tutor Responsibility:** Tutors are responsible for ensuring that appropriate measures are observed and have the right to ask a member to comply if they feel that the member's behaviour is posing a threat to other members. If the member refuses to comply, then the tutor could ask the member to withdraw from the class for a specified period.

8. **Collection of Fees:** As you will be aware, many shops are now insisting on cashless payments. Unfortunately, we do not have the facility to take payment by debit/credit card. We would therefore ask you to make payment by personal cheque. If this is not possible, then we will accept payment by cash, but we ask that you tender the exact amount to minimise having to manage cash. It would be most helpful if you could place the money in a sealed envelope with your name and the amount on the outside. If you wish to enrol for more than one class, then this will still be possible, provided you pay the correct amount. Cheques do not need to be placed in an envelope. In order to avoid crowding the collector, if you could leave your envelope on the collector's table so that they can then sit quietly and write out the receipts. The collector will obviously be able to deal with any queries, provided social distancing is observed around the table.

This is a frustrating time for everyone, but if we respect and support each other by making slight adjustments to our normal practices, then there is no reason we cannot get back to enjoying all those things that we have missed.

Thank you for your co-operation.