

WESTMINSTER SYNAGOGUE

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Last Updated : 13th March 2020

Dear members,

As a precautionary measure against COVID-19 the Executive and the Professional Team of Westminster Synagogue have decided to suspend all Services, Educational Provision and Community Events with immediate effect.

This is not a measure that we are taking lightly but the safety of the community must be our top priority.

To date, as a Synagogue we have taken precautions to offer services, classes and gatherings in a safe way. However, having looked at growing evidence and advice, and with regard to our specific situation as a multi-generational space we have decided to take this further step now.

The suspension of all communal activities will continue until the Executive and the Professional Team determines that the situation has sufficiently changed to allow us to resume.

We wish to be clear that we do **not** have reason to believe that any of our members or recent visitors have coronavirus.

Online Provision

Whilst educational classes will be cancelled for this weekend, we are planning to run these online starting next Shabbat. Further details will follow.

We do not currently have provision to live-stream services. However we are looking into offering this as well as finding innovative ways for us to pray together and learn together until we can next meet as a community. For this Shabbat you may wish to login to the live streaming services of our friends at [Northwood & Pinner Liberal](#) (6.30pm tonight and 11am tomorrow) or [Radlett Reform](#) (6.30pm tonight and 10.30am tomorrow).

As a community we will continue to do everything we can to be there for our members, whatever their needs, particularly the elderly and vulnerable. We are staying in contact by phone with all our more senior members to offer support – both emotional and physical (eg. collection of medicines or foods on their behalf) as well as helping to alleviate any potential loneliness during this time.

If you need any assistance whatsoever or want help to access the latest information or would simply like to talk to somebody, please call 020 7584 3953 (or 020 7052 9710 out of hours). You can also email gary@westminstersynagogue.org.

We are also looking for volunteers to be able to help with these efforts. Specifically if you are willing to phone 7-10 people, or are able to collect and deliver groceries and medicines, please email hilary@westminstersynagogue.org.

If you or a member of your family have tested positive for coronavirus, please let us know. This is to allow us to support you personally and to take any precautionary measures necessary. Should you need to contact the Synagogue out of hours (evenings and weekends) please contact, 020 7052 9710, leave a message and a member of staff will call you back.

If you have a lifecycle event planned for the coming months (a Bar or Bat Mitzva, or a Baby naming for example) we will be getting in touch with you to discuss this, but please feel free to contact the office by email or phone.

The office remains open and certain individual meetings will continue. For this reason we are taking extra-precautions. These include:

- Extra cleaners have been contracted to undertake a COVID 19 deep clean (focussing on prayer books, door handles and banisters)
- We have re-iterated and enhanced food hygiene measures used in the kitchens
- Encouraging regular washing of hands, especially upon arriving and prior to eating. Posters are in place showing how to thoroughly wash your hands.
- Not greeting each other by handshake, hug, or kiss.

You may find these websites helpful to keep yourself updated;

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

Please do keep in touch and let us know how we can be of assistance and help to you or your family during this time. We remain a strong community and our commitment to one another is vital as we wait for this risk to pass.

We look forward to all meeting again in the near future and we hope that you, your family and all your friends remain safe and healthy until then.

Shabbat Shalom.

The Executive and Professional Team of Westminster Synagogue,

Jeffrey Ohrenstein – Chair

Michele Raba – Vice-Chair

Rabbi Benji Stanley

Rabbi Thomas Salamon

Gary Sakol - Executive Director

Yael Roberts – Director of Community and Education

David Connick

Edward Glover

Valery Rees

Ellen Miller

David Goldberg

Julien Hammerson

Dudi Appleton

