

SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL - RESPONSE TO COVID-19 UPDATE 29/03/20

SHIELDED GROUP FOOD SUPPLY DELIVERIES, COMMUNITY GRANTS, COMMUNITY REASSURANCE TEAMS

Delivery of food supplies to people in the Shielded Group

The council has now taken delivery of the emergency food supplies for local people in the Shielded Group who have been told to self-isolate for the next 12 weeks. These people have already been contacted by the NHS to let them know that they are part of this group and will receive food deliveries and other support should they need it.

This delivery of food supplies is to ensure that people have the supplies they need before their direct food delivery arrangements are put in place in the coming weeks.

You are in the Shielded Group if you have the following health conditions -

1. Solid organ transplant recipients.
2. People with specific cancers:
 - people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
 - people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
 - people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
 - people having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
 - people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
3. People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD.
4. People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell).
5. People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.
6. Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.

If people are in the Shielded Group and need a supply of food now or in the coming week, they can let us know by calling our Helpline on **0345 678 9028**.

The Helpline number is now live, and residents are being asked to use the Helpline if they have any coronavirus-related issues or enquiries. The Helpline is **0345 678 9028**, and is available from **8am to 6pm weekdays**, and **9am to 1pm Saturdays**. Each caller will be asked to explain their need and, if required, this information will be passed on to the appropriate support.

Community Grants Funding

The council has made £295k available to distribute in grant funding to community / VCS organisations to help with the COVID-19 local responses and other funding pressures brought about by the pandemic at a local level.

The plan is to use this funding in 3 distinct ways:

- To help people in food poverty – funding **£100k**
- To provide funding for key VCS organisations who can both deliver and coordinate community support – funding **£120k**
- Small grants fund for very local initiatives – funding **£75k**

Food Poverty

Shropshire has a fantastic network of organisations helping to alleviate food poverty in the county. The coronavirus crisis has provided additional challenges for food banks in terms of supply of vital food and goods and in terms of additional numbers of people facing uncertain and reduced income. This funding will help to ensure that there is enough for those who need it. The Food Poverty Alliance has already been grant funded 20k to help coordinate our response, and to directly fund food banks who may be running low on food. An additional 80k has been made available and we will be working through in the coming weeks about how this will be used and distributed.

Key VCS Organisations

The council will be approaching our key voluntary and community organisations directly over the next few days. We will work with those organisations which are well-known and trusted in our communities and which have the capability to deliver the right services and to support smaller organisations and communities to do likewise.

There will be 2 elements to this:

1. Delivery of services and local area co-ordination. Funding will be provided to organisations who are experienced in drawing together and enabling communities to provide support. And we want to make sure that the whole county is covered.
2. Specialised support to vulnerable people. This support will be for vulnerable Service Users and their carers whose activities, social interaction and networks have been curtailed. People need to know that they're not facing these changes alone. So, support will be about reassuring people whose lives have become very different almost overnight and providing good, sensible, accurate and up to the minute advice.

Funding will be provided to those local VCS organisations which are specialised in working with the following vulnerable groups:

- Older people and carers
- People of working age with a range of vulnerabilities – mainly money-related, e.g. welfare benefits, debt
- People with mental health challenges and their carers
- People (including young people) living with learning disabilities and their carers
- People (including young people) living with autism and their carers

Small grants fund

This is aimed at supporting very local initiatives. Many communities have begun initiatives to help others who may be finding the current situation difficult. We want to be able to provide some financial support to help these initiatives take off and be sustained throughout the crisis. We also know that some community facilities and village halls will be facing lost income during this time and so we want to help ensure that they are sustained as well. The maximum grant available will be £500.

We want to make this as simple as possible:

- There will be a simple application and agreement
- Guidance will be provided
- The funding will be available to community groups
- Max £500 per project
- Must be in respect of:
 - supporting a local community response to COVID-19, OR
 - sustaining a local asset, e.g. village hall adversely affected by loss of income as a result of the coronavirus crisis
- The grant scheme will be widely advertised – we will open it next week. If you would like more information in the meantime, please contact Neil Evans at neil.evans@shropshire.gov.uk

Community Reassurance Teams

How the council is working with existing and new community groups and voluntary organisations to tackle the impact of COVID-19 on our communities

The council has set up area based Community Reassurance Teams to provide support to the new and existing community groups set up in response to COVID-19, town and parish councils and other organisations.

The teams are not there to duplicate or get in the way of the amazing work that is being done in our communities, but to ensure that the council has information about what is happening so we can advise residents who are getting in touch with us, and also to ensure that the information and guidance we need to share gets to the right people. Ultimately, the Teams want to work with communities to ensure that everyone gets the help and support that they need to stay at home and stay well and healthy.

The Community Reassurance Teams are a local point of contact for groups, local councils and Shropshire Council members, and will be able to help with any calls for support that are coming forward, as well as ensuring the delivery of the things we are being asked to do by central government.

You can get in touch with your local Community Reassurance Team by getting in touch with the Helpline on 0345 6789028.

Telephone Reassurance Teams

In addition to the Community teams we have set up a Telephone Reassurance Team who will provide extra support to our very busy Customer Service Centre. They will provide a supportive listening ear to anyone who needs to talk about their situation and be supported to find solutions to non-emergency issues.