

23rd March 2020

Dear valued YMCA St Paul's Group Members

I wanted to take this opportunity to write to you to confirm our actions over the last few days.

In line with Government advice, on 20th March 2020 we closed our Health and Wellbeing centres, including Hampton Pool, and froze all memberships. As a charity that celebrates the work it does with a wide cross section of the community, this was not an easy decision to take however it was the right thing to do.

During the period whilst our community and H&WB centres are closed we have three focuses: the first is in providing you with home workout videos, health & wellbeing tips and online support, that will help you to stay physically and mentally healthy during these challenging times. We are also moving our counselling service to an online consultation so that we continue to support those who were accessing valuable help.

The second is in ensuring that we sustain our wellbeing support to the many vulnerable members of the community we are engaged with, not least the 1,150 formerly homeless people we will continue to house throughout this period. In this group are teenage parents, looked after children as well as those who have come off the streets.

Our final focus is ensuring that our key, frontline workers who provide the support to our residents throughout this period are given the resources they need to sustain through this time of challenge. Like those in the NHS our staff are having to travel, come into hostels that house lots of residents, many of whom are concerned and worried but who lack the facilities and opportunities that many of us will have.

We are really grateful for your support for the YMCA over the years, your membership has already been used to invest in community resources. I also want to assure you that whilst the centres are closed your membership will remain frozen and you will not have to pay for your membership until we re-open. This payment freeze means that you retain your membership, whether you have an annual, monthly, pre-paid or pay as you go membership, your Direct Debit payment will not be collected throughout this period.

That said, if there are those who would be willing to continue to pay, even an element of this membership throughout this so we can continue to provide the wellbeing resources as outlined above, then your support will go a long way to



helping some vulnerable people at this time. We will, in time, look to recognise and celebrate that investment however if you think this is something you can do, even for a period then we would love to hear from you not least as we are likely to be able to claim Gift Aid back on it.

In closing I am minded of the truth that, as YMCA we have been around for 175 years. We have run support services to families throughout major international conflicts, have seen our staff commit to deliver family letters to the frontline during the World Wars and have seen our workers inspired to launch movements such as the Poppy Appeal. The current COVID challenge is a dark tunnel that we are all travelling through at the moment however when we finally emerge, we will see a new world made possible.

Stay safe and be well

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'Richard James', is written in a cursive style.

Richard James
Chief Executive