



## Weekly News Bulletin for Community and Voluntary Groups, Town and Parish Councils, Partners and Hub Update Subscribers



### How residents in need can access food and medicine after July 31<sup>st</sup>

After shielding pauses and the food parcel and medicine deliveries from the Government end on July 31<sup>st</sup>, people who have been shielding will be able to visit shops and supermarkets from August 1<sup>st</sup>. Those who are registered for the priority supermarket slots will remain eligible after July 31<sup>st</sup>. Further Government guidance is [HERE](#).

The Royal Voluntary Service (NHS Volunteer Responders) will carry on delivering food, prescriptions and essential items purchased by vulnerable or isolating residents, if needed. The organisation can be contacted on 0808 196 3646 (8am to 8pm) or at <https://volunteering.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/nhs-volunteer-responders>

Berkshire Age UK's Easy Shop can provide a shopping service for £6 fee to people over 60 years old who find accessing the internet difficult. The Easy Shop can be contacted by telephone on 01635 522255 or by email at [easyshop@ageukberkshire.org.uk](mailto:easyshop@ageukberkshire.org.uk)

People in significant difficulty can contact the Community Support Hub on: 01635 503579 by email on [westberksbct@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:westberksbct@westberks.gov.uk) The Hub will be able to direct them to the help they need. The Hub is open from 8:30am to 5pm on Monday to Thursday and 8:30am to 4:30pm on Friday.

### Government's Latest Guidance on Covid-19

#### *Virus isolation period extended from 7 to 10 days*

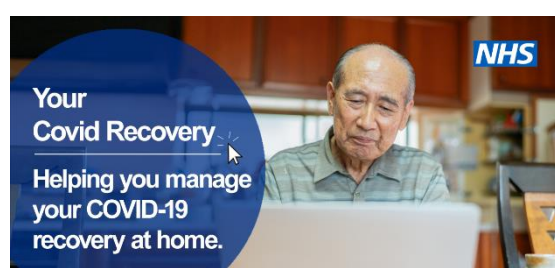
As of July 30<sup>th</sup>, those showing key symptoms of the coronavirus (a new continuous cough, a temperature or loss of taste or smell), or those with a positive test result, will need to self-isolate for 10 days instead of 7. Chief Medical Officers for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have issued this updated advice [HERE](#).



#### *Coronavirus Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on what the public can and can't do*

The Cabinet Office FAQ outlining what the public in England can and can't do during the coronavirus outbreak has been updated as of July 27<sup>th</sup> to reflect the latest government guidance. A section has also been added on looking after grandchildren: [FAQ](#)

### New NHS website for "Supporting Recovery after Coronavirus"



The new "Your Covid Recovery" website from the NHS (<https://www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk/>) provides support for those recovering at home.

The site helps people to understand what has happened as a result of the virus, and what they might expect as part of their recovery.

## Kudos to West Berkshire Volunteers for Amazing Lockdown Support to Residents!

West Berkshire Council and the Community Support Hub would like to thank profusely Community and Volunteer Group Co-ordinators for all of your groups' amazing support to residents during the coronavirus lockdown! In addition, the Community Support Hub has been able to link numerous individuals in need to the invaluable services available from you – 90 community and volunteer groups who represent nearly 3,000 volunteers across our county.



Thank you as well for your feedback to our recent Volunteer Co-ordinator's survey. We learned from the findings that nearly 9 out of 10 of your groups were quickly formed as a direct response to the Covid-19 outbreak and lockdown, according to your feedback to our recent Volunteer Co-ordinators survey. The remainder came from existing community and voluntary services which urgently adapted to meet the coronavirus emergency.

According to the survey, the most prevalent services provided by the community and volunteer groups included collecting prescriptions (97%), shopping (94%), befriending someone who is isolated (66%), delivering food parcels (54%), and providing advice (51%). Other services included dog walking (40%), transport (37%), and emergency repairs (31%).

Katharine Makant, West Berkshire Community Support Hub Manager, said: "The Community Support Hub, together with our partners Volunteer Centre West Berkshire and Greenham Trust, would like to convey our enormous thanks to all those involved for their outstanding help and support throughout the coronavirus outbreak and lockdown.

"The speed of reaction by community and volunteer groups, local towns and parish councils, and individual volunteers, has been truly amazing. Their dedication has helped us to respond to the elderly and vulnerable at a time when they have needed it most."

### ***Collaboration and communication core to volunteers' successes***

Findings from your survey feedback indicated that the keys to the team's numerous successes came from focusing upon collaboration, both within their teams and with their local providers, and using a variety of communications tools to bring their local community together. These techniques included the use of Zoom, Facebook, WhatsApp, socially distanced meet ups and telephone calls.



For example, the Mortimer Village Partnership (MVP) Covid Support Group operated a Helpline as well as a "Listening Circle" weekly via Zoom where people could come to talk and feel heard with several experienced "circle facilitators."

In addition, the support group was able to call upon its volunteers using a specially designed system to nominate those particularly in need and to deliver free meals offered by local pubs or fish and chips shops.



In Berrys Road, Upper Buckleberry (including Blacklands Road and Woodside Close), weekly socially distanced coffee mornings every Sunday were started at the beginning of lockdown, with anyone welcome to join.

These get-togethers have since been expanded into frequent BBQs on residents' front driveways, sing-along sessions with local musicians and big celebrations with bunting, music, dancing and food for Easter, VE Day, and Father's Day/Summer Solstice. Neighbours also gathered around to sing a socially distanced version of Happy Birthday to those who were celebrating during lockdown.



Apart from being a lot of fun and helping the community in the roads, these activities, along with the NHS Clap on a Thursday, have promoted mental health and well-being. They've also been described at times as a lifeline especially for those residents who do not have digital access, or nearby family and friends for support. In addition, those residents who volunteer to assist with the more practical needs (coordination via WhatsApp and passing information to the wider area using a Community Facebook Group) feel greatly rewarded by helping others.



The Compton COVID-19 Volunteer Group has run numerous community socially-distanced activities such as sewing scrubs for the NHS; crafts such as 'tinsects,' bunting and rainbows; sunflower growing; cake making; Easter Cards; book and puzzle swaps; and preparing home cooked food for families. They also plan to continue their befriending scheme for many months to come.

Shelley, one of the group organisers, said that the volunteers have been having great fun helping to keep community spirits up while assisting isolated residents with all their needs such as shopping.

### **Working with the Community Support Hub**

In the volunteer group co-ordinator survey, 97% of respondents noted that they felt supported by the Council throughout the lockdown, with all saying that they wished to continue receiving the Hub Bulletin, a news and resource update issued to them by the Community Support Hub each week. Moving forward, several of the Co-ordinators as well as Town and Parish councillors will be working with the Community Support Hub and the West Berkshire Public Health and Wellbeing department to collaborate on further enhancing ways of reaching the elderly, vulnerable and other marginalised communities.

Finally, we were delighted to receive the following quote from a community group leader – thank you!

**Well done everyone at Team Hub. It all happened very quickly and the situation was fast-changing, sometimes daily. Some really good people stepped up to the plate to do the best they could, as quickly as possible, when it probably wasn't their job. Good effort and thank you for all the support during the Covid-19 lockdown.**

## Funding opportunities to support charitable projects that are Covid-19 related

**National Lottery Community Fund** is prioritising funding for projects and organisations supporting disadvantaged communities throughout the coronavirus emergency. According to their website, if you're planning to apply for the Government allocation of funding to the Coronavirus Community Support Fund (CCSF), you must apply by 12 noon on 17 August 2020 when this fund will close. See other funding options after this date. Funding grants will be from £300 to £10,000, depending on the project, to cover six months of expenditure. Applications from small and medium sized charities including "micro" charities are particularly encouraged. More details [HERE](#).



HM Government



**Alpkit Foundation** welcomes any applications from individuals or organisations serving those affected by the Covid-19 emergency. You can apply for funding up to £500. Application form [HERE](#).

Examples of projects Alpkit Foundation will consider:

- Being active in your local community to help elderly or vulnerable people.
- Minimising the impact of self-isolation for those in quarantine and need access to food, medicines or social care.
- Supporting food banks and increasing the number of meals on wheels deliveries to support the elderly.
- Supporting those who are homeless or in temporary accommodation.
- Bringing adventure indoors and overcoming the obstacles that prevent us benefiting from going outdoors.

## Free debt counselling from Christians Against Poverty Newbury

The Newbury Centre for the Christians Against Poverty charity offers a [free Debt Help service](#) via its helpline 0800 328 0006 and has some appointments available for August and September.



## Good news stories – please keep them coming in!

We love to feature your good news stories on our social media and [Hub Facebook](#) page and you can find more stories, photos and videos about the wonderful work of West Berkshire's volunteers on our [Local Heroes](#) website.

With our grateful thanks and best wishes  
The Hub Team

*Please ensure that all queries about individual cases are directed to the Hub via the general email [westberksbct@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:westberksbct@westberks.gov.uk) or by calling **01635 503579**. This is to ensure they are dealt with promptly, effectively and in line with guidelines on dealing with vulnerable adults.*