



**Dorset**  
Council

# COVID-19 Dorset Co-ordinated Community Response

We are working with public sector partners and charities across Dorset to respond to the impact of the coronavirus outbreak.

We know that many people in our communities want to help and we want to harness that goodwill - we are going to need it. There has been a fantastic response from Dorset's Communities to COVID-19 and many people have signed up to volunteer their help.

If you would like to volunteer your support, or are part of a community group that would like to offer their support, you can sign up with Volunteer Centre Dorset.

## I want to help - who do I contact?

If you want to help but are not sure where to start, register with the Dorset Volunteering Centre in the first instance. You can also register if you are voluntary sector organisation that wants to get involved in providing support or if you would like help with maintaining your volunteer base.



[www.volunteeringdorset.org.uk/i-want-to-volunteer](http://www.volunteeringdorset.org.uk/i-want-to-volunteer)



01305 269214



[info@volunteeringdorset.org.uk](mailto:info@volunteeringdorset.org.uk)

## I want help

If you don't have family, friends or a support network that can help you get the things you need, you can **call 01305 221000**, 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday to get specific help and advice.

Alternatively email [communityresponse@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:communityresponse@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

or let us know what help you need by using our online form [here](#)

## I know someone who needs help - who do I contact?

### Citizens Advice



[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/search-for-your-local-citizens-advice/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/search-for-your-local-citizens-advice/)

Citizens Advice continues to provide free, independent and confidential advice and information whatever your question. They offer a full range of advice including help with:

## Benefits entitlement and claims

- Debt management and budgeting
- Employment advice including Statutory Sick Pay and rights when laid off work
- Advice for the self employed



**Dorset Adviceline 0344 411 1444 or email your local branch:**



Bridport:  
[advice@bridport-cab.org.uk](mailto:advice@bridport-cab.org.uk)



Central (North Dorset, Sherborne, Dorchester & Weymouth & Portland)  
[westdorsetca.org.uk](http://westdorsetca.org.uk)



East Dorset:  
[wimborne@eastdorset.cabnet.org.uk](mailto:wimborne@eastdorset.cabnet.org.uk)



Purbeck  
[www.purbeckadvice.org.uk/contact-us.html](http://www.purbeckadvice.org.uk/contact-us.html)

## Dorset Community Action

We're committed to helping your charity, community group or social enterprise through these unsettled times. With the current COVID-19 health situation our community is in uncharted territory. As a result, we're putting together alternatives to our usual networking and training events.

We have set up a dedicated Helpline, which is open between 11am and 4pm Monday to Friday to answer questions you may have regarding Coronavirus and your organisation -



**Helpline**  
**01202 847609**



**Visit our website for regular updates**  
[www.dorsetcommunityaction.org.uk](http://www.dorsetcommunityaction.org.uk)



**Join our mailing list to receive updates and support straight to your email.**  
[info@dorsetcommunityaction.org.uk](mailto:info@dorsetcommunityaction.org.uk)

## Benefits and support – COVID-19

If you have questions about council tax support and benefits or are worried about reduced pay/ Statutory Sick Pay or are self-employed, more information can be found [here](#).

## Local community groups

Find contact information for groups in your local community on the [#HelpAndKindness](#) website. Enter 'covid' into the keyword search field, followed by your area in the location search field.

## Foodbanks

You can contact your local foodbank for guidance on required items and how to drop off or collect items. Find details of your local foodbank.

## Volunteering - things to think about

Before considering volunteering, ask yourself if you are well enough to volunteer and think about the following:

- Try and work as a pair, this will alleviate some concerns about safeguarding and offer protection for yourself and the person you're helping
- Always tell someone where you're going and when you anticipate returning
- Carry a mobile phone with you
- Try to volunteer in daylight hours only
- Carry a torch with you if you can't avoid volunteering in the dark
- Stay at least 2 metres (about 3 steps) away at all times - this reduces the risk of potential infection to yourself and the person you're helping
- Avoid entering the home of the person you're helping
- Don't take credit cards from individuals, and keep any receipts for items purchased on behalf of others
- Photograph all receipts and purchases for your records
- Don't assume that someone needs help or call at a house unexpectedly - anxieties are high at the moment and people need to follow guidance with regards to opening their front doors, especially if they are self-isolating
- Consider dropping a note through the door as a first offer of help (but wash your hands before doing so)
- Don't get disheartened if a volunteering role is not found for you immediately - the response to this crisis is growing daily and the volunteering response will grow with it
- Only assist with activities which have been risk assessed - if you're asked to carry out a different activity, contact your volunteer coordinator / voluntary group for guidance
- Always put yourself in the shoes of the person you're helping, ask how you would like to be treated if the situation was reversed
- For your peace of mind and that of people you support, a DBS check may be required for some activity – check with the Volunteer Centre

Remember volunteering is a choice, freely made. Should your circumstances change, and you are no longer able to volunteer (either short term or long term), the voluntary organisation/group will support your decision.

## Do you have a safeguarding concern?

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Anybody can raise a safeguarding concern, for example they might be a carer, a volunteer, a professional working with adults with care and support needs or somebody who thinks they have been abused.



**You can raise a concern by contacting Adult Social Care directly on 01305 221016**

**or 'Out of Hours Service' on 01305 858250.**

Contact the Police where a crime may have been committed or you believe the person to be in immediate danger

We are working closely with Volunteer Centre Dorset who are providing support to ensure the safety of our residents, both those volunteering and those in need of support.

## **Top tips to help others**

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### **What you can do as a community**

- Check in on any vulnerable family, friends and neighbours. Sometimes just helping them with their shopping and checking they have everything they need, can make a big difference.
- If you know someone who is self-isolating contact them via phone and text and check that they're OK. By its very nature, self-isolation is a solitary experience and their wellbeing will likely be improved by talking to someone.
- Please be mindful with your comments and actions, so as not to cause undue concern or anxiety within your community. If you hear mis-information that may cause issues, respectfully challenge if you are able to.
- Public Health England has advised people who are self-isolating to do what they can to avoid visitors to their home and any deliveries of groceries, medications or other shopping to be left at the door so please ensure that when you are providing support this advice is followed.

### **Offering help in your community**

- Keep it local and manageable. We suggest your own street or about 20-30 houses at most.
- Don't try to cover more than you realistically can sustain – this might last for months. Keep to where people will recognise you and trust your offer is genuine.
- Try to understand that people may be cautious about accepting help if they don't know you well and have the right to refuse your help.
- Create a list of the things that you feel able to help others with. Feel comfortable to say no if people ask for more help than you're able to give.
- Trust your instincts when you are offering to help others or being offered help. Remove yourself from the situation if you don't feel safe and respect others choice to do the same.

### **Looking after yourself whilst helping others**

If you would like to help others but have been instructed to self-isolate, please follow the official Government guidelines and don't break your isolation period early.

- When in contact with others follow social distancing advice and keep a safe distance from others (this is 2 metres or 6 feet apart).
- Be sure to wash your hands thoroughly for 20 seconds before and after contact with your neighbours and follow the NHS 'catch it, kill it, bin it' advice when coughing or sneezing.
- Don't enter other people's homes

- If you are helping others, be aware of your own wellbeing and ask for help and support if you need it.
- Keep in touch with friends and family, and maintain activities that you're able to do such as reading, exercise, walking the dog and gardening.

## **Keeping safe at home**

- Don't get into personal care or going into people's houses – be assured that other agencies are set up to provide this. Keep an eye out for suspicious activity or visitors to your neighbours, particularly those who may be more vulnerable, and report this to the Police if you feel concerned.
- There have been some incidents of people knocking on doors and claiming to represent charities, such as the Red Cross. Be sure to carefully check people's identification if you are not expecting them to visit and don't answer the door if you feel uncomfortable.

## **Keeping safe online**

- Keep up virtual community connections using social media, email or WhatsApp groups for your local community, rather than sending individual messages. This helps to maintain everyone's safety.
- There are lots of existing groups that you may wish to join – check out Facebook groups for example.
- Do not share your personal details such as your email address or telephone number if you are not comfortable doing so.
- Be sure to continue to access up to date information from trusted organisations including Dorset Council, the NHS and Public Health.
- Don't open emails or click on links claiming to be from organisations such as Public Health or Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. They may be scams and could download a virus to your computer.

## **Financial safety**

- Don't give or loan people money if you don't know them or if it doesn't feel safe to do so.
- Keep your personal information safe and don't share any account details with people you don't know and trust.
- If you would like to donate to charity to support people affected by the pandemic, check the credibility of the organisation first or donate to trusted organisations that you know. There are likely to be funds set up soon – these will be promoted by trusted organisations such as Dorset Community Action.

## Always use trusted sources of information

- [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)
- [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)
- [dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/coronavirus)



[communityresponse@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:communityresponse@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

If you don't have internet access, and you need help or have a question, call Dorset Council Customer Services



**01305 221000**