

*Inform, Advocate, Support*

**SCI Specialist Nurse response to ensure continued support of NHS Services throughout the Coronavirus epidemic.**

06/10/ 2020

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We at SIA want to continue to support frontline workers in caring for people with spinal cord injury (SCI) through these worrying times. There are no indicators that SCI people are more likely to catch Coronavirus (also known as COVID-19), however due to paralysis and weakened cough reflex SCI people who contract Coronavirus are more likely to require acute care as the consequences of this virus on their already compromised respiratory function could prove critical.

**Our response**

In the demand for acute care beds over the winter months, an increase in the number of people with SCI who do not gain access to the Specialist Spinal Cord Injury Centres is possible. We are already seeing rapid discharges of SCI people from acute to primary care settings. It is paramount that the correct community care provision is provided to prevent the need to access acute care in the future due to the development of avoidable complications.

Our Specialist Nurses have responded to the crisis to be a valuable resource to support you in your caring for patients with SCI.

The framework of this response is around three vital areas:

**1. Inform:**

- A 9am to 5pm Advice Line for referral to our expanded SCI Nurse Specialist service, not only on issues relating to Coronavirus but also the usual complex care requirements required by those with SCI.
- Regularly updated advice and support on SCI care and issues related to Coronavirus, shared through briefings, videos and social media links.
- Regular updates on anything relevant to SCI that is advised by statutory bodies.
- Virtual educational offerings via SIA Academy.
- Face to face visits following a thorough risk assessment process.

**2. Advocate & Campaign:**

- Through our Advice Line address concerns about ongoing availability of care and appropriate SCI-health management if admitted to hospital.
- Represent all SCI people to government, the NHS and the wider care systems to ensure the priority needs of SCI people are being considered at every step.

**3. Support:**

- Refer, link and triage SCI people to a network of support services, charities and help, offline and locally to address physical, social and mental health needs throughout the epidemic.

In this way we will be able to provide expert information, advocacy and support to SCI people and the people caring for them for the duration of the emerging Coronavirus epidemic.

If you require the support from SIA's SCI Specialist Nurses please follow the link to our website <https://www.spinal.co.uk/> for an online referral form and updated advice and information on Coronavirus and SCI.

Or email: [scinursespecialists@spinal.co.uk](mailto:scinursespecialists@spinal.co.uk)

You can also contact us via our Advice Line: [0800 980 0501](tel:08009800501).

We hope you all stay safe.

Regards,

*Carol Adcock*

Carol Adcock  
RN BSc Hons  
SCI Specialist Nurse Lead North Regions