

## Hertsmere Together – Local Strategic Partnership Briefing - 28 April 2020

This briefing intends to provide an overview of the current activities at a countywide and local level to support our local community.

General information on all aspects of the crisis including links to the most up to date Central Government information, can be found via the [County Council's coronavirus pages](#).

### Support for Vulnerable People

#### Operation Shield

The countywide effort to ensure the extremely vulnerable can self-isolate for twelve weeks is known as Operation Shield and is being coordinated at a county level via a multi-agency partnership known as the Volunteering and People Assistance Cell. As of 8 April, there were known to be 24,510 names on the 'extremely vulnerable' list for the county. GPs have been tasked with identifying additional people most at risk and were required to update the national list accordingly by the 14 April. Once these newly identified individuals have been recorded, they will be able to access the Government's shielding support offer (which they may have already self-registered for).

Deliveries of food parcels, household essentials and prescribed medication to the most vulnerable of our residents continues; to date 10,870 food parcels and 301 prescriptions have been delivered. Volunteers who ordinarily work for Hertfordshire Constabulary are now working with volunteers from Fire and Rescue to make pharmacy deliveries and this is working well. Plans are underway to utilise other volunteers in warehouse tasks to pick and pack food parcels; up to 100 volunteers are expected to receive their induction next week.

#### Operation Sustain

At a county level over 9,500 volunteers have been recruited to the three key voluntary sector organisations working collaboratively on this task: Communities 1<sup>st</sup>, #TeamHerts and Watford3RT. The number of volunteers deployed countywide to date is over 3000.

Within Hertsmere the response to support vulnerable people has been led by Communities 1<sup>st</sup> in conjunction with Hertsmere Borough Council. As of 20 April, 383 people have now registered as [Compassionate Community Connectors](#) volunteers, following a reference check and registration process, 106 are now activated as ready for duty and 59 are currently providing services to local residents.

Volunteers are able to provide a range of support including shopping collection, dog walking and befriending through to call handling and back office functions.

344 people with 463 requests for help have registered on the system in the Borough of Hertsmere. Communities 1st are now operating a 6 day a week phone line and are receiving on average 76 calls per day (99 per day on weekdays).

- *Individuals wishing to volunteer are requested to complete an [online form](#) or contact Communities 1st by phone on 020 3940 4865*
- *Those needing help or support (or someone on their behalf) can complete an [online form](#) or call 020 8207 5115. They will then be either matched with one of the Compassionate Community Connector volunteers, offered support immediately or signposted/referred on to a local voluntary/community organisation.*
- *Residents can also visit [www.hertshelp.net](http://www.hertshelp.net) and fill in the online form, email [info@hertshelp.net](mailto:info@hertshelp.net) or call HertsHelp on 0300 123 4044.*

#### Support for carers

Iain MacBeath, Director of Adult Care Services has written to all those caring for a family member or friend who receives adult care services to provide answers to the questions that carers have been asking the County Council and Carers in Hertfordshire. The letter also outlines the support for carers that is available from Carers in Hertfordshire. As well as keeping in touch with carers to check on their wellbeing, Carers in Hertfordshire have a website that provides a range of information and support on being prepared, how to get support, ways to stay occupied and links to all the latest guidance for carers.

Anyone currently using a social care service should expect that to continue, however they should speak to their care provider first or call on 0300 123 4042 for other urgent care needs. Service updates can be found at [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/serviceupdate](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/serviceupdate)

## Hertfordshire Mind Network

Hertfordshire Mind Network launched its new Young People's helpline on 23 April. Young people in need of support can call 01923 256391 as follows:

- Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1pm-4.30pm
- Tuesday and Thursday 5pm-7.30pm
- Saturday 10am – 1pm

This is in addition to the 24 hour crisis helpline which can be accessed on 01923 256391.

## Communities 1<sup>st</sup>

### Support for Voluntary Organisations

In addition to leading on the work to support Operation Sustain within the borough, Communities 1<sup>st</sup> are looking to collect information about the impact of Covid-19 on local organisations and are encouraging them to complete an [online form](#). Information is being used to create a Community Directory, a live document detailing the current status of local organisations.

They are also issuing regular briefings specifically for the sector which provide a range of information about local activities and the type of support available for organisations during this difficult time. [Sign up for the Newsletter](#).

## Hertsmere Borough Council

### Support for Local Businesses

A range of advice and support is available to Hertsmere businesses about the financial measures which the Government has put in place during the national coronavirus shutdown. Information about expanded retail discount off business rates; support for nursery businesses that pay business rates; grants for small businesses and retail and leisure companies and details on with how to apply, has been added to the Hertsmere Borough Council website [Business Support page](#) here and is being regularly updated.

### Service Updates

The Council is operating business as usual wherever possible, although some changes have been made to ensure we follow social distancing guidelines. Please visit the Council's [Service Update page](#) for the latest information.

## Citizens Advice Hertsmere

Demand for help via the phones has increased hugely and continues to do so. Hertsmere residents can now access a dedicated telephone number along with an expanded email offer. Countywide Adviceline phones are also manned between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

The issues that the service is being contacted about have changed in response to the crisis: -

- 98% of the calls or emails are related to the Coronavirus.
- Whilst benefits, especially claims for Universal Credit account for 62% of the calls in the last 3 weeks 42% of clients contacting us also have an employment query.
- Debt is still high at 38% but, as enforcement action is currently suspended, clients are being supported with financial planning and template holding letters to send to creditors.
- The main debt issues are utilities, council tax and rent arrears.
- The age profile of clients has dropped with the highest number of people being in the 35-39 age bracket.

*Hertsmere residents in need of support from Citizens Advice should contact 0208 167 2859 (10am – 3pm Monday to Friday) or contact [Elstreadvice@hertsmerecab.org.uk](mailto:Elstreadvice@hertsmerecab.org.uk) with your name, phone number and postcode. Please see the attached poster attached with further details which can be shared with clients.*

## Hertfordshire Constabulary

As of 4th May 2020, Mark Bilsdon will formally take over as Chief Inspector for Hertsmere. He can be contacted on [Mark.Bilsdon@herts.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Mark.Bilsdon@herts.pnn.police.uk)