

Update on food parcels for vulnerable people



The first free food boxes containing essential supplies have been delivered in England to those at highest risk from coronavirus. More parcels are expected to go out next week from wholesalers across the country, bringing the first set of deliveries to more than 50,000.

The government plans that the number of deliveries will increase to 150,000 the following week and then 250,000, then 350,000 - to a max of 450,000 per week. These deliveries will be direct to

the clinically vulnerable who have received a letter from the NHS and requested immediate support.

The Borough council are also working with Nottinghamshire County Council to identify those residents who need support but who are not classed as clinically vulnerable. Rushcliffe Borough Council have a database of residents who will receive a letter in the next few days.

They will be asked to contact the Nottinghamshire County Council helpline if they do not have local support in place and will then be triaged back to districts for support. The Borough council should then be in a position to co-ordinate redeployed staff alongside local parishes and volunteer groups to distribute other essential items that will be provided via the Nottinghamshire County Council Community Support and Volunteering Hub.

A reminder that volunteer groups can get involved by registering on [the County Council website](#).

All the activity is being initially co-ordinated via County Council centrally, as they have the use of military planners to assist with the co-ordination efforts.

Initial £150 council tax reduction for residents on low incomes



Central government has allocated an initial £150 reduction on annual council tax bills for low-income residents in the Borough as part of its response to COVID-19.

Over 1,800 tax payers will now receive the reduction on their bills for the 2020/21 financial year, announced as part of £500m of new hardship grant funding nationwide.

The awards will be made as soon as possible and all eligible claimants will receive a confirmation letter. Residents should not call the Borough Council for further information, but email revenues@rushcliffe.gov.uk

The government outlined in its Budget on March 11 that it would provide local authorities in England with the fund which has seen us allocated £515,389.

This will now further support working-age residents who currently receive help from our Council Tax reduction scheme.

The Borough council will be initially awarding a maximum of £150 per household, who are in receipt of Council Tax Reduction from 1 April 2020, towards their Council Tax bill.

"Over 1,800 tax payers should benefit from this and the Borough are actively looking at further council tax support measures that aim to help individuals who are particularly suffering with financial hardship at this difficult time.

"There is no requirement currently for a separate claim under this scheme. The Borough will assess who is eligible for support from the hardship fund and automatically credit their accounts.

"The awards will be made this week and all eligible claimants will receive a confirmation letter."

Nottinghamshire COVID-19 Community Fund



A £1 million Nottinghamshire COVID-19 Community Fund has been created to help communities as they respond to exceptional challenges over the coming months.

Nottinghamshire County Council want to support local charities

and community organisations that are delivering essential services to vulnerable Nottinghamshire residents impacted by COVID-19.

The Borough council are encouraging charities and voluntary groups in Rushcliffe to apply for a grant of anywhere between £200 to £10,000 to deliver projects or services that meet the Nottinghamshire COVID-19 Community Fund criteria:

- Projects that directly help vulnerable people affected by the effects of COVID-19, such as by providing access to food, toiletries, necessities, as well as projects to help vulnerable people in isolation.
- Projects that are already set up and helping vulnerable people now.

Please visit the [Nottinghamshire COVID-19 Community Fund page](#) to find out more.

COVID-19 Community Support and Volunteering Hub

WE



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Nottinghamshire County Council are continuing to work with all seven District and Borough Councils to further their COVID-19 Community and Support Volunteering Hub.

They have now further developed their support with increased features for residents to make contact with the support functions they need.

Lots of details are available on their [website](#), which welcomes emails or phone calls from volunteers, as well as those seeking support for free between 8.30am and 5.30pm, Monday to Friday: **0300 500 8080**

D2N2 appeals to businesses for Personal Protective Equipment Donations



D2N2 is asking businesses across the region to donate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to the fight against coronavirus as part of the **PPE4NHS** campaign.

In addition to widely reported shortages of PPE within the NHS, the Care and Charity sectors are also finding it difficult to source adequate items of PPE in order to safeguard vulnerable members of society.

Amongst the items in demand are:

- Any fluid-resistant surgical masks including although not exclusively FFP2 or FFP3 (the rating is marked on each mask)
- Nitrile gloves
- Visors or goggles
- Disposable aprons or overalls
- Sanitising Gel
- Overshoes

D2N2 Chief Executive Sajeeda Rose said: "We fully understand the efforts government are making to ensure PPE is available for all who need it, but we equally recognise the challenge they face in reaching beyond the NHS into other parts of the care system that are vital to shielding our most vulnerable citizens and preventing further strain on the front line by keeping people safe.

"It may be that there are protective items sitting in storage cupboards that can be put to good use to support our social care workers, care workers and other front-line employees.

"If businesses are able to offer up this stock in our fight against this virus, please get in touch."

Businesses interested in donating should visit the [D2N2 PPE4NHS webpage](#).

To make the donation process as quick as possible, emails should include PPE supply details including quantity and postcode, plus a contact name and phone number.

Businesses will be asked some questions about the type of support that can be provided and will be contacted as soon as possible if the support is needed.

Businesses can also interact with the scheme on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn via the @PPE4NHS accounts

FINANCE AND BUSINESS

For all the latest, visit the [business pages on our website](#).

Businesses contacted on business grant support



We are continuing to contact business owners on vital business grants available from central government.

As of April 1, at 4pm the Borough council had contacted over 340 businesses distributing over £3.4m with many more set to receive the funding in the coming weeks.

The Chancellor outlined the support on March 17 as part of the £350bn package

of support for enterprise nationwide that will now see the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) provide the authority with the funding to administer the payments to businesses.

The latest information on this and all the support for businesses, our services and communities is available at www.rushcliffe.gov.uk

Renting guidance now available for landlords and tenants



Non-statutory guidance for landlords and tenants in the private and social rented sectors in the context of coronavirus has now been published [here](#).

It outlines the provisions in the Coronavirus Act 2020, and further advice more broadly about their rights and responsibilities.

High blood pressure medication



The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has advised that if anyone is taking angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors (ACE inhibitors or ACE-i) or angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs) to treat high blood pressure, it is vitally important they continue their usual treatment.

There is no evidence from clinical or epidemiological studies that these might worsen coronavirus infection.

More information on the government website [here](#) -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-and-high-blood-pressure-medication>.

Telecommunication providers commit to support vulnerable consumers



The UK's major telecommunication providers have agreed to a set of commitments to support and protect vulnerable consumers and those who may become vulnerable due to circumstances arising from coronavirus.

The providers agreed:

- That they will remove all data allowance caps on all current fixed broadband services.
- To offer some new, generous mobile and landline packages to ensure people are connected and the most vulnerable continue to be supported.
- To work with customers who find it difficult to pay their bill as a result of coronavirus to ensure that they are treated fairly and appropriately supported.
- To ensure that vulnerable customers or those self-isolating receive alternative methods of communication wherever possible if priority repairs to fixed broadband and landlines cannot be carried out.

For more information, read the [joint statement from Government, Ofcom and the telecommunications industry](#).

Coronavirus Information Service on WhatsApp



Central Government has launched its [Coronavirus Information Service on WhatsApp](#).

The free service is an automated 'chatbot' that will provide information on coronavirus prevention and symptoms, the latest number of cases in the UK, advice on staying at home, travel advice and myth busting.

It aims to further reduce the burden on NHS services, including 111, combat the spread of the virus and ensure people stay at home and save lives.

Watch out for coronavirus scams

Wash your hands of coronavirus scams!

Friends Against Scams aims to protect and prevent people from becoming victims of scams.

Be aware of people offering or selling:

- Virus testing kits - these are only offered by NHS.
- Vaccines or miracle cures - there is currently no vaccine or cure.
- Overpriced or fake goods to protect yourself from coronavirus such as anti-bacterial products.
- Shipping or medication collection services.
- Home cleaning services.

Protect yourself and others:

- Don't be rushed into making a decision, if it sounds too good to be true it probably is.
- Only purchase goods from legitimate retailers and take a moment to think before parting with money or personal information.
- Don't assume everyone is genuine, it's okay to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.
- If someone claims to represent a charity, ask them for ID. Be suspicious of requests for money up front. If someone attempts to pressure you into accepting a service they are unlikely to be genuine. Check with family and friends before accepting offers of help if you are unsure.

Be a good friend, help to protect your family, friends and neighbours from scams.

Read it. Share it. Prevent it.

#Coronavirus #ScamAware

CONTACT
For advice on scams call the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0800 333 11 33
To report a scam call Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040
Contact your bank if you think you have been scammed.

NATIONAL TRADING STANDARDS
Scams Team

To learn more about the different types of scams visit www.FriendsAgainstScams.org.uk

Criminals are exploiting fears about COVID-19 to prey on members of the public, particularly older and vulnerable people who are isolated from family and friends.

National Trading Standards is warning people to remain vigilant following a rise in coronavirus-related scams that seek to benefit from the public's concern and uncertainty over COVID-19.

Members of the public should ignore scam products such as supplements and anti-virus kits that falsely claim to cure or prevent COVID-19.

In some cases individuals may be pressurised on their own doorsteps to buy anti-virus kits or persuaded into purchasing products that are advertised on their social media feeds. In addition, some call centres that previously targeted UK consumers with dubious health products are now offering supplements that supposedly prevent COVID-19.

Communities are also being urged to look out for signs of neighbours being targeted by doorstep criminals. While there are genuine groups of volunteers providing help during self-isolation, there have been reports of criminals preying on residents – often older people or people living with long-term health conditions – by cold-calling at their homes and offering to go to the shops for them.

The criminals often claim to represent charities to help them appear legitimate before taking the victim's money. There are genuine charities providing support, so consumers should be vigilant and ask for ID from anyone claiming to represent a charity.

Further information is available on the [Friends Against Scams website](http://www.FriendsAgainstScams.org.uk).

Cultural initiatives



Over the past week, arts and cultural organisations have launched a range of digital initiatives to ensure extraordinary national collections and performances can be enjoyed by everyone whilst following the latest guidance to stay at home.

Existing initiatives include:

- [The National Gallery virtual tour](#)
- [The British Museum virtual tour](#)
- [Sadler's Wells Digital stage](#)
- [National Theatre at home](#)
- [Royal Opera House Programme](#)

SERVICE SPECIFIC ISSUES

More central government support for mental health



In recognition of the unprecedented challenges which the outbreak and extended periods of self-isolation can pose, Public Health England has published [new online guidance](#) setting out principles to follow to help people to manage their mental health during this difficult time.

Parents and carers will also benefit from tailored advice on how to support children and young people with stress during the coronavirus outbreak, which includes providing

clear information, being aware of their own reactions and creating a new routine.

The government has also announced a £5 million grant for leading mental health charities, administered by Mind, to fund additional services for people struggling with their mental wellbeing during this time.

This could include telephone and online support services for the most isolated and vulnerable in our communities.

Borough Council website accredited as accessible



Over recent months, teams have been working hard on Rushcliffe's website in order to make it more accessible, inclusive and user friendly for people with disabilities.

Following stringent testing by the Shaw Trust the website has achieved a high level of accessibility and has therefore been awarded the Shaw Trust 'Accessible' rating!

Reminder on Police and enforcement powers



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
POLICE**
PROUD TO SERVE

A reminder that the government has strengthened police enforcement powers in England to reduce the spread of coronavirus.

If members of the public do not comply the police may:

- Instruct them to go home, leave an area or disperse
- ensure parents are taking necessary steps to stop their children breaking these rules
- issue a fixed penalty notice of £60, which will be lowered to £30 if paid within 14 days
- issue a fixed penalty notice of £120 for second time offenders, doubling on each further repeat offence

Individuals who do not pay a fixed penalty notice under the regulations could be taken to court, with magistrates able to impose unlimited fines.

If an individual continues to refuse to comply, they will be acting unlawfully, and the police may arrest them where deemed proportionate and necessary. However, in the first instance the police will always apply their common sense and discretion

All the latest information for residents is available at www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/coronavirus or over the phone on 0115 981 99 11.