

COVID-19 – Supporting our communities

In response to the rapidly changing situation regarding new coronavirus (COVID-19), Herefordshire Council will be doing everything we can to support Herefordshire's local communities, businesses and the voluntary and community sector.

We are aware that the advice for self-isolation and social distancing will present different issues for different people. It is important that people get the right help and support to get them through this extremely difficult time as quickly as safely as possible.

Important considerations

For those co-ordinating local community groups and those offering practical help to residents e.g. delivering essential supplies, there are important things to consider, to ensure everyone stays well and safe.

Keeping yourself and others safe

We recommend that if you are co-ordinating a local group or volunteering for one, there are key steps that will help to protect everyone:

- Don't bring people together face to face, be mindful of the government's advice on [social distancing](#) and [staying at home](#) (for those experiencing symptoms)
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze and put used tissues in the bin straight away. Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.
- Wash your hands regularly, for a minimum of 20 seconds with soap
- If you feel at all unwell, even if you're experiencing mild symptoms **do not** volunteer
- Try to support people who live close to you so you don't travel longer distances and avoid public transport where possible
- Be careful about how you share personal information about yourself and other people.
- Be careful about taking money; many people may be more vulnerable to fraud at this time
- Avoid physical contact with those you're helping; try to stay a minimum of 2 metres away
- Do not provide medical or clinical advice – leave that to the professionals
- Be careful of misinformation and rumours, especially on social media

Whilst co-ordinating local community groups, if you identify any issues you feel unable to support, please contact Herefordshire Council by email:

Talkcommunitycovidresponse@herefordshire.gov.uk or telephone 01432 260027.

Safeguarding: All of us need to sign up to keeping people safe and to follow it in acting as good neighbours and citizens. It is important that community organisations and volunteers know what to do if they think that someone they are supporting may be at risk of harm. Herefordshire Council's website has information on [protecting an adult](#) who is being abused as well as [for protecting a child](#).

Useful sources of information

There are many sources of advice and support available both nationally and locally:

Nationally

Stay up to date with the latest health guidance for coronavirus on the [NHS website](#).

There is a lot of excellent information available on line, including information targeted at particular groups of people who might be experiencing significant stress and anxiety at this time.

[Age UK](#) have a really helpful list of frequently asked questions designed for older people who are worried about Coronavirus.

The charity [Mind](#) have some great advice and guidance on their website about how to look after our mental health and well-being during this time. The [NHS website](#), also provides a list of recommended mental health helplines that offer support and advice.

[Carers UK](#), provide useful guidance and advice for those who care for others.

A [National Domestic Abuse Helpline](#), is available for those experiencing domestic abuse or those concerned for the welfare of others.

[Full Fact](#), the UK's Independent Fact Checking Charity, has generated a [fact check page](#) on covid-19 to help dispel any false information.

Locally

Herefordshire Council is providing [updated information](#) about how COVID-19 is affecting its services on its website.

HVOSS (herefordshire voluntary organisations support service) provides information, guidance and support to volunteers, charities, voluntary and community groups in Herefordshire. HVOSS is working as part of the 'Talk Community Herefordshire COVID-19 Response' to help ensure all members of the community are supported, for as long as is needed. It has generated [some useful information](#) for voluntary and community groups.

A Good Neighbour Scheme can be set up in a way that responds to local need and is about local communities providing support to local people. This may be the type of organisation which is particularly suitable to respond to the challenges presented by Covid-19 in local communities. Hereford Diocese in partnership with Herefordshire Council has developed a toolkit to support the setting up of a local [Good Neighbour Scheme](#).

[WISH](#) (Wellbeing Information and Signposting for Herefordshire) is a website provided by Herefordshire Council. It provides information including local services and events to support the health and wellbeing of all adults, children, young people and families across Herefordshire. Due to the ongoing coronavirus / COVID-19 situation, some services and events across the county are being amended / cancelled. If you're interested in any of the services, groups, events or activities listed on WISH, please contact the organiser directly, to check they're still running.

Herefordshire Council is supporting a local co-ordinated response through its Talk Community Covid-19 response. Contact details are:

Email: Talkcommunitycovidresponse@herefordshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 01432 260027