

Briefing Shropshire COVID-19 Community Support

We have been asked several questions from members, organisations and individuals regarding support to vulnerable people in their communities.

Under current Government advice (24th March 2020), members of the public are permitted to leave their house to provide care or help for a vulnerable person. Anyone who is out their home should observe social distancing and hygiene rules very carefully.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874742/Full_guidance_on_staying_at_home_and_away_from_others_1_.pdf

Members and volunteers who wish to distribute leaflets should be in good health.

People in the following groups should not distribute leaflets:

1. Anyone who is over 70 years of age
2. Anyone who has an underlying health condition and has been advised to avoid social contact for 12 weeks
3. Anyone who is self-isolating

We have provided **health protection guidance** that people who are well and wish to distribute leaflets and supplies to protect themselves before, during and after.

There are **alternative means of support**, to use the Shropshire Council Community Response Team as key workers; to use the postal system and / or to use social media.

Community Reassurance Teams across Shropshire will work with local community groups, voluntary organisations and businesses to coordinate the support for local residents. Community Hubs will be across the County in 5 locations.

Shropshire Council's Customer Service Centre is open and taking calls as usual at the moment. The following numbers will stay in use:

Concerns for a vulnerable adult 0345 678 9044

Concerns for a vulnerable child 0345 678 9021

If you are at risk of homelessness 0345 678 9005

For urgent waste and recycling enquiries 0345 678 9007

For Registrars' issues 0345 678 9016

Because we are now getting more enquiries related to Covid-19 issues, we will go live with a new helpline this week dedicated to trying to help with all related issues. As this situation develops this line may begin to take over from some of our business as usual numbers.

The number for this Covid-19 line is 0345 678 9028

We are asking people to exercise specific care when **identifying and keeping records of those who need support** in our communities. We need to ask people to do this in a secure way that does not identify individuals to those not directly involved in support and care. We need to maintain confidentiality and not identify households or individuals who may use to exploit or for threatening behaviour, and we have seen instances of this locally, for instances with Scams.

Keeping safe and well when supporting our Vulnerable communities

Health Protection Advice

Four steps to protecting the health of our volunteers and the vulnerable in our community

1. If you feel unwell, or a member of your family is unwell please stay at home. However strongly you feel about volunteering if you volunteer when you may be infected with COVID-19 you will potential pass it on to all the people you are trying to help.

2. If you and your family are well you can protect yourself from picking up COVID-19

Before you start

- a. If you wish to wear gloves we will do our best to provide personal protective equipment. You can wear rubber washing up gloves as an alternative, please make sure that you have disinfected these gloves outside before you go out. You can disinfect by using a household disinfectant or by washing the outsides with hand soap. **NO NOT USE** gloves made of any material other than rubber, COVID-19 can be carried on wool, cotton and other materials.
- b. **Alternatively**, make sure you wash your hands before you leave the house.
- c. Try to make sure that anything you may carry with you e.g. mobile phone has been cleaned you can do this carefully with soap and water. Be particularly careful to clean the key pad, if you have one.
- d. Carry a hand sanitiser with you or a wet flannel and soap (like mum used to) when you are out.
- e. Carry a tissue with you when you are out.

3. **While you are out and about**

- a. Be hyper vigilant about what you touch. Surfaces that are touched often such as door handles can carry COVID-19 for 72 hours if they haven't been cleaned. Wash or sanitise your hands after touching these surfaces. Letter boxes will be less likely to carry virus because they are not touched regularly.
- b. Do not touch your face, this is any easy route for the virus to use to enter your system.
- c. If you happen to cough or sneeze, make sure you catch it in a tissue and then wash or sanitise your hands.
- d. Keep up with the social distancing while you are out, keep 2 metres between you and others, unless the others are members of your family.
- e. You could carry a disinfectant wipe with you, in a bag. Disinfectant will kill the virus on surfaces.

4. **When you return from distributing leaflets**

- a. Make sure that you wash your hands and your face before you do anything else.
- b. Celebrate that you've made someone's day a little brighter

Other considerations

We also suggest that those distributing leaflets are provided with a card / letter so that they can identify themselves as supporting the vulnerable. This could be in addition to and ID card.