

HUB UPDATE, SHIELDING, NHS VOLUNTEERS – 8th April 2020

Community and Business Response

We have been really heartened, but not surprised, to see our communities across Cumbria respond with such resilience and strength to the ongoing and fast developing situation. Since the outbreak began, over 300 formal and informal community-based groupings have swung into action, working alongside charities, to support others in their communities. In addition local small businesses have come to the fore providing doorstep deliveries of food, ready meals and essential supplies, which means more people can self support keeping themselves and others safe.

CCC Emergency Support Helpline

It's been just over a week since Cumbria County Council and partners launched an Emergency Support Helpline for vulnerable or isolated people in need of urgent help. The emergency helpline has already taken over 1,000 calls, receiving around 200 calls a day but seeing slightly less on weekends. The helpline exists to provide support to people at 'high risk' who aren't able to rely on neighbours, friends or family members, and may be struggling for food, medicines or other essential supplies. The requests for help are matched with local support which is being offered by a network of community groups, volunteers, redeployed council employees, and local businesses.

How to contact the Emergency Support Helpline:

- Phone - The emergency telephone support helpline is 0800 783 1966.
- Online - COVID-19 online support form.
- Email your request for help to COVID19support@cumbria.gov.uk.

The telephone call centre operates Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm and 10am to 2pm at weekends. The service also accept referrals from members of the public who may be concerned about people in their community. **Over the Bank Holiday, Friday 10 April to Monday 13 April, the service will operate between 10am to 2pm.**

Welfare Coordination Hub

Voluntary and Community Groups right across Cumbria have stepped up to the challenge of ensuring their communities are supported effectively during this time. At least 300 voluntary groups are now working hard to support the most vulnerable in their communities, who have no other support network, to ensure they receive assistance with grocery shopping and pharmacy orders. The county council will continue to work alongside these groups, providing advice and guidance, and as a broker to ensure they are able to take up offers of help from local businesses, make connections with food providers or support with grant applications.

Proactive letters and Calls – Shielding and High Risk

Additional efforts are also underway to make sure isolated people, and those who may be 'offline', are hearing about the service. This week, the county council will write to a targeted group of residents in the NHS 'shielding' category, and those who are classed as extremely vulnerable, to make them aware of the helpline service. This will be supported with an SMS (text message) and a leaflet drop across local communities.

Members of the public, volunteers and local businesses can also help spread the word and download a pack of useful resources to print and share at www.cumbria.gov.uk/coronavirus.

Shielding

The government is providing a weekly free food parcels as part of its “shielding” strategy. In Cumbria **10,000 residents** should have received letter from the NHS informing them of the steps that they should be following and they will be advised to register their needs. If they aren’t able to register online, they can call the national number **0800 028 8327**.

4000 people in Cumbria have registered with the NHS Shielding service. The Government are working with pharmacies to help them deliver medicines and prescriptions. Food parcels will be delivered to their door directly as arranged by Government. Approximately **400 free food parcels** (per week) have been delivered in Cumbria.

Going forward, the Government’s intention is that the on-line information pages on where vulnerable people can seek help will become more sophisticated, allowing key data about these individuals to be captured, which will assist in developing support with food retailers and the supermarkets to enable people in this group to be prioritised for delivery and ‘click and collect’ services. For anyone who has been advised to shield and HAS NOT received their free food parcel and needs urgent food, Cumbria County Council has been allocated a small supply, just in excess of 100 basic food parcels, to be allocated out on an emergency basis. The way to access these emergency parcels is **0800 783 1966** or email COVID19support@cumbria.gov.uk.

In addition any contacting the helpline who doesn’t have friends, family or other support will be connected with local volunteers, community groups or statutory agency support, if required.

NHS Volunteers - GoodSAM

GoodSAM is an app that has existed for a number of years, and it was developed to allow members of the public with first aid skills and off-duty health professionals to an emergency (such as a cardiac arrest) close to their current location, where their skills might be useful before an ambulance arrived. This has been adapted for the NHS volunteers, but it works on similar principles.

National government announced recruitment to support the NHS on 25th March 2020. Those interested were asked to sign up via the GoodSAM website: <https://www.goodsamapp.org/NHS>

These NHS volunteers were recruited to 4 roles:

- Community Response Volunteer (help with shopping, medicine and essential supplies)
- NHS Patient Transport Volunteer (transport home from hospital)
- NHS Transport Volunteer (transport of equipment between NHS sites)
- Check in and Chat Volunteer (short term telephone support to those at risk of loneliness because of Coronavirus restrictions)

Recruitment of volunteers via the GoodSAM website has been temporarily closed in order to allow the 750,000 volunteers already signed up to be processed.

We do not have direct access to the data on volunteers who have registered via the GoodSAM system, and do not know how many people from Cumbria are registered as volunteers.

However, Local Authorities can access the GoodSAM app to access a local volunteer if we have any gaps in support. The tasks that NHS volunteers have been recruited to clearly overlap with work that the Welfare Hubs will be carrying out. Due to the fact we have very strong existing local volunteer networks in Cumbria we haven’t yet needed to task any of the NHS volunteers.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

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