**Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

As we now know, Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a serious illness and we, because of our age profile, may be at greater risk than others if we catch it\*.

For many of us, we would have been the ones who volunteered in the past to help our community when needed. On this occasion, the greatest contribution we can make is to minimise social contact and avoid contracting the virus.

Social distancing can mean social isolation when people live alone, and this is very difficult. If you are in a position to do so, phoning a relative, friend or neighbour to chat on a regular basis can be of mutual benefit.

For practical needs, most communities have drawn up lists of local people who are willing and available to help out. Your local parish office or neighbours or local Garda station may be in a position to provide details. There is very useful information on the Citizens Information website

 <https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/health/covid19/covid19_and_older_people.html>

There is a huge amount of information (and misinformation) circulating about COVID-19. The Taoiseach and the Government have advised us to use only reputable news/information sources. Some links to official websites are given below.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/472f64-covid-19-coronavirus-guidance-and-advice/>

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html>

<https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI56vc9Y2x6AIVjLHtCh3KMAIfEAAYASAAEgLCKPD_BwE>

There is plenty of help out there – it is our turn to avail of it this time.

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***\* From the HSE website****:*

*Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus. We are still learning how it works.*

*There are some groups of people who may be more at risk of serious illness if they catch coronavirus. But we do not think these groups have a higher risk of catching coronavirus. This is similar to other infections such as flu.*

*You are more at risk of serious illness if you catch coronavirus and you:*

* *are 60 years of age and over - people over 75 are particularly vulnerable*
* *have a long-term medical condition - for example, heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, cancer or high blood pressure*
* *have a weak immune system (immunosuppressed).*