



Iron Mill College

Education & Training in Mental Health & Wellbeing
Established 1981

Dear Students

Re: Iron Mill College Response to the Government Lockdown Announcement

I am sure you will have heard the government's announcement at the weekend, explaining that a new national lockdown is beginning on Thursday this week to control the spread and growth of coronavirus across the country. I am writing to let you know the resulting actions which will now be taken at Iron Mill College.

The government have been clear that public sector educational establishments should remain open during this lockdown, and have emphasised the importance of continuing education for our young people at schools, FE and HE institutes. However, we have also considered the following:

- the population of Iron Mill College does not comprise 'young people' of the age profiles typically seen in schools, FE colleges and in universities - our demographic consists of 100% mature students, whose health and risk levels could be more severely impacted by coronavirus
- although COVID-19 numbers in the South West are currently below the national average, they continue to steadily climb
- we understand from a range of modelling reports collated by Sage that the South West will be one of the two first regions (along with the Midlands) to exceed hospital capacity, including use of the Nightingale facilities, and this is expected to occur within the next 2 weeks, presenting further risk
- the R-rate in the South West is higher than anywhere else in the country at this time, at 1.3-1.5
- there is an expectation from the government that, with the exception of key public sector staff, people must work from home during lockdown if they can possibly do so, and it is clear that IMC staff can do so
- while we appreciate that face to face work is the ideal for counselling and psychotherapy training, it is also possible to learn online effectively and safely, for a temporary period, and our professional bodies are understanding and supportive of such learning during the coronavirus situation.

We have therefore decided to take all learning back into our 'live online classrooms' from this Thursday 5th November until 2nd December, when lockdown is due to finish, to protect our whole college community over the next 4 weeks. We will continue to

review the situation throughout this period. If the government decides to extend lockdown further, or if our Risk Assessment Team decides that the assessed risk is too high in December, we may need to extend the online learning period. However, it remains our firm intention to revert to attended learning and increase attendance numbers as soon as we can safely do so.

In the meantime, please look after yourself and each other well during this difficult time ahead, and speak with your tutor immediately if you are struggling with your learning or with your emotional wellbeing - we will do all we can to support you through this second lockdown and beyond.

Best wishes

Rose



Rose Bedford | Principal

Principal - Iron Mill College UK

Academic Director - PCI College Ireland